

Bayhaven Restaurant Group owners Greg and Subrina Collier growing influence at Camp North End



THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

# The Charlotte Post

WEEK OF MARCH 17, 2022

VOLUME 48, NUMBER 28

WWW.THECHARLOTTEPOST.COM

\$1.50



STOCK PHOTO

Although more people of color are entering the medical field, Black nurses and educators are underrepresented compared to the percentage of Black people in the U.S.

## Front line Black nurses and instructors are in short supply

Education costs and racial barriers in medical community are difficult to overcome

By Aaliyah Bowden  
aaliyah.bowden@thecharlottepost.com

Mariah Lowery, a senior nursing student at Queens University of Charlotte, was the 2021 scholarship winner for the Great 100 Nurses of North Carolina.

"I was nominated by Dr. [Janie] Best, who just retired from Queens," said Lowery, who earned a biology degree from the school. "I was very grateful that she chose me, and I just really appreciated it. It was a huge honor."

Following graduation in May, Lowery, 29, aspires to become a DNP, or Doctor of Nursing practice, in women's health

or family medicine.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a shortage of nurses. However, the global health crisis has shined a light on the shortage, especially among nurses of color in the field. Blacks, who make 13% of the U.S. population, make up 8% of registered nurses and 6% of physicians. Although more people of color are seeking careers in medicine, college nursing schools suffer from a lack of Black professors and students.

"There's a shortage I would say in black health care educators," said JoAndrea Costner, assistant professor and

chair of the nursing program at Queens. "People want to be taken care of by a provider that looks like them. Every now and then, students want to see an educator who looks like them. It's not always possible, but it's not what's happening as the norm."

An expensive and highly competitive pathway to nursing could deter some from the field. Also, racial discrimination is rarely discussed and often swept under the rug.

"Oftentimes people don't know how to talk about racism - the students don't

Please see **SHORTAGE** | 2A

## Rembert returns to county board

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Wilhelmina Rembert is back for another turn as a Mecklenburg County commissioner.

The board voted Tuesday to confirm Rembert's appointment to fill a temporary vacancy created when at-large commissioner Ella Scarborough stepped down for medical leave. The board made its recommendation on March 12 after interviewing four finalists.



Rembert

Rembert, 70, a former at-large commissioner who'll serve through Dec. 5, was the board's vice-chair from 2004-06, and a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board. She will be sworn in on March 22.

On Feb. 8, the commissioners unanimously approved Scarborough's request for medical leave after missing several months of in-person meetings. North Carolina law permits the commissioners to appoint a temporary replacement for the duration of leave.

Rembert, who attended the same Sumter, South Carolina, high school as Scarborough, is a clinical social worker, retired Winthrop University professor and a former partnership specialist at the U.S. Census Bureau, where she worked with community groups on the 2020 headcount. She touted her familiarity with county government as an employee and former commissioner as a plus.

"I might be the only candidate who has had the opportunity to work for the county and eventually serve the county in a governance role as a commissioner," she said during her interview, noting jobs with Mecklenburg's public library system, Department of Social Services and as a social worker.

Please see **REMBERT** | 2A

## Anti-lynching bill moves on to Biden's desk for signature

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Lynching is on the verge of becoming a federal hate crime.

The Emmett Till Antilynching Act awaits President Joe Biden's signature after passing both chambers of Congress last month. The bill, named in honor of the Black boy who was murdered by white men in Mississippi in 1955, passed the Senate on March 8 and the House last month.

According to the legislation's text, "Whoever conspires to commit any offense... shall (A) if death results from the offense, be imprisoned for any term of years or for life."

"(B) In any other case, be subjected to the same penalties as the penalties prescribed for the offense of the commission of which was the object of the conspiracy."

Specifically, the legislation makes lynching a federal hate crime, punishable by up to life in prison.

Till, a 14-year-old from Chicago who was visiting with relatives, was kidnapped and tortured for allegedly whistling at Carolyn Bryant, a white woman. Bryant's husband Roy and brother-in-law J.W. Milam were acquitted of murder but later admitted in a 1956 Look magazine article they killed Till. Because of constitutional protections against double jeopardy, Roy Bryant and Milam couldn't be retried.

"By recognizing lynching as a federal hate crime, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act brings the full force of the law to bear in vindicating the rights of victims and survivors who endure the most violent form of racism," said Damon Hewitt, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. "Just as importantly, the bill recognizes our country's history of violence against Black

Please see **FEDERAL** | 2A



SABEL STELLATO

North Carolina public schools tend to discipline students with physical or developmental disabilities at disproportionately higher rates.

## North Carolina schools mete out harsher discipline against students with disabilities

By Ellie Heffeman  
UNC MEDIA HUB

CHAPEL HILL - Daniel Attaway, 19, has a need for speed - the faster, the better.

He loves monster trucks, and his mom, Sherry Attaway, has taken him to Monster Jams where drivers compete in races. Daniel also enjoys doing donuts on his mini-ATV, which his parents adjusted to run no quicker than roughly 5 miles per hour.

In some ways, Daniel is a typical young man. But he also has multiple disabilities including nonverbal au-

tism, ADHD and Potocki-Lupski Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder associated with developmental delays.

He can't read, write, or speak full sentences, but he is in an adaptive curriculum classroom at Chapel Hill High School. These separate classrooms serve students with severe disabilities.

People with autism have involuntary meltdowns when they feel anxious or overstimulated. When Daniel has a meltdown, he might scream, cry, throw things or hit people who invade his space.

Please see **NORTH CAROLINA** | 3A

## Data points to better economic mobility

By Steve Harrison  
and Lisa Wolf  
WFAE

This story is part of a series looking at efforts to improve equity in Charlotte. It is published in partnership with WFAE.

The 2014 study that said the Charlotte area had the worst economic mobility among the nation's largest 50 metro areas has been updated, with new information that gives insight into why Charlotte ranked so low. It also has surprising data that shows that Mecklenburg County isn't as bleak as previously thought.

The original "Land of Opportunity Study," led by a team from Harvard and the University of California-Berkeley, tracked the tax returns of 40 million children and their parents. The study examined children born in the early 1980s to see how they fared in their early 30s by examining tax returns through 2012. The main question: How many children who grew up poor moved to the top quintile or top 20%?

The report found that the Charlotte commuting zone, which includes three counties in South Carolina and six in North Carolina, was at the bottom. It became a ral-

Please see **DATA** | 4A

### STAY IN TOUCH

Snapchat: thecharpost  
Twitter: @thecharpost  
Facebook: The Charlotte Post  
Instagram: @thecharlottepost



#PaperThursday

INSIDE  
Sports 5A  
Life 1B  
A&E 5B  
Classified 4B

Digital edition:  
www.thecharlottepostnewspaper.com

To subscribe: (704) 376-0496 or online  
http://tcppc.com/Subscribe



4 19887 00001 1

# Shortage of frontline Black nurses, instructors

Continued from page 1A

know, the professors don't know," said Joelle Ceremy, who graduated Queens in December with a degree in nursing. "And so, it's really difficult and it was frustrating for me at times, to have an entire semester or entire class where we're taught, we're dancing around the subject, we're not really saying this is what racism looks like in nursing and here's how we address these implicit biases."

Out of more than 150,000 nurses in North Carolina, only 13% are Black. Nationally, Blacks make up 22% of the pool. In Mecklenburg County, there are 12,534 registered nurses and 1,576 licensed practical nurses, according to the North Carolina Board of Nursing, second only to Wake County, which has more than 18,000 practicing nurses.

### Education

According to the website nursing-school411.com, 85 North Carolina schools have a nursing program, including 26 that confer bachelor's degrees. But massive student loan debt and stiff competition are a deterrent to candidates. More than 70% of graduates leave school with at least \$37,000 in debt.

At Queens, the average tuition for undergraduate students is \$37,348 for the 2021-2022 academic school year, according to the school's website.

Pre-licensure students in their first year of the nursing program can expect to pay an additional \$1,000 to \$1,500 on books, uniforms, stethoscopes, immunizations, and other clinical requirements. Once undergrad and graduate students obtain a registered nurse license, they can anticipate paying an extra \$300 to \$500 on top of tuition and fees.

Most nursing majors apply during their junior year for a spot in a nursing program. Since most take two years to complete, they can only be accepted during the third year. If a student is not accepted then, they are unable to reapply by enrolling in graduate school for a master's degree in nursing to be considered again.

Between 100-150 students are accepted into nursing programs at East Carolina University and UNC-Chapel Hill School yearly based on factors ranging from a school's budget and number of faculty to the ability to locate clinical sites for students to complete clinical rotations.

With the competition to be accepted into programs and schools able to accept only a limited number of students, it's harder for new nurses to enter in the field. Another issue is the difficulty to replace retired nurses.

"The fact that we can't accept the number of nursing students in nursing schools that we need to replace these aging nurses, it's a real problem for us," said Dr. Pamela Reis, an associate professor, PhD program director and chair of the department of nursing science at East Carolina University College of Nursing. "So, the profession of nursing is very concerned about our aging workforce, and how we're going to replace people."

At East Carolina, there are 132 Black nursing students out of 1,329 enrolled in the program, according to Reis.

At UNC, nearly 30% of undergraduate students are identified as a person of color compared to 47% of graduate students, according to the school's website.

Both nursing programs are taking holistic admissions approaches to

focus more on what makes applicants stand out as person versus the traditional grade point average and test scores. This method is used by more colleges across the U.S. to diversify enrollment of students with different backgrounds, skills, and talents needed to succeed in the profession.

"Some of what we also do is try not to, for example, show the ZIP code where someone came from because it gives them away," said Dr. Rumay Alexander, a professor at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Nursing. "We might blind the name so that you only have to deal with the application because we believe as humans, well if they've got this kind of name, they must be this way and then the biases jump in."

### Discrimination

Historically, nursing has been a predominantly white female field in North Carolina. Men account for about 9% overall with Black men accounting for 10% of that group.

That reality plays out in the classroom as well.

"We do have, maybe five total African American students in the class out of 1 believe, about 36 students," said Shatoya Walker, a senior in Queens' accelerated nursing program. "I do feel like it is predominantly white in the program."

The students also added that implicit biases among white doctors and as a minority working in the field was not taught in the curriculum. In 2021, 92% of Black nurses reported they had experienced racism in the workplace with 70% from leaders, 68% from patients, and 66% from peers according to a survey by the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing.

More than three quarters of Black nurses said racism negatively impacts their professional well-being.

"Unfortunately, I have not received any knowledge about that in school," Lowery said.

Nationally, low teacher pay nationally could also explain why there is a lack of Black nursing professors. Nurses, who earn around \$60,000 annually, often command a larger salary than teachers.

"Black students like to see Black faculty to know that they'll be supported in their program," Reis said. "However, schools of nursing have been very challenged to recruit diverse faculty into faculty positions for a number of reasons."

Queens University Presbyterian School of Nursing aims to hire more Black professors to increase diversity.

"It's good to see that we have several adjuncts (professors) that are Black Americans, mostly female," Costner said. "We don't have any male adjuncts who are Black, but we are working on it."

Upon graduation from Queens for a second time, Lowery is considering graduate school to pursue a master's degree in education to keep her nursing skills fresh. Her goal is to reduce health disparities that impact Black women and how they view health care.

"It's unfortunate that a lot of African American women die during childbirth," she said. "In general, I just want to make a difference in how our people see health care because a lot of people don't trust health care. If there's more people like us that are able to help, then they might be more likely to take more control over their health."

Aaliyah Bowden, who covers health for The Post, is a Report For America corps member.

# Rembert joins board

Continued from page 1A

In response to a question by District 6 commissioner Laura Meier, Rembert identified housing as a county service that she would emphasize if additional funding were available.

"I would select affordable housing, and I would do that because of the rising incidence and prevalence of homelessness in our community," she said. "And given the current cost of housing and the availability of affordable housing in our community, it is going to get worse,

unfortunately, and I think it is such an issue that impacts other aspects of everyone's life. Everyone - every human being - needs a safe and stable sense of place. A place to live, to lie down, to sleep, to eat, to take a bath."

Former N.C. Rep. Beverly Earle, former Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board chair Mary McCray and Sam Spencer, a longtime political advisor and spokesman for U.S. Rep. Alma Adams, were also finalists from a pool of 17 applicants. All are Democrats.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

# Fageyinbo earns North Carolina Boys and Girls Clubs honor

STAFF REPORTS

Janae-Rose Fageyinbo won the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Clubs' North Carolina Youth of the Year competition.



Fageyinbo

Fageyinbo, a senior at Charlotte Country Day and a member of the Sedgfield Boys & Girls Club on Marsh Road, won Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Charlotte 2021-22 competition. She was selected by a panel from among candidates from Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club organizations across the state.

Fageyinbo is involved with Girl Scouts as a summer camp counselor and tutors at her school. She also founded Youth Connect Charlotte, a program that connects court-referred teens with non-court-involved peers.

Tanya Blackmon has been named 2021 Charlotte BusinessWoman of the Year award by Queens University of Charlotte. Blackmon, executive vice president and chief diversity, inclusion, and equity officer at Novant Health, was cited for her leadership and dedication to strengthening Novant Health's position as a respected leader in the Charlotte region and

throughout the country.



Horton

Jennelle Horton, a Clover High School sophomore, won the Dr. Dewey Duckett Sr. Classical Music Talent Hunt Scholarship Program sponsored by Kappa Alpha Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Boyd Brackett, a sophomore at South Pointe High, finished second and Jenaé

Horton, a Clover High junior, was third. Also participating were Joshua Carter, Zion Kemp, Zandile Kemp, Mia Funderburk, Alecia Jones, Gemiyah Heyward, and Jayce Davis.

Jannelle Horton will compete against students from North and South Carolina at the Sixth District's preliminary round. The Top 10 qualifiers will then move on to the District Talent Hunt at the 77th Sixth District meeting in Greenville, S.C., on April 29.

## DENTAL Insurance

If you've put off dental care, it's easy to get back on track. Call Physicians Mutual Insurance Company now for inexpensive dental insurance. Get help paying for the dental care you need.

Getting back to the dentist couldn't be easier!

CALL TODAY  
1-844-496-8601

Dental50Plus.com/ncpress

Get your FREE Information Kit

Product not available in all states. Includes the Participating (in GA: Designated) Providers and Preventive Benefits Rider. Acceptance guaranteed for one insurance policy/certificate of this type. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. This specific offer is not available in CO, NY, call 1-800-969-4781 or respond for similar offer. Certificate C250A (ID, C250C, PA, C2500). Insurance Policy P150 (GA, P150GA, NY, P150NY, OK, P150OK, TN, P150TN). Rider kinds: B438, B439 (GA, B439B). 6208-0721

## The Charlotte Post & The Triangle Tribune Newspapers

Serving: Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill & Cary, NC  
The Voice of the Black Community

# Women's History Month Webinars

Her-Story is Our History

### Week 1



The Challenges of Educating Our Children in Public Education  
Dr. Nyah Hamlett, Superintendent of Chapel Hill - Carrboro City Schools

Thursday, March 10th at 6:30PM - 8PM  
Meeting ID: 823 5109 3893 Passcode: 955815

### Week 2



Small Business / Entrepreneurship Showcase  
The Melanated Exchange Market, JP Financial Group, Totally Tamz, Mary Kay, Avon, Vegan Eats CLT, Gilmore Counseling & Consulting, Melo Customs, Bella's Locker, Equity NC Real Estate, ABWA Limitless Ladies Chapter, Health Empowerment Renewal, Semi Colon Soy Candles, Village First Consulting, Paparazzi Accessories, HSP Certified Public Accountant

Thursday, March 17th at 6:30PM-8:00PM

### Week 3



Women Leading Non-Profit  
Terry Spicer, Sisters Inspiring Sisters Raleigh  
Carmen Blackmon - Support Our Afterschool Sources - Charlotte

Wednesday, March 23rd at 6:30PM-8PM

### Week 4



Women's Wellness (Body, Mind & Soul)  
Black Skin Care & Cosmetic Surgery  
Dr. Tonya McLeod, Dermatologist  
Anaya Chavious, NP, MSN

Wednesday, March 30th at 6:30PM - 8:00PM



Mind & Soul  
Akira Lovett, Katina Smith,  
Certified Functional Nutrition Counselor Pastor  
Denise Scott Williams

Thursday, March 31st at 6:30PM - 8:00PM

Advanced Registration Required.  
Meeting ID: 873 9511 6784 • Passcode: 030414  
For Additional Information Contact: 980.500.8753

# Federal anti-lynching law is near

Continued from page 1A

bodies. According to FBI data, Black people continue to be the most common victims of hate crimes. This important legislation sends a message that those who engage in racist violence will be held accountable. That message is especially important given the continuing white supremacist violence endemic to our nation."

Efforts to pass anti-lynching bills were defeated for more than 100 years since the first draft was sponsored in 1901 by Rep. George Henry White, a Black lawmaker from North Carolina. The House passed the Emmett Till Act on a 422-3 vote, with three lawmakers - Reps. Andrew Clyde (R-Ga.), Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), and Chip Roy (R-Texas) in opposition. The Senate vote passed with unanimous consent.

The Equal Justice Initiative has documented 4,084 lynchings attributed to racial terror in 12 Southern states between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and 1950, with 1880-1940 the peak years.

"The House has sent a resounding message that our nation is finally reckoning with one of the darkest and most horrific periods of our history, and that we are

morally and legally committed to changing course," said Rep. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.).

Rush recalled that he was 8 years old when he saw photos of Till's brutalized corpse in Jet magazine.

"That shaped my consciousness as a Black man in America, changed the course of my life, and changed our nation," Rush said.

Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) noted that between 1936 and 1938, a flag posted outside of the national headquarters of the NAACP read, "A man was lynched yesterday."

"That was a solemn reminder of the reality Black Americans experienced daily during some of the darkest chapters of America's history," said Booker, a bill co-sponsor along with Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and Rand Paul (Ky.), who opposed a similar measure in 2020. "Used by white supremacists to oppress and subjugate Black communities, lynching is a form of racialized violence that has permeated much of our nation's past and must now be reckoned with."

"Although this bill will not undo the terror and fear of the past, it's a necessary step that our nation must take to move forward."

National Newspaper Publishers Association reporter Stacy M. Brown contributed to this article.



White

Follow The Post on social media



@thecharpost



The Charlotte Post



thecharpost

# North Carolina fails students with disabilities

Continued from page 1A

After one meltdown during the 2017-2018 school year, Daniel received a three-day suspension for hitting his teaching assistant.

Sherry Attaway said this outburst happened because Chapel Hill High repeatedly failed to follow laws that protect students with disabilities. This caused Daniel to have more frequent, severe meltdowns - and violated his educational rights, she said.

"They effectively got a warm body in the classroom with zero experience and zero training," Attaway said. "And I was super furious."

Evidence suggests that stories like Daniel's are widespread.

North Carolina's students with disabilities were disproportionately disciplined in the 2017-2018 school year. This is the most recent year for which data is available from the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection.

Compared to children without documented disabilities, North Carolina's students with disabilities were more than twice as likely to be expelled. They were more than twice as likely to be transferred to alternative schools. And they were almost three times as likely to receive multiple out-of-school suspensions.

A bird's eye view hides more severe disparities within individual schools. Consider Glenwood Elementary, another Chapel Hill-Carrboro City school. This school's students with disabilities were more than 24 times as likely to receive at least one out-of-school suspension.

Is disproportionate discipline legal?

But is disproportionate discipline unfair? Many commonly documented disabilities, such as ADHD, are associated with poor impulse control and trouble paying attention. If students with disabilities misbehave more frequently, that could explain disproportionate discipline.

But students with documented disabilities are legally protected from certain disciplinary measures. Students that a school could have reasonably suspected of needing documentation are also protected, said Barbara Fedders, a law professor at UNC-Chapel Hill. Fedders also directs the school's Youth Justice Clinic, where her students represent young people in delinquency proceedings and school suspension appeals.

Students with documented disabilities have either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan. Almost 14 percent of North Carolina's public school students had one of these plans during the 2017-2018 school year.

The statutes covering these plans say schools must provide students with a "free, appropriate public education" in the least restrictive environment possible. Essentially, because students with disabilities have unique needs, they need extra support, which is explained in their IEPs or 504 plans.

Once these plans are formalized, schools must provide the support detailed within them. If they don't, the law says they're discriminating against a student because of their disability.

Students with disabilities are often protected if a behavior that gets them in trouble is demonstrably caused by their disability, Fedders said. If this is demonstrated, students with disabilities usually can't be expelled, transferred to an alternative school or suspended out-of-school for more than 10 days total each school year. Offenses related to drugs, alcohol or weapons are exceptions.

Students with disabilities are also guaranteed a review process that determines whether their behavior was related to their disability. Or a school's failure to follow

their IEP or 504 plan.

In North Carolina, schools aren't required to complete this process for suspensions lasting under 10 days, like the one Daniel received. Only a few districts let students appeal these short-term suspensions.

Short-term suspensions also aren't considered when the N.C. Department of Public Instruction identifies schools that disproportionately discipline students with disabilities.

The state is aware that students with disabilities are disciplined at higher rates, said Sherry Thomas, director of the department's Exceptional Children Division. This division provides technical assistance and equity-based training for schools with significant discrepancies. These schools suspend for more than 10 days annually or expel students with IEPs at 2.5 times the rate of students without IEPs.

Students who only have 504 plans are not included in this data - weakening its ability to fully assess disproportionate discipline. More than 26,000 students statewide had 504 plans in the 2017-2018 school year.

Why schools struggle to fulfill students' needs

Failing to implement an IEP or 504 plan can aggravate a student's disability, making them more likely to act out.

"Worst case scenario, they've been labeled a troublemaker," Fedders said. "They've accrued a disciplinary record that will follow them for the rest of their school career. They feel stigmatized. It now becomes harder for them to function with their peers because they feel different from everyone, and they feel singled out for behavior that they don't really feel they can control."

It's a lose-lose situation that can lead schools to get involved in oftentimes tense administrative and legal procedures, Attaway said. Parents say this could be avoided if schools just implemented IEPs and 504 plans. So, why don't they? Many schools have under-trained staff.

When Daniel gets frustrated, certain activities calm him down. It helps to take him for a short walk, give him quiet music time or let him sit on a bean bag chair and rest his eyes.

Daniel's behavior intervention plan (BIP) explains these activities and how they help him. BIPs specify actions to improve any inappropriate behaviors that interfere with a student's education - not just those caused by a documented disability. Any student can get a BIP.

For students with documented disabilities, BIPs become part of their IEPs or 504 plans, which makes them legally binding.

Being unfamiliar with a student's BIP makes it hard to provide education that isn't unfairly restricted by their disability, Attaway said.

Daniel's behavior quickly started changing when he returned to school after winter break in 2018. Attaway noticed because of his daily communication notes, which summarize his behavior and mood. She requested this accommodation because, being nonverbal, Daniel can't tell her if he's upset.

Daniel's notes said he was agitated, moody and pushy, up to three days weekly.

When Attaway communicated with Daniel's teaching assistant about this, she asked if they had read Daniel's BIP. They had no idea Daniel had one, Attaway said.

In the days leading to Daniel's suspension, Attaway repeatedly emailed his assistant principal, expressing concerns about understaffing and a lack of training.

"For example, if I talked to her on Jan. 3, she said, 'Oh, we have training scheduled for the 15th,'" Attaway said. "But from now until the 15th, people are working with my kid that are not trained, and they don't know how to do his BIP."

When given the opportunity to comment on or refute Attaway's story via email, a school system spokesperson said he did not feel confident they could get someone relevant to speak on this topic.

Daniel's school didn't hire a permanent adaptive curriculum teacher for the rest of the school year. But many days, there was also no substitute teacher. Daniel's teaching assistants were fully responsible for a classroom of students with profound disabilities, Attaway said.

Teaching assistants don't need a degree in education or special education to work with students with disabilities. They don't need an undergraduate degree at all, according to the school system.

They need roughly four semesters of college credits, or a combination of seven credits in "core subject matter" - which includes reading, math, science and social studies - and a passing score on a test that measures skills in reading, locating information and math.

Although training and experience working with children with disabilities is also required, that training isn't always completed on time, Attaway said.

Even if training is completed, it can't compensate for understaffing. Daniel's IEP says his classroom must have enough teaching assistants that he has his own, guaranteeing one-on-one attention. That did-

n't happen during 2018 - an IEP violation that contributed to serious consequences.

"Completely crying his eyes out." A serious meltdown

One day, Daniel's assistant principal called Attaway. She said that Daniel repeatedly hit his teaching assistant, and she needed to pick him up because he was suspended. When Attaway reached Daniel's classroom door, she peeked through its window and saw her son alone with his teaching assistant.

Daniel was having a meltdown, crying, waving his hands and slapping things. Then Attaway saw Daniel's teaching assistant yank his hands down to his sides, physically restraining him. As Attaway tried opening the door to reach her son, a teacher from another classroom blocked her path.

She wouldn't let Attaway through to see Daniel. Instead, she made her go to the assistant principal's office.

The assistant principal and this teacher tried talking to Attaway about how Daniel's behavior was out of control. Attaway said she was too angry to talk coherently. She refused to answer their questions and repeatedly asked for her son.

"Where is Daniel? Give me Daniel now," Attaway said.

When Attaway returned to Daniel's classroom, he was still distressed.

"I open the door and Daniel is in a bean bag chair by himself, and just completely crying his eyes out," Attaway said. "My son has never, in his whole entire life, ever had this experience in school. He was full-on crying, melting down, just overwhelmed. And it took me probably, 15 or 20 minutes to calm him down. Because I was hugging him, and I was rubbing his arm, and like 'I'm Mom.'"

What could change, and

who has the power?

Preventing situations like this should start with giving staff better pay and more training, Fedders said. North Carolina's special education teachers earn, on average, no more than around \$54,000 annually, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Teaching assistants make less, earning on average no more than \$33,000 annually or \$15.87 hourly. In North Carolina, that isn't a living wage for any household with children, according to M.I.T.'s Living Wage Calculator.

There's little incentive to pursue a degree or extended training for such a low-paying job. This makes it difficult for schools to find properly trained staff. They often settle for what they can get.

But paying teachers more would require substantial increases in state education funding. North Carolina has had one of the country's largest decreases in inflation-adjusted average teacher salaries since 2000.

In the absence of statewide changes, who is responsible for addressing disproportionate discipline?

"If you talk to anybody from the district, from the school, from the classroom level they will all point to each other and say, 'It's their fault,'" Attaway said. "So it's a systemic problem throughout the district, where there is just no accountability."

But principals and school boards can unilaterally make decisions that reduce disproportionate discipline and protect students with disabilities.

The Guilford County School Board did this by allowing students to appeal short-term suspensions. McDougle Elementary, another school in Orange County, did this by adopting restorative justice practices - an alternative to punitive disciplinary meas-

ures like suspensions. No McDougle Elementary students received out-of-school suspensions during the 2017-2018 school year.

But these improvements might be happening because of something unique to places like Chapel Hill and Guilford County.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools has knowledgeable parents who know their legal rights, Fedders said. Orange County, home to Chapel Hill, has the third-highest median income in the state.

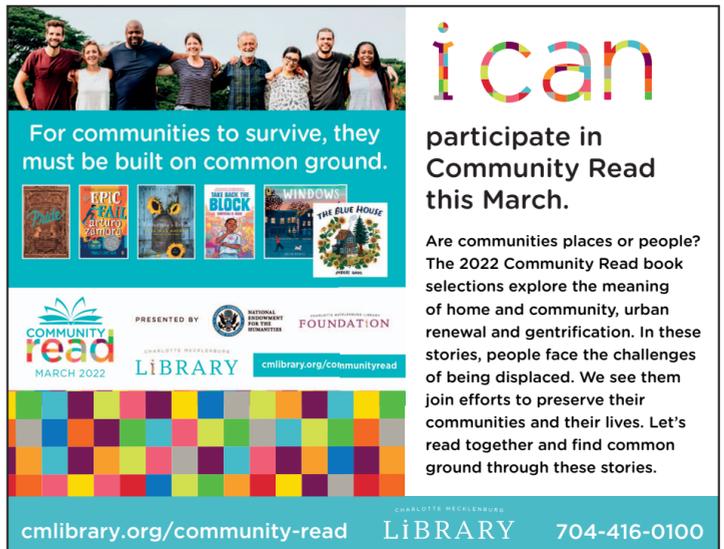
Guilford County's median income is higher than over three-quarters of North Carolina counties.

Employers such as UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. A&T State University also attract people with advanced degrees, who can combine their resources to advocate for their children.

Attaway likely wouldn't have been able to help Daniel without leveraging certain financial and social resources. She is the school representative coordinator for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools' Special Needs Advisory Council, a group that advocates for the district's students with disabilities. Attaway said her "mom friends" from SNAC provided support and information when Daniel faced challenges at school.

After Daniel was suspended, Attaway also tapped an attorney, who contacted his school to request personal files. The school and the district almost immediately organized a meeting to rewrite Daniel's BIP, which between 15 and 20 people attended to provide input.

Daniel was not invited back to school until this group perfected his BIP and made sure everyone was properly trained to follow it. When asked what their incentive was, Attaway's response was blunt. "Me not suing them," she said.



**i can**

participate in **Community Read** this March.

Are communities places or people? The 2022 Community Read book selections explore the meaning of home and community, urban renewal and gentrification. In these stories, people face the challenges of being displaced. We see them join efforts to preserve their communities and their lives. Let's read together and find common ground through these stories.

For communities to survive, they must be built on common ground.

COMMUNITY read MARCH 2022 LIBRARY

PRESENTED BY NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES FOUNDATION

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG LIBRARY

[cmlibrary.org/community-read](http://cmlibrary.org/community-read) 704-416-0100

## Vibrant Senior Living in All Seasons



Weather won't disrupt your day at Windsor Run, the premier senior living community in Matthews! Enjoy independent living, **plus amenities to help you stay active and secure.**



Get your **FREE** brochure!

Call 1-877-508-7364 or visit [WindsorRunCommunity.com](http://WindsorRunCommunity.com).



**Windsor Run**  
BY ERICKSON SENIOR LIVING™

Matthews  
[WindsorRunCommunity.com](http://WindsorRunCommunity.com)

## The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

Gerald O. Johnson | CEO/PUBLISHER

gerald.johnson@thecharlottepost.com

Robert L. Johnson | PUBLISHER/GENERAL MANAGER

robert.johnson@thecharlottepost.com

Herbert L. White | EDITOR IN CHIEF

herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Published weekly by The Charlotte Post Publishing Company Inc., 5118 Princess Street, Charlotte, NC 28269 (USPS #965500). Subscription is \$65 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Charlotte, NC. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Charlotte Post, PO Box 30144, Charlotte, NC 28230

## Deep look at NC environmental bias

By Jonathan Sharp  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

People in impoverished and ethnically divided neighborhoods across the country have been silently fighting pollution from train yards, coal-fired power plants, sewage treatment facilities, oil and gas refineries, and concrete batch mills for years without getting any attention.

Disparities in North Carolina have been exacerbated, as they have been in many other states, by discriminatory zoning and housing discrimination, as well as by the long-standing practice of concentrating polluting sources in low-income and minority communities, among other unjust policies. These disparities have heightened the risks and consequences of more extreme weather, flooding, and other climate change impacts in these communities.

The majority of the country's contaminated waste sites are located near low-income housing, according to a recent analysis by the Associated Press, and 2 million people live within a mile of one of the 327 Superfund sites that are vulnerable to climate change-related flooding, the majority of which are located in low-income and minority communities of color.

In the Southeast, notably in North Carolina and Virginia, coal ash deposits, spills, and a general anti-regulation attitude are well-known. People of color are exposed to coal ash pollution at a higher rate than the general population, which contains carcinogens such as mercury, lead, and arsenic. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 1.5 million persons of color reside in locations that are prone to pollution.

In 1978, hazardous waste was dumped along the shoulders of North Carolina highways in an attempt to avoid the imposition of costly new environmental regulations. From June through August, a group of men worked under the cover of darkness to pour transformer oil over the ground, contaminating lakes, cropland, and groundwater with harmful chemicals such as dioxin, dibenzofurans, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). In the end, 31,000 gallons of transformer oil were poured, polluting 60,000 tons of dirt over 240 kilometers of highway and contaminating 31,000 gallons of groundwater.

Following the aforementioned demonstrations in Warren County, the United Church of Christ published a study in 1987 describing how minority populations bore the brunt of the consequences of hazardous chemical plants in their areas. Approximately three out of every five African Americans and Hispanics reside in a community that contains toxic waste, confirming the intuitive conclusion that the government is more likely to dispose of hazardous items in poor and politically excluded communities.

In 2006, a report from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry highlighted that residents in Charlotte were exposed to chlorinated solvents for an unknown amount of time when drinking, showering, bathing, cooking, and other household tasks due to illegal waste disposal methods. The report found that chlorinated solvents found in drinking water wells greatly surpass drinking water requirements, with PCE, TCE, cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (cis-1,2-DCE), and vinyl chloride being the main pollutants raising serious concern.

The report shows that the site was a public health hazard and residents may have been exposed to chlorinated solvents in their drinking water wells for a long time at concentrations that were too high for drinking water leading to serious health issues. A high level of TCE found in residential wells puts children at risk for non-cancer health effects like liver and kidney damage, even though the chances of these effects are very low. Residents who drink water with the maximum amount of PCE in it every day for many years may be at risk of getting cancer.

But Charlotte's hazardous waste site is one of many federal Superfund sites that will need to be cleaned up quickly. The Environmental Protection Agency stated it would get an expedited remediation schedule as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. However, throughout North Carolina there are many other Superfund sites that need to be cleaned up fast.

One other glaring example is Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps Base Camp found to be polluted with the industrial solvents trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene. An intense public debate has erupted about the possible health repercussions for former homeowners who were exposed to tainted water as a result of the water contamination. Considering that TCE and PCE are known to have toxic effects in both animals and people, determining the scope and level of exposure that happened at the base is critical to determining whether or not there would be long-term consequences on the health of former inhabitants.

Today, Black people are roughly four times more likely than white people to die as a result of pollution exposure than they are in the past. Back in 2017, The Clean Air Task Force published "Fumes Across the Fence-Line," which found that African Americans are exposed to 38% more filthy air than White Americans, and that they are 75% more likely to reside in areas that border a plant or factory than white Americans and newer studies have shown that these percentages are nowhere near decreasing.

Jonathan Sharp is chief finance officer of Environmental Litigation Group P.C., a law firm in Birmingham, Alabama.

## News about favorite NC eateries

There is good news and bad news about our favorite places to eat in North Carolina.

The bad news is that many of our favorite roadside eateries closed recently. Some could not meet the challenge of the COVID pandemic. Some closed for an assortment of other reasons.



D.G. MARTIN

Meanwhile, an updated "North Carolina's Roadside Eateries," which was ready to go to press, was put on hold by UNC Press when the pandemic began. It seemed certain that more eateries might fail.

So, what is the good news? First, many of the roadside eateries survived the COVID crisis. And secondly UNC Press has asked me to move forward an updated revision of "Roadside Eateries."

This is where you, my readers, come in. You can help.

If you have a favorite eating place that is near a North Carolina Interstate Highway, send me an email at the address below with the eatery's name, location and why you think it is a

place you'd recommend to an Interstate traveler or a North Carolina neighbor who happens to be on the road.

When you write, tell me why your restaurant is a place you would recommend—where the atmosphere and staff are cordial. And you are served barbecue or some other comfort food at reasonable prices by friendly people who are happy to have you there.

It would help if the restaurant is a well-known local favorite, but it would be even better if you have found a gem that is not famous.

To remind you of what we have lost, here is a list of the restaurants from "Roadside Eateries" that have closed and will not be a part of the new edition:

Interstate 26: Ward's Grill; Saluda.

Interstate 40: Judge's Riverside, Morganton; Smith Street Diner, Greensboro; Allen & Son and Margaret's Cantina, Chapel Hill; Toot-n-Tell Restaurant, Garner; Holland's Shelter Creek Fish Camp, Burgaw.

Interstates 73 and 74: Dixie III Restaurant, Ashboro; Hill's Lexington Barbecue, Winston-Salem.

Interstate 77: Acropolis Cafe & Grill, Cornelius, Carolina Bar-B-Q, Statesville,

The Cook Shack, Union Grove; The Lantern Restaurant, Dodson.

Interstate 85: Wink's King of Barbecue, Salisbury; Tommy's Barbecue and Captain Tom's Seafood Restaurant, Thomasville; Angelo's Family Restaurant, Graham, Bob's Bar-B-Q, Creedmoor; Nunnery-Freeman Barbecue, Henderson.

Interstate 95: Sheff's Seafood Restaurant, Pembroke, Candy Sue's Restaurant and Fuller's Old Fashion Bar-B-Q, Lumberton (Relocated to Pembroke); Saltbox Seafood Joint, Durham; Miss Maude's Café, Benson; Holt Lake Bar-B-Q & Seafood, Smithfield; Bill's Barbecue and Chicken Restaurant, Wilson; and Broadnax Diner, Seaboard.

This little list of closures brings forth so many memories. Ward's Grill, for instance, was located in Saluda's Thompson's Store, which has been open since 1890 and is worth a visit. You can follow my visit to Saluda and Thompson's at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3JYPuglU4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3JYPuglU4)

Losing Allen & Son in Chapel Hill was a personal tragedy. It was one of the last in the state to cook barbecue all night over wood coals. So was Caro-

lina Bar-B-Q in Statesville, which earned a recommendation from Charles Kuralt, even though he admitted he preferred more fat and gristle. Kuralt was a fan of eastern "whole hog" barbecue.

Nunnery-Freeman Barbecue in Henderson also had important knowledgeable fans including former Charlotte Observer columnist and barbecue enthusiast, Jack Betts. He put Nunnery-Freeman at the head of his top ten list of barbecue eateries.

I still lament the loss of Bill's Barbecue and Chicken Restaurant in Wilson and the end of Bill's massive barbecue empire that had trucks taking food to celebrations throughout the East and Piedmont.

Finally, I cannot forget the tragedy of the closing of Broadnax Diner in Seaboard, the town where Broadway's William Ivey Long hosted his family reunions and tried to make the town a support center of performances.

If these departed restaurant favorites remind you of places you would be willing share, please write me with details at [nceateries@yahoo.com](mailto:nceateries@yahoo.com)

D.G. Martin hosted "North Carolina Bookwatch," for more than 20 years.

## Steer clear of tax season scammers

It's tax season, which means scammers are out in full force looking to take advantage of hardworking North Carolinians.



JOSH STEIN

Each year, my office hears from North Carolinians struggling to file their taxes while fending off fraudsters. Tax scams put people's money and personal information at risk, but my office is here to help you avoid them. Here are some tips to help you file your taxes safely.

Guard your personal information. Identity thieves can use your Social Security number to take out loans, open credit cards, or even collect your tax refund. Remember, email is vulnerable to hackers, so avoid emailing your Social Security number or other confidential information to a tax preparer or account-

ant. If you're using a website to file your taxes, make sure your information is secure by looking for the lock icon and <https://> in the address bar.

Watch out for fraudulent tax filings in your name or business. Whenever thieves gain access to your personal information, they can use it to file taxes under your name and pocket your refund. If you receive a notice or letter from the IRS indicating that more than one tax return was filed in your name, respond immediately to the IRS employee whose contact information was provided.

Beware of scammers posing as the IRS. If you get a call from someone claiming to work with a government agency, chances are they're a crook.

Unless you have received written communication from the IRS that outlines your tax debt, the IRS is unlikely to call you to collect. Ask them for the caller's name and identification

number. Then, hang up, look up the agency's telephone number on a government website, and call the agency directly to confirm the information.

If anyone demands you make immediate payments using gift cards, money orders, or wire transfers, hang up the phone - it's a scam.

Before you use a paid tax preparer, check their credentials and paperwork. Verify that your preparer has a Preparer Tax Identification Number - without one, they can't prepare a tax return for a paying client. You can find a preparer's PTIN through the IRS tax preparers directory.

Also, check with our office at 877-5-NO-SCAM or the Better Business Bureau to find out if the preparer has any complaints filed against them. Keep in mind taxpayers making \$73,000 or less can use free tax preparation software through the IRS at [www.irs.gov/efile](https://www.irs.gov/efile).

Think twice before you

opt for an instant or rapid refund. Some tax preparers and banks offer a refund anticipation check. This is a paid service for taxpayers who don't have a bank account to use for direct deposit of their refund, or don't have the money to pay for tax preparation assistance.

There's a fee (typically about \$30) to set up the RAC system. The preparer deducts that fee, their tax preparation charges, and other fees from the eventual refund. After that, there may not be much of your actual refund left.

Tax season can be a stressful time. With these tips, you can save yourself the added headache scammers create. If you believe you have been the victim of a tax scam, contact my office at 877-5-NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at <https://ncdoj.gov/complaint>.

Josh Stein in North Carolina attorney general.

## Data reveals better mobility picture

Continued from page 1A

lying cry here for governmental and civic leaders, who were embarrassed by our poor showing. How could a city with so much apparent wealth do so poorly by its most vulnerable residents? Charlotte leaders responded with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity task force, which came up with 91 recommendations to improve economic mobility here.

Since then, the study has been updated with tax returns through 2015. And the same research team that did the original study matched the new information with census data to see how different racial and ethnic groups fared, as well as immigrants and native-born residents - information that wasn't available in the 2014 findings.

In the Charlotte area, there is more mobility when looking specifically at Mecklenburg County as opposed to more rural counties that were included in the original study, like Chester County, South Carolina.

And Mecklenburg County fares better when looking at mobility based on individual incomes instead of household incomes. The original 50 out of 50 study looked at household income.

Isabel Sawhill, of the Brookings Institution, studies economic mobility. She said she remembers seeing Chetty's color-coded map of economic mobility for all races and ethnicities.

"The first time I saw the

Chetty map - you looked at the South and the whole South looked terrible," she said. "And the first time I saw that, I thought that's got to be about race."

She said the updated data is important because it lets cities understand what groups are falling behind.

For example, the original study gave high marks to less diverse areas like Pittsburgh while areas like Charlotte that are more diverse ranked lower. The Pittsburgh commuting zone - a Census designation of connected counties - had the second-highest economic mobility in the study, but when you look closely at how different racial groups do in Pittsburgh, there is a large disparity.

If you look closely at the home counties of Charlotte and Pittsburgh, people who grew up poor and Black in Pittsburgh struggled to move up more than people who grew up poor and Black in Charlotte.

For example, in Mecklenburg County, 7.1% of Black children whose parents were in the 25th percentile moved into the top 20% based on individual income. If you look at all the counties in the study, the national median is 7%. In Allegheny County, home to Pittsburgh, it's 6.7%.

The new data also shows that Mecklenburg County's mobility rate for low-income Black residents is one of the highest rates of people moving from the bottom to the top among urban counties in the South based on individual

incomes. It's higher or the same as many of the largest urban counties that were part of the 50 out of 50 rankings. They include the home counties of Nashville and Atlanta, and several counties in Florida, such as the homes of Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa.

The mobility rate in Mecklenburg County is higher than the counties that are home to Austin, Texas, and several cities in the Midwest, such as Cleveland, Dayton, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh.

However, Mecklenburg's mobility rate is lower than the counties home to cities like Los Angeles County, 10%; Denver, 8.8%; Houston, 9.1%; Washington, D.C., 14%; and Philadelphia, 9.4%.

The updated study said that the average individual wage for Black residents who grew up poor in Mecklenburg is \$20,000. The national median for all counties in the study for low-income Black children is also \$20,000.

Mecklenburg's wage of \$20,000 is the same or higher as the counties that are home to Los Angeles, Chicago, Las Vegas, and several Midwest cities, but trails places like San Francisco (\$23,000); Seattle (\$21,000) and Minneapolis (\$22,000).

In Mecklenburg County, low-income Latinos also fared better than elsewhere. Ten percent of low-income Latinos moved into the top 20% based on individual income. The median for all counties in the study

was 9.6%. Individual income for all low-income Latinos who grew up in Mecklenburg - including those born outside the United States - was \$25,000, while the median for all counties was \$24,000.

For low-income white residents, 12% moved to the top 20%, which was the same as the median for all counties in the study. Mobility for white residents in nearby counties was much lower. Rowan County was 5.5%; Anson County was 6.3%; Lancaster County was 5.7%.

"I guess you celebrate small victories," said Teddy McDaniel, head of the Urban League of Central Carolinas. "But let's back up on that data."

He is concerned about the different rates of mobility among different races in Mecklenburg County. Again, 7.1% of low-income Black residents made it to the top income bracket, whereas 10% of Latinos and 12% of white residents did.

That gap between white and Black residents is smaller than in a lot of cities in the 50 out of 50 rankings, but it's still a sizable gap.

"You wanted to be at a place that feels fair and equitable and a place where people of all walks of life can get the best out of what they want," he said.

Mobility based on household income When you move from individual incomes to household incomes, Mecklenburg County fares

# Sports

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022



TROY HULL | THE CHARLOTTE POST

New Johnson C. Smith head coach Maurice Flowers is looking forward to the start of spring drills, which starts on March 22.

## Flowers plants the first seeds of overhauling Golden Bulls

*Spring practice, which kicks off March 22, is next step in building a new culture for football on campus*

By Herbert L. White  
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Spring cleaning is underway for Johnson C. Smith football.

With new head coach Maurice Flowers taking a more aggressive approach to recruiting players and overhauling the coaching staff, the Golden Bulls are trying to build a competitive program from the ground up. The first game is five months away, but Flowers is eager to get on the field March 22 for the first practice session.

"I'm really looking forward to it, just

extremely excited because I feel the excitement from the young men," he said. "They're excited to put their best foot forward and building a topflight program. I'm just excited because I like watching how they come to work each morning at 6 a.m. and how they come committed to getting better and it's just going to keep going as we go through spring practices."

There's a decent foundation for Flowers to work with, with nearly 70 players from last year's 1-7 squad expected to suit up for drills. They'll get acclimated

to new schemes and coaches as well as expectations.

"We've got 68 going through spring ball right now," Flowers said. "That includes a few guys that came in mid-year, but we've got over 65 that are out there going through drills, which is a great number because we're developing our culture and how we're [setting] the direction."

"We've been very pleased with our progress and the attention to detail of the young men."

The incumbents will need to be atten-

tive to compete with a flood of recruits expected on campus in August, which will transform the program's size and depth. Every position group will likely get an overhaul, especially at quarterback where there'll be a new starter, and special teams, a major problem last year. There's some talent though, such as 2021 CIAA all-rookie pick Davion Nelson, Waderek Hemingway and Tyreik Leach at running back as well as second-team all-CIAA receiver Reggie Bryant.

Please see **FLOWERS** | 6A

## What's in an MLS rivalry? Charlotte and Atlanta take the first step

By Steve Goldberg

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

ATLANTA - As an early-season MLS match, this was far from a game of serious consequence, but you would never convince the fans or players of Charlotte FC and Atlanta United of that.

The new team took Atlanta to within two minutes of a draw in stoppage time before yet another deflected goal gave United a 2-1 win Sunday at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in front of 43,055 fans.

Former MLS and USA National Team goalkeeper Tony Meola, now a broadcaster for the Chicago Fire and SiriusXM FC, says rivalries are born out of competition, who has beaten who in a playoff or cup match. This match may have not had the weight, but it certainly had the drama as it remained scoreless until a Josef Martinez penalty kick put Atlanta ahead 1-0 in the 60th minute. Six minutes later, Charlotte answered with its first goal of the season, a header by Burlington native Adam Armour off a Ben Bender corner kick.



STEVE GOLDBERG | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte FC defender Adam Armour (center) celebrates his 66th-minute goal - Charlotte's first as an MLS franchise - in Sunday's 2-1 loss to Atlanta United at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. The match was the first meeting between the two franchises, who are separated by four hours.

Just when it looked like the visitors from up the road would get a result, Jake Mulraney's shot deflected off defender Christian Makoun into the Charlotte net. It wasn't the end of the season but at that moment, was just as painful.

Upon joining MLS back in 2017, Atlanta United changed the rules on how to build a successful club. Everyone, including the league, said a soccer-specific stadium - 20-25,000 seats - was necessary. To that point, only the Seattle Sounders who play in the

same building as the NFL Seahawks, had demonstrated any success in a large arena. Atlanta United owner Arthur Blank, who was planning a new state-of-the-art domed stadium for his NFL team, felt otherwise.

In a city with a dismal reputation as a sports town, Atlanta United proved the doubters wrong. The Five Stripes, as they've self-branded, continued to fill the building, first at Georgia Tech's Bobby Dodd Stadium and since at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Please see **WHAT'S** | 6A

## MLS leverages \$25M in loans with Black banks

By Herbert L. White

herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Major League Soccer is borrowing \$25 million from Black banks as part of its drive toward economic mobility for underserved communities.

The deal is the first commercial transaction for any major sports league exclusively with Black banks, which was facilitated by the nonprofit National Black Bank Foundation. The partnership is the latest diversity

and initiative by MLS, which is made up of 28 franchises, including Charlotte FC, which joined the league this year.

"Major League Soccer's partnership with the National Black Bank Foundation is a tangible step in the efforts to close the racial economic gap in the United States, and it's the right business decision for us," MLS Commissioner Don Garber said in a statement. "As a league, we continue to increase our initiatives in support of racial justice. In

order to make a genuine impact, economic justice must be part of the equation. This transaction with a syndicate of community-focused Black banks is an important measure, and it is our hope this will raise awareness of the importance of Black-owned banks and their impact on the economy."

The loan, combined with MLS's credit rating, will grow the banks' capitalization

Please see **MLS** | 6A

## NFL teams ready to spend with QB shortage

By Barry Wilner

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

With the NFL's broadcasting rights fees skyrocketing in the near future, leading to a much higher salary cap down the road, maybe this season's free agency frenzy won't be as frenetic as years past.

Don't bet on it. Sure, the salary cap, pretty much stagnant for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact and now at \$208.2 million, is headed upward - maybe into the stratosphere - in the next few years. Still, all of that extra money is, for now, make-believe bucks. So, the spending spree we've seen every spring won't likely be disappearing

this time around.

"You want to get guys signed if you're looking for long-term deals," says Hall of Fame general manager Bill Polian. "Do it this year, when you have an argument against the agent (with less money available), though that probably will not resonate much."

Polian warns that basing new contracts on projected revenues and salary caps later on is a path filled with potholes. No deals are done in a vacuum, of course, and all sorts of factors should come into play during negotiations.

"With quarterbacks, for example, whatever is the highest deal that last happened,

the next guy wants 5 to 10% more, and that is how inflation takes place anyway," he explains. "They might smooth out the (salary cap) spikes, because it is in both sides' best interest to make it be orderly, and that has been the history of it, too."

A major part of the history of free agency, naturally, has been where the big names land. With no franchise-type quarterbacks on the market when the bidding begins Monday in the "legal tampering period," some of the top players received franchise tags: Green Bay's two-time All-Pro wide receiver Davante Adams and Tampa Bay WR Chris Godwin, for example. That leaves at

Please see **NFL** | 6A

## Va. Union ripped off by NCAA committee

Virginia Union men were ranked No. 9 in the latest Atlantic Region poll, had won 10 straight games heading into the CIAA Tournament championship game and posted a 23-6 record.

Then they lost to Fayetteville State by three, which gave the Broncos the automatic bid. The Panthers got nothing. Their best season since 2016-17, and they are sitting home by an NCAA selection committee that is so biased it's not even funny.

Since only the top eight teams in each region earn a spot in the 64-team tournament, the Broncos, who weren't ranked, knocked Union out of the tourney. However, West Virginia State got a No. 7 seed despite the Panthers beating them like a rented mule in November by 28 points. VUU also lost in double overtime to Millersville University, the No. 5 seed.

I believe the Panthers' talent scared the selection committee. VUU could have done some damage. That No. 7 seed should be theirs. And coach Jay Butler can't raise too much of a ruckus because committee members have long memories.

The more things change Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

North Carolina Central women were eliminated in the first round of the MEAC Tournament Wednesday by Norfolk State.

In five seasons under coach Trish Stafford-Odom, the Eagles have advanced to the semifinals just once.

After winning nine games in each of her first two seasons, NCCU looked to be on the rebound in 2019-20 after finishing 13-17 overall and 9-7 in the conference. The Eagles swept rival North Carolina A&T during the regular season, beat the Aggies again in the tournament, and advanced to the semifinals before COVID-19 halted the season.

Last year was a washout for both the women and men. The

Please see **VIRGINIA** | 6A



BONITTA BEST

## Flowers plants seeds of overhaul at J.C. Smith

Continued from page 5A

"We're bringing in a big class - [we've] got 38 right now - but our number will probably end up being closer to 50 once we're done recruiting," Flowers said. "So, with those young men that we are recruiting, they're going to have to come into the right type of culture. That's what we're doing right now - developing our culture and how we're going about our businesses as we carry ourselves on the field and off the field."

Flowers' goal is to build depth that can withstand injuries or inconsistent play during the season as well as replace players who leave due to graduation or transfer. A larger roster also means more bodies

at practice sessions to replicate opponent tendencies.

"The plan is to have between 110 and 120 [players], and that's pretty much the last couple of schools that I've been," he said. "At Fort Valley State this past season, we brought in 120 for training camp, and then we have what we call a school start roster, which was another 25 that we brought out ... after training camp."

"What those numbers do is that it not only just helps school enrollment, but it also helps the program and the fact that you can practice the right way. You have a first team you have a second team; you have scout teams that provide a look for the [starters]."

## NFL teams ready to spend big

Continued from page 5A

the top of the class New Orleans tackle Terron Armstead; New England cornerback J.C. Jackson and Carolina CB Stephon Gilmore; edge rushers Von Miller of the Super Bowl champion Rams and Chandler Jones of the Cardinals; and Kansas City safety Tyrann Mathieu.

Keep looking for the quarterbacks of value. They're not there.

Yet, with the importance of that position magnified even more by who made the Super Bowl - the Rams getting over the championship hump after acquiring Matthew Stafford; the Bengals getting there with a second-year QB, Joe Burrow, who looks like the next great one - there could be plenty of dollars heading into the accounts of the likes of Jameis Winston, Marcus Mariota and Mitchell Trubisky. And yes, all three have flopped elsewhere.

"No stone unturned to find that guy" is how Denver general manager George Paton described the quarterback search before the Broncos made the megatrade to get Russell Wilson from Seattle.

Pittsburgh, with Ben Roethlisberger hanging it up, must be aggressive. Not to mention Carolina, New Orleans, Houston and, after sending Carson Wentz to Washington, the Indianapolis Colts. Buyers beware.

"The wisest choice is not to throw good money at a mediocre player," Polian says. "That's much easier said by a guy no longer in it. We have a marketplace that is driven by who is out there and what the agents think they can command. You have seen every so-called expert talk down the quarterback market in the draft; I am still not sure we won't have three or four taken in the first round. The game of musical chairs will still exist. Teams will be without quarterbacks."

"There will be veteran guys who have failed in one place before but will get pretty surprising money, I would think."

Lots of teams have salary-cap tightness and must be more frugal than their fan bases would prefer. In the worst shape as the new business year approaches are five NFC clubs who are between an estimated \$45 million (Packers) and \$10-

plus million (Buccaneers) over the cap. The Super Bowl champion Rams are about \$20 million over, while the Saints are \$33 million too high and Minnesota is \$15 million above.

Big spenders could include some of the league's rising teams, with the AFC champion Bengals among them at more than \$34 million under the cap with major needs on the offensive line. Just ask Burrow about that.

Miami, which also had a winning record in 2021, has more than \$50 million available. The Chargers are up there, too, and Indy minus Wentz has the most room at just short of \$70 million.

Other than Adams and Godwin, keys to their teams' offenses, no huge stars were franchise-tagged, with tight ends the most popular position for such a move. Dallas tagged Dalton Schultz, while Miami did the same with Mike Gesicki and Cleveland with David Njoku.

Again, no quarterbacks were attractive enough there, either.

## National Hypocrisy League strikes again on Ridley penalty

By Paul Newberry

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The organization better known as the NFL moved quickly and decisively to punish receiver Calvin Ridley for betting legally on games while he was away from the Atlanta Falcons dealing with mental health issues.

Ridley will be suspended for all of the 2022 season at the very least - a far stiffer sanction than he would have received for using performance-enhancing drugs while actually playing the game.

"There is nothing more fundamental to the NFL's success - and to the reputation of everyone associated with our league - than upholding the integrity of the game," Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a letter to Ridley that may have set a new standard for irony.

If only the NFL was so diligent with other issues that affect the integrity of the game. Like the glaring lack of Black coaches.

Or the kids-glove approach to reprehensible actions by owners such as Washington's Dan Snyder.

And while we're at it, has anyone seen Colin Kaepernick lately?

Sure, the NFL is prudent to maintain a strict no-betting stance for its players involving league games, but a lot more nuance is needed with the proliferation and acceptance of legalized betting in today's society.

Look no further than the Ridley case, for which the NFL has definitively adopted the position of do as we say, not as we do.

The league has gone all-in on legalized sports betting as a way to generate millions in additional revenue, yet it still expects the players to view the activity as some sort of shady enterprise being run by modern-day Al Capones.

Apparently, no thought was given to the very real possibility of players taking the league's stance on gambling as a backhanded invitation to do a little wagering themselves.

Ridley was the second player to be nabbed in this new era, following former Arizona Cardinals defensive back Josh Shaw. They are unlikely to be the last.

The NFL could have used Ridley's case as a real teaching moment, since there was no evidence he got inside information or tried to influence the games he was betting on. Goodell also commended the player for promptly reporting for an interview and admitting he had used a legal sports app in Florida to place the wagers.

No matter.

The commish dropped the hammer.

"For decades, gambling on NFL games has been considered among the most significant violations of league policy warranting the most substantial sanction," Goodell said.

Ridley, who can't apply for reinstatement until next February, went on Twitter to insist he didn't have a gambling problem, saying he had wagered \$1,500. He clearly thought the penalty was too harsh.

If nothing else, there is no incentive for

the next player who is caught to come clean to Goodell.

"I know I was wrong," Ridley said. "But I'm getting one year."

Penalties should be lessened if there's co-operation from the offending party, as long as there's no evidence of game-fixing. Counseling should be offered. At the very least, the league needs to acknowledge that its widespread acceptance of gambling requires even more education for the players.

Meanwhile, the league that says there is nothing more important than its integrity heads into the season with just two Black coaches and another who identifies as multiracial - a long-running embarrassment for a league in which Black players comprise 70% of the workforce.

The league keeps paying lip service to the idea of increased diversity in the coaching ranks, but there has been no significant moves to ensure more minorities get a real chance.

Of course, that's right on point for a league that conducted an investigation into allegations of sexual harassment within the Washington Commanders organization - but refused to release the report.

Snyder was ultimately fined \$10 million by the league and supposedly turned over day-to-day operations of the team to his wife (wink, wink).

For a bit of context, Snyder's fine represents 0.25% of his estimated net worth of \$4 billion. Ridley's suspension will cost him all of his \$11.1 million salary for next season.

Recently, and only after feeling the heat from Congress, the NFL agreed to launch a new investigation of Snyder and the Commanders, whose offensive former name was apparently just the tip of their bad behavior.

We won't hold our breath waiting for the outcome.

Meanwhile, let's not forget that lawsuit filed by former Miami Dolphins coach Brian Flores, who alleged racist hiring practices within the league's coaching ranks. That's explosive enough, but the league should be even more concerned with Flores' saying the Dolphins offered him a \$100,000 bonus for each loss during his first season with the team in an effort to receive a higher draft pick.

If proven, that would be infinitely more damning to the league's integrity than anything Ridley did.

This seems a good time to remember Kaepernick, who was effectively tossed from the league more than five years ago for taking a knee to protest racial injustice. Adding salt to the wound, the NFL effectively commandeered the causes Kaepernick was championing and passed them off as its own.

Too bad the NHL is already taken by the National Hockey League.

The National Hypocrisy League surely fits the NFL.

Paul Newberry is an Associated Press sports columnist.

## MLS leverages \$25M in loans with Black banks

Continued from page 5A

through fees and interest earned, which translates into more capacity for new credit lines for home and small business loans in communities of color. The NBBF organized the syndication team led by Atlanta-based Citizens Trust Bank and New York-based Carver Federal Savings Bank.

Durham-based Mechanics & Farmers Bank is a member of the syndicate along with Alamerica Bank of Birmingham, Alabama; Carver State Bank of Savannah, Georgia, Columbia Savings & Loans in Milwaukee, and Unity National Bank of Houston.

"Major League Soccer has raised the bar for corporate America with this transformative partnership," said Ashley Bell, NBBF's co-founder and general counsel. "If other leagues and major corporations follow the MLS model, lives of Black families all across this country will change for the better because their local Black bank will have the capital resources to approve historic numbers of home and small business loans."

In addition to partnering with NBBF, MLS will work with 100 Black Men of America Inc., National Coalition of 100

Black Women and Black Players for Change on economic empowerment programming.

Black banks have long been an engine of economic and social mobility by providing access to borrowers to capital but have historically been hamstrung by racist policy and social customs that have undercapitalized them and the flow of credit to underserved borrowers. The lack of access to credit access has limited Black families' ability to build generational wealth through home ownership and entrepreneurship, with the Federal Reserve finding the economic gap between Black and white Americans has remained unchanged since the 1960s.

In 2020, lenders denied Black mortgage applicants at a rate 84% higher than whites and about half of Black households were unbanked or underbanked in 2019 compared to 15% of whites. Without access to financial services such as checking or savings accounts, Black families are often forced to turn to alternatives like money orders, check-cashing services and prepaid credit cards where fees can total an estimated \$40,000, according to the Brookings Institute.

## What's in a rivalry? Charlotte and Atlanta take the first step

Continued from page 5A

Of course, geography is a factor, though not to the extent of two teams competing for fans in the same market as is the case in New York and Los Angeles. But there is much more than a highway that binds these two southern cities together.

Until Charlotte joined the NBA in 1988 and the NFL in 1995, many Charlotteans - most native-born in those days - also suffered through the Hawks and Falcons (though arguably more went with Washington and Dallas when it came to the NFL).

When it comes to baseball, Charlotte is ripe with Atlanta Braves supporters. The Panthers and Falcons, coincidentally also owned by David Tepper and Arthur Blank, have been NFC South rivals for years.

Then there is the question of a rivalry that includes Nashville, who joined MLS in 2020, only a few miles further from Atlanta than Charlotte but the long side of the triangle from the Queen City.

Two-hundred and fifty miles up I-85, David Tepper poked the bear from Day 1, saying "Screw that city" during the announcement of Charlotte's entry into Major League Soccer. Atlanta's supporter section was in full voice echoing that sentiment back to Charlotte... but with a much coarser verb.

Atlanta, the first MLS team between Washington, D.C., and central Florida, had pretty much done the same thing to their

closest opponent, Orlando City. Much of it came from the supporter side as Terminus Legion and the others were eager to engage in hyping United's aspirations. Like Charlotte this season, it was all in front of them in 2017.

At the end of 2018, they were MLS champions.

"We're the kings of the South, they call themselves the Queen City, so I've been racking my brain on what we'll end up calling [the rivalry]," Atlanta president Darren Eales told MLSsoccer.com in January. "I don't like I-85 Derby, so perhaps it'll be the Royal Rumble or something like that. But we're going to enjoy having that rivalry with Charlotte and I think it's good for the league that we've got clubs coming in and pushing the envelope and I think it just speaks to the excitement there is for MLS and soccer in North America."

The first real shot was fired on March 5 when Charlotte set a new MLS attendance of 74,479 in their home opener. Atlanta held the mark of 72,548 set on Aug. 3, 2019. To that, Eales said the test will be if they can keep it up. That was the same question put to Atlanta, which has done just that over the past five years, even as their suffered over the past two seasons.

Sunday's match was just the third in Charlotte's history and, should they improve to make the playoffs in their first season as Atlanta did, their supporters will be ecstatic. A game in which Atlanta hit and Charlotte hit back was the next step in building what can be a true rivalry. Let's see if they can keep that up as well.

## Virginia Union ripped off by NCAA tournament committee

Continued from page 5A

women could barely get 16 games in due to COVID protocols, finishing 4-12 overall, 2-6 MEAC, and an early tourney exit.

This season was supposed to be different, and I'm sure there was a lot of backstage stuff going on that folks don't know about. Still, Stafford-Odom has a 40-92 record in five seasons.

NCCU officially joined the MEAC in the 2011-12 season, and women's basketball has been a joke. Football has won championships, men's basketball has won championships, baseball had won...OK, baseball didn't win any championships, but it sent players to the pros.

VUU dissed; NCCU needs a change. And most of us realize that women's basketball doesn't get the resources and scholarships that football and men's basketball do. But it's no ghetto job, either. NCCU is a top-notch HBCU, and the women's pro-

gram could be talked about in the same manner as the men's - with the right person.

Former NCCU coach Vanessa Taylor was a major success at Johnson C. Smith and seemed a perfect fit. Until she revealed her strategy of recruiting high schoolers to mold into her system for four years. Heck, that doesn't even work on the Division II level anymore. Taylor posted a 33-113 overall record from 2012-17. Her best year was 11-19 in 2013-14.

Stafford-Odom replaced Taylor and came to Durham touted as one of the best college recruiters and a former assistant to a couple of ACC coaches. But good recruiters don't always make good head coaches just like good players don't.

NCCU's new athletic director could be making his or her first hire real soon.

Bonitta Best is sports editor at *The Triangle Tribune* in Durham.



The Charlotte Post

SPORTS CHARLOTTE

Podcast with a home team advantage