

THE VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

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Mecklenburg County voters will decide the future of mass transit across the region when they head to the polls to vote on a 1-cent sales tax boost to fund billions in infrastructure upgrades over the next 30 years.

## Mecklenburg transit future rides on voter referendum

*Series will engage residents impacted by previous initiatives and look to future*

By Herbert L. White

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Mass transit is a necessity as Mecklenburg County's population surges.

The most efficient way to pay and implement for initiates - and who should bear the cost - is the subject of raging debate at the intersection of economics, race and urban development.

Is a 1-cent sales tax enough investment for infrastructure enough, or a start to accommodate a region expected to add another 600,000 people in the next 20 years? As voters weigh the possibilities of a sales tax referendum, The Post is launching a series on the state of transportation in Charlotte and the communities most impacted by mass transit.

We'll engage people who live, work and commute along light rail and bus routes and how initiatives have changed Charlotte's neighborhoods since the Lynx Blue Line launched in 2007. We'll dive into how mass transit has sparked business growth as well as gentrification in the urban core; connected neighborhoods and opened divisions over costs, service and access.

The Metropolitan Transit Commission voted in May to prioritize a 50% increase in bus service along with 43 miles of new rail service along rapid transit corridors. The referendum on November's ballot would commit Mecklenburg to billions in roadways and public transportation. If voters approve it, the local levy will

raise Mecklenburg's sales tax from 7.25% to 8.25% and generate a projected \$19.4 billion over 30 years. In a politically segmented environment, the resources are strictly local - new state or federal funding isn't likely to arrive soon, if ever.

Under the MTC plan, the upgrades would add:

- Bus stops that can be accessed by additional 450,000 people
- 2,000 new shelters, benches, and waiting pads
- Micro transit zones consisting of 18 new hubs across Mecklenburg
- 89 new buses
- 12 miles for light rail, with 10 miles for Silver Line from Charlotte Douglas International Airport

Please see REGION'S | 2A

## US pledges \$500M in new funding to HBCUs

By Herbert L. White

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The Trump administration is making new investments in historically Black colleges and universities as part of a campaign to improve education outcomes.

The U.S. Department of Education announced on Sept. 15 nearly \$500 million in new funding for HBCUs as well as tribal colleges and universities, charter schools and American history and civics programs. The money is repurposed from discretionary programs the department determined are not in the best interest of students and families.

The Education Department will make one-time investments of \$495 million to HBCUs and TCCUs and

Please see FEDS | 2A



McMahon

## Mecklenburg DSS building rename honors trailblazing social worker

By Cameron Williams

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The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services building is getting a new name.

County commissioners voted last year to rename Wallace H. Kuralt Centre on 301 Billingsley Road the Catherine M. Wilson Center. Wilson, who was born in 1924, rose through the ranks during the Jim Crow era. A Charlotte native, Wilson graduated Second Ward High School and Johnson C. Smith University before attending Clark Atlanta University for graduate studies. She went to work as a social worker in 1949 with the Mecklenburg County Department of

Social Services.

"In 1949, North Carolina was officially segregated," Commissioner Arthur Griffin said. "She had to work through and around a lot of the Jim Crow laws and issues that presented themselves during that time in history. She stayed with Mecklenburg County for 37 years and worked her way up to become their first African American program director. She was the program director for Youth and Family Services."

Wilson, who died at age 82 in 2007, will finally get the recognition she deserves.

"Myself and the county commis-

Please see MECKLENBURG DSS | 2A

## Sheriff sued by former employee

By Herbert L. White

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A former member of the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's executive team filed a federal lawsuit against Sheriff Garry McFadden.

Angelia Riggsbee was fired in November 2024 from her job as business operations director. According to the suit filed Sept. 12, she was sacked as reprisal for alerting McFadden to remedy pay disparities between a Black woman employee who earned less than white employees with less seniority and experience.

Riggsbee's suit seeks at least \$75,000, back pay and reinstatement or compensation if she isn't.

"This retaliation has shattered my life," Riggsbee said last week at a press conference with her lawyers. "Because of the sheriff, I have suffered financially, mentally, and emotionally. My 35-year career and reputation were severely damaged.

Please see FORMER | 2A



## 20 years after hurricane, FEMA's still a flashpoint

By Kevin Vaughn

HOWARD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

A somber President George W. Bush addressed the nation from Jackson Square in New Orleans on Sept. 15, 2005, while the city was still reeling from one of the most violent natural disasters in American history: Hurricane Katrina.

Two weeks earlier, the category 5 storm breached the levees in several neighborhoods due to strong winds, causing nearly 1,400 deaths and immense flood damage that displaced thousands of citizens.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency faced a mountain of criticism regarding its unpreparedness and late response to the needs of the storm. The U.S. government say they took this as a "lesson learned" — a lesson that's still being evaluated 20 years after Hurricane Katrina hit. Urged by then-Mayor Ray Nagin, nearly 30,000 people, mostly African American, congregated at the Superdome as a last resort for safety and shelter. Among them were the sick, elderly, poor and disabled.

Initially, officials promised immediate resources like food, water and medical aid from FEMA, as well as transportation out of the city.

Please see 20 YEARS | 3A



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## Region's mass transit rides on referendum

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ternational Airport to Bojangles Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium and 2 miles for the Blue Line extension from I-485/South Boulevard to Carolina Place Mall in Pineville

• 6 miles for the Gold Line extension, which stretches from Eastland in east Charlotte to Rosa Parks Place in the west

• 25 miles for the Red Line commuter rail from Center City to south Iredell County

• Silver Line rail extensions west to I-485 and east to Matthews and the Blue Line to Ballantyne if funding allows, and upgraded bus service in the interim

Referendum supporters contend the transit tax is necessary to keep pace with growth. Opponents counter the levy doesn't provide significant detail on what is included in the tax or whether it is permanent. Another concern is the tax is regressive, which means lower income people pay a greater share of the investment.

According to the National Campaign for Transit Justice, 60% of public transit riders in the United States are people of color, with Black people making up 25%, followed by Hispanics at 20%. Those rates align with the percentage of households nationally that lack personal transportation, includ-

ing 18% of Black people, 13% of indigenous Americans and 11% of Hispanics.

According to a 2024 survey by Charlotte Area Transit System, Black people made up three-quarters of bus riders, far outpacing white (11%) and Hispanic (5%) commuters. About half (48%) had a yearly income under \$50,000.

Light rail demographics show a diversity shift: 57% of commuters were Black, 25% white and 12% Hispanic. At least 43% of riders earned less than \$50,000.

Proponents contend the referendum is an opportunity for the region to address economic inequity by lowering barriers for lower-income communities. The initiative is based on the "Better Bus" model, which would put buses on 15-minute frequency schedule supporters contend would increase access and socioeconomic opportunity.

"This could serve 202,000 more people of color compared to the 40,000 it's serving right now," Mecklenburg commissioners Chair Mark Jerrell said in May. "Three hundred twenty thousand more jobs would be accessible within a half mile of the 15-minute frequency than 120,000 today."

## Former Mecklenburg sheriff's office employee sues McFadden

Continued from page 1A

I am a single mother and a grandmother, but I have been unable to secure employment - despite my skills and many years of excellent performance. This has been one of the most difficult times of my life."

Riggsbee was fired a month after chief deputy Kevin Carty resigned, alleging McFadden fostered a hostile work environment. Carty's replacement, Chris Allen, was on the job eight months before quitting, citing the same allegation against McFadden.

According to Riggsbee's lawsuit, the salary disparities she flagged could lead to lawsuits against the department based on racial and gender bias. Carty, who was chief of staff at the time, approved a request to address the matter. McFadden blocked it, the lawsuit contends.

In an interview last year with WBTV, Carty said McFadden demanded he fire Riggsbee, but refused, asserting doing so

lacked merit.

In addition to Riggsbee, who was hired in March 2024, McFadden fired another executive staff member last November - human resources director Alexis Pearson, a five-year employee of the agency. Both women reported directly to Carty. According to the lawsuit, McFadden referred to Riggsbee and Pearson as "problems" and ordered a 60-day "work plan" for Riggsbee.

Riggsbee's lawsuit contends McFadden ordered her to alter financial records, but she refused because she believed it was illegal. The conflicts with McFadden, according to the suit, resulted in reprisals and ultimately her dismissal.

"As a woman of resilience and as a woman of God, I look forward to our day in court," Riggsbee said. "When the truth is seen by a jury and the court, I believe we will prevail. ... I want to set the record straight and I want justice."

## Feds direct \$500 million in new spending to HBCUs

Continued from page 1A

addition to their anticipated fiscal 2025 funding, an increase of 48.4% and 109.3%, respectively. HBCUs will receive more than \$1.34 billion and tribal campuses over \$108 million in overall financing.

There are 105 HBCUs in the country, and North Carolina has 10 accredited four-year Black colleges, the most of any state.

"[The department is making three massive investments - redirecting financial support away from ineffective and discriminatory programs toward those which support student success," Education Secretary Linda McMahon said in a statement. "We are proud to make the largest investment in the Charter Schools Grants Program in the department's history, support American history programs that will inspire young people to be active and informed citizens and recognize Historically Black Colleges and Universities' and Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities' historic contributions to improving

education and opportunity in our country."

An email seeking comment from U.S. Rep. Alma Adams, a Charlotte Democrat and founder of the Congressional HBCU Caucus, wasn't returned. Adams, a graduate of historically Black North Carolina A&T State University and retired professor at Bennett College, an HBCU for women, represents a district that includes Johnson C. Smith University, an HBCU.

The new spending was announced on the heels of the administration's Sept. 10 announcement to end discretionary funding for grant programs to minority-serving institutions that meet racial or ethnic quotas.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer determined in July that HSI programs "violate the equal-protection component of the Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause," and the Justice Department will not defend them in court.

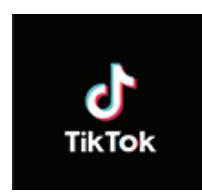
Citing "dismal educational outcomes" from the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, the Department of

Education plans to distribute grants totaling a record \$500 million for charter schools to support education choice in fiscal year 2025. That funding fulfills a commitment the Trump administration made earlier in the year.

"The department has carefully scrutinized our federal grants, ensuring that taxpayers are not funding racially discriminatory programs but those programs which promote merit and excellence in education," McMahon said. "The Trump administration will use every available tool to meaningfully advance educational outcomes and ensure every American has the opportunity to succeed in life."

The Education Department released earlier this year a notice inviting applications for awards under the American History and Civics Education National Activities - Seminars for America's Semiquicentennial program. The \$160 million in grants is part of an initiative to encourage civics education ahead of the country's 250th anniversary in 2026.

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LISA TUCKER GRIER

Catherine Wilson, a trailblazing Mecklenburg County social worker who became the first Black program director over a 37-year career, will be honored with the renaming of DSS headquarters.

## Mecklenburg DSS building rename honors trailblazer

Continued from page 1A

sion felt like it was time to put her name on the building," Griffin said. "They have been working on this for a while, trying to get the building renamed. The actual renaming event is on Sept. 27, and they are going to have a renaming program at the site there at 301 Billingsley Road."

The ceremony will start at 10:30 a.m. and light refreshments will be served.

In 1968, Wilson was the only Black social worker on

a DSS staff of 101, Griffin said, so her impact was felt by many in a time where Black voices were suppressed.

Kuralt, whose name has been on the facility since 1994, was social services director from 1945-72. He supervised the county's eugenics program in which people - usually poor and Black - were sterilized without their consent. Kuralt was on record as saying that "mentally low-income families tend

to produce the largest number of children." He claimed sterilization was key to saving taxpayers money and eliminating poverty.

Three decades after Kuralt's retirement, advocates pushed North Carolina government to compensate people subjected to sterilization. In 2012, Gov. Bev Perdue proposed a budget that included \$10.3 million in compensation.

The Charlotte Post

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JOCELYN AUGUSTINO FEMA

New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina flooded the city in 2005. "There were a lot of issues with disaster recovery, and Black Americans were treated unfairly," a former FEMA employee says.

## 20 years after Katrina, and FEMA's a flashpoint

Continued from page 1A

But for days, survivors waited, and conditions at the Superdome would gradually worsen.

Michael D. Brown, the head of FEMA during Hurricane Katrina, had ordered emergency officials not to respond to areas affected by the storm until requested by state and local authorities. Additionally, misinformation around events transpiring at the Superdome had halted supplies that were gravely needed.

"I saw then that a lot of these institutions were failing American citizens, especially the poor," says Dwight Cunningham, a retired journalist and former FEMA employee. "There were a lot of issues with disaster recovery, and Black Americans were treated unfairly."

In his address, President Bush said that "We're going to review every action and make necessary changes, so that we are better prepared for any challenge of nature [that] could threaten our people."

So, what necessary changes were made to FEMA's disaster response in the last 20 years?

In the summer of 2006, the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act was enacted, distinguishing FEMA as a prominent entity within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and forbidding discrimination based on language barrier and disability.

The act also added specialized roles such as the Director of Response and Recovery, Director of Preparedness and Director of Disability. It established ten regional offices as well, with each one having a sole administrator.

Additionally, the act stated FEMA administrators must have at least five years of emergency leadership experience, something that the currently acting administrator, David Richardson, lacks.

"FEMA was elevated in visibility and resources, with greater emphasis on leadership accountability," says Joel Scata, senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "The act's eligibility requirements for FEMA administrators are crucial for ensuring experienced emergency management professionals are in charge."

Additionally, the federal government would pour more than \$14 million into funding for levee repairs in New Orleans, but Gregory Lee, a

native and professor at Loyola University of New Orleans, says that job isn't finished just yet.

"We have not fully recovered," Lee says. "There are pockets of the city, especially in the St. Bernard Parish, where a lot of work still needs to be done."

After Hurricane Sandy in 2012, President Barack Obama signed the Sandy Recovery Act, making disaster aid easier and faster to get. The measure also encouraged projects to be done on time and within budget and gave Tribal Nations the power to request disaster declarations on their own.

Then, in 2018, President Donald Trump signed the Disaster Recovery Reform Act to set up a fund for state and local governments to receive money for disaster planning, especially if they had a recent federal disaster declaration.

Whatever progress has been made in the last two decades are now at risk due to the Trump administration's proposed cuts to FEMA, which would slice \$646 million off its spending for the 2026 fiscal year.

On May 2, 2025, the Office of Budget Management sent a budget request to DHS and declared FEMA's current grant programs "wasteful" and "woke." Additionally, it dropped \$7 million from funding in loan guarantees in non-federal dam safety projects.

"The administration's actions are setting the nation on course to experience another Katrina," Scata says.

Former and current employees wrote a letter to Congress earlier this month warning about the long-term effects of these budget cuts and how they will affect disaster relief in the future.

"We the undersigned — current and former FEMA workers — have come together to sound the alarm to our administrators, the US Congress, and the American people so that we can continue to lawfully uphold our individual oaths of office and serve our country as our mission dictates."

While lessons were learned after Hurricane Katrina, many people say that FEMA still has a long way to go in terms of true disaster relief policy reforms.

"It bothers me to see this vital agency almost go away," Cunningham says. "It's unfair. I don't think FEMA is equipped to help anybody now."

## Displacement opened new chapter for Charlotte family

By Ken Koontz

FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

In addition to destroying homes, businesses, and infrastructure in addition to leaving thousands dead and homeless, Hurricane Katrina forced tens of thousands to resettle in new places.

Many of the displaced would never return, uprooted from their homes and familiar surroundings only to end up around strange people and deep uncertainty about their futures. Attempts failed to produce official and accurate numbers for persons, families or businesses that relocated to Mecklenburg County.

Restauranteur Martine Clark and her family were among those who made that transition. Then married with two children ages 2 and 6 years old when Katrina hit New Orleans, the family shut down their restaurant, *Bite Your Tongue*, and settled down with friends in Huntersville.

They had lived in an apartment in downtown New Orleans where flood waters weren't so high and the impact on their home was not as severe as other Crescent City neighborhoods where single family homes took

major, irreparable damage. But their restaurant was not so lucky as their customer base vanished. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the Clarks opened a food delivery service.

"Charlotte people were welcoming and made our transition here easy," Clark said. "We created a new start-up delivery service, but, we also saw great potential for reviving *Bite Your Tongue*-New Orleans cuisine here. "We had opened in New Orleans in 2002 where there was great upside potential for success until Katrina."

The Clarks opened *Bite Your Tongue*-New Orleans Cuisine and moved eight times across the county. Now divorced with two adult children, Clark runs the restaurant on the Beatties Ford Road corridor with financial support from Historic West End Partners, a nonprofit that promotes business development and expansion.

The new venue boasts virtually everything Cajun from alligator tail and Po' Boy sandwiches to gumbo and other seafoods and bayou cuisines.

Clark's children are following the family's culinary arts tradition. Her daughter is learning skills under mother's watchful eye and tutoring. Her son owns a Cajun-style food truck in Winston-Salem called Bayou Eats.



Clark



BAMIDELE AINA | HOWARD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

Frankie Seabron uses a bullhorn to rally students during a walkout at Howard University.

## D.C. students and faculty protest federal occupation

By Bamidele Aina, Domenica Ellis, Bri Outlaw and Kevin Vaughn Jr.  
HOWARD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "Who keeps us safe?" shouted Frankie Seabron, activist and community organizer with the Free D.C. Project.

"We keep us safe!" Howard University students responded in unison.

In solidarity with three other D.C. universities, Georgetown, American and George Washington, hundreds of students and faculty participated in a walkout to protest the federal occupation of the District.

The Yard at Howard became a boiling pot of students, organizers and news broadcasters, all crowding around the flagpole where Seabron stood with a bullhorn.

"Raise your hand if you've seen overwhelming federal forces in our city," Seabron said after the call-and-response. Every hand went up.

Seabron then asked how many students knew what to say if stopped by authorities.

This time, no hands were raised.

For students, the moment captured what they say is the reality of living in a city without full political autonomy.

"It is now legal for you to be stopped based off of the language you speak and the color of your skin," said Funmilayo Coates, a freshman at Howard who stepped forward to join the group of speakers. "This is abhorrent behavior of a government that's supposed to protect us, but we all know that was never the case."

"I feel so bottled up in my emotions in this overwhelming time of occupation in D.C." Coates said. "I even feel targeted myself, as I am part Nigerian. I'm scared that just because of my name or if I'm caught speaking another language, I could be stopped."

Coates closed her remarks with a reading of Langston Hughes' poem "Let America be America Again." She linked the historic struggle for Black freedom to the current fight for D.C. autonomy, stating she felt the message is "still relevant today."

The verses drew nods and quiet applause from the crowd. With words of encouragement, an unnamed student urged the crowd to find strength in optimism and to have faith in our future.

"Even if this is for something that won't materialize in our present, even if it is fighting for a sunrise that I know I will never see, I still have hope — hope that maybe the next generation, the next or the next will be that change," he said.

"That hope is enough for me. For as long as a spark of hope is alive, you can use it to ignite the flame in the darkest of times. Keep hope alive."

Cyrus Hampton, a professor in the Department of Literature and Writing at Howard, joined students on The Yard.

"When y'all call on us, it falls on us — and us first and foremost — to ensure you are safe, to ensure you are supported, to ensure you are empowered," Hampton said. "I wanted to make sure I was out here with students, supporting students."

Hampton joined the walkout to fulfill his promise of protecting students who are owed "Truth and Service," a core value at Howard and its motto.

"Truth and Service that's what we're supposed to give y'all; I cannot honestly say that we do," he added. "The way we change this is by us talking together and working together."

On American University's campus, just five miles away from Howard, passing cars honked in support as a crowd of nearly 100 students and residents rallied in front of the School of Public Affairs, shouting chants and holding signs that denounced former alumna and current Mayor Muriel Bowser.

"We see how Mayor Bowser has failed to stand up against Trump's bullying," said Malini Ranganathan, assistant professor at AU's School of International Service. "We see how she is [willing] to accommodate the National Guard and ICE to oppress her own people."

The Sunrise Movement, a climate justice organization, partnered with the Free D.C. Project to organize this day of walkouts.

One organizer with Sunrise said the planning took unity and motivation from personal grievances. He and other members of the rock climbing club at American encounter the National Guard consistently while taking public transportation.

"It doesn't make us feel safe; it makes us feel scared."

The junior public health major says the federal occupation is an overarching problem that is also tied into the climate crisis, one of the reasons that the Sunrise Movement became involved in the walkout.

"A lot of big oil, a lot of weapon developers who are damaging the climate are sending these weapons to the National Guard who's coming into D.C., to Gaza, to continue the genocide of the Palestinian people."

"It fills me with a lot of hope to see this organized student body come together from cross campuses, cross-organized."

He hopes to see the conjoined campus effort continue.

Chelsea Morgan, a student speaker at the event, urged attendees to use their voice to fight against oppression.

"Washington, D.C., is the fifth most-educated city in the country," Morgan says. "That means we cannot sit back in comfort while our neighbors live in fear. We must use our privilege, our education and our voices [for] justice."

Morgan called for Congress to end the federal occupation through a vote tomorrow.

"We owe it to the next generation," she continued, "to create a world where they can learn, love and live without fear — for the streets they walk are not patrolled like battle fields, where their schools, homes and neighborhoods are spaces of growth, not surveillance."

The group took their march to one final stop on Massachusetts Avenue and Nebraska Avenue. They chanted "We want justice. We want peace. Get the soldiers off our streets" and "ICE off our campus now."

At George Washington University, students rallied near the president's house. Even after the protest concluded, students still felt strong convictions on how it impacted them.

A 19-year-old sophomore sociology major at George Washington said people from immigrant and international backgrounds on campus are fearful — especially since he said his university has made little to no effort in combating the safety of students from the Trump administration.

"I think it's important that even though GW University is in the Foggy Bottom bubble, there are plenty of black and brown communities here in D.C. who are being constantly harassed under this occupation. People don't feel safe."

The student said the main focus is to make sure that the National Guard is not deployed any longer.

"The most important thing to do is realize that we are not outnumbered; we are out organized," he said. "Here at GW, we have a sanctuary campus campaign and the point of the campaign is essentially to demand that the administration protects the students."

The GW student highlighted that despite the short notice of the protest, they were able to mobilize. This made him realize the shared effort against the occupation.

"There are people who wanna take a stand and wanna actually do something rather than just be upset about it," he said. "We can turn our frustration into actual action."

# The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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## The social contract we're all signed to

By Wim Laven

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Charlie Kirk rose to prominence by promoting a racist, sexist, and bigoted agenda under the guise of Christianity, using distorted, barroom-style arguments that masquerade as sincere debate.

Prove me wrong.

It is not an argument or debate. It is fallacy. A trick that is dressed up as logic — if I'm not right, then prove it. It looks convincing on the surface, especially to those inclined to believe (for any number of reasons), but collapses under any real scrutiny because it is not actually a developed position.

In honest debate the first step is a clearly articulated position and then the support for that position follows. Premises develop, through logic, into a conclusion. Wanting something to be true does not make it so, evidence and reasoning that reflect reality are the structure of coherent discourse; fallacy is merely performance.

It is meme thinking, present in social media threads, and it is easily recycled by trolls, AI bots, and disinformation campaigns. Charlie Kirk is not the first or last to peddle in such stagecraft. But I wish he had not been shot.

I do not care what he did or did not say about gun control, the murder of George Floyd, or empathy. We teach second graders that two wrongs do not make a right and we spend our entire lives (hopefully) with the benefits and blessings of due process.

Indeed, through Turning Point USA he had a professor watchlist, and friends of mine were harassed because of him, and I have other friends who celebrated Charlie Kirk for optimism that resonated with them.

This is truly a divided country; those who liked Kirk's "courage is contagious" Christianity and felt empowered by it did not necessarily know or subscribe to his "Black women do not have the brain processing power to be taken seriously" political positioning with DEI.

Those who know and are offended by his, "I'm sorry. If I see a Black pilot, I'm going to be like, 'Boy, I hope he's qualified'" politics, on the other hand, are not likely to know about the positivity and joy he brought to people through charity and faith.

What I'm most focused on in the moment, however, is a concern I have observed from many directions: hyping political violence, comes in waves, etc. I will take the "prove me wrong" on that front.

There is considerable evidence that violence, like disease, spreads in a contagious way. The wave phenomenon, so to speak. But the much more natural course of events—human desire is for peace—and in the timeline of the history of the species and predecessors (if we go all the way back to Lucy) only the smallest fraction—tiny slivers of humanity feature senseless killing, war, and political violence.

So, yes, there could be copycats, and revenge, and so on... but the waves subside, and this is what the evidence shows. There are many more people looking to do good—on all sides—and the focus on the bad (again, from all sides) overshadows this truth. Media—the news and everyday—operate with a negative bias, which is internalized but misses the world of good we live side by side to.

I've sat side by side with hundreds of strangers, people just like Charlie Kirk, whom I may have some political disagreements with, but much more in common. The rhetoric and pressures can trick or scare us away from this awareness. The amygdala can be hijacked and push us to fight or flight type reactions; there is no doubt that some politicians and personalities thrive on this, but they are outliers.

Cognitive science can definitively demonstrate (prove me wrong) that humans, along with a wide array of animal species, have reinforced neural pathways for harm aversion—both for ourselves and others, empathetic concern—we sometimes share in the suffering of others, and a tendency to mirror the emotions we are surrounded by. We are literally hardwired with the disposition of doing on to others as they do on to us.

I am politically as opposed to Charlie Kirk as much as it gets and I don't have an ounce of celebration for what happened to him. That is what shared humanity is; I know the pain that is losing a father or any loved one, and I would not wish that upon anyone. All the talk about hatred and rage reflects unnatural distortions and the manipulation of our natural dispositions—at our cores, we know and teach a social contract. Being kind to one another is fundamental no matter the holy book or political figures we subscribe to.

Prove me wrong.

Wim Laven, Ph.D., syndicated by PeaceVoice, teaches courses in political science and conflict resolution.

## Open letter from Black conservative

Weak people take strong positions on weak issues.

This one sentence succinctly sums up the "media appointed" leadership in the Black community. When I say "media appointed," I mean Black organizations and individuals who have been bought and paid for by radical white liberal Democrats whose raison d'être is to destroy the Black community.

All of these organizations are run by radical liberal Black Democrats, though their organizations all "claim" to be nonpartisan. Most, if not all, are tax exempt organizations who constantly violate their exemption status given to them by the Internal Revenue Service.

I have strongly urged the Trump administration to investigate each one of these radical liberal Democrat organizations for possible revocation of their tax-exempt status and yes, this includes Black churches who are total sellouts to the Black community.

Who are some of these organizations and individuals?

The National Association of Black Journalists, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Urban League, Congressional Black Caucus, National Association of Black MBAs, National Association of Black Accountants and the National Newspapers Publishers Association to name a few.

They are living in a digital world but offering analogue solutions. Their solutions are singing "We Shall Overcome;" marching on Wall Street in New York City or marching to the White House in D.C.; labeling everything as "racist" or blaming "systemic racism" for all of Black people's problems.

These radical liberal groups have all made a conscious decision to be a Democrat organization versus a "professional" organization which puts them in violation of their own bylaws!

Can you point to one accomplishment of the NABJ in the past 25 years? To prove how ineffective NABJ has become, one need look no further than how ABC News reporter Rachel Scott was thoroughly embarrassed by then-presidential candidate Donald Trump last year at their national convention.

Can you name me one thing the NAACP has done to benefit the Black community in the past 40 years? When did homosexuality or transsexualism become a Black issue? When did amnesty for illegals become a Black issue? When did coddling Black criminals become a solution for crime in the Black community?

What significant piece of economic legislation or policy that targeted Blacks has the National Urban League passed or promoted in the past 40 years?

The CBC was founded in 1969, and I challenge readers to name one meaningful piece of legislation they as a group or individual have passed since their founding.

The NNPA, which claims to represent the 200 Black newspapers, refuses to take money from Republican campaigns. Yes, you heard right. Most Black newspapers have turned me down when I offered them advertising from Republican candidates.

I will go so far as to challenge my readers to name one Black group that has secured a policy or law specifically beneficial to the Black community. The Black MBAs? The Black Accountants? The Black medical association?

Name me one Black fraternity or sorority that has positively impacted the Black community in any meaningful way post-Civil

Rights in terms of policy or legislation.

Even when radical liberal Democrats control the whole of government (White House, Senate, and House), these radical Black liberals NEVER seem to get any policy or legislation passed that benefit Blacks. I refer you to the Clinton and Obama administrations.

They each had a veto-proof Congress; and yet D.C. nor Puerto Rico received statehood. HBCUs never received any significant funding increases, especially relevant to the Department of Defense.

The homosexual community get specific things, Hispanics get specific things, white women get specific things, Asians get specific things. Blacks get "people of color" things. You have radical Black liberal Democrat "media appointed" leaders that sell out Black folks every day of the week to please their white masses.

People like Alfred Sharpton, Marc Morial, Derrick Johnson, Yvette Clarke, Roland Martin, Joy Reid, Tiffany Cross, Don Lemon, Symone Sanders, Abby Phillip, Laura Coates, Hakeem Jeffries, Jasmine Crockett, Maxine Waters, to name a few.

They do more damage to the Black community than any white guy with a hood over their face.

Donald Trump is not the problem for the Black community. Radical liberalism is the problem.

Name me one major Black city that is run by a Black mayor where any economic or social indices are positive for the Black community. I will wait.

You have Black mayors controlling major Black cities and they are all running rampant with crime, unemployment, failing schools, out of wedlock births and abortions.

Look at major cities run by Blacks like Eric Adams (New York), Brandon Johnson (Chicago), Karen Bass (Los Angeles), Vi Lyles (Charlotte), Muriel Bowser

(Washington, D.C.), Paul Young (Memphis), Brandon Scott (Baltimore), Cavalier Johnson (Milwaukee), Quinton Lucas (Kansas City, Mo.), Andre Dickens (Atlanta) and Barbara Lee (Oakland).

Beside being Black, what do they all have in common? They are all pushing radical liberal policies in their cities. Liberalism is what is destroying the Black community, not Donald Trump or racism.

As a matter of fact, the Trump administration is open for business. How do I know this? Very simple. I and many Black entrepreneurs are living witnesses.

In July, I hosted my annual minority economic summit. It is the largest gathering of conservative minority entrepreneurs in the country. It was loaded with top members of the Trump administration. C-SPAN covered the conference live for two consecutive days.

The White House asked me to bring them some success stories to the president; and that is exactly what I am doing. Expect some of these stories in the media shortly.

While these radical liberal Black Democrats are spending all of their time calling Trump Hitler, and authoritarian, a criminal, etc., Trump is simply delivering business opportunities to the small business community, making cities being failed by Black mayors safe again, engaging with the continent of Africa in meaningful ways.

What have these bought and paid for radical liberal Black people delivered to the Black community by way of legislation or policy? Absolutely nothing.

When all is said and done, there is more said than done.

Raynard Jackson is founder and chairman of Black Americans for a Better Future, a federally registered 527 super PAC established to get more Blacks involved in the Republican Party.

## Clearing out the old and their meaning

The last box is on the curb.

The house is empty and cold and dead. Next week it will be full again with other lives. But we can never go black inside again to

wander in the bookshelves, closets, and attic. We will never smell the smells of hot meals on its stove, of warm fresh clothes from its laundry room, of flowers from its garden, or of clean sheets mingled in the old blankets on its beds.

It happens to all of us when we move after being in a house for a long time. But when our parents or grandparents move to a smaller home or die — it is more than moving.

It is clearing out. Clearing out the treasures — and the junk. Deciding what's what. Finding places for these newly orphaned things. Yesterday, they were secure in the loving possession of one whose love and memories surrounded them. Each one

had its special place. Each was tied to precious people and events. Out of the house they now must go. And without the protection of the one who loved them, they are just things.

Who gets the silver service? Will anybody take this old cup from Niagara Falls? What do we do with this plaque that Dad got? Does anybody want the plate that has a picture of the old church? Who takes the pitcher that brought my mom's mint-lemon iced tea to the table? Who keeps the bell that brought us to dinner together? (Did we really eat supper together every evening?)

Who will take the books? The bookshelves in this house were such welcome places. Every book has a story to tell — some special connection to our family. All the books together were a reflection of my parents and their special interests in ideas and places and people. Books signed by the authors remember special friendships and connections. Where will they go? Where will they fit? What will happen to them if nobody saves them? What will the grandchil-

dren say if we give any of them up?

Clean out the closets. Old ties, old dresses. Suddenly my mom thinks that the Mint Museum in Charlotte will be interested in one of her dresses for its collection. She thinks that the dressmaker Mrs. Colvin was a great artist and some examples should be kept forever. We think that is a crazy idea — but we set the dress aside to humor Mom. (The Mint Museum is delighted. They want the dress. Mom is right again.)

Who will take the desk? Who will take the chest? Clear them out first. And there they all are — all over the floor. The letters. The photos. The old catalogs. Canceled checks from many years ago. Tax returns.

There are thousands of photos. How can there be so many? One of my father when he was much younger than I am today is indistinguishable from a recent picture of my son. I go into a misty dream that brings him back alive and puts the three of us together as contemporaries and buddies.

Letters. Letters. Letters.

My brother settles in with the letters between my parents. Written 50 years ago, they describe the joys and pains of bearing children, moving, living through hard times with optimism, and of loving each other. My brother is moved and cannot be pulled away. But where will these letters be stored? Who will hold them for the grandchildren?

The doorbell rings. He comes in like a character from a Greek play — to bring a conclusion to our own drama. It is the flea market man. He helps us build a pile of treasures for his bid. "I'll give you an extra \$50 for the old telephone. Maybe I can double my money; maybe not. Thanks a lot. I sure have enjoyed getting to know you folks. You're good people, and I know what you're going through."

Then he's gone. And we're finished. And the last box is on the curb. Now, the tears can come.

D.G. Martin is a retired UNC system vice president and former host of PBS NC's "North Carolina Bookwatch."

## Lack of proper clothing puts students behind

By Freda Freeman

THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

Just as schoolchildren find it hard to concentrate and learn when they are hungry, they find it equally hard to stay focused when their clothes are too small and uncomfortable, or shoes hurt their feet.

According to national statistics, about 20 million children in the United States — 2 of 5 children — are affected by clothing insecurity, meaning they do not have properly fitted, seasonally appropriate clothes that are in good condition. Clothing insecurity can lead to increased

absenteeism, poor academic performance, low self-esteem and bullying.

Triangle-based Note in the Pocket, a nonprofit organization that provides clothes for schoolchildren in kindergarten through 12th grade, is working to draw attention to this "hidden crisis." The organization designated Sept. 15 as National Clothing Insecurity Awareness Day.

"Clothing insecurity is a problem that is not discussed enough. We talk about food, and we have programs that provide food. We also have housing programs. Those are two

and made them return them. The next day, the teacher put a note in the coat pocket explaining that the coats were a gift, thus the name Note in the Pocket.

The teacher moved to Raleigh and expanded the program to include Wake County School District. The organization opened an office in Durham in 2024.

The program is now available to all Durham and Wake schools with clothes to students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. That is about 68,200 Wake students, and 31,500 in Durham.

# Sports

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Johnson C. Smith is 11-1 over the last two seasons when limiting opponents to 17 points or fewer, including three in as many games in 2025. The Golden Bulls, who are ranked 21st in this week's NCAA Division II coaches poll, take on No. 22 Virginia Union in Richmond.

## Next: CIAA game of year (so far)

*Unbeaten JC Smith (3-0) takes on Virginia Union (1-1) in a clash of nationally ranked CIAA rivals*

By Herbert L. White

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Another week, another prove it game for Johnson C. Smith.

After averting an upset at Elizabeth City State that earned them a spot in this week's AFCA Division II coaches poll, the No. 21 Golden Bulls (3-0) turn their attention to Virginia Union (1-1, No. 22) in a clash of nationally ranked squads. CIAA coaches picked the Panthers first in their preseason poll while the Golden Bulls were second.

The game counts in the conference standings for JCSU while it's not for Virginia Union due to the CIAA including

only the final seven conference games in its standings. Smith's win at ECSU, as a result, is considered a nonconference game.

Virginia Union, which lost to Edward Waters 41-38 last week on Ryan Gagne's 35-yard field goal on the final play, rallied from a 28-17 deficit at the end of the third. The Panthers are paced by running back Curtis Allen, (332 yards rushing, four TDs in two games) rushed for 151 yards and two touchdowns on 24 carries against Edward Waters.

JCSU remained unbeaten with a 21-17 win at ECSU, but it wasn't easy. After

falling behind 14-3 in the second quarter, the Vikings reeled off a pair of touchdowns to go ahead midway through the third quarter only to have the Golden Bulls rally on Kelvin Durham's 62-yard scoring pass to Reggie Daniel - his lone catch of the game - with 3:51 to play.

JCSU found nearly found out the peril of looking past a winless opponent. ECSU (0-3), which lost previously to Chowan (28-24) and FCS Hampton (27-20) were on the verge of

snagging an upset win until Durham and Daniels connected to flip the result. Statistically, the Golden Bulls and Vikings were relatively even with JCSU compiling 358 yards compared to the Vikings' 298 and the Golden Bulls held possession for 30 minutes, 29 seconds.

Red zone efficiency was an issue for JCSU, which turned one of four trips inside ECSU's 20 into a touchdown. The others resulted in fourth down failure,

Please see CIAA | 6A



Daniel

Durham

## It's a familiar spot for Hough, still No. 1 in Magnificent Seven

By Herbert L. White

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Another week means another shift of the Magnificent Seven rankings.

Hough High is still first among Mecklenburg County high school teams, but there's more movement behind them as West Charlotte reclaims the No. 2 spot followed by Palisades. Independence moved from

sixth to fourth and Mallard Creek is back after a week away. Chambers and Myers Park slid to sixth and seventh, respectively while Ardrey Kell, No. 7 last week, fell out after a 28-27 loss to South Mecklenburg.

1. Hough (4-0, first). You're surely accustomed to seeing the Huskies atop the rankings, and last week's 28-21 win against Mooresville won't disrupt Hough's win

streak. Next up is a home date against non-conference opponent New Bern (3-1).

2. West Charlotte (2-2, fourth). Providence was but a 42-7 speed bump to the Lions on their way to opening conference play. West Mecklenburg comes to campus for a westside rivalry game.

3. Palisades (3-1, fifth). Need proof the Pumas are the real deal? Last week's 14-7

win against Chambers goes a long way. Independence will be a challenge as well in what might be the program's biggest home game in its four seasons.

4. Independence (3-1, sixth). The Patriots rolled Lake Norman 26-7 by showing balance on both sides of the ball. They'll need more of that to handle upstart Palisades on

Please see HOUGH | 6A

## Streaking Crown playing like royalty in chase of history

By Herbert L. White

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Everything's going right for Charlotte FC. The Crown tied Major League Soccer's consecutive wins streak at nine with a 3-0 result against Inter Miami despite the sideline absence of coach Dean Smith, who was suspended for yellow card accumulation. Charlotte can set a new standard Sept. 20 with a win at New York City.

Saturday's win, coupled with New York Red Bulls' loss, clinched a third straight postseason appearance for Charlotte (17-11-2), whose 53 points trails only Cincinnati (55) and frontrunner Philadelphia (57) in the Eastern Conference. The top four teams earn home pitch advantage in the first round.

"Eleven games ago at halftime, down 3-0 at Chicago and they've turned themselves

Please see STREAKING | 6A



TROY HULL | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte FC striker Idan Toklomati slams the ball past Inter Miami goalkeeper Oscar Ustari for the second of his three goals in a 3-0 win Sept. 13, 2025, at Bank of America Stadium. The win was Charlotte's ninth straight, tying the MLS record.

## First win in hand, Charlotte 49ers and Albin look for more

By Cameron Williams

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Winning feels good — especially on your birthday.

For Charlotte 49ers (1-2) coach Tim Albin, that's what happened in a 42-35 win against FCS opponent Monmouth on his 60th birthday.

"There was one point late in the fourth quarter where... some of the [players] were looking around and it was a tight game," Albin said, "and I said, 'Hey guys, this is the most exciting birthday I've ever had.' It got a lot of laughs."

Charlotte quarterback Conner Harrell took another step in the progression Albin wanted him to take by setting the 49ers' all-time passing completion percentage record with 86.7%. He threw for 382 yards, three touchdowns and an interception. He also carried the ball 13 times for 47 yards and two scores.

Harrell led the game-winning scoring drive in the fourth quarter with a 55-yard pass to E. Jai Mason followed by a 2-yard run. It was Harrell's second game-winning drive, the other coming when he was at North Carolina in 2024 against Minnesota.

Even after a performance like Saturday's, Harrell was focused on getting better.

"I'm blessed for the win," he said. "I am thankful for the win... but we have Rice on Thursday, and we had two or three turnovers there in the first half. It is going to be hard to win a lot of games doing that, so we are trying to figure out how I can be better for the next game."

Albin said he feels like he keeps repeating himself when talking about Harrell, but he again showed grit.

"I believe it was the first drive of the third quarter," Albin said. "[Harrell] was stinging a bit from that interception [late in the second

quarter] but if my memory serves me correctly, that was the first drive of the third quarter that he finished the great [touchdown] run. I think he just said, 'OK, I'm settled, it's a game, now let's just go execute the offense.' And he did a pretty damn good job of it."

Mason had 10 catches on 10 targets for 228 yards, which is third most all-time behind Austin Duke who has two games with more yards. Mason was also on the receiving end of two Harrell touchdown passes.

"It did feel good to make the most of my opportunities," Mason said. "I just know that our coaches preach to just make the play when your number is called. So, that is something that I wanted to keep doing is just make the play."

Albin said after the loss to Appalachian State that he wanted more explosive plays

Please see FIRST | 6A

## Throw flag on fast and loose stats

By John McCann

THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

What we can't say was on display on opening night in Chapel Hill's Kenan Stadium was the same of North Carolina Tar Heels who never have been able to play defense.

That's a lazy take.

There was an expectation from Las Vegas oddsmakers of a competitive game that would have the Tar Heels slow boil the Texas Christian Horned Frogs before losing by a field goal. And North Carolina certainly started out scalding, in 3:59 of the game's opening drive, going 83 yards in seven plays for a touchdown. But the Horned Frogs hopped out real quick and steamed the Tar Heels 48-14, generating lazy talk about North Carolina not getting beat by that much since the Miami Hurricanes waxed them 47-10 in 2018.

Uh, why do we do this — trotting out trivial stats, connecting minutiae? For real, why do we do it? What does it matter that Texas Christian put up the most points in a season opener against any North Carolina team in the history of Tar Heels football?

It doesn't matter. But it is redeemable, making the case for penalizing what really should be illegal contact against defenseless data points.

Putting stuff in historical context is common in sports journalism. Nothing wrong with

Please see THROW | 6A



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

Johnson C. Smith running back Bobby Smith (14) is making the most of his opportunity to contribute with extra playing time with starter Kamarro Edmonds out with a leg injury. Smith led the Golden Bulls with 66 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries last week in a 21-17 win against Elizabeth City State.

## CIAA rivals JC Smith, Va. Union square off

Continued from page 5A

and a missed 29-yard field goal try. The Vikings made good on both possessions inside the Golden Bulls' 20.

### Magic number on defense

For Smith, it's 17. That's what Elizabeth City mustered, and it's a season-high allowed by the Golden Bulls, who are 11-1 over the last two seasons against teams scoring 17 points or less. The exception is Livingstone, which beat JCSU 15-10 in last year's finale.

The Golden Bulls limited ECU to 298 yards, but 91 came on a Christopher Perkins pass to Ka'Trez Bracey to cut the Vikings' deficit to 14-10 in the second quarter. Otherwise, JCSU forced Elizabeth City State to earn everything.

Kristian Eanes paced the Golden Bulls with six tackles and Jalen Alexander was in on a sack for the third straight game. As team JCSU racked up three sacks and six tackles for loss against the Vikings.



Alexander

### Offense is riding with Durham

Durham turned in another strong performance, hitting 18-of-24 passes for 198 yards and the game-winning score to Daniel. He added 18 rushing yards on four carries.

Durham continues to spread the ball, with six Golden Bulls catching at least one pass and four grabbing at least two. Biggie Proctor led the way with seven receptions for 35 yards while running backs Antonio Crim and Avante George caught three for 53 and two for 23 respectively.

### New backs contribute

With Kamarro Edmonds out (leg), there are more opportunities for Golden Bulls backs to rise to the occasion. In addition to his work as a receiver, Crim, a transfer from UNC Pembroke in his first season at JCSU, showed his worth with four carries for 54 yards and a touchdown. His 56-yard gallop in the first quarter put JCSU in front 7-3.

Bobby Smith led JCSU with 66 yards rushing and a score on 16 carries.



MATT LACZKO | THE CHARLOTTE POST

The Charlotte 49ers delivered Tim Albin his first win as coach with a 42-35 decision against Monmouth on Sept. 13, 2025.

## First win in hand, 49ers and Albin look for another

### Continued from page 5A

from Charlotte's receivers. Javen Nicholas responded with 122 yards against North Carolina and now Mason for better than 200.

"I think probably the most important thing is hopefully we'll get some favorable boxes," Albin said. "Not that we just run the ball every time, but you know that eight hat is going to have to know where those guys are. I hope that we can use the production in those two receivers and really some of the tight ends. Gus [McGee] had a big catch down there going towards Tryon, and then Joey [Barnes III], that fourth down catch (in the fourth quarter). I think those things are going to loosen the

box a little bit. It's going to help in there and the offensive line in just getting some favorable number counts."

Charlotte, which had a combined 97 rushing yards against Appalachian State and North Carolina, reeled off 181, led by sophomore Rod Gainey Jr., with a career high 74. His previous single-game best was 29 yards in 2024.

"The running game is important," Albin said. "The numbers [in the first two games] may be a little skewed because of the snap [issues]. ... But, after the first game one of the biggest things we talked about was pad level. ... The run game is important, and everyone knows why. We got better and we're going to take the positives."

## Throw flag on fast, loose stats

### Continued from page 5A

that. But for the love of Butch Davis, Larry Fedora and Mack Brown, what do the teams of those former North Carolina head coaches have to do with Bill Belichick's? Nothing, but that is the comparison getting made when crunching stale numbers.

Comparing, say, Brown's teams during his first stint as North Carolina's head coach with the squads of his second go-around makes sense. It's putting apples beside apples — sizing up his assistant coaches and recruits from 1988-1997 with his assistant coaches and recruits from 2019-2024.

But flag on the play for looking at the late Carl Torbush's defensive coordination under Brown in the 1990s and comparing that to what it was like when Fedora, from 2012-18, had revolving doors on the defensive coordinator's office. It's different players, different schemes, different circumstances. Fedora found a way to have success despite suiting up as the cleanup man navigating NCAA sanctions after Davis was fired when his players got caught accepting improper benefits and taking fake classes.

So, here's North Carolina in 2025 with a gang of new coaches and 70 new players

associated with that Monday night creaming, yet it's still, "Well, the Tar Heels never have been able to play good defense. Why, even when Lawrence Taylor played linebacker for North Carolina in 1979. ..."

Acknowledging the pattern of porous North Carolina defense over the years is one thing. But connecting historical dots to suggest there's something in the Old Well precluding the Tar Heels from getting stops deserves a holding call for illegal use of the stats.

Sportswriter John McCann has covered the North Carolina Central and North Carolina athletics.

## Hough No. 1 in rankings

### Continued from page 5A

5. Mallard Creek (3-1, unranked). The Mavericks earned their way back into the rankings with a 20-13 win against surprising Myers Park. Things won't get easier with a road game against 4-0 Cardinal Gibbons awaiting.

6. Chambers (3-1, second). The 14-7 loss to Palisades in a defensive struggle at home is hard to take. Ardrey Kell is the Cougars' opportunity to get right.

7. Myers Park (3-1, third). The Mustangs tumbled from the unbeaten ranks with a seven-point loss to Mallard Creek but look like they'll be heard from as the conference season unfolds. First, though, is a nonconference game at Charlotte Christian.

### West Charlotte star transfers to Weddington

West Charlotte High defensive back and Duke football commit K.D. Cotton is transferring to Weddington.

Cotton, a senior, announced via social media on Friday afternoon of his intentions.

West Charlotte, ranked fourth in the Post's Magnificent Seven rankings of Mecklenburg County public schools, is 2-2 and Weddington is 3-1.

Cotton has not played for West Charlotte yet this year, rehabbing an injury. No announcement has been made when he will suit up for the Warriors.

Post reporter Cameron Williams contributed to this report.

## Streaking Crown playing like royalty in chase of MLS history

Continued from page 5A

"I feel amazing," Toklomati said. "I cannot explain my feeling right now. After I scored two, we get a penalty, and I look at [teammate Wilfried Zah] and he says, 'You want a hat trick?' I look back at him, like 'Oh my God, he's an angel.' I looked at him like an angel. After I scored the hat trick, I almost lost my mind. It was the best feeling I ever had."

Toklomati has been on a roll since moving into the starting lineup in June when Patrick Agyemang was called to U.S. national team duty. Since then, Toklomati has had a game-winning goal or an assist in six straight matches, with Saturday's hat trick against MLS's highest-profile club his most dynamic result.

"First of all, that is the best moment and best team to play against to score a hat trick," he said. "We are playing well and standing on nine games in a row when we win. I cannot even explain the feeling."

Toklomati had plenty of help in building a historic stat line. Passes from Kerwin Vargas and Ashley Westwood led to his first goal while Brandt Bronico and Zaha assisted on his second. He buried a penalty kick to close the assault.



The Charlotte Post

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