



# Faith & Soul

News Magazine

*Refreshing the Mind, Body and Spirit!*

**Ed Johnson:**  
Fayetteville's  
First African-  
American  
Mayor

**Jim Pace**  
Makes A Run  
For Congress

**18TH ANNUAL  
BLENDED  
HERITAGE  
CELEBRATION**





# Faith & Soul

News Magazine

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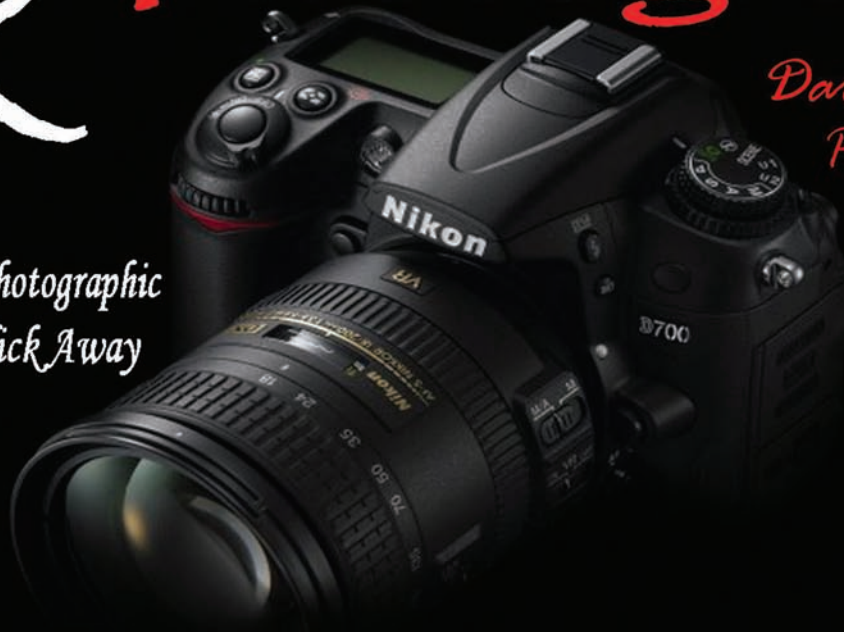
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### BREAKING NEWS AS WE GO TO PRESS

**Pinewood Studios Fayetteville:** Amid recent news reports that Pinewood Studios Corporate is considering the possibility of selling the Fayetteville facility in order to expand their London base brand. This is not unusual for a company its size to look at all options to grow their organization.

Local investors indicate that the company is moving ahead with planned projects.



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## MELINDA'S NOTES

Joel 2:28-29 (KJV)

<sup>28</sup>And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: <sup>29</sup>And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

**G**od Bless New Year! Thank each and everyone for a successful 2016. We are excited to serve you in 2016. This is the year for us to Create New Dreams and Visions. God our Creator, created us to create. Join us as we teach the younger generation how to use their God given talents and become a creator. S. Truett Cathy, Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, Tyler Perry, and many others are creators. Yes, we each face lots of challenging situations; but being a creator of the solutions to those situations is a Blessing.

We humbly ask for your support as we expand our mentoring program. Buy a subscription today. This will allow us to mentor a grade school, middle school, high school, or collegiate student. All of the students we have mentored have bachelor's degrees, many with masters, and some with PhDs. They are taught to serve their community and teach others. Our collegiate students traveled to President Obama's inauguration as well as covered major events on a national, regional, and local level. One of our students worked as an assistant to the President of Sri Lanka. To purchase a subscription, go to: [www.faithandsoul.net](http://www.faithandsoul.net)

Many of us have made resolutions every year for a New Year and a New Year! By the end of January, many of us struggle and before the first three months are over, many of us have dropped or forgotten the resolutions.

In the bible: God talks about dreams and visions. A man shall have dreams and visions. A man without a vision shall perish. Though we follow the culture of resolutions, having dreams and visions line up with the word of God. Be steadfast with your dreams and visions. Build your team to see your dreams and visions come to pass. Read *Faith & Soul News Magazine: Refreshing: Body, Mind & Spirit!*

In this issue, you will get to know Fayetteville's First African American Mayor Ed Johnson, Information about Flint Ridge Baptist Church 150 Years History Event, Jim Pace Running for U.S. Congressional Seat, Reflection On A Calling, Tax Tips, Easter Sunday Celebration, Hot Chilli Recipe, Atlanta Dream Games, Pastoral Alliance In Lafayette, 18th Annual Blended Heritage, Beauty Tips By Joy and Let It Sing. We pray that you



will be blessed by this FASMG issue and share FASMG with others. Subscribe and Advertise Today! It is our blessings to serve you! Enjoy!

Blessings, Peace and God's Love,

*Melinda C. Sylvester*

Melinda C. Sylvester  
Publisher  
Faith & Soul News Magazine



### Family Prayer

Shared by Theresa Calais

OH GOD, BLESS our family, all its members and friends with many gifts of love. We need you every day, to keep us safe from harm, to heal the hurts we cause, to begin together afresh. Help us to be kind and patient with each others' burdens and cares and not to miss the wonderful gifts that together we share. Bless our family, gracious God. Bless us, everyone. For God you know our hearts, you made us all. Amen.



# 13th Annual African American History Parade Set for February 28th, 2016 in Lafayette

by Je’Nelle Chargois



Parades in southwest Louisiana and good times go together like a hand and a glove. Lafayette's African American History Parade also endeavors to entertain, but with a purpose. "We want to present a significant message that there is still hope to move our community forward if we all just come together and work as one," said Jenelle Chargois, President of the African American Parade and Gala Committee.

The 13th annual African American Parade rolls down the streets of Lafayette, Louisiana beginning at 2:00 pm on Sunday, February 28th, 2016. It is the culmination of a month-long celebration of Black History events.

As in previous years, a historically Black College/University band will march in the parade. "Each year we try to have a different college band," Chargois said. "As part of the negotiations for these schools to perform, they must agree to consider local high school students for scholarships to their school."

Last year's band, Alcorn State University, offered eleven local students scholarships to attend the school. Chargois is hoping for the same success with this year's band, Texas Southern University.

This year's theme is "Taking a Historical Look at CEEP (Culture, Economics, Education, and Politics)," which, according to

Chargois, are the essential components for community growth. The CEEP concept was developed by the late Civil Rights and Community Advocate Alfred McZeal many years ago. Chargois said McZeal believed that these four elements are essential to human progress, which makes life better by performing worthy services for God and fellow human beings.

"We're going to have a number of people in the parade emphasizing a significant message of hope and how, by using the CEEP concept, we can accomplish so much as a community," Chargois said. Thirteen year old business owner **Mo'iah Bridges**, who owns Mo's Bows out of Memphis, Tennessee, is one of seven individuals or organizations leading this year's parade.

The other honorees include Lafayette native **Clark Joseph**, Minister of Music and Worship Arts at St. John Baptist Church Grand Prairie, TX; **Donald "Aldox" Alexander**, nationally renowned artist; **the Ledet family** who own multiple businesses in Breaux Bridge; **the Landry School** of Breaux Bridge; **Sherry T. Broussard**, storyteller and author of African Americans in Lafayette and Southwest Louisiana and Louisiana Zydeco; and **Shawn Wilson**, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation. The Carter G. Woodson Award will be presented to Lafayette resident Nathan Faulk, who is in the National Guard, and spends much of his time working with the youth



# 2016 H onorees



*Donald "Aldox" Alexander*



*Moziah Bridges*



*Sherry T. Broussard*



*Michael and Tracy Landry*



*Ernest Ledet*



*Clark Joseph*



*Shawn Wilson*

in the community especially young boys. He mentors them, stressing education as a way out.

The African Foundation's Annual Gala is February 27, the night before the parade, to honor all recipients. The banquet begins at 7:00 pm at the Unity Multi-Purpose Center in Scott. Tickets are \$40.00 and are available now. Music will be provided by Kent August and August Heat.

Parade participants can pick up registration forms at the KJCB radio station in Lafayette or call the station at 337-233-4262

for more information. Participants can also send an email to [AAHPfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:AAHPfoundation@gmail.com) or [kjcb@lusfiber.net](mailto:kjcb@lusfiber.net). Again, this year's theme is "A Historical Look at the CEEP Concept - Culture, Economics, Education, and Politics." All floats must represent someone from one of these categories.

The parade's route remains the same as last year. Lineup starts at 12:00 pm at the Philadelphia Church, located at 200 West Willow Street, Lafayette, Louisiana, and ends at True Vine Church, which is located at 1555 West Willow Street in Scott, Louisiana. •



# Conservative Businessman Jim Pace Announces His Run for Congress

**Peachtree City Businessman Jim Pace announced his candidacy for Georgia's 3rd Congressional District to replace Congressman Lynn Westmoreland.**

"After much prayer, discussion with my family, and encouragement from so many throughout our community, I am proud to announce my candidacy for Congress," Pace said. "I didn't come to the decision to run easily. I'm not running for a career in politics or because I need a title. I am running because I truly believe that together we can make a difference and can solve our nation's problems. Our federal government is out of control, our national debt is quickly approaching \$19 trillion and our nation is in dire need for new leadership. We must return to the conservative economic principles and moral values that made our country the greatest country on Earth. We can't expect different results in Congress from the same career politicians and out of touch bureaucrats who've have created this mess. I've spent my entire career managing businesses, building the economy and creating jobs. I want to take my private sector experience to Congress, so we can take back our country and put the power back in the hands of the people of this great country."

## About Jim Pace

A successful businessman, Jim Pace has over 40 years of experience representing a diverse business background. In 1989, Jim cofounded Group VI (6), one of Georgia's leading family owned and



operated full service real estate and construction firms. As CEO of Group VI, Jim is responsible for long-term planning, strategy, and growth of all related Group VI Companies. Jim has also successfully managed operating units at both Westinghouse House and Cooper Industries. His experience includes management positions in accounting, financial planning, operations, customer service, sales and marketing. Jim also remains active in the community having served on several boards including: Former Chairman of Young Life of Fayette County, Former Chairman of Fayette Family YMCA, Clayton State University School of Business Advisory Board, Landmark Christian School Advisory Board, BlueSky Global Ministries Board of Directors and Founding Member of Southside Church. At the age of 13 Jim became the youngest person in the state of Mississippi to earn the rank of Eagle Scout and in 2014 he

was awarded the Golden Eagle award from the Flint River Council Boy Scouts of America for his public service to the community. After visiting his daughter in Kenya, Africa where she operates a summer camp and outdoor adventure center, Jim founded the mission Cows for Christ to purchase milk-producing cows for families and a large orphanage of children whose parents have died of AIDS. Jim earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Mississippi College. Jim and his wife Mary have been married for over 43 years and have three children and eight grandchildren. •

## Other Political News

Georgia State Senator Mike Crane from Newnan, Georgia announced his run for Georgia's Third Congressional seat; the same seat that Jim Pace is running for.

The Georgia Primary will be held on March 1, 2016. Candidates must qualify to run the week of March 7-11, 2016 for this upcoming 2016 election.

## Which District Do You Live In?

With the recent votes by the Fayette County Board of Education and the Fayette County Commission to enter into a settlement agreement with the NAACP and plaintiffs in the ongoing Voting Rights lawsuit, a new Four District Fayette County Map was approved.

To find out which district you live in, visit [http://www.fayettedems.org/fayette\\_county\\_districts](http://www.fayettedems.org/fayette_county_districts)



# REFLECTIONS ON A CALLING

by Bonita Williams, MEd



I had been working as Director for a social services agency for seniors a number of years. I worked very closely with the neighboring hospitals, staff (doctors and nurses) and provided in-service training to the nurses who were providing in-home care for seniors in the community. From that I began teaching counseling for the college that they were attending. This experience excited the teaching bug in me and it came alive again. When I first entered college my major was education but when my mother died in my sophomore year I dropped out. When I returned I chose Social Work and Health Services Administration instead. After graduation, I was offered a scholarship to major in counseling and I accepted. After years of working in various fields and positions, that exposure to teaching inspired me to leave my job as a director and took me full circle back to where I had started.

I decided to apply to the Department of Education and was accepted into a middle school. The principal assigned me to a special education class based on my experience in counseling. I took the assignment. I did have to take a few more courses to qualify for permanent licensure in this area and I decided to do so. I believe my previous education and experience was preparation for the road I was to travel. There are no coincidences. I excelled as an educator but most importantly my students excelled. They felt at home in my classroom, often calling me

"Grandma" (although I begged their pardon). They had constantly been told they couldn't learn. In "our" classroom they proved to themselves that they could learn. When the state exams were administered many of their peers (in "regular" education classes) would confront them to find out their scores in an attempt to taunt them. To their chagrin in many cases, my students scored the same and in some cases better than their "regular education" peers.

I taught many children over the years and although not all chose this path, many have gone on to achieve gainful employment, marry and have families. Many students also went on to further their education attending and graduating from two and four year colleges.

I am reminded of one student in particular who was presented to me by the School Psychologist. The psychologist said he had evaluated him and found him to be at the low end of borderline IQ. He was a personable, mild-mannered, likable youngster with very supportive parents. He worked very well in the classroom with the other students and was soon identified as the "smart one." At the end of that school year he was re-evaluated. The School Psychologist returned to me and asked, "What are you doing in here?" Puzzled by his question I asked him what he meant. He informed me that when re-evaluated the student scored in the high average category. I told him that I teach them with respect and expect them to learn.

I often wonder how things might have been different if I had not made the change in career I did and had not been his teacher. This June that same young man graduated with a Bachelors Degree from an accredited college. He is interested in filmmaking and has made a few documentaries that have received recognition and is interning with a producer. When I think about this part of my life I always smile and look up and say, "I know that was You God". •

*Bonita Williams is the co-founder of Positive Peer Pressure Education Group, LLC., a company that puts a positive spin on peer pressure. You can visit her site at [www.p3educationgroup.com](http://www.p3educationgroup.com). You can also Like Positive Peer Pressure Education Group on Facebook.*

*Feel free to contact Bonita at [info@p3educationgroup.com](mailto:info@p3educationgroup.com).*

# FLINT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



*The Past: Rev. G. Berry Austin*



*The Present: Rev. Eric M. Gurley*

*photos provided by  
Flint Ridge Baptist  
Church*

**T**he Bush Arbor was a place of refuge for worship. It was set up like a tent with sides to keep the rain and wind out. This was a place where one could pray, clap, shout, and sing songs of freedom and praise. God was in the dwelling place and in the people and this was the church.

One day the Bush Arbor was burned down, by mysterious means but the people knew that the love of Christ could not be destroyed. The band of baptized believers in Christ received a vision from God to build a church. They met and prayed together and decided that with the help from God and neighboring friends they would build a church.

In March of 1866, the Flint Ridge Baptist Church was founded under the leadership of Brother Berry Austin. He had found the Lord sometime during slavery while ministering under the pastor and a great minister at Bethsaida Baptist Church (several miles north of Kenwood, Georgia). After organizing the church, the members needed to purchase land for the new church they were going to build. The land was purchased from Mr. Austin, a former slave holder. The brethren and Brother Berry Austin using two steers went into the woods and gathered suitable logs and constructed a sturdy cabin. As years passed, the church membership grew; however, during the summer months, the members would return to the Bush Arbor for revivals.

**Youth Usher:** Shirley Williams, in times past, was instrumental in the training of the young usher of the church. Our junior ushers are now training and serving under the leadership of Lynn Williams. Our current junior ushers are Simone Stafford, B. J. Williams, Anna Russell, Miracle Jones and Makela Dean.

**Outreach/Transportation:** Currently, Deacon Terry Walk serves as the transportation lead alongside D.W. Brown, Mack Adams and Mildred Dodson.

## 2016 : 150 Spiritual Years at the "Ridge"

Flint Ridge Baptist Church is grateful for our past and the rich heritage of those who came before us and left historical markers for the future. We continue to move forward under the leadership and strong spiritual guidance of Pastor Eric M. Gurley: Glorifying God Together with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Through grace and mercy we are blessed to have a few members who were born in the early and mid-1900's and are still alive and active in the church.

- ✠ Sister Doris Cannady (1919)
- ✠ Sister Artie Cannady (1930)
- ✠ Deaconess Bennie Jordan (1932)
- ✠ Deacon D.W. Brown (1941)
- ✠ Sister Mildred Dodson (1948)



## Flint Ridge 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Scheduled Events

<b>A Taste of Flint Ridge</b>	February 28, 2016	2:00 PM	Church Fellowship Hall
Culinary favorites from the church's archives prepared by church members			
<b>Gospel Musical</b>	March 5, 2016	4:00 PM-7:00 PM	Flint Ridge Baptist Church
Featuring musical selections from mixed choirs, noted singers and combined old and new Flint Ridge Baptist Church community choirs			
<b>150<sup>th</sup> Flint Ridge Baptist Church Anniversary Gala</b>	March 11, 2016	7:00 PM-12:00 Midnight	Wyndham Peachtree Hotel and Conference Center in Peachtree City, Georgia
Semi-formal gala to include a full course meal, live gospel jazz, presentations and an encouraging message from our special guest, Rev. Dr. W. J. Lawson, Pastor of Cornerstone Community Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. \$50.00 per person; \$45 per person table of 8 (due Feb 21).			
<b>Youth Extravaganza and Luncheon</b>	March 13, 2016	11:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Flint Ridge Baptist Church (Luncheon in Fellowship Hall after service)
Praise and worship by the youth of Flint Ridge to include spoken words, singing and praise dancing			
<b>Great is Thy Faithfulness 150<sup>th</sup> Flint Ridge Baptist Church Anniversary Celebration</b>	March 20, 2016	3:00 PM	104 Old Road Fayetteville, Georgia

Fellowship dinner and guest speaker presentation to commemorate this century and half historic time for the Flint Ridge Baptist Church Family and Community

To reserve your tickets or table, please send us a message at [info@flintridgebc.org](mailto:info@flintridgebc.org) **OR** please contact Reverend Eric at (770) 461-8742 or [pastor@flintridgebc.org](mailto:pastor@flintridgebc.org) if you have any questions or concerns. •

# Join in the Celebration!



*Photos clockwise beginning with center top: Pastor Eric Gurley, Deacon D W Brown, Deaconess Bennie Jordan, church interior, architectural rendering of a look to the future, sisters Artie and Doris Cannedy*

# FAYETTEVILLE MAYOR EDWARD JOHNSON, JR.



It is not often that someone espouses philosophical wisdom using the Acronym “FROG.” However, for newly sworn in Mayor of Fayetteville Georgia, Pastor Ed Johnson, that little gem is now his new mantra. “A friend and former councilman advised me to use “FROG” in everything I do,” Johnson said during his inauguration speech. “It means forever rely on God and you can’t go wrong.”

Johnson defeated incumbent Mayor Greg Clifton in November to become Fayetteville’s first black Mayor. Two days following his January 5 inauguration, he led his first City Council meeting.

Relying on God comes easy for the personable Pastor of Flat Rock A.M.E. Church in Fayetteville, and former Navy Officer. Defying the odds is nothing new for the sixty-one year old Johnson as he was also the first African American elected to the city council in 2011.



What is astounding about Johnson's journey to the mayor's office has as much to do with how he accomplished this feat, as the end result. Johnson, known as a "bridge builder," already laid the foundation with his 2011 victory as city councilman. In that race, as in this latest one, Johnson built a core of supporters from an array of political groups, including the tea party and the Fayetteville County Republican party.

One of the mayor's greatest supporters, his 86-year-old mother, Marguerite Johnson, never doubted her son's victory and success. Mrs. Johnson, a native of New Orleans who now lives in Dallas, with a mother's pride lighting up her face, professed she knew her son would be mayor because he is "highly blessed."

Johnson's wife, Dr. Vanessa Johnson, also a retired Navy Officer, expressed pride in her husband's accomplishments. "I know

that God was truly in the midst of him becoming the mayor of Fayetteville, Georgia," she said. "I am committed to support my husband in his endeavor to serve the citizens of Fayetteville to the best of his abilities."

John Jones, Fayetteville NAACP President believes Johnson is very deserving to be mayor of Fayetteville. "He'll do a fine job and he'll build bridges and make Fayetteville a wonderful place to live," said Jones.

A bridge builder is a term that Johnson the Pastor, the Navy Officer, and now the Mayor has embraced in all aspects of his life. "A good friend coined the phrase "building bridges of biblical brotherhood," emphasizing my effort to bring some truth to the misunderstandings that existed in some local congregations," Johnson said. "I guess you can say that I continue



Ed Johnson with his two sons, Edwin and Devan

Ed Johnson and Wife, Dr. Vanessa Johnson



Ed Johnson and Avpride Dawn Oparah





applying that approach to all organizations that I associate with.” Johnson added that he believes that people are more alike than they are different. “We all want to experience the best quality of life for our families — and working together to remove stereotype ideologies is one approach in doing so.”

*“My vision is to engender a collaborative spirit among the businesses, homeowners, and those seeking to make Fayetteville a great city that can still celebrate its history and also embrace its future.”*

~ Mayor Ed Johnson

Dr. Johnson, a formidable contemporary in her own right, echoed those sentiments. “It is critical that we as a community come together and get to know our neighbors,” she said. “In order to do this we must be inclusive and celebrate our diversity by breaking down barriers of race, class and religion.”

Leonard Presberg, Fayetteville County School Board member believes Johnson will be an excellent mayor. “I think Mayor Johnson will lead Fayetteville to become a progressively robust, economically thriving city for all citizens,” Presberg said.

Johnson’s commitment to Fayetteville and its citizens resonated throughout his inauguration speech. “I commit to represent you with dignity, transparency, and integrity,” he said.

That commitment is the reason the mayor chose to have his inauguration in a “holy place” (New Hope Baptist Church, North Campus). “I believe the oath of office I have just taken is a covenant between myself, God and the citizens of Fayetteville, Georgia that binds me to be the best servant leader that I can be.” Johnson eloquently stated.

Dignity and integrity has been the cornerstone of much of Johnson’s life. He grew up in a tough area of New Orleans and graduated from a public high school in 1973. He attended Dillard University and graduated in 1978 with a Bachelor’s degree in Biology. He then entered the Navy’s Aviation Officers’ Candidate School in Pensacola, Florida and was commissioned as an Ensign in December 1978.

For the next 22 years, Johnson’s illustrious career in the navy evolved to include, being selected, graduating from, and receiving a Master’s of Arts Degree from the Naval War College’s Command and Staff College. He also received a Master’s of Science Degree from Salve Regina College of Newport Rhode Island. During the last four years of his navy career, the Navy Commander became Executive Officer of the Atlanta Region Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) consisting of the Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech) and Morehouse College units.



Perhaps his greatest accomplishment of his military career has been the impact he's had on so many young people who have followed in his footsteps. "Commander Johnson inspired me to fulfill a 20-year career as a Marine Corps Officer and to pledge Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity," said Captain Steven S. Andrews, Retired Marine Officer. "I thank him for all of his man talks and his mentorship." Stevens also credits Johnson for his new job as a high school JROTC instructor.

Johnson's mantra of "forever relying on God," has truly served him well in his spiritual life. He was ordained Elder with the Sixth Episcopal District of the A.M.E Church in Atlanta Georgia in 2001. He first served as Pastor of the New Mount Carmel A.M.E. Church in Sharpsburg, Georgia prior to being appointed Pastor of Flat Rock A.M.E. Church in July 2003. He successfully increased the church's membership from 40 to 125 members currently.

The Johnsons were high school sweethearts and dated for 10 years before embarking on an incredible journey of serving God, country, and community. Vanessa Johnson is a graduate of L.B. Landry High School, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and Special Education and graduated Cum Laude from Dillard University, New Orleans. She also has a Master's in Educational Administration and acquired a subspecialty in Education and Training Management in 1987 in the Navy. She most recently retired as principal of Liberty Point Elementary School in Union City Georgia. The Johnsons have been married for 36 years, have two sons and three grandchildren.

*"The only legacy I hope to leave is one of exceptional leadership, not directly attributed to my ethnicity, but one based on bringing the community together for the best possible outcome."*

~ Mayor Ed Johnson

Since her second retirement, Dr. Johnson has gotten more involved in activities and taken on roles that give her a better understanding of what she can do to improve the quality of life in the Fayetteville community. This includes serving as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for Resurgent Education and Community Health Services, Inc. (REACH), Board member of Fayette Alliance Connecting Together Our Resources (FACTOR), member of Fayette Visioning Initiative, member of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Educated Subcommittee, Advisory Board member of Partnering Academics and Community Engagement (PACE) of Clayton State University and member of the 2016 ENCORE Leadership class,

Now that history has been made, Johnson's next epic task is to move Fayetteville forward to the viable city he believes it can be. "My vision is to engender a collaborative spirit among the businesses, homeowners, and those seeking to make Fayetteville



Ed Johnson and Master Chief David Hutchinson



Ed Johnson's brother Conrad and his brother's wife Geiselle Johnson



Ed Johnson's Mother: Mrs. Marguerite Johnson



Photo: Fayette Daily News

Mayor Mario Avery, Mayor Ed Johnson and Charles Rousseau

Above: The Sandy Creek High School Gospel Choir

a great city that can still celebrate its history and also embrace its future,” he said.

The mayor and Fayetteville will benefit from having an international film company — Pinewood Atlanta Studios — in the city. The film industry and studios are expected to develop and attract businesses that not only support this industry but also attract residual businesses that will make Fayetteville “a fun and inviting destination for tourism and incubator businesses.”

Johnson also hopes to attract younger people and families to the city by first getting input from them to determine what is needed to make them feel wanted and needed in the community. Second, affordable housing is needed for the

younger generation of residents without compromising on the quality. Third, develop recreational activities that appeal to the younger generation without attracting undesirable behavior and incidents.

Johnson has already engraved a legacy dedicated to service of God and country. Now he is well on his way of creating a legacy that will impact an entire city for the duration of time. “The only legacy I hope to leave is one of exceptional leadership, not directly attributed to my ethnicity, but one based on bringing the community together for the best possible outcome,” the affable mayor said.

No matter where his journey takes him, Johnson believes he can’t go wrong as long as “he forever relies on God. •



# DISTRICT VOTING SWAYS ITS WAY TO FAYETTE COUNTY

BY LAKEISHA S. FLEMING



More than four years, hundreds of thousands of dollars and countless discussions later, a settlement has been reached in the district voting lawsuit brought by the NAACP and other plaintiffs. Both the Fayette County School Board and Board of Commissioners approved the settlement in January, following a mediation process.

The agreement restructures Fayette's voting districts, changing the number of districts from five to four. Each citizen votes for their district representative, and for one at-large seat, for both the school board and board of commissioners. Fayette County NAACP Branch President John E. Jones is pleased with the outcome. "I don't look upon this as we won; we did what good American citizens do - we come together, we compromise and we move on for the greater good." The settlement also includes a total payment from both boards of \$225,000 to the NAACP. Jones notes the payment covers NAACP defense fund expenses. "The Fayette county NAACP doesn't see one dime of that money," he stated.

The cost pales in comparison to the potential bill, which factored into each party's decision to put the fight to rest. The school board approved the agreement unanimously. Their official statement noted that the settlement "eliminates the school district's potential exposure to payment of over \$1 million of attorney's fees to the plaintiffs' lawyer if the case were litigated further . . . "

The Board of Commissioners approved the settlement with a vote of 3-2. County Commissioner Randy Ognio, who voted in opposition, stated, "I can't help but wonder how we as elected officials ... can be voting to take away three fifths of the voting rights of the citizens that voted for us." He continued, "The right thing to do is to protect rights of the citizens." After voting to approve the agreement, Commissioner David Barlow said he honored the wishes of those he serves, in his decision. "Many of my constituents didn't know what the lawsuit was all about, but when they heard how much it was costing with no guarantee of success, they were not in favor of continuing the lawsuit." (*cont.*)



Jones acknowledged that several people were instrumental in the push for district voting and unifying Fayette County. The FCNAACP honored these Community Leaders during the birthday celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on January 18th. Faith & Soul Magazine Publisher Melinda Sylvester, along with Jim Pace (Group VI), Carlotta Ungaro (President /CEO of Fayette County Chamber of Commerce), Joel Cowan (founded Georgia's Peachtree City/ owner of Habersham & Cowan), Greg Detwiler (Chair-Fayette County Chamber of Commerce), Rick Halbert (Halbert Development), Malcolm Hughes (Hughes Financial Group), Fayetteville Mayor Rev. Ed Johnson (Pastor of Flat Rock AME Church), Kim Learnard (Peachtree City Council Member), Larris Marks (Co-Chair Fayette Visioning), Judith Moore (Community Activist), Dawn Oparah (AV-Pride Co-Founder), and Edward Outlaw (Fayette County Advocate). "We also had some architects working to design the bridge to be built," Jones mentioned. State Representative Virgil Fludd and Attorney Wayne Kendall were among those honored for their contributions.

Once the terms of the Board of Commissioners' agreement are approved by the state legislature and signed by the Governor, district voting will be official. All parties seem pleased to put the lawsuit behind them, and look to the future. "That's where I see it going – a good community all working together to protect our community and make it a great place to live," Jones stated.

FCNAACP thanks everyone for making this MLK Parade and Event a huge success! •



## FCNAACP 2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Academic Achievement and Essay Honorees



### Fayette County High School Seniors

- Destiny Mahone** will attend Stanford University majoring in Biology and minoring in Psychology, then plans to attend Johns Hopkins University to become a neurosurgeon
- Brandon James** accepted to UGA, Tulane and Georgetown University as a Political Economy Major with the goal to pursue a profession in law or politics

### McIntosh High School Seniors

- Alexandria Pinckney** hopes to attend University of Virginia with a double major in International Studies and English Literature
- Demi Tega** excelled in thirteen AP classes with a 4.3 GPA 4.3 and applied to Harvard, Yale and Brown universities

### Sandy Creek High Seniors

- Tajah Damm** accepted by University of Georgia and Georgia Institute of Technology with the intent to major in Biology
- Elmer Gonzalez** received acceptance letters from Georgia State University, University of Georgia and Georgia Institute of Technology

*Academic Achievement Honorees from left to right: Miguel Gonzalez, Morgan Knowlton, Alexandria Pinckney, Demi Tega, Brandon James, Destiny Mahone, Tajah Damm, Kevin Romero, Jordan Barnett, Logan Shanks. (Photo inset) Elmer Gonzalez*

### Starr's Mill High School Seniors

- Morgan Knowlton** will study Industrial Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology
- Miguel Gonzalez** plans to attend Duke University and major in Neuroscience

### Whitewater High School Seniors

- Jordan Barnett** applied to Vanderbilt and University of Georgia to major in Sports Medicine with the goal to become an orthopedic surgeon
- Kevin Romero** accepted to George Washington University and plans to attend an in-state college for undergraduate studies

### Bennett's Mill Middle School

- Logan Shanks** Eight grade MLK Essay winner

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## **“TAX TIPS” FOR 2016**

by Chandra Winford  
photo by Chandra Winford



### **TAX SEASON IS UPON US!**

Tax clients are either anxiously anticipating a refund, dreading the tax payment they will have to make soon, or indifferent because tax filing is just another task with little refund expected or tax payment to be paid.

Where are you?

What can you do differently in 2016 to put yourself in the indifferent category?

**Taxpayers expecting a refund:** If you work a full-time job and you get a large refund check back every year. You are giving the government an interest free Loan. You should work with your tax professional to reduce your withholding allowances to allow more money to come into your hands during the year.



**Taxpayers who have to make a large tax payment:** more than likely you are an entrepreneur or independent contractors. You need to withhold a certain percentage from funds received and make quarterly payments so you do not end up owing the government.

### **CHANDRA'S TOP 5 WAYS USE YOUR TAX REFUND**

1. **Create a savings reserve account:** a reserve account will cover you when unexpected expenses arise.
2. **Pay off all or some of your debt:** if you eliminate debts that will free up whatever funds you are paying monthly on that debt.
3. **Start a business or invest in your business:** everyone should have multiple streams of income. Use the funds to start a business part-time and this will also increase your tax deductions for next year.
4. **Start saving for your retirement:** social security on average, will only replace 40% of your pre-retirement income.
5. **Get a life insurance policy:** if something happened to you, your family will need funds for funeral expenses and to cover any debt you may on assets you own like your home or vehicle. •

*For additional information:*

*Call us at 678-489-8867 or email us at [cwinfordfinancial@gmail.com](mailto:cwinfordfinancial@gmail.com) to schedule your appointment.*



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Celebration

Easter Sunday  
MARCH 27

Centennial Olympic Park

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5:00 - 9:00 pm**

**WHAT are we doing?** Several churches from around the metro Atlanta area have joined together to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to raise up the banner of His great name for the deliverance of our City. There will be live music, praise teams, choirs, psalmists and dance ministries.

**WHO is invited?** Everyone. If you love Jesus and you want to see His name restored to a place of honor in America, then come. Or if you want to know Him and why we celebrate this day, then come. Expect to experience the Glory and presence of God as we worship Him.

**WHY are we doing this?** Easter is the most meaningful holiday on the Christian calendar. Salvation is possible only because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We want to return the celebration of Jesus to Easter and share the Good News of what the resurrection means for you personally.

**It's time to make the name of  
JESUS great again in this city.**

For more details call 770-994-3777.

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# Hot Chili To Keep You Warm On A Cold Day

by Melinda Sylvester

Here is an easy recipe for making chili for a hearty meal on a cold winter's day!

This meal will serve six to eight people.

1. Brown one onion and one bell pepper in a medium pot



2. Season the ground meat to your taste with salt, paprika, red pepper and black pepper and add the fresh, seasoned ground meat into the pot and cook until brown



3. Cook two cans of tomato sauce in another medium pot



4. Pour cooked tomato sauce into pot with cooked seasoned ground meat



5. Season with chili powder



6. Add hot peppers, if you desire
7. Serve hot

## Ingredients

Onion	one	diced
Bell pepper	one	chopped
Ground meat	3-5 lbs	(beef or turkey)
Tomato sauce	2 cans	
Salt		
Paprika		
Red pepper		
Black pepper		
Chili powder		
Hot peppers		

## Alternative Healthy Chili

And for those concerned about their health, here are two optional items that you can use replace for the original ingredients:

1. Instead of beef, use ground turkey meat
2. Replace the salt used in the original recipe with Mrs. Dash Salt-Free Season

Enjoy with Baked Lays or chips of your choice. •







## 2016 Atlanta Dream Schedule

photos by Tel-Mel Media and Publishing Co., LLC

MAY	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
Sat. 14	at San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	8:00 p.m.
Fri. 20	at Indiana	Indianapolis, Ind.	7:00 p.m.
<b>Sun. 22</b>	<b>Chicago</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>
Tue. 24	at New York	New York, N.Y.	11:00 a.m.
Fri. 27	at Dallas	Arlington, Texas	8:30 p.m.
<b>Sun. 29</b>	<b>Indiana</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>

JUNE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
Fri. 3	at Connecticut	Uncasville, Conn.	7:00 p.m.
<b>Sun. 5</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>
Fri. 10	Minnesota	Philips Arena	7:30 p.m.
<b>Sun. 12</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>
Fri. 17	Chicago	Philips Arena	7:30 p.m.
Sat. 18	at Washington	Washington, D.C.	7:00 p.m.
<b>Wed. 22</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>12:00 p.m.</b>
Sat. 25	at San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	8:00 p.m.
Tue. 28	at Seattle	Seattle, Wash.	10:00 p.m.
Thu. 30	at Los Angeles	Los Angeles, Calif.	3:30 p.m.

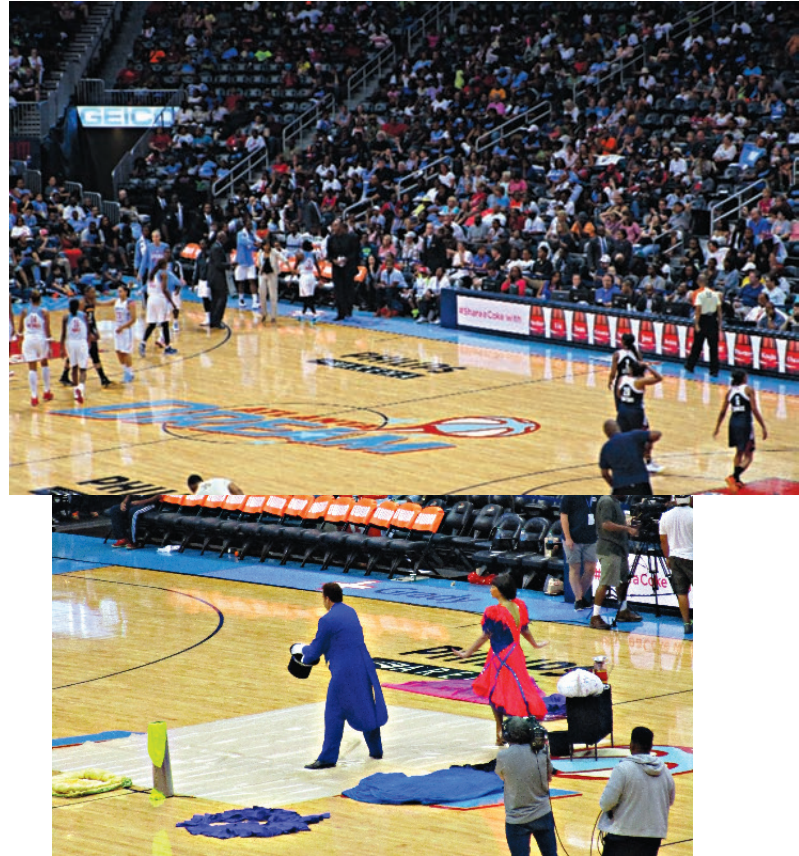
JULY	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
<b>Sun. 3</b>	<b>Phoenix</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Tue. 5</b>	<b>Seattle</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Fri. 8</b>	<b>Dallas</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>
Sun. 10	at Connecticut	Uncasville, Conn.	1:00 p.m.
Wed. 13	at New York	New York, N.Y.	11:00 a.m.
Fri. 15	at Indiana	Indianapolis, Ind.	7:00 p.m.
<b>Sun. 17</b>	<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>
Wed. 20	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, Minn.	1:00 p.m.
Fri. 22	Dallas	Hank McCamish Pav.	7:30 p.m.

### July 23-August 25 Olympic Break

AUGUST	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
Fri. 26	at Chicago	Skokie, Ill.	8:30 p.m.
<b>Sun. 28</b>	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>

SEPT	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
<b>Sun. 4</b>	<b>Seattle</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Tue. 6</b>	<b>Phoenix (ESPN2)</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>8:00 p.m.</b>
Thu. 8	at Los Angeles	Los Angeles, Calif.	10:30 p.m.
Sun. 11	at Phoenix	Phoenix, Ariz.	6:00 p.m.
<b>Tue. 13</b>	<b>San Antonio</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Thu. 15</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Philips Arena</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>
Sat. 17	at Minnesota	Minneapolis, Minn.	8:00 p.m.

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# Thirty Louisiana Pastors Inducted into Pastoral Alliance of Southwest Louisiana

by Mary Brown  
photos by Snapshots



*The 2016 Inductees*

With an emphasis on churches being a strong pillar of the community, the Senior Pastoral Alliance of Southwest Louisiana recently inducted 30 Lafayette area Pastors into the Alliance. This is the first induction for the Alliance, whose mission is to work with and unite for the betterment of the entire community.

Pastors attending the induction were excited that all of the churches across Lafayette came together in a unified effort to stand as one. "We're looking forward to eradicating poverty, and getting rid of adjudicated properties and putting real people and real families in them," said Bishop Al Gatlin, Pastor of Gethsemane Church of God in Christ. "We are doing things to improve the education of our children and ensure that

government is doing what it can for our community."

Bishop Carlos Harvin, Pastor of New Beginnings Christian Church, said he was excited at how so many different pastors from different congregations came together. "We're on one team and we know it has been by the power of God that this has been able to happen," Harvin said.

Harvin added that the Alliance's vision of uplifting the community and rebuilding the hope of its people is important. "We must enforce the partnership with City Hall to see good people stand and rise and take ownership and control of their community," Harvin said.

The Destiny of Faith Christian Center Church and Pastor Ken Lazard hosted the event.



*Parish President Joel Robideaux*



*From left: Elder Derrick Millard, Pastor Tracie Millard, Pastor Ken Lazard, and Pastor Mary Lazard*



*Foreground (from left): Attorney Valerie Gotch, Sen. Vincent Pierre  
Background: District 6 Councilman Bruce Conques*



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**Wednesday March 2, 7pm**  
DR. JONATHAN CARTER  
Siloam Church International  
College Park, GA 30349

**Thursday March 3, 7pm**  
PASTOR STEVE O. ALLEN, SR.  
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## Community

# Let Freedom Sing!

In Fayette County, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday observance takes place every year on the third Monday with scheduled parades and programs with keynote speakers.

The Fayette County Republican Party has participated by entering a float for the parade, sponsored the literary contest and sponsored events in unity with the NAACP and the Democratic Party. Last year the FCRP began its first series of "Unity in the Community" event with Let Freedom Sing held in Sam's Auditorium. The event held maintained an apolitical public event to enjoy invited musicians and artists of all ethnicity to perform their talent, musically. The 2015 event was a great success. This year the FCRP had its "Second Annual Unity in the Community - Let Freedom Sing" on Sunday, January 17, 2016; a prerequisite to the events scheduled for the MLK holiday.

Tyrone K. Jones, Sr., Chairman of the FCRP has led, in his first year in office, a progressive outreach venture. An established musician himself, the idea of celebrating this great American comes very naturally. What better way to celebrate Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, his legacy with the spirit of music.

by Cheri Werginz

photos by:  
Bobb Ross



Photos (clockwise from top): Darryl Williams and Voices of Praise, Master of Ceremonies George Dahlman, Praise Dancers, Let Freedom Sing founder Tyrone Wilson on keyboard and Beverly Wilson, and (in the center) the Callahan Brothers

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