ENTREPRENEURS & LEADERSHIP ISSUE | CELEBRATING 24 YEARS!

The Anchor News

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KILLEEN PASTOR COMBINES FAITH, FAMILY AND SERVICE

BY WANDA B. GUNTER

For Dr. Cynthia Morris, ministry is not a role—it is a calling that has shaped her life since childhood. The daughter of a Baptist pastor, Morris grew up with faith and service woven into her family's life.

Today, she serves as pastor of Family Dominion Church, a Killeen-based cyber church that shares weekly worship services through Facebook Live. Morris has served in ministry for 33 years, including six years in pastoral leadership.

Family Dominion Church's mission centers on evangelism, discipleship and reaching families with the Word of God. Its outreach has included food distribution, educational supplies, marriage and family workshops, and other efforts to meet families' practical and spiritual needs.

Among Morris's most meaningful ministry milestones are launching the church's television ministry and conducting marriage and family seminars. She and her husband, Rennick, share a commitment to God, family and service. The couple met while serving in the military in Germany, and their shared Christian upbringing became a foundation for their marriage and ministry.



DR. CYNTHIA MORRIS

Morris brings an academic background to her work. She earned an associate degree in general studies from Central Texas College, bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from the University of Central Texas, and a doctorate in educational administration from The University of Texas at Austin. She also completed postdoctoral work in sociology at Texas A&M University–Central Texas.

As a psychology professor at McLennan Community College, Morris combines her interest in human behavior with her faith. She believes understanding people is essential to ministering effectively in both Christian and secular settings.

Balancing marriage, family, ministry and professional responsibilities requires "much prayer, patience, love and un-

SEE **MORRIS**, PG. 2

KING'S CHICKEN WINGS: GREAT FOOD WITH A GREATER PURPOSE

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

For Leo and Jenee Spann, King's Chicken Wings is more than a restaurant. It is a dream rooted in family, faith, gratitude and community.

The couple opened their first Waco location in January 2022. Since then, King's has grown into an award-winning local brand.

The business grew from a personal journey. Leo Spann, co-founder and CEO, was raised in New Orleans by a single mother with five siblings. Although the family had little, his mother found ways to feed them, and some of their happiest memories were made around the dinner table. Spann learned that food could satisfy more than hunger—it could unite people.



LEO SPANN

After Hurricane Katrina forced his family from New Orleans, they arrived in Waco with very little. Strangers extended kindness and support when they needed it most.

"Waco didn't just help us build a business," Spann said. "Waco helped us build a life."

Years later, after their son King was born, Leo and Je-

SEE **SPANN**, PG. 9

LOUIS FITE: FROM HOMELESS ATHLETE TO YOUTH MENTOR

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

On Friday nights, thousands of fans saw Louis Fite as one of the most gifted football players in Texas. They saw the speed, the touchdowns and the young man wearing Waco High School's number 7. What they did not see was a teenager who often had no bed, no permanent home and no certainty about where his next meal would come from.



LOUIS FITE

"The kid everybody cheered for on Friday night didn't have a bed," Fite said.

For much of high school, Fite slept on couches, stayed with friends and sometimes slept beneath the bleachers. Free breakfast and lunch at school were the only meals he could depend on. If he played especially well on Friday night, someone might invite him home for the weekend and feed him.

"Football wasn't just a game to me," he explained. "It was how I ate."

Born in Lynwood, California, Fite was raised in Compton by his Aunt Eddie and his uncles. Gangs controlled his neighborhood, and by age 12, he had entered that world. After his name became connected to trouble on the block, a gang placed a hit on him.

A boy Fite considered a brother walked him into an alley, shot him in the back and twice in the leg, then stood over him intending to fire again. The gun jammed. Someone carried Fite away and left him at a hospital. Knowing the gang might return, his family placed him on a Greyhound bus to Waco, where his parents were living.

"That gun jamming is the reason I'm alive," Fite said. "It taught me early that my life wasn't mine to waste."

In Waco, football became both his refuge and his family. Fite credits his cousin James Silmon and the Silmon family, the LaCurtis Jones household, Head Coach Johnny Tusa, Coach Grant, Coach Grimes and the men in the Elm Avenue barbershops with helping him survive.

"None of them owed me anything, and all of them took care of me," he said.

During his senior season in 1990, Fite rushed for 2,532 yards and scored 26 touchdowns. He was named the Associated Press and Tex-

SEE **FITE**, PG. 2



J.L. & LINDA CRAWFORD

J.L. and Linda Crawford are co-owners of *The Anchor News*. J.L. Crawford serves as Director of Operations and is a Bible teacher and columnist writing on faith, family, and men's issues. Linda Crawford serves as Publisher and Editor, is a motivational speaker, and is the owner of Enjoy the Journey Life Coaching Services.

FROM THE EDITOR...

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES CELEBRATING LEADERS INSPIRING DREAMS

I hope you enjoy this Entrepreneurs and Leadership issue of *The Anchor News.*

These stories celebrate people whose vision, determination, and service strengthen our community.

As you read, I encourage you to support their businesses, celebrate their leadership, and find inspiration for your own dreams. Thank you for being part of our journey and allowing us to share "Just the Good Stuff"!

FITE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as Sports Writers Association Class 5A Player of the Year and a Parade All-American. In January 1991, Waco High retired his number 7.

His most unforgettable performance came against Converse Judson, the defending state champion. Four days before the game, his cousin James was killed by a drunk driver on Garrison Street. Fite struggled during the first half until Terry Bell reminded him, "James would want you to do this. Run through them like ghosts."

Fite responded by rushing for 410 yards—385 of them in the second half. The men at the Jockey Club barbershop began calling him "Black Moses" because, when he leaped over the pile at the goal line, "the Red Sea parted."

Although Fite signed with Baylor University, he did not qualify academically and never played there. He had the athletic ability, but no one had guided him through the SAT, required core courses or collegiate eligibility rules. That painful closed door later became the foundation of his life's work.

Fite continued his career at Navarro College and Texas A&M–Kingsville, playing under Coach Ron Harms in 1993 and 1994. The Chicago Bears invited him to training camp in 1995. After about six weeks with the team, he chose an opportunity in the Canadian Football League. That same year, he won the Grey Cup with the Baltimore Stallions. He later played for the Montreal Alouettes and in arena and indoor football, proving that he could compete professionally.

However, Fite's story is about far more than football. When the game ended and he faced difficult years—including sleeping in cars and hotel rooms—his wife, Adrienne, remained beside him.

"She believed in me before I believed in myself," he said.

Faith also sustained him. Looking back, Fite believes God was present in the alley when the gun jammed, during the nights he had nowhere to sleep and throughout every uncertain season. His book, *The Good Fite: A Memoir of Hunger, Faith, and Football*, takes its title from 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith."

Published in 2026 by FITE CAMP Press, the memoir introduces readers to the struggling child behind the celebrated athlete. Fite wrote it so young people could see that their beginnings do not determine their endings—and so parents, educators and coaches would recognize that some children quietly carry hunger, homelessness and fear.

Today, Fite lives in Belton and leads FITE CAMP, the youth football and life-coaching program he founded to give young athletes the guidance he never received. The organization conducts camps and combines in Waco, Dallas and Austin. Its annual Waco camp is held each July at Waco ISD Stadium.

Young participants are called "200%ers," reflecting the program's motto: "Best player. Best person. Both at once."

Fite and his team evaluate athletes so families understand their children's abilities and areas for growth. He also teaches students to maintain their grades, prepare for the SAT, complete the correct core courses and understand eligibility requirements. Scholarships ensure that financial hardship does not prevent a child from participating.

Fite returns to Waco High and speaks at schools, churches and youth organizations. He is a member of the Waco ISD Athletic Hall of Fame, and his life story was recently featured in *The Good Fite* documentary, which premiered at the Waco Hippodrome.

For Fite, leadership means doing more than telling young people what to do.

"I don't just tell a kid to get his grades up," he said. "I sit down with him and his mama and show them exactly what he needs and when he needs it."

His mission is simple: to prevent talented young people from reaching the end of high school only to discover that an avoidable obstacle has locked the next door.

Fite wants every young person who feels rejected, overlooked or defeated to understand that one closed door does not end a life's story.

"I've been rejected, overlooked, shot, homeless and told no by people who should have helped me," he said. "I'm still here."

He also leaves adults with a challenge that reaches far beyond the football field:

"The kid you cheer for on Friday night might be the kid who doesn't have a bed. Look closer, and help him."

The Good Fite is available in paperback and Kindle through Amazon. Learn more about FITE CAMP at fitecamp.com, follow Louis Fite on Instagram at @louisfite or visit louisfite.com. For press and speaking inquiries, contact Marcus J. Carey at marcuscarey@gmail.com.

MORRIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

derstanding," Morris said. Financial challenges have also strengthened her faith and taught her to trust God more fully.

Morris hopes her legacy will reflect a life of loving and faithfully serving God and people. Her advice to couples called to serve together is to invest in their relationship with God and with each other.

Family Dominion Church airs Wednesdays at 10:30 p.m. on KPLE-TV and streams Sundays at 11 a.m. Central on Facebook Live. The ministry also welcomes prayer requests from individuals and families.

The Anchor News

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PURPOSE

The Anchor News, dedicated to serving the community and surrounding areas, focuses on positive news and accomplishments of minorities.

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Anchored on the principles of scripture, *Anchor News* will at no time publish information that is potentially libelous or intentionally malicious, derogatory or irrelevant.

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The comments and opinions of our readers are welcomed. Letters and articles should be e-mailed. Letters should be no longer than 200 words and must include a name and phone number. Article submissions should be no longer than 450 words and should include an original head shot (in JPEG format) along with your name, address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, space, potentially libelous material and copyright infringement. We also reserve the right to refuse derogatory, irrelevant and malicious submissions.

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ANCHOR STAFF

LINDA CRAWFORD
Editor-In-Chief/Owner

STASHA AUSTIN MALONE
Associate Editor

FAITH WEAVER
Editor

J.L. CRAWFORD
Director of Operations/Owner

RAY AUSTIN
Website Designer

GALE EDWARDS
Advisor

WANDA B. GUNTER
Contributing Writer

SCOTT NEFF
Design/Layout

JOHN L. BIBLE CONTINUES A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP THROUGH LENDING

After more than seven years leading the Cen-Tex African American Chamber of Commerce, John L. Bible has entered a new chapter of service as Vice President of Lending at TFNB–Your Bank for Life.

Bible transitioned into the position following the conclusion of his Chamber tenure in 2026. His TFNB office is located on historic Elm Avenue in East Waco, directly across from the Chamber—placing him in the heart of the community where he has invested much of his professional life.

He does not view the move as leaving his former mission behind. At the Chamber, Bible connected entrepreneurs and businesses with education, relationships and resources. At TFNB, he can help them pursue one of the most important resources for growth: capital.



JOHN BIBLE

"My passion for helping people and businesses succeed hasn't changed," Bible said. "Only the capacity in which I serve has changed."

Bible's relationship with the Chamber began in 2008, when he joined its Board of Directors. He later served as treasurer and board chairman before becoming president and CEO in May 2019.

Under his leadership, the Chamber expanded its visibility, partnerships and impact. Among its accomplishments was the Cen-Tex Minority Equity Fund, which distributed more than $200,000 in grants to small businesses. The Chamber also supported youth entrepreneurship through Young CEO and Lemonade Day Waco, helped women through Esther's Closet, advanced the Center for Business Excellence and developed collaborative initiatives such as StarBridge Alliance.

Bible said his greatest pride comes from the trust and relationships the Chamber built with financial institutions, corporations, schools, government entities and community organizations.

"Programs can provide immediate assistance, but relationships create opportunities that can last for generations," he said.

Before leading the Chamber, Bible spent more than 20 years in financial services and investment advisory positions with UBS, AIG and New York Life. That experience, combined with his understanding of the barriers facing small and minority-owned businesses, prepared him to approach lending from both financial and relationship perspectives.

At TFNB, Bible develops banking relationships, evaluates lending opportunities and helps individuals, entrepreneurs and commercial borrowers understand responsible financing. He advises prospective borrowers to establish a relationship with a banker before needing a loan, understand their credit, manage debt carefully and maintain accurate financial records.

Bible's leadership also extends into faith, family and entrepreneurship. He pastors Waco Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, where his wife, Saundrea Bible, serves as church secretary and supports children's education and family ministries. Their outreach includes W.S.G.B.C. Daycare Center, Kids Night Out, Prayer 'n Breakfast and Family Enrichment Classes.

Through Bible & Sovereign Partners, LLC, the family also operates an investment advisory business and Young Bible Readers, an initiative promoting faith, leadership, financial responsibility and entrepreneurship among youth.

Whether serving through banking, business, ministry or education, Bible's mission remains consistent: investing in people and helping build stronger families, businesses and communities.

BOLTS BUILDS BUSINESS, COMMUNITY AND LEGACY

Dominique "Rocko" Bolts has built ROCMYSTYLE into more than a barbershop. Over the past 15 years, it has become a welcoming community space rooted in connection, opportunity, ownership and joy.

Bolts, an entrepreneur, barber, community leader and commercial real estate investor, opened ROCMYSTYLE on June 22, 2010. He began by building his clientele one customer at a time, learning business through experience and reinvesting in his vision.

"Community isn't something we added to the business—it has always been part of the business," Bolts said.

Customers have entered ROCMYSTYLE for haircuts and found encouragement, advice, networking, mentorship and a safe place to be themselves. The shop has hosted celebrations, community conversations, events and programs such as Safe Space Sunday. The brand has also expanded to include merchandise and other business ventures.

Bolts' upbringing and personal experiences helped shape his leadership. His father was incarcerated during his childhood, requiring him to learn some lessons differently. Becoming a husband and father later deepened his commitment to legacy, ownership and creating opportunities for others.

Among his proudest accomplishments is purchasing the land where his barbershop stands. When he lacked all the resources needed, Bolts sold 1,000 T-shirts for $20 each to help fund the purchase.



DOMINIQUE "ROCKO" BOLTS

"People weren't just buying a shirt—they were investing in what ROCMYSTYLE could become," he explained.

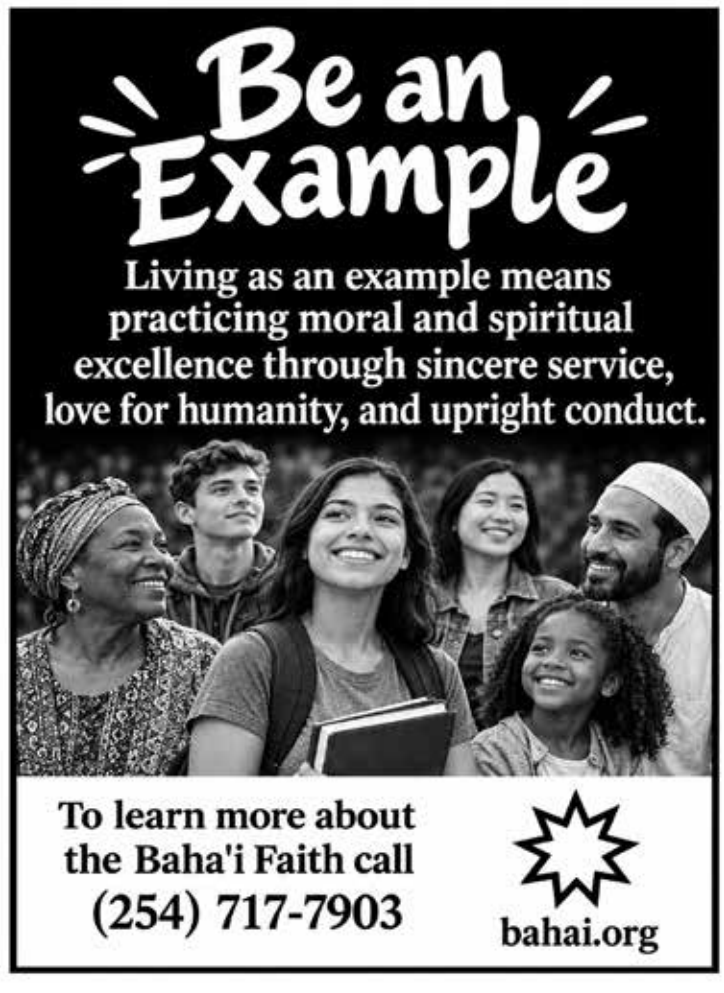
That achievement strengthened his belief in faith, creativity and community support. Today, he sees the property as a symbol of 1,000 people helping transform a vision into ownership.

Bolts now encourages other entrepreneurs to think beyond operating businesses and consider owning buildings, developing property and helping determine what their neighborhoods become. His future plans include expanding ROCMYSTYLE into real estate, redevelopment and community development while preserving the character of Waco neighborhoods. He wants entrepreneurs to have a seat at the table as Waco continues growing.

His advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is direct: "Start before you feel ready." He encourages them to begin small, remain consistent, build relationships and learn from mistakes.

Readers can connect with Bolts on social media at @rockobolts, book barbering services at rockodabarber.com, purchase ROCMYSTYLE merchandise or support upcoming community events.





OMARI AND ABBY HEAD: POURING INTO BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

For Omari and Abby Head, Pop's Lemonade Company is about more than what fills a cup. It is about family legacy, second chances, and building a business that helps others grow.

The Waco couple officially launched Pop's in September 2020, but its roots reach back to Omari's childhood. His father taught him to make lemonade at age 10. Years later, a fresh-squeezed recipe became a customer favorite at Mac House, the couple's gourmet macaroni and cheese restaurant.

When Mac House closed, the Heads faced disappointment, embarrassment, and concern for the 15–20 employees who had depended on them. Yet that experience taught them valuable lessons about leadership, financial management, difficult decisions, and changing direction.

"We've learned that failure doesn't have to be final," they shared.

The lemonade offered a fresh beginning. At Cheddar Box, another business they owned at Magnolia Market, they sold unlabeled bottles from a cooler outside their food truck. They eventually named it Andy's Fresh Squeezed Lemonade, honoring Omari's father, before establishing the Pop's brand.

Today, Pop's serves signature lemonade and assorted flavors at its Franklin Avenue drive-thru, Magnolia Market at the Silos, and Baylor University sporting events. The company also serves weddings, corporate gatherings, festivals, and other special occasions.

One memorable milestone was reaching McLane Stadium. Their brand now appears in an in-game experience featuring a full LED takeover during every Baylor home football game—a remarkable progression from bottles in an ice chest.

Still, some of their proudest moments come when their daughters recognize Pop's around town and celebrate what their parents have built.

Entrepreneurship runs through both families. Omari's father and maternal grandmother owned businesses; Abby's grandparents invested in real estate. Abby credits her grandmother's generosity, determination, and work ethic as lasting influences. Omari points to his mother's wisdom and a college mentor who helped him develop confidence and recognize his potential.

As husband-and-wife business partners, the Heads emphasize communication, complementary strengths, and a shared vision. Faith guides their decisions, their response to challenges, and their definition of success. They want their daughters to inherit an example of generosity, integrity, and care for others.

Those values shape their leadership. Alongside fresh ingredients and consistent products, they emphasize hospitality: helping customers feel welcomed, valued, and appreciated.



ABBY AND OMARI HEAD

They also invest intentionally in employees, particularly young people entering the workforce. Through meaningful employment, accountability, and opportunities to lead, they help team members build confidence, skills, and a strong work ethic.

"If someone leaves our company more confident, more capable, and better equipped for whatever comes next, we consider that a win," they explained.

Their generosity extends to community organizations, including The Cove, which serves youth experiencing homelessness. The Heads have supported its work by providing meals and meeting practical needs.

"We want to pour into organizations that are pouring into our city," they said.

Looking ahead, their guiding idea is to simplify so they can multiply: strengthen their foundation, streamline processes, develop employees, and prepare for sustainable growth while remaining open to God's direction.

Their advice to aspiring entrepreneurs reflects their own experience: start somewhere, learn along the way, and surround yourself with people who offer encouragement, challenge, and honest guidance.

For Omari and Abby Head, success means building lasting relationships—and making Waco better, one opportunity and one cup at a time.

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254-749-6594
monadunkin@gmail.com

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PATE BRINGS PURPOSE TO CEN-TEX CHAMBER

Rachel E. Pate stepped into the role of Interim President and CEO of the Cen-Tex African American Chamber of Commerce on August 1, 2026, bringing a decade of Chamber service and a leadership philosophy grounded in relationships, follow-through and measurable results.

"Listening to local business owners, serving on community boards and bringing Chamber programs to life have prepared me to lead with purpose," Pate said. "I understand the trust this role requires and am ready to earn it through our work."

The Chamber helps businesses connect, grow and gain access to opportunities, with a particular focus on African American entrepreneurs and the broader business community. Through referrals, business development, partnerships and practical support, Pate wants Chamber membership to open meaningful doors.



RACHEL E. PATE

Her immediate priorities include securing sustainable funding, increasing organizational capacity and clearly communicating the Chamber's value. She recognizes that members, sponsors and community partners want to understand what their investments support and why a strong African American Chamber is important to Waco's economic future.

Under Pate's leadership, the community is already seeing visible progress. October's inaugural Nightmare on Elm attracted more than 1,000 people to East Waco and demonstrated what organizations can accomplish through collaboration instead of competition.

The Chamber is also helping entrepreneurs pursue capital through its fall BOSS Pitch Competition and supporting women's professional growth through Esther's Closet development pathways.

"Each effort strengthens our businesses and community," Pate said.

Although her appointment is interim, Pate's commitment to moving the Chamber forward is firm. Her strategy includes establishing clear goals, communicating consistently, strengthening partnerships and creating practical opportunities that help businesses advance. She also wants board members, Chamber members and residents in-

SEE **PATE**, PG. 8

DR. CORETTA M. PITTMAN LEADS WITH HUMILITY AND SERVICE

Dr. Coretta M. Pittman did not set out to become a leader. For more than 20 years, she planned to teach, conduct research and mentor others. However, others recognized her ability and placed her in leadership positions.

Today, Pittman serves as Vice Provost for Community Engagement and Belonging in the Office of the Provost at Baylor University. A specialist in Writing Studies and African American rhetorics, she works with faculty, staff, students and community members to strengthen belonging and connect Baylor with Waco.

Pittman helps faculty navigate belonging-related challenges, develops programs that share faculty research with the public and creates initiatives highlighting student achievement. She also partners with Baylor programs serving international students. One initiative is a Community, Engagement, and Belonging reading group for faculty and staff studying Matthew Desmond's Poverty, by America.

Pittman defines effective leadership as achieving "short-term gains and long-term systemic change." She believes leaders need humility, strong listening and collaboration skills, the courage to make difficult decisions and the willingness to offer correction.

"I try to lead with humility and respect when I ask people to work on programs or events with me," she said.

When facing difficult decisions, Pittman walks and thinks. She also seeks advice from elders and experienced leaders. Her move from faculty member to administrator has taught her that organizations sometimes must make tough decisions and that leaders should avoid quick judgments without all the information.

Faith remains central to her leadership.

"We are here to serve God and others," Pittman said. "I try to keep this at the center of all my decisions and programming efforts."

That commitment inspired her to create the Micah Lecture series, based on Micah 6:8 and its call to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. Invited Baylor faculty members present one lecture on campus and another at a community location, encouraging conversations about justice, mercy and shared responsibility.



DR. CORETTA M. PITTMAN

The inaugural lecturer, Baylor Law Professor Dr. Whitney Holmes, spoke on poverty law and justice at Baylor Law School and the Lee Lockwood Library and Museum. Students from Connally and La Vega attended the community presentation and spoke with Holmes afterward. A spring 2027 lecture featuring Kathryn Janda-Thomte will focus on public health and sustainability.

Only about a year and a half into her role, Pittman hopes to build stronger relationships with area middle and high schools and develop summer programs on Baylor's campus. Although funding is limited, she remains hopeful. She would also like to see more students from McLennan and surrounding counties attend Baylor.

Pittman believes community engagement must be reciprocal.

"The community has so much to teach us at Baylor," she said. "Sometimes we think the reverse, but I know that is not true."

She hopes her work will benefit the community and honor her parents and grandparents. Her advice to emerging leaders is simple:

"Say yes even when you are nervous. Say yes even when you think you don't have the skills to lead. Say yes to new adventures."

STEADFAST CARE BUILDS TRUST THROUGH SERVICE

For Jermaine Malcolm and his wife, Sophia Young-Malcolm, caring for others is more than a business—it is a responsibility rooted in faith, family, and stewardship. Together, the couple founded Steadfast Care & Staffing to provide dependable, relationship-centered support to adults and families throughout Waco, Woodway, Hewitt, and nearby communities.

Steadfast helps individuals remain safe, comfortable, connected, and supported in their homes while giving their families greater peace of mind. Its non-medical services include companionship, light housekeeping, meal and household support, assistance with daily routines, and the reassuring presence of someone families can trust.

The idea for Steadfast grew from conversations Jermaine and Sophia shared about aging, service, family, and the importance of caring well for people. Both came from families and communities where helping others was simply part of life. As they studied the needs of local families, they recognized an opportunity to build the kind of care company they would feel comfortable inviting into their own family's home.

"One of the biggest concerns we repeatedly hear is



JERMAINE MALCOLM

consistency," Jermaine said. Families want caregivers who arrive as promised, communicate clearly, and take time to know the person receiving care.

Launched in Waco in 2026, Steadfast is growing deliberately. Jermaine and Sophia remain personally involved in assessments, family conversations, care, and daily operations. Jermaine oversees scheduling, care plans, policies, training, and caregiver support, while Sophia leads much of the company's business development and relationship-building.

Their careful approach reflects a commitment to quality over rapid expansion. Although the need for home care is great, the couple believes growth should never come at the expense of reliability. For them, sometimes saying "not yet" is an important act of stewardship.

The greatest measure of success is not simply the number of clients served, but whether families feel heard, trust Steadfast to return, and confidently recommend its services to others. Even a few hours of dependable assistance can provide much-needed breathing room for a family carrying significant responsibilities.

Looking ahead, the Malcolms want Steadfast to become one of the Waco area's most trusted home-care providers. They also hope to develop an exceptional caregiver team, create meaningful employment opportunities, and establish stronger career pathways into caregiving and healthcare.

"We want families to know that when we say we will be there, we mean it," Jermaine said.

Families, caregivers, churches, businesses, senior organizations, healthcare providers, and community groups are invited to contact Steadfast Care & Staffing for consultations, employment, or partnership opportunities.

HELP THE ANCHOR!

Local media everywhere is feeling the impact of declining print and limited funding. The Anchor News is no exception. With the support of our community, we continue providing Waco and surrounding areas with trusted news, real estate insights, educational resources, and uplifting content. Your donations keep us in print.

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PHONE: 254.458.9254
FACEBOOK: Wanda Gunter
E-MAIL: wbgunter@hot.rr.com
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WANDA B. GUNTER
Author, Artist &
Contributing writer
for *The Anchor News*

KAY FRANCES BELL CULTIVATES WELLNESS AND COMMUNITY

BY WANDA GUNTER

For Kay Frances Bell, farming is more than growing food. It combines entrepreneurship, wellness, leadership and service.

Originally from Jacksonville, Texas, Bell moved to Waco to teach at La Vega ISD. Her agricultural journey began after she was diagnosed with cancer in 2003 and experienced side effects from chemotherapy and radiation. Searching for natural ways to support her health inspired her to study herbs and grow her own.

Bell has farmed for 10 years and sold herbal teas for eight. In 2017, she named her farm Passion Garden to reflect her love for the earth and green spaces. The farm produces fruits, vegetables and herbs, including thyme, oregano, peppermint and lavender.

Her first dried and packaged product was peppermint tea. As her knowledge grew, Bell began blending herbs based on her research into their traditional wellness uses. Today, Passion Garden Teas offers more than 20 varieties. She grows most of the herbs and purchases the others from an organic farm.

Bell's first retail opportunity came in 2016 when Drug Emporium invited entrepreneurs to sell their products. She approached the manager with six teas. A decade later, the store carries more than 20 Passion Garden Teas. A smaller selection is available at Water Tree on Lake Air Drive.

Limited marketing funds remain a challenge, but Bell is upgrading her packaging and hopes to enter additional stores. Her vision includes expanding the farm and creating space for tours and retreats.

As a woman in a male-dominated industry, Bell has entered rooms where few women farmers were represented. Those experiences strengthened her determination to lead and open doors for others.

In 2014, she founded Global Revive Community Gardens, which operates three gardens serving East Waco



KAY FRANCES BELL

neighborhoods and local food pantries. Bell also serves as president of the Texas chapter of the National Women in Agriculture Association. Both organizations work to reduce food insecurity, provide fresh produce and involve families through activities and summer gardening camps.

Bell is co-founder and vice president of THE Waco Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs. She hopes its emphasis on business ownership will encourage Black entrepreneurs.

Bell encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to take a leap of faith. She has experienced failures but refuses to let them dim her light. Her message is simple: take the risk, learn from setbacks and keep cultivating your dream.

WACO NAACP
UNIT CHAPTER ELECTION
The Waco NAACP will hold its unit chapter election on November 17, 2026.

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LET DEEDS, NOT WORDS, BE YOUR ADORNING

BY JO WELTER

"The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct."

"Let deeds, not words, be your adorning."

These two quotations from my Bahá'í Faith have been especially on my mind as I remember my beloved friend Alice, who passed away seven years ago.

I think about Alice every day and how she lived according to her Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Our faith traditions teach compassion, justice, mercy, and service. Alice didn't just believe in these virtues. She lived them.

Of course, she had her foibles! Alice was delightfully disorganized, with too many things going on at once. Whenever she entered my



JO WELTER AND ALICE POLLARD

home, we immediately collected her keys, phone, and sometimes her purse. Otherwise, she would invariably misplace them and be unable to leave until we found them. Her car and home overflowed with things she had collected, each with her idea of how she would use them or give them away.

And yet, amid all that clutter and confusion, Alice always found what mattered most: someone who needed help.

She found homes for jackets she collected for children who had none in winter. She delivered shoes to teachers for children whose worn-out soles flapped with every step. And when a hungry child called her at nine o'clock at night, Alice showed up with chicken tenders.

Alice accomplished much. She earned a college degree, became Waco's first Black female police officer, devoted herself to her beloved Zeta sorority — GO BLUE! — and helped shape generations of children. An annual event that has become a mainstay of Waco's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations is part of her enduring legacy.

But for me, Alice's greatest legacy is the example she left of what it means to be a loving, compassionate, just, merciful, and humble servant of God and humanity.

Alice wasn't perfect. None of us are. But she understood something essential about living a life of faith: Love is not merely something we profess. It is something we do.

I pray for your continued progress in the next world, my dear friend, as I know you pray for me.

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WHEN EVERYONE DEPENDS ON YOU

BY LINDA CRAWFORD, CERTIFIED LIFE COACH



LINDA CRAWFORD

QUESTION: I am the person everyone calls when they need something. I love my family and want to help, but I am tired and falling behind on my own goals. How do I make time for myself without feeling guilty?

ANSWER: Being dependable is a wonderful quality. However, when helping others consistently leaves you exhausted, it is time to consider what you can reasonably give.

Start by asking yourself: "What have I been postponing because I keep saying yes?" Your answer may reveal a need for rest, time to finish your education, or space to pursue a dream you have carried for years.

Before accepting another request, pause. Try saying, "Let me check my schedule and get back to you." That simple response gives you time to decide whether you have the energy and resources to help.

Next, practice setting a clear, respectful limit. You might say, "I can help for one hour Saturday," or "I cannot take that on this week." You do not need a lengthy explanation.

Then schedule one small commitment to yourself. Protect thirty minutes for walking, studying, praying, or working toward a personal goal. Treat that appointment with the same care you give commitments to others.

Guilt may show up as you change familiar patterns. Notice it without immediately reversing your decision. Ask whether you have broken a promise or simply disappointed an expectation.

You can care deeply for others while making room for your own needs and goals. Begin with one thoughtful decision this week.

COACHING REFLECTION: What will you make room for when you give yourself permission to pause?

Linda Crawford, Certified Life Coach. Enjoy the Journey Life Coaching.

JANET CHEEVES CARRIES A FAMILY LEGACY FORWARD

When Janet Cheeves lost her husband, Willie Chisom, in 2008, she faced grief, single parenthood and uncertainty. She faced a decision: allow the moving company they had built together to end with his death or find the strength to carry his dream forward.

Cheeves chose to continue.

Today, she owns Christian Brothers Moving Service, which has served Central Texas for 26 years. Cheeves has led the company for 18 years, transforming loss into a testimony of faith, perseverance and leadership.

"My decision was not just about keeping a business operating," Cheeves said. "It was about survival, providing for my children and honoring my husband's dream."

Leading a moving company brought challenges. Some people questioned whether a woman could manage a company associated with heavy lifting. Cheeves proved that ownership requires far more than physical strength. It demands organization, financial management, problem-solving, customer service and the ability to lead employees confidently.



JANET CHEEVES

Christian Brothers provides residential and commercial moving, local and long-distance relocation, packing, loading and unloading, deliveries, junk hauling and lawn service within 100 miles of Waco. Cheeves ensures employees are trained, equipment is maintained, customers receive quality service and the company remains financially responsible.

She considers character as important as strength when hiring. Employees must be dependable, honest, respectful, hardworking and willing to learn. The company offers second chances to people who demonstrate trustworthiness and a willingness to work.

Cheeves earned an Associate of Applied Science degree and worked more than 25 years as a pharmacy technician and medical receptionist. She is also a licensed manicurist.

Her leadership has earned two Angie's List Super Service Awards and honors celebrating her accomplishments as a professional woman and Waco business owner.

Still, Cheeves measures success through service, jobs created and families supported.

"My faith in God has given me strength throughout my journey," she said.

Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to believe in

SEE **CHEEVES**, PG. 8

TO MY BROTHERS...

TO MY BROTHERS LEADERSHIP BEGINS WHERE YOU STAND

BY J.L. CRAWFORD



J.L. CRAWFORD

My brothers, when we hear the word "leader," we often think of someone standing behind a podium, running a business, or holding an elected office. Yet some of the most important leadership takes place around a kitchen table, on a job site, in a church hallway, or beside a young man who needs direction.

Every day, our actions teach somebody something. Our children watch how we handle disappointment. Our coworkers notice whether we keep our word. Young people observe how we treat women, respect elders, and respond when things do not go our way. We are setting an example, whether we intend to or not.

The question is: What kind of example are we setting?

Jesus showed us leadership through service. He listened, taught, encouraged, and met people in their need. He even washed His disciples' feet. His example reminds us that serving others requires humility and a willingness to do work that may receive little recognition.

Brothers, we can practice that kind of leadership today. Call the young man who has stopped attending church. Support a local business. Help a neighbor complete a difficult task. Take time to explain what you know instead of criticizing someone for not knowing it.

We must also be willing to examine ourselves. A man who can admit a mistake, offer an apology, and change his behavior gives others a powerful example of accountability. Our families need to see that growth is possible at every age.

Somebody helped us along the way. Someone offered advice, opened a door, prayed for us, or refused to give up on us. Now we have opportunities to extend that same care to others.

My brothers, consider who might benefit from your time, your experience, or your encouragement this week. Then make the call. Show up. Follow through.

The place where you stand may be the very place God has given you to lead.



GOD'S GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS

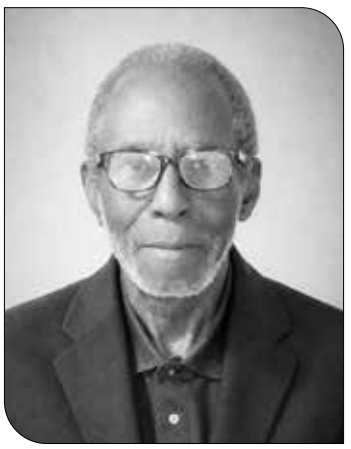
BY GEORGE STEWART

James 1:17. God gives good and perfect gifts. A perfect gift from God works for our good according to His will and purpose for our life.

John 3:16. God gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins. We are saved by faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

John 14:17. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to believers that dwells inside of us forever. The Holy Spirit baptizes all Christians into one body, the Church. The Holy Spirit comforts the body and empowers members of the body to be faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

God's gifts of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for salvation can only be accepted by faith. We are saved by faith and not of ourselves; it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). By faith, the gospel is preached, sinners confess Jesus Christ, God adds to the Church, and by faith, the Church bears fruit.



REV. GEORGE STEWART

Our faith will be tested by many trials and tribulations (1 Peter 1:7). A believer's faith will not fail; it will endure until the end. Your faith will allow you to fight a good fight, finish your course, and receive a crown (2 Timothy 4:7–8).

God's gifts of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and faith will work for good in a Christian's life and be honored and praised by Jesus Christ at His appearing. Amen.

EUREKA

BY MONA DUNKIN

The story goes that Greek scholar Archimedes cried "Eureka" after stepping into a bathtub and noticing the water rise as his body submerged. That observation revealed how displacement could measure irregular objects.

"Eureka" means "I found it." We've all had those "aha" moments when something unclear suddenly makes sense. One of mine changed how I approached my work.

I love to work, whether managing home responsibilities, earning a paycheck, or volunteering. I follow the Biblical principle: "whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." Still, enthusiasm can lead us across a line without our realizing it.

I teach life skills and know from experience that these principles can change lives. In my zeal, I wanted people to attend my presentations, join support groups, and read my books. I believed I had a message the world needed to hear.



MONA DUNKIN

After a sparsely attended class, I sank into a side chair with a "what's the use" attitude. Then I sensed God speaking into my spirit: "No, Mona, it is not that you have a message the world needs to hear; it is that you have a message you need to share."

That small shift brought freedom. I became the teacher ready whenever the student appeared. Whether the audience numbered two or two thousand, I was thankful to share.

My prayer is to reach those seeking hope, stronger relationships, time management, and meaningful goals.

The "Eureka" effect continues. I can offer information, encouragement, and principles for living. When someone benefits, I rejoice without exalting myself. When someone rejects the message, I am saddened but not depleted.

Either way, I have fulfilled my calling. I shared the message.

Invite Mona to speak to your group. Enjoy her humor, uncommon insights, and thought-provoking poems, and leave challenged and motivated. Call 254-749-6594.

PATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

volved in shaping the organization's future.

Pate emphasizes that leadership is shared. The board provides guidance and accountability, while staff members and ambassadors connect with businesses and strengthen relationships. Sponsors, businesses and community partners contribute ideas, expertise and resources.

"Everyone has a role, and their involvement makes all the difference," she said.

Pate invites the community to support the Chamber by joining or renewing membership, sponsoring programs, volunteering, attending monthly events or introducing the organization to businesses needing assistance.

Her desired legacy centers on greater strength, access and inclusion.

"I want to leave our organization stronger, with more businesses equipped to succeed and more people who know opportunity in Waco includes them," Pate said.

Her work continues

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FOUNDATION HONORS FAMILIES AFFECTED BY GUN VIOLENCE

For families devastated by gun violence, the pain does not end when the shooting stops. The Montrell Phenix Cease the Violence Foundation is working to ensure that grieving mothers, grandmothers, fathers, and other loved ones do not have to walk that lifelong journey alone.

Established December 5, 2018, the foundation grew from founder Flecha Smyre's personal loss. Smyre lost her son to gun violence on November 7, 2010. Pamela, who works alongside her, lost her grandson on January 30, 2022. Joined by Denise and others who understand the needs of grieving families, they chose to transform their pain into purpose.

CHEEVES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

themselves, learn their industry, welcome support and refuse to let fear determine their future.

Christian Brothers Moving Service is more than a company. It is Willie Chisom's dream, Janet Cheeves's testimony and a family legacy built to endure.



FLECHA SMYRE

The foundation's mission is to help stop violence through public-health strategies and community engagement while bringing awareness, support, and love to affected families. Organizers hope to provide grieving mothers with emotional support and a safe space among people who understand their experience without requiring them to explain their pain.

The group hosted "A Celebration of Strength, Love, & Remembrance" at 6 p.m. Saturday, October 24, at Floyd's Audio Capital, 1313 Dallas Street in Waco. The free public event honored four area women who have lost a loved one or grandchild to gun violence: Natalie Bradshaw, Kesha DeGrate, Linda James, and Ida McLennan.

Organizers want each honoree to know that she is loved, supported, and not forgotten—and that her child continues to be remembered. They plan to make the celebration an annual event, randomly selecting four women or men each year from submitted names.

The foundation emphasizes that the trauma of gun violence continues through missed birthdays, holidays, financial changes, and countless family "firsts" without a loved one. Grief, they said, can last a lifetime.

Over the next five years, the organization hopes to see a rapid decline in gun violence and violence of every kind throughout Waco and Central Texas. Donors, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners are needed.

"This is our story today, but it could be your story tomorrow," organizers shared. "No one is exempt from the threat of gun violence."

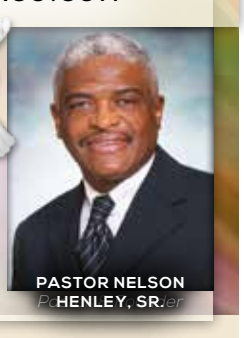
To volunteer, sponsor the event, nominate a future honoree, or learn more, contact Flecha Smyre at Ceasetheviolence@yahoo.com.

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PASTOR NELSON HENLEY, SR.

SPANN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nee wanted to honor Spann's New Orleans roots and the community that welcomed his family. King's Chicken Wings was born from that desire.

Its wings reflect New Orleans' food culture, but the Spanns want guests to remember more than food. Their company centers on three commitments: "A Unique Experience. Good Food. A Clean Restaurant."

That commitment has helped King's earn Best of Waco for Chicken Wings four consecutive years. A third location scheduled for December 2026 will create jobs, develop future leaders and serve more Central Texas families.

For Spann, entrepreneurship is about people.

"We're not just building a business," he said. "We're building people."

Team members are encouraged to develop confidence, leadership and career skills.

Growth has brought challenges, including rising food costs, staffing demands and operational expenses. The couple must preserve the quality, culture and personal connections that made King's successful while preparing for expansion.

"Passion may get you started, but discipline, leadership and perseverance are what keep you going," Spann said.

He advises entrepreneurs to begin with purpose, understand their finances, build teams, remain teachable and refuse to let fear stop them.

"Build something that matters, not just something that makes money," he said.

At King's, hospitality is part of the company's identity. Employees are encouraged to form connections and brighten someone's day.

"People may come for the food, but the way you make them feel determines whether they come back," Spann said.

The Spanns want King's to be known for creating opportunities, strengthening families, supporting schools and nonprofits, developing leaders and inspiring dreams.

"Our story started with a community that gave to us," Spann said. "Our legacy will be defined by what we give back."

Learn more at www.kingschickenwings.com or call 254-218-3250.

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DEMETRIUS ELLIS LEADS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS, SERVICE AND CREATIVITY

Demetrius Ellis believes leadership is not defined by a title. It is demonstrated through service, relationships, accountability and the influence a leader has on others.

As an assistant principal at China Spring Elementary School, Ellis brings more than 13 years of experience. He has served as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, associate principal and principal. Through every position, his purpose has remained constant: making a difference in students' lives.

Ellis credits his childhood coaches with inspiring his career. They held him accountable, challenged him to reach his potential and supported him when he needed them. Their example shaped his belief that leaders can maintain high expectations while ensuring people know they are valued.

"My leadership philosophy is built around relationships, consistency, accountability and high expectations," Ellis said. "I believe you can hold people accountable while still



DEMETRIUS ELLIS

making sure they know you care about them."

Ellis demonstrates that philosophy through Bow Tie Tuesday, an initiative that transforms students' artwork into handcrafted wooden bow ties. Students submit drawings and ideas, and Ellis recreates designs. He uses a laser engraver and cutter before sanding, painting, assembling and finishing each bow tie by hand.

The bow tie is presented to the student whose creativity inspired it. For Ellis, the project is not about clothing or craftsmanship. It is a leadership tool that helps students feel seen, heard and appreciated.

Bow Tie Tuesday began with Ellis's first wooden bow tie on September 15, 2020. Since then, he has created more than 300 bow ties. His son has joined the movement, wearing one each Tuesday and encouraging classmates to submit designs.

Ellis hopes the initiative encourages other educators to develop ways to connect with students and strengthen school culture. He believes every interaction with a student, parent, educator or community member offers an opportunity to lead through service.

His message to young people reflects his leadership journey: find something meaningful, keep developing it and do not allow others to discourage you.

"If you believe in it, put your time into it and give it your all," Ellis said. "You never know where it might take you."

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YOU CAN'T WIN A SPIRITUAL WAR WEARING ONLY 1% OF GOD'S ARMOR!

BY APOSTLE DR FANNY MINNITT

Have you ever left home feeling prepared for the day, only to discover you forgot something important? Perhaps your keys, wallet, or phone. Suddenly, you realize something essential is missing.

Now imagine a Roman soldier entering battle wearing only 1% of his armor. How long would he survive?

Yet many Christians face spiritual battles without fully utilizing the protection God provides.

In Ephesians 6:11 (KJV), Paul writes, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Paul lived under Roman rule and understood the equipment Roman soldiers used in warfare. Their armor included a protective breastplate, helmet, shield, sturdy footwear, and sword. Each piece served a specific purpose. A soldier entering combat without adequate protection risked serious injury or death.

Paul used this familiar military imagery to illustrate spiritual warfare.

The belt represents truth, the breastplate righteousness,



APOSTLE FANNY MINNITT

and the footwear readiness through the gospel of peace. The shield represents faith, the helmet salvation, and the sword of the Spirit God's Word. Paul also emphasizes prayer.

But what does this mean for everyday life?

Consider the unexpected battles we encounter: family disagreements, betrayal, financial struggles, fear, discouragement, and temptation. Sometimes, our greatest struggles occur within our own thoughts and emotions.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

Our battle is spiritual, but people are not our enemies.

Our spirit needs fellowship with God. Our soul—our mind, will, and emotions—must continually be renewed through His Word. Our bodies should honor Him through righteous living.

Imagine carrying the shield of faith while neglecting truth, prayer, or righteousness. Would you consider yourself fully prepared?

God never intended believers to face spiritual opposition partially equipped.

First Thessalonians 5:23 reminds us that God desires our whole spirit, soul, and body to be preserved blameless.

Today, examine your spiritual preparedness. Are you allowing fear to overpower faith? Are you relying on your own strength instead of God's?

Remember, spiritual victory requires God's strength, not merely human determination.

You cannot win a spiritual war wearing only 1% of God's armor!

Before your next battle, ARMOR UP!

GOD'S OBJECTIVE

BY PASTOR MATTHEW REED

God's objective for you through salvation is to keep you secure from the intent of the enemy. As the church, we must remain aware of God's preparation to protect His people. Our Father Jehovah has provided us with a defense system second to none and superior to all.

In the natural world, America has supplied Israel and Ukraine with air defense systems reported to intercept up to ninety percent of drones and missiles. Men are impressed with these systems. Yet God has given the church a spiritual defense that destroys one hundred percent of Satan's weapons.

We must understand that Satan is our enemy. The shield of faith is the divine defense system I speak of. Ephesians 6:16 states, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

God also provides us with intelligence that is one hundred percent accurate. As



PASTOR MATTHEW REED

stated in 1 John 3:20, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." His Word discerns every thought and intention. Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The enemy can never deceive or surprise you, for our God never sleeps nor slumbers. Psalm 121:4 declares, "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

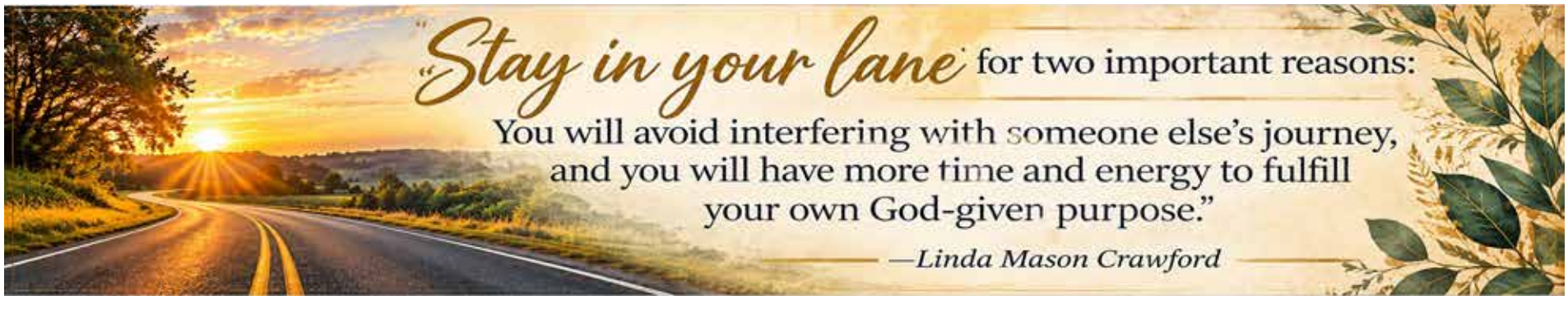
The weapons of our warfare are the most advanced system known to man. According to 2 Corinthians 10:4, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

This system is available only to the church. It is so advanced that we can activate it by our thoughts. Ephesians 3:20 states, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

This divine protection is found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is so powerful that it will preserve you from the wrath of God. It is truly one of a kind—there is no other like it.

If you are seeking a security contract that covers all your needs, I suggest you contract with God. To do that, you must get in touch with His Son, for no one else has the authority to negotiate this covenant.





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BLOOD SUGAR, BLOOD PRESSURE & BALANCE

BY DR. SHAMONICA TRUNELL

November brings cooler weather, Thanksgiving celebrations, and opportunities to reflect on our blessings—including our health. Because November is National Diabetes Month, it is an ideal time to focus on blood sugar and blood pressure.

Diabetes and high blood pressure may develop without obvious symptoms. When unmanaged, they can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and other complications. Fortunately, small, consistent changes can make a meaningful difference.



DR. SHAMONICA TRUNELL

Six Ways to Protect Your Health

1. Know Your Numbers

Blood pressure measures the force of blood against artery walls, while blood sugar reflects glucose in the bloodstream. Ask your healthcare provider how often you need blood pressure, blood sugar, and A1C screenings.

2. Enjoy Holiday Favorites—with Balance

Enjoy traditional dishes without overindulging. Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, one quarter with lean protein, and one quarter with carbohydrates. Eat slowly and stop when comfortably satisfied.

3. Watch the Salt and Sugar

Season foods with herbs, garlic, onion, or lemon. Choose water or unsweetened beverages more often and enjoy desserts in reasonable portions.

4. Walk After Dinner

A 10- to 15-minute walk after eating can support blood sugar management, heart health, mobility, and emotional well-being. Invite your family to join you.

5. Protect Your Peace

Holiday stress can affect sleep, blood pressure, and blood sugar. Set realistic expectations, ask for help, pray, rest, and remember—you do not have to accept every invitation or responsibility.

6. Don't Wait Until January

Your body does not operate on a calendar. Schedule postponed appointments, maintain healthy routines, take medications as prescribed, and prepare for holiday pharmacy closures.

A Thanksgiving Reminder

Thank your body for carrying you through another year—your legs for every step, your heart for working faithfully, and your mind for navigating life's challenges. Then commit to caring for those gifts. Gratitude followed by action can be transformative.

Your Takeaway

Enjoy your traditions while protecting your future. Know your numbers, eat intentionally, move regularly, manage stress, and remain consistent with preventive care.

Monthly Self-Care Challenge

Take the 10-Minute Holiday Health Challenge:

Move for 10 minutes daily.

Make one healthy food or beverage swap.

Record one blessing and one way you cared for yourself each day.

November Wellness Reminder

Ask yourself: Have I checked my blood pressure? Do I need blood sugar or A1C screening? Am I taking medications consistently? Do I have enough for holiday closures? Never change prescribed medication without professional guidance.

Dr. Shamonica's Prescription for Healthy Living

"This Thanksgiving, don't just count your blessings—take care of them. With balance, intention, and consistency, you can enjoy life while protecting your health."

Until next month, be well, live intentionally, and remember—your health is your greatest wealth.

DR. TIFFANY SPICER LEADS WACO ISD FORWARD

Dr. Tiffany T. Spicer leads Waco Independent School District with a conviction: every student deserves opportunity, support and someone who believes in their potential.

Spicer became Waco ISD's superintendent on October 15, 2024. Her leadership style combines relationships, optimism and high expectations. She describes her approach as moving between "the dance floor and the balcony"—working alongside employees while stepping back to examine the district's direction and long-term needs.

"Know your students, know your staff and know your community," Spicer said. "They are my why."

Growing up in a military family taught Spicer to adapt quickly and build relationships across communities. Those experiences shaped her commitment to ensuring that students feel seen, supported and represented.

Her journey began at The University of Texas at Austin, where she earned a bachelor's degree in social work. She earned alternative teacher certification and taught special education and reading in Round Rock ISD. She earned a master's degree in educational leadership from Texas State University-San Marcos and a doctorate from Texas A&M University.

Spicer advanced from teacher to assistant principal and district administrator before serving as superintendent of Buna ISD. She accepted the Waco position because she saw an opportunity to strengthen the community by expanding equity, access and excellence across its schools.



DR. TIFFANY T. SPICER

Under her leadership, Waco ISD has established unified math and English curricula from prekindergarten through 12th grade, strengthened career pathways and expanded instructional support for teachers. The district also completed the first year of its 2025–2030 Strategic Plan and created student and teacher advisory committees.

Spicer is proud of the district's partnership with McLennan Community College, which helps students take district-funded dual-credit courses. She also values partnerships with Communities In Schools and Waco Family Medicine that support students' emotional, behavioral and physical health.

As a visible Black woman in leadership, Spicer remains grounded in faith, family, health and service. She believes transparency and trust are essential when difficult decisions must be made.

Her desired legacy is a district culture built on genuine relationships and unwavering support—one in which students from every background have barriers removed and know their community believes in them.



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DOES CONVERTING YOUR GARAGE ADD VALUE?

SUBMITTED BY LINDA MCDONALD

When your family needs more space, the garage may look like the perfect solution. Could it become another bedroom, a home office, or a comfortable gathering place? Before replacing that garage door with a wall, consider how the change could affect your home's value.

A garage conversion can add useful living space, but it does not automatically increase resale value. The outcome depends on the quality of the work, neighborhood expectations, available parking, and what buyers want.

For a family needing room for an aging parent or a growing household, the additional space may be valuable. However, buyers who want protected parking, storage, or a workshop may see the missing garage as a drawback.

Start by talking with a local real estate professional. Reviewing comparable homes with and without garages can help you understand how buyers in your area might respond.



LINDA MCDONALD
REALTOR, CRS, GRI, PMN, SRS

Next, check with your local building department about permits, zoning, and parking requirements. Also review any homeowners association restrictions before beginning construction.

A successful conversion involves much more than paint and flooring. Have qualified professionals evaluate insulation, heating and cooling, electrical work, moisture protection, and any required emergency exits. The finished room should feel like a natural part of the home.

Do not assume the converted space will automatically count toward your home's reported living area. Appraisal standards and the room's characteristics matter. Keep permits, inspection records, and contractor documents.

Consider your complete budget, including where vehicles, tools, and stored belongings will go. Spending money on a conversion does not guarantee you will recover that amount when selling.

Ultimately, the right decision balances today's needs with tomorrow's resale possibilities. If you plan to remain in your home, the daily benefit may justify the expense. If selling soon, explore your options carefully.

Before you convert, get informed. A thoughtful plan can help you create space that serves your family while protecting your investment.

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• Commitment: 3 months minimum
• Savings: $400+ compared to pay-per-visit

NOTES
• *Household members only; proof of address required.*
• *Monthly payments are non-refundable once the month begins.*
• *Unlimited Plan capped at 12 visits per month, per member.*
• *Massage included only in Unlimited Plans.*

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DIABETES, HEART DISEASE AND MEDICARE

BY MARGARET IVORY

Living with diabetes or heart disease can mean keeping up with medications, doctor visits, tests, and daily health routines. With so much to manage, it is important to understand the Medicare coverage available to you.

Some Medicare Advantage plans are designed specifically for people with certain chronic health conditions. These are called Chronic Condition Special Needs Plans, or C-SNPs. Depending on the particular plan, qualifying conditions may include diabetes, chronic heart failure, or certain cardiovascular disorders.

These plans bring together Medicare hospital, medical, and prescription drug coverage, with services tailored to the people they serve. Care coordination can help members navigate their healthcare needs and follow a personalized care plan.

However, having diabetes or a heart condition does not automatically qualify someone for every special needs plan. Each plan has specific eligibility requirements, and your qualifying condition must be verified. You must also have Medicare Parts A and B and live within the plan's service area.



MARGARET IVORY

Before choosing a plan, start with the healthcare professionals you trust. Check whether your primary care doctor, cardiologist, endocrinologist, and preferred hospital participate in the network.

Next, review your medications. Your insulin, heart medications, and other prescriptions deserve careful attention. Ask about covered drugs, pharmacy choices, costs, and any coverage requirements.

It is also important to understand your expenses for specialist visits, hospital stays, medical equipment, and other services. Additional benefits may be available, but benefits and eligibility vary by plan. Always review the details rather than relying on an advertisement or a friend's experience.

As an independent Medicare broker, I am excited to help people living with diabetes and qualifying heart conditions explore coverage designed with their needs in mind. Together, we can review available options and determine whether a plan fits your doctors, prescriptions, and budget.

Bring your medication list, your doctors' names, and your questions. You deserve clear explanations and time to make an informed decision.

This November, while giving thanks for family and friends, take a moment to consider your health coverage.

Understanding your choices is an important step toward preparing for the year ahead with greater confidence and peace of mind.

Margaret Ivory, Medicare Plans Agent, 254-313-7413.

The Anchor News



Seeking Senior Submissions

FOR OUR DECEMBER ISSUE

Do you know a remarkable senior who is **age 89 or older?**

We are accepting feature submissions (350 words or less) to honor and celebrate our seniors (ages 89+) in the December issue of *The Anchor News.*

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

- Write your submission in Word (up to 350 words).
- Include a color headshot of the senior.
- Send it to **theanchornews@aol.com** within the body of an email OR as a Word-only attached document.

TEXT (254) 715-8943 to let us know your email has been sent, and include the email address you used, so we can be expecting it.

DEADLINE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

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MORNING WORSHIP .....11:15 a.m.
SUNDAY EVENING.....6:00 p.m.
MON. BIBLE STUDY.....7:00 p.m.
WED. PRAYER WORSHIP...7:00 p.m.
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