

SERVING *the* CENTRAL TEXAS COMMUNITY for 23 YEARS!

# THE *Anchor* NEWS

FREE! | JANUARY 2026

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 6

## ALEISHA HALL: A NEW MASTER'S AND A LOVE OF LEARNING

Aleisha Hall is a dedicated educator and lifelong learner whose journey proves that education is not a race, but a calling that unfolds in its own time. Born and raised in Waco, Texas, Hall's path to academic achievement was anything but traditional, yet it is precisely that journey that has shaped her into an inspiring example of perseverance, faith, and purpose.

Hall attended Waco ISD schools, beginning at Kendrick Elementary School, then Lake Air Middle School, the Waco Ninth Grade Center, and Waco High School, from which she graduated with the Class of 2000. At the time, college was not something she imagined for herself. Like many young adults, she entered adulthood unsure of her direction, enrolling at McLennan Community College shortly after high school before stepping away to work.

Between 2000 and 2008, Hall moved between McLennan



ALEISHA HALL

Community College and Navarro College, taking courses while working full time. Unsure of a career path, she

explored foundational coursework and later youth counseling. A turning point came when she completed practicum hours at G. W. Carver Middle School. That experience sparked a love for working with students and quietly laid the foundation for a future in education.

After more than a decade working in food service, Hall took a leap of faith and applied for a teacher assistant position at Premier High School of Waco. Although she had not yet earned a degree, she had accumulated enough college credits to qualify. She began her role during the 2009–2010 school year, and the experience reignited her determination to complete her education.

Motivated by her work with students, Hall re-enrolled at McLennan Community College and earned her asso-

SEE **HALL**, PG. 6

## AN ATTORNEY'S FAITH-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

At just 35 years old, Attorney DeAndrea Petty has already reached a level of leadership that many attorneys spend decades striving to attain. Her journey, however, has never been driven by titles or comparison. Instead, it has been shaped by faith, preparation, and a deep commitment to justice and service.

Raised in the small town of Marlin, Petty's foundation was built on humility, family, and community. She credits her steady grounding to her proud mother, Annie Faye Petty, who remains a constant presence in her life and work. Known for doing nearly everything alongside her daughter, Annie Faye Petty has been a source of encouragement, accountability, and strength throughout DeAndrea's academic, professional, and leadership milestones.

From the beginning of her legal career, Petty embraced what she calls a "Yes we can" mindset. Rooted in her faith in God, she believes the greatest limitations are often self imposed. Once she recognized how and where she could make a difference, she moved forward with intention, determined to be a change agent and an advocate for others.

For eight years, Petty successfully owned and operated her own law firm, building her practice from the ground up. While law school prepared her to analyze the law and advocate effectively, entrepreneurship taught her lessons



DEANDREA PETTY

that could only be learned through experience. Managing taxes, marketing, advertising, and daily operations strengthened her understanding of leadership beyond the courtroom. Those skills also allowed her to extend her legal knowledge into leadership roles within professional organizations, including service as a parliamentarian and in national attorney positions.

As a young solo practitioner, Petty learned how to lead without a safety net. She spent countless hours researching, preparing, and learning independently when answers were not immediately available. Over time, she built strong professional relationships with other attorneys who provided guidance during trials and offered perspective when she needed direction. Through that process, she learned to trust her preparation and discovered that most of the time, she knew more than she initially realized.

Returning to Central

SEE **PETTY**, PG. 10

## LEADERSHIP ROOTED IN FAITH: JEREMY DAVIS' STORY

For Jeremy Davis, faith has never been a side note. It has been the foundation. As he recently completed his bachelor's degree in Public Administration and City Planning from East Texas A&M, Davis views the milestone not simply as a personal achievement, but as preparation for deeper service. Throughout the journey, his belief in God's purpose provided clarity during uncertainty and peace during overwhelming seasons, reminding him that finishing strong was part of a larger calling.

That faith was tested often. Balancing a demanding academic program alongside



JEREMY DAVIS

leadership roles, family responsibilities, and community commitments required more than organization. It required perseverance. Davis leaned heavily on prayer, choosing discipline over discouragement and purpose over comfort, especially during moments when the weight of responsibility felt heavy.

Family played a central role in his success. Davis credits his wife, Courtney, and their family as his backbone. Their encouragement, patience, and belief carried him through

SEE **DAVIS**, PG. 10

ENJOY THE JOURNEY: A LIFE COACHING Q&amp;A WITH LINDA CRAWFORD—

## WHEN LIFE LOOKS FINE BUT FEELS EMPTY INSIDE



**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.



**LINDA CRAWFORD  
BY LINDA CRAWFORD**

**QUESTION:**

I am doing what I am sup-

posed to do. I work, care for my family, and stay involved, yet I feel tired in a way rest does not fix. I am not depressed, just worn down and disconnected. Is there something wrong with me, or is this simply part of getting older?

**ANSWER:**

There is nothing wrong with you, and this feeling is more common than people admit.

Many individuals reach a season where they are functioning well on the outside

while quietly running on empty inside. This kind of weariness often comes from years of responsibility, constant giving, and little time to pause and reflect on where you are in life.

With time comes wisdom, but also unprocessed loss, postponed dreams, and emotional fatigue that has never been addressed. When those things accumulate, weariness becomes the language of the soul.

This is not a failure. It is an invitation to slow down, reconnect with yourself, and allow support. Clarity does not always come from doing more. Sometimes it comes from being heard.

If this resonates with you, I offer private life coaching sessions by appointment for those who would like a safe and supportive space to talk, reflect, and move forward with intention

—Coach Crawford

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: FEBRUARY COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS OPEN

FROM THE EDITOR...

### ENTERING THE NEW YEAR WITH FAITH AND GRATITUDE

As we close the chapter on 2025, we do so with gratitude for God's keeping power and quiet strength. Every season has reminded us that He is faithful, even when the road is uncer-

tain. Welcoming 2026, we step forward in faith, trusting God to guide our steps and renew our purpose. May the new year bring peace, clarity, and courage to walk boldly in His will.

The Anchor News is seeking 300–400 word articles for our February Black History Month Issue, highlighting Black history makers in Waco and surrounding Central Texas communities. We invite writers, families, churches, schools, organizations, and community members to submit original stories honoring those whose lives and leadership are shaping our community today.

Black history is not confined to the past. It is alive in our classrooms, churches, hospitals, businesses, courtrooms, neighborhoods, and homes. It is reflected in educators who inspire, healthcare

professionals who serve with compassion, entrepreneurs who create opportunity, faith leaders who guide, elders who preserve wisdom, and young people who are breaking new ground.

For this special issue, The Anchor News welcomes submissions that spotlight local trailblazers, unsung heroes, legacy families, and emerging leaders. Articles may be written as profiles, tributes, or historical reflections.

Suggested categories include: Education; Healthcare & Medicine; Faith & Ministry; Business & Entrepreneurship; Law and Civic Leader-

ship; Arts and Culture; Youth and Emerging Leaders; Legacy and Living History; and Community Service.

**Submission Guidelines:**

Articles should be 300–400 words and include one photo. Submissions may be sent within the body of the email (preferred) or as a Word document.

Deadline: January 30

Email: [Theanchornews@aol.com](mailto:Theanchornews@aol.com)

This February, help The Anchor News celebrate Black History Month by telling the stories that matter. Black history is still being written — and it is being written here.

## ADVERTISE TODAY!

# THE *Anchor* NEWS

*The Anchor News* is a free, monthly publication of Crawford Publishing, E-T-C, located in Waco, Texas, (254) 715-8943. All rights reserved.

**PURPOSE**

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

**POLICY**

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

**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Signed opinion articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial staff. Unsigned editor-

ials reflect the opinions of the editor.

**LETTERS & ARTICLES POLICY**

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.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions are \$49 a year (12 issues) and can be paid by check or money order. Send all correspondences to *The Anchor News*, P.O. box 24014, Waco, Texas 76702, or email to [theanchornews@aol.com](mailto:theanchornews@aol.com).

**ADVERTISING RATES**

To request advertising rates, contact the office at (254) 715-8943 or visit [theanchornews.org](http://theanchornews.org).

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**WANDA B. GUNTER**  
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# STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

BY MONA DUNKIN

You cannot change another person, but you can influence him to change.

One of our greatest strengths is to know our weaknesses, and to work on them.

THREE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING:

· IMPRESS – Can be done at a distance; no relationship is necessary. Accomplishments.

· INFLUENCE – A little closer; some contact is necessary. Insight, Judgments & Actions.

· IMPACT – More frequent and intense contacts, relationships. Spirit and Attitude.

1. Be skeptical. Be a little leery of what you hear and read. Have an open mind. Do not be gullible and do not be overly critical.

2. Define words. Make sure you understand the definition of terms and how they are applied. Do not assume.

3. Check and double-check your pre-conceived ideas. Are you blocking this information because it counters what you



MONA DUNKIN

have “always believed”. Are you embracing the argument because it is what you have “always thought”. Overcome “feelings” and go with thinking and reasoning. Is what is being presented fact or assumptions. Are you responding with truth or with “folk lore” or unproven statements.

“Do you want truth or what you have been taught?” - Astrid Gulley

4. Examine and re-examine the “evidence”. Many things have been proven, only to be claimed false in the next generation. (Eggs causing cholesterol; Sweeteners not harmful.)

5. Look for other ways of interpretation. Is it always a cause and effect statement? Is it a part of the elephant, but not the whole elephant? Is it too broad or too limited in scope?

6. Do not over complicate or over simplify. Is “Yes” or “No” too cut and dried? Is it a truism but not an absolute?

7. Do not over generalize. Do hotcakes really sell fast? Where is the research and evidence? Has a “common sense statement” been made into a dogma?

8. Apply critical thinking to all areas of life. In the advice you are given, in the “expert” opinions passed off in schools and universities, in folklore, in TV ads, in headlines. Do not readily buy into “studies have shown that...” Keep a leery

eye out knowing facts and figures can be slanted to “prove” most any point of view.

This article was written by

Mona Dunkin, Motivational Speaker and Personal Success Coach, monadunkin@gmail.com.

## WITH GRATITUDE, ALWAYS

BY LINDA CRAWFORD

As we turn the page and continue this journey together, I want to pause and simply say thank you.

The Anchor has never been just a newspaper. It is a community, a conversation, and a shared commitment to telling stories that matter. None of this happens without the people who believe in it.

To our columnists, thank you for lending your voices, your wisdom, and your time. Week after week, you show up with insight, faith, courage, and perspective. You help shape the heartbeat of The Anchor, and I do not take that lightly.

To our readers, thank you for reading, sharing, encouraging, and stopping me in grocery stores, churches, and parking lots to say, “I enjoyed that article.” You remind me why this work matters. Your



LINDA CRAWFORD

loyalty, your feedback, and your trust are deeply appreciated.

To our advertisers, thank you for investing in a platform that uplifts the community and

SEE **GRATITUDE**, PG. 12

# THE COMMUNITY LOAN CENTER EXPLAINED

At NeighborWorks Waco, I serve as the bookkeeper and Community Loan Center of the Heart of Texas liaison. In this dual role, I help ensure that our organization’s finances remain strong and transparent, while also providing access to affordable, small-dollar loans that can ease financial burdens and open doors to opportunity.

The CLC offers affordable small-dollar loans to employees of participating employers, giving them a safer way to handle unexpected expenses. Designed as an alternative to payday or title loans, the program stands out in several key ways:

Key Features:

• Considered a benefit offered only through employers

• Loan Amounts: Up to \$1,000

• Repayment: Up to 12 months through payroll deduction

• Interest Rate: 18% (APR 21.58%)\*

• Payment \$93.35, based on monthly payment\*\*

• No Credit Check

• \$20 application fee

• Fast Approval: Funds available within 24 hours



ALICIA SAWYER

\*Interest Rate and APR are subject to change

\*\*Payment is subject to change, based on rate and APR calculation

Why It Matters:

This year alone, we’ve issued 1,481 loans, saving local families thousands in fees and interest. Every loan represents a step toward financial stability and peace of mind.

Benefits for Employees:

• Avoid high fees and interest

• Access emergency funds quickly

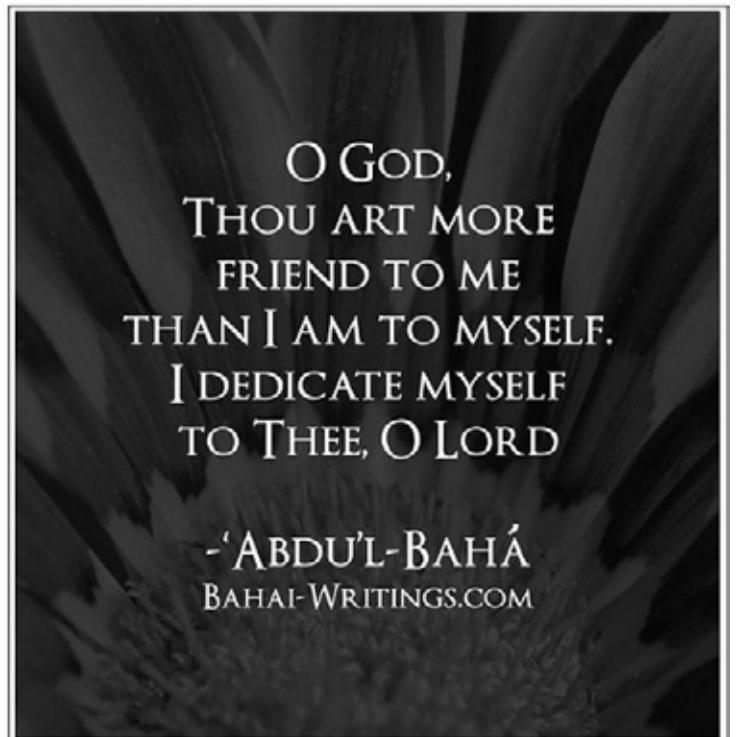
Benefits for Employers:

• Support employee financial wellness

• Reduce stress and absenteeism

• No cost to the employer

This work is deeply meaningful to me because it allows me to combine practical skills with a mission-driven purpose. Every balanced account and every loan we process contributes to building stronger neighborhoods and healthier communities here in Waco, as well as the surrounding communities. Beyond my professional responsibilities, I am also active in my church, where I find a strong foundation for service and faith. My involvement there continually reminds me that the work I do is part of a larger calling to serve others and to carry out God’s work in tangible ways. That spiritual grounding gives me strength and perspective, and it inspires me to approach my role at NeighborWorks Waco with integrity, compassion, and dedication. I am grateful to be part of a team that believes in empowering people, fostering financial stability, and creating opportunities for brighter futures.



To learn more about the Bahá’í Faith, call (254) 717-7903

or visit wacobahais.org



bahai.org/beliefs/

## BABATUNDE PRESENTS BLACK HISTORY PRODUCTIONS IN FEBRUARY

BY W. B. GUNTER

February will bring two powerful and engaging Black History events to downtown Killeen, both hosted at the E-Center, 809 Gray Street. Free and open to the public, these family-friendly programs invite the community to learn, reflect, and connect.

The 2nd Annual Walk Through Museum, scheduled for Sunday, February 1, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM, will feature a compre-

hensive timeline of African and American history, beginning with Africa prior to the European Trans-Atlantic Enslavement Trade and continuing through the present day. The event will also include poetry performances, and a docent will be on hand to answer questions. Attendees are encouraged to bring note-taking supplies. Making knowledge a priority begins with each of us.

The celebration continues on Sunday, February 22,



BABATUNDE

2026, with the Black History Month Afrikan American Bookfair, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM, at the same location. Vendors may begin set-up between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM, with fees starting at \$35 for those providing their own table and chairs. The registration deadline is February 17, 2026, at 5:00 PM. Vendor registration is available through Eventbrite.com, and additional information may be obtained by calling (254) 371-9532 and asking

for Babatunde.

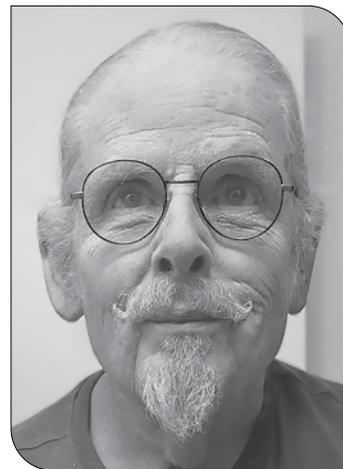
These community-wide events provide meaningful opportunities to engage with authors, artists, historians, and educators while celebrating Black history and culture. With ample parking and a welcoming environment, the E-Center is an ideal venue. Community members are encouraged to attend, invite others, support vendors, and consider the space for future events while meeting owner Carolyn Brown.

## THE VALUE OF GROWING UP WITH DIVERSITY

BY MICHAEL JONES

I was fortunate to have grown up in the small New Mexico mining town of Grants during the 1950s. The families of the white (or Anglo) miners were the minority in the village, which was primarily populated and run by Hispanic families whose ancestors had been in the area for 400 years. My school mates through my freshman year had surnames like Quiñonez, Anzures, Baldonado and Natseway. There were also many school students bussed in from surrounding Native American Pueblo reservations of Laguna and Ácoma. A bushy-tailed Baptist boy, I shockingly dated Roman Catholic girls, helped to mess with my Spanish-speaking friends' junker cars, and was occasionally invited for dinner and an overnight stay with the families of my Pueblo friends.

Now, I'm not so naïve as to believe that there weren't political, racial or social frictions between the various cultures. It was the 1950s, after all. I'm saying only that I was treated with kindness, affection, and teasing good humor. I behaved myself and was respectful, as my folks



MICHAEL JONES

taught me to be. I asked a lot of questions (some undoubtedly impertinent or rude) and heard some very different and beautiful traditions of hospitality, viewpoints about American history that I wasn't learning in school, striking new approaches to spirituality, and of the roles of men and women in their respective cultures.

My horizons extended further when my oldest brother, a career Marine, brought home a bride he met and married in Japan. Our family fell in love with her broken English, her sly sense of humor, her

spectacular cooking, and her ideas about the importance of family.

Well, all those experiences percolated in my brain for thirty or forty years. I entered adulthood not understanding racism, feeling that my religion was better than anyone else's, or why in the world people with a different color skin, language or national heritage would be inferior to me in any way. None of that made sense!

About a dozen years ago, a good friend and fellow worker I had already known for fifteen years introduced me to the Bahá'í Faith. The more I learned about the Faith and its mission to establish equality between men and women, to eliminate all forms of prejudice and extremes of wealth and poverty, and to make manifest the harmony of religion and science (among many other things), the more I felt that I had come home at last.

If the Bahá'í Faith sounds intriguing to you, I urge you to visit the local Waco Bahá'ís' website at [wacobahais.org](http://wacobahais.org). Or you can visit the national Baha'i website at [bahai.org/teachings/](http://bahai.org/teachings/). To speak with someone about the Faith, call (254) 717-7903.

A MONTHLY WORD OF WISDOM AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR MEN...

## TO MY BROTHERS: LIVING MORE FOR GOD IN 2026

BY J.L. CRAWFORD

My brothers, as we step into 2026, I want to speak plainly and from the heart. At this stage of life, I've learned that living for God isn't about doing more noise. It's about doing more obedience.

For many years, I thought strength meant pushing harder, proving myself, and carrying everything alone. Age has taught me better. True strength is surrender. It's waking up each day asking, "Lord, how can I honor You today?" and then having the courage to live the answer.

Scripture reminds us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). That verse hits differently when you've lived long enough to see what chasing "things" costs. Careers fade. Titles change. Bodies slow down. But what you build with God lasts.

Living more for God in 2026 means guarding your spirit. It means choosing peace over pride, prayer over panic, and purpose over popularity. It means loving your wife, your family, and your community



J.L. CRAWFORD

with consistency, not convenience. And when you fall short (and you will), get up quickly. God is not finished with you.

Brothers, we don't have to be perfect to be powerful. We just have to be willing. Willing to listen. Willing to change. Willing to let God lead.

The Bible says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). That decision is daily. Let 2026 be the year we stop straddling the fence and fully plant our feet in faith.

Walk steady, Brothers. God is still calling us higher.

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# JANUARY: RESET & RECHARGE

BY DR. SHAMONICA TRUNELL

January often arrives with

pressure—new goals, new routines, and high expectations. But true, lasting health doesn't come from drastic

changes. It comes from simple, sustainable habits practiced consistently. January is the perfect time to reset your routines, recharge your energy, and create momentum that lasts all year long.

Rather than chasing perfection, focus on progress. Small steps taken daily build a strong foundation for lifelong wellness.

### TIPS TO RESET & RECHARGE

1. Move Your Body with Intention

You don't need an intense workout plan to see results. A daily walk, gentle stretching, or light strength training helps improve circulation, boost mood, and ease joint stiffness—especially after a busy holiday season.

2. Fuel Your Body for Energy

Start the day with protein and whole foods to stabilize blood sugar and reduce cravings. Think eggs, yogurt, nuts, lean meats, fruits, and vegetables. Eating to nourish—not restrict—sets the tone for success.

3. Rebuild Sleep Routines

Late nights and irregular schedules during the holidays can disrupt sleep patterns. Aim to go to bed and wake



DR. SHAMONICA TRUNELL

up at the same time each day. Quality sleep restores immunity, focus, and metabolism.

4. Hydrate Before You Caffeinate

Begin each morning with a full glass of water. Proper hydration supports digestion, brain function, and energy levels—and often reduces fatigue mistaken for hunger.

5. Set One Health Priority

Instead of multiple resolutions, choose one meaningful health goal this month—such as daily movement, stress management, or improved nutrition. Mastery comes from focus.

### YOUR TAKEAWAY

January is not about reinvention—it's about realignment. When you care for your body with consistency and compassion, you create momentum that carries you forward all year.

Remember: small habits create big results.

### MONTHLY SELF-CARE CHALLENGE

"21-Day Reset"

Choose one healthy habit—walking daily, drinking more water, stretching before bed—and practice it for 21 days. Track your progress and celebrate consistency over perfection.

Reminder: Schedule your annual wellness visit and routine labs early in the year to establish a clear health baseline.

## WHY WINTER IS A SMART TIME TO SELL

SUBMITTED BY LINDA MCDONALD

Many homeowners wait until spring to sell, but winter can offer unexpected advantages. With fewer homes on the market, sellers face less competition and more serious buyers—often those relocating for work or dealing with time-sensitive moves.

In the Waco area, winter listings can stand out, especially when homes are warm, well-lit, and inviting. Buyers shopping this time of year tend to be decisive, which can mean quicker offers and smoother negotiations.

While winter selling requires a bit of preparation, such as maintaining curb appeal and clear walkways, it



LINDA MCDONALD  
REALTOR, CRS, GRI, PMN, SRS

can be an ideal opportunity for homeowners looking to sell without the crowd.

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- Instills hope
- Transfer skills into all aspect of life

### Who will benefit:

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- Social Workers
- Educators and Administrators
- Criminal Justice
- Health Care Professionals
- Business Leaders
- Pastoral and Parents
- Individuals



Mona Dunkin  
254-749-6594  
monadunkin@gmail.com

Conducted under the auspices of  
Glasser Institute for Choice Theory

## WHY DR. RODNEY DUCKETT'S OUR-STORY IS SUNDAY'S MUST-LISTEN

TEMPLE, TX — History isn't confined to textbooks. It lives in the voices of our elders, the struggles of our youth, and the stories we share when the world finally slows down.

This Sunday, a beloved Temple tradition finds a powerful new home—and a renewed heartbeat—on the airwaves as Dr. Rodney Duckett presents OurStory: The Lively Art of Conversation. Airing every Sunday morning from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on MY KISS 103.1 FM, the program stands as a vibrant tribute to a pillar of Texas broadcasting and Black media legacy.

For nearly two decades, Roscoe Harrison commanded the screen on PBS with The Focus Show, opening every episode with his iconic greeting:

"Hello, this is Reverend Roscoe Harrison, and you are watching The Focus Show, where we

practice the lively art of conversation."

Dr. Duckett, a longtime admirer of the Reverend's wisdom, immediately recognized the power of those words.

"I told the Elder that if I ever had a platform of my own, I wanted to use that statement," Dr. Duckett recalls.

With a blessing—and a legacy gift—from the man famously known as the last person to record Martin Luther King Jr. before his assassination, The Lively Art of Conversation was officially passed to a new generation.

OurStory is grounded in the belief that conversation is a bridge. Dr. Duckett's mantra—"Where we live, we learn, we earn, and we pass it along"—beats at the heart of every broadcast. By centering OurStory in a world often dominated by "His-story," the show creates sacred space for oral his-

tory, truth-telling, and shared wisdom.

This is the Vibe of the Tribe—a platform where a 25-year-old navigating manhood can find common ground with an 80-year-old icon safeguarding his legacy. From The Men's Factor, which addresses health, survival, and responsibility, to Book Authors' Corner, spotlighting emerging local voices such as JaNay Ratcliff, the show honors the past while fueling the future.

"This is your platform to share your triumphs," says Dr. Duckett. "It's about the legacy you leave behind."

Galvanize your spirit this Sunday. Stop talking at each other—and start talking with each other.

Tune In Every Sunday | 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.; Station: MY KISS 103.1 FM – Temple, Texas; Listen Online: <https://mykiss1031.com/show/lively-art-conversation/>.

## HALL | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ciate degree in December 2012. She continued serving as an assistant teacher for ten years, gaining hands-on experience while quietly preparing for her next step. Knowing she wanted more for herself and her future, she enrolled at Texas A&M University–Commerce to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree. The online for-

mat allowed her to balance full-time work with academic responsibilities.

As graduation approached, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted plans worldwide. Despite uncertainty and discouragement, Hall persevered, graduating Magna Cum Laude in May 2020 during a virtual commencement. She earned

the President's Award twice for maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA, a testament to her discipline and commitment.

The following school year marked another milestone when Hall became a lead teacher at Premier High School, where she is now in her sixth year of teaching. Still driven to grow, she continued her academic journey and recently earned a Master of Science in Organizational Learning Technology from East Texas A&M University, formerly Texas A&M University–Commerce, graduating on December 12, 2025. She pursued the degree to deepen her understanding of leadership and organizational systems, with aspirations of stepping into leadership roles in education.

Hall is the first in her family to earn three college degrees, a distinction she holds with pride and humility. She celebrated her 44th birthday as a college graduate, embodying her belief that it is never too late to achieve new goals. When asked what comes next, Hall simply says she will go wherever God leads her.

Grounded in faith, Hall credits God for sustaining her through moments of doubt and fatigue. Her story continues to inspire students, colleagues, and community members to persist, trust the process, and never give up on their dreams.

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**\$90.<sup>00</sup>**

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## GOD, DESTINY AND A GLASS OF WINE, AN EASY READ AND PERFECT GIFT

The best gift sometimes comes in a small package. Such is the case with *God, Destiny and a Glass of Wine*. All chapters begin with one of Linda Crawford's own "true-story" personal narratives that she later connects to a point that is relevant to this journey called destiny. The book is an easy read. Several readers have told her that they couldn't put it down once they started. It is available on Amazon.com. *God, Destiny, and a Glass of Wine* is sure to open your heart to receive healing, encouragement, and a different outlook on life.

Chapter 1: This Too Shall Pass, but When?

I was almost out of breath by the time I made it to the car. Though it was just a few feet away, it seemed like 100 miles. I had parked my car in the backyard to hide it from the bank. Let's face it. It was an old piece of stick-shift junk, but it was all I had, and I was behind on the payments. But tonight, in my panic to get out of the house, maybe the backyard wasn't so smart. Dressed in a gown, house shoes, and a thin jacket, I gripped the keys that were pinned inside my bra. Oh yes, my bra. That was the safest place to keep my valuables, like my

car keys and what little money I had. I had learned a lot in my 29 years. With lightning speed, I dashed out the backdoor, tripping over the threshold, but still holding my balance and determination. Thank God my boy was spending the night with a friend. It was pitch-black dark outside, as I had no time to flip on the outside lights. I just needed to get out. Once inside my car, I let out a sigh, unaware that I had been holding my breath. Quickly locking the car doors, I knew I was on my way. The car was run down and bent up, but it was my path to freedom tonight and my only means of transportation. I'll never forget it. It was a gray and black Toyota, well...a fading gray and a fading black, a hatchback, about 8 years old at the time, and a stick. Ha! A stick. That could be a holdup since I was still in the learning stage, but I could handle it. I tried to crank the old trap, but it just clicked. I tried again, combining my efforts with a plea. "Please God, I need my car!" Just as the motor turned over, I heard that dreadful sound, a swatch-type sound, like an old screen door dragging. My God! He knew I was going to try to get away. He



LINDA MASON CRAWFORD

knew, so he had unlocked the hatch back, ahead of time! He was in the back so fast; all I could do was bite my lip and jerk forward. "Stop the car, Lynn, and give me the money!" he yelled, as he swiftly crawled into the back seat. He lurched through the bucket seats so fast that my head literally seemed to spin, like the girl in the Exorcist. Grabbing the steering wheel, he yelled again, "Gimme the money, Lynn!" The Exorcist...I was sure that his voice changed. But tonight...no, not tonight. I kept driving, the car swerving across into the other the lane and back again as he, too, gripped the wheel. We came within inches of hitting a minivan. I saw head lights

of an 18 wheeler that we also barely missed as we sped into the on-coming traffic. Hands pinned to the wheel, I was driving to my pastor's house, and no one was stopping me. That was the life I lived for most of my 16 years of marriage to a crack addict, one that was much different from my single days of the quiet, country, church girl. I had never touched drugs in my life. I smoked only one cigarette that nearly killed me. And here I was, 29 years old, married to a drug addict. I had so many similar stories to contend with, jumping fences to get my car back from the drug dealers, standing toe-to-toe and nose-to-nose with dealers who threatened to kill me if I didn't leave them alone about getting my car back, knocks on the door in the middle of the night from thugs demanding money my husband owed them, stealing my own car back and driving backwards, trying to miss the flying bullets. You name it; I just about dealt with it. Many times over the years, I walked into my house to find that every piece of furniture and every appliance was gone—sold in exchange for drugs. I remember waking up one Christmas Day to find that

my babies' gifts were gone, sold for drugs. Once, I frantically searched the streets of Tampa because my husband put our 6-year-old out of the car since it was "too dangerous to take him to the crack house," he said. This was before the days of cell phones. I don't even remember how I found my baby boy. I could go on and on, but the only thing that matters is that one day, I accepted the truth that I had to forgive if I expected to move on with my life. I have since come to grips with the truth, that my now ex-husband was a good person, who loved people. When he was straight, he would give away his last. When he was not, he would take another person's last. I literally saw him take his shirt off and give it away. Once he pulled off his watch and gave it away, and then took my watch and gave it away, too. He had a heart of gold, but in addiction, he was the devil. Still, I had to find a way to forgive. I owed it to myself, my children, and my God.

To order *God, Destiny, and a Glass of Wine*, paste the following into your browser: <https://www.amazon.com/Destiny-Glass-Linda-Mason-Crawford/dp/069211761X>.

### 5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS | INSPIRING & ENCOURAGING | KINDLE CUSTOMER

(Reviewed in the United States on August 20, 2019)

"I absolutely love this book! I could not put it down and read it in two days. There is so much good stuff in this book that I am reading it again. It is inspiring, encouraging and will bless you."

### 5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS FIVE STARS | AMAZON CUSTOMER

(Reviewed in the United States on May 21, 2018)

"This is an amazing book. It is entertaining, compelling and convicting. A definite must-read for everyone!"

### 5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS | EASY READ AND APPLICABLE TO MY LIFE

(Reviewed in the United States on March 27, 2019)

"After *God, Destiny, and a Glass of Wine*, I felt like I could take the author's response to certain circumstances and apply to my own life. Each chapter is a life learning lesson of praising God through hard times, and walking into God's plan for my life. It may appear as an easy read, because I read it in one day my first time reading it. Then I had the opportunity to re-read and breakdown each chapter week by week."

Rey

### 5.0 OUT OF 5 STARS | EXCELLENT BOOK

(Reviewed in the United States on June 13, 2020)

"This is an amazing book. I found it helpful in navigating my fear of not reaching my full potential. It helped me understand how I can have a positive God-ordained destiny. Excellent work!"

Dr. Mia Moody-Ramirez



GOD, DESTINY, AND A GLASS OF WINE  
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# MEDICARE CHANGES: WHAT I WANT YOU TO KNOW

BY MARGARET IVORY

Medicare changes every year, and 2026 brings a mix of higher costs, stronger protections, and new rules that could affect how you use your coverage. My role as a Medicare Plans Broker is to help you understand what's changing and make sure you're prepared for 2026.

1. Let's start with Medicare Part B, which covers doctor visits, outpatient services, preventive care, lab work, and medical equipment.

For most people on Medicare, the standard Part B premium in

2026 will be \$202.90 per month. This amount applies to beneficiaries with moderate incomes. Even if you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, this premium is still required because it is paid directly to Medicare, not to the insurance company.

Most people today are enrolled in Medicare Advantage (Part C) rather than Original Medicare alone.

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, you typically do not have separate Part A or Part B deductibles like those under Original Medicare. Instead, your plan replaces those deductibles

with copayments or coinsurance for services such as doctor visits, hospital stays, outpatient procedures, and lab work.

Each Medicare Advantage plan sets its own cost-sharing structure for items listed above plus an annual out-of-pocket maximum.

This is why reviewing your plan every year matters. A plan with a \$0 premium may still cost more depending on how often you use healthcare services.

2. Prescription Drug Relief Continues in 2026: There is good news when it comes to prescription drug costs. In 2026, Medicare will begin using negotiated prices

for certain high-cost prescription drugs commonly used to treat chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and blood clotting disorders.

In addition, there will be an annual out-of-pocket cap for Part D prescription drugs, set at about \$2,100. Once you reach that amount in a calendar year, you won't pay anything more for covered prescriptions for the rest of the year.

3. Prior Authorization Pilot Under Original Medicare: Another change to be aware of is a prior authorization pilot program under Original Medicare. While prior authorization has traditionally applied to Medicare Advantage plans, this pilot will require advance approval for certain Part B services in select states, including Texas.

This will not affect every service or every beneficiary, but it may add an extra step before Medicare approves payment for some procedures.

4. Protection for Incorrect Network Directory Information: If you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, there is an important protection in place for 2026. If you enrolled in a plan based on incorrect provider network directory information, such as being told your doctor was in-



MARGARET IVORY

network when they were not, you may qualify for a Special Enrollment Period. This allows you to change plans outside the normal enrollment window.

My Final Advice: Medicare is not a "set it and forget it" program. With higher Part B premiums, continued prescription drug relief, new authorization rules, and added consumer protections, reviewing your coverage each year is more important than ever. If you need help reviewing your options or confirming your doctors and prescriptions are covered, that's exactly why I'm here.

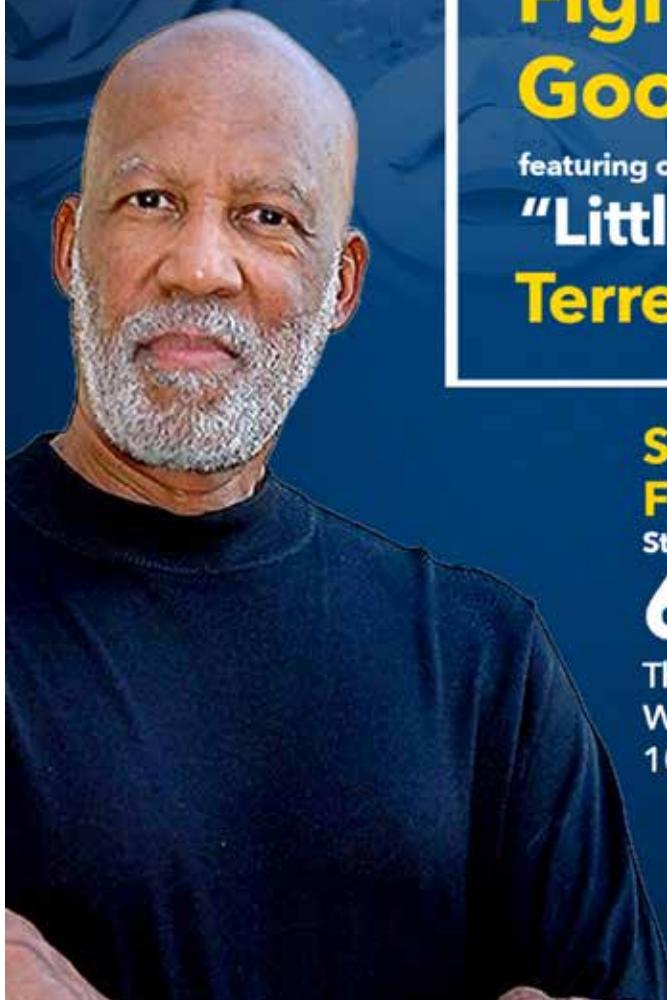
Margaret Ivory: Your Friendly Medicare Plans Broker. 254-313-7413.

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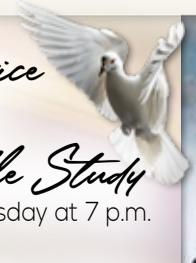
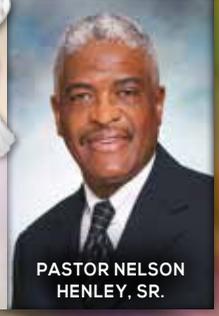
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# THE CHURCH IS PERFECT

BY PASTOR MATTHEW REED

I thank God for the good news that I am about to share with you, the children of God. That good news is found in Hebrews 10:14: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

My prayer for the church is that you will receive this truth, this blessing, this gift of God. For too long, from the pulpits we have been told that we are not perfect. Even the hope of perfection has been taken away from us. The gospel of Christ clearly teaches that those who are sanctified are perfect.

To be sanctified, one must obey (keep), abide in, and do the Word of God. As John 17:17 declares, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." We can conclude that through the keeping of God's Word, Jesus is able to present us to God perfect.

The Scriptures affirm this truth:

Jude 1:24 — "Now unto



PASTOR MATTHEW REED

him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

Colossians 1:22 — "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight."

Ephesians 1:4 — "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of

the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Obey God's Word through Christ so that He may present you to God perfect.

I have written unto you this truth: the church is perfect and is perfected in keeping God's Word. God's words to the church are found in the New Testament. We know this because in the New Testament God says, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

If the church is ever going to step into its authority and power, it must become perfect. This is achieved by striving to attain the perfection by which Christ has perfected us. In 1 John 1:9, we find the grace to do so: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

We have the grace to try and try again. We should never give up striving. This is good news to the church. Amen!

## DAVIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

late nights and long weeks. During the course of his studies, his son experienced extended hospital stays, forcing Davis to navigate the delicate balance between being fully present at home while remaining committed to his academic responsibilities. That season reshaped him, deepening his empathy and reinforcing his understanding of what true leadership looks like: showing up, even when life is hard.

Davis chose Public Administration and City Planning because it sits at the intersection of people, policy, and purpose. Years of hands-on community leadership had already shown him the challenges families face, but the degree gave him the language, structure, and systems-level understanding to strengthen the work he was already doing. Applied learning experiences stood out, allowing him to translate theory into re-

al-world decision-making that mirrors the realities of public service.

Today, Davis serves as Vice President of the Waco ISD school board and Director of Mentor Waco, while also running for McLennan County Commissioner, Precinct 2. His passion centers on economic opportunity, infrastructure equity, youth development, and access to resources. He believes communities thrive when leadership understands both policy and people.

Beyond the diploma, this accomplishment represents obedience to faith, responsibility, and calling. With graduate school already ahead, Davis remains committed to learning, leading, and serving. His message to others is simple but powerful: it is never too late to invest in yourself, and perseverance, grounded in faith, can change not only lives, but entire communities.

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## PETTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Texas after law school in Houston meant starting over professionally. Without an established network in Waco, Petty had to build relationships from the ground up and navigate the profession without a formal mentor. She overcame those challenges by stepping out on faith, asking questions, and letting go of assumptions about who might be willing to help. One defining moment came when a seasoned attorney admitted not knowing the answer and suggested researching it together. That experience reinforced a lasting truth that experience does not always mean certainty and that collaboration strengthens leadership.

Petty is now stepping into a new regional leadership role within a larger legal system, expanding her impact be-

yond individual cases. While the position differs from private practice, it draws directly from her years of hands on experience as a solo attorney. In this role, she brings a balanced perspective shaped by understanding multiple sides of the legal process, strong research habits, and a commitment to fairness, consistency, and ethical decision making. It represents both professional growth and a broader opportunity to influence systems that affect many lives.

Being one of the youngest professionals in many leadership spaces has required confidence and clarity. Early in her career, Petty was told she seemed too quiet and too kind for criminal law. Her response became a guiding philosophy. A lion does not roar while hunting. It moves quietly,

quickly, and decisively. Petty relies on preparation, honesty, and accountability. When she is wrong, she acknowledges it, believing credibility is built through integrity.

The journey has required sacrifice. As a solo practitioner, she served as attorney, secretary, and office manager, often sacrificing free time and vacations. While recently hiring a secretary brought balance, her new role requires a different sacrifice. She is closing a business she worked tirelessly to build and stepping away from being her own boss.

Petty credits her family, especially her mother, along with supportive attorneys, judges, The Anchor News, and her sisters of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

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# HAVE YOUR CHURCH AUDIO TUNED UP IN 2026

**BY WILLIE HUDSON – AHP MEDIA TECHNOLOGY**

When I get a call from a church about audio issues, it usually goes something like

this: “Our sound isn’t working right. We can’t hear the choir, and the mics won’t stop squealing. We think we need a whole new system. Can

you come out and give us a quote?” Honestly, it reminds me of a golfer who thinks buying a brand-new set of clubs will magically fix a bad swing.

Before shopping for expensive gear, I like to take a walk through the sanctuary and ask a few diagnostic questions to see what’s really going on.

The “Sound Check” Walk-through

- The Clarity Factor: Is the congregation actually struggling to hear the preacher or choir?

- The Monitor Mix: Are the musicians or choir struggling to hear themselves or each other?

- The Feedback Loop: Do the microphones squeal constantly, or only in certain spots?

- Technical Glitches: Are there pops or clipping when using wireless mics?

- The Balance: Are instruments overpowering the singers?

- The Volume Level: Do members leave service with ringing ears?

- The Source: Is the pastor yelling so loudly that the audio is being distorted?

Is It the Gear or the Room?

Just because you’re experiencing these headaches doesn’t mean you need to replace your system. The last thing I want to do is sell new equipment if there’s nothing

actually wrong with what you have.

Often, issues can be resolved by adjusting the audio board, relocating speakers, or repositioning microphones.

One of the most overlooked factors is room acoustics. Consider the ceiling height, room shape, and number of hard surfaces. If the sanctuary naturally echoes before a microphone is even turned on, a new speaker alone won’t fix the problem.

### MY PHILOSOPHY

Optimize your current equipment first.

Once we understand the room and how the system is being used, we’ll know whether an upgrade is truly necessary. My rule of thumb is simple: if the equipment is working, keep using it until it no longer does. While there are exceptions, many systems don’t need replacing—they just need to be used correctly.

I know that may sound unusual coming from a technology company, but that’s what sets us apart. Contact us at [ahpmediatechnology.com](http://ahpmediatechnology.com) or call (254) 299-3282 to find out whether your church needs a sound tune-up or new equipment.



**WANDA B. GUNTER**

Author, Artist & Contributing writer for *The Anchor News*

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## Remembering 2025 | NEWS THAT MADE HEADLINES

# NEIGHBORWORKS NAMES PRESIDENT & CEO

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JULY 2025

NeighborWorks Waco is proud to announce Delisa Burnell-Smith as its new President and Chief Executive Officer. A devoted member of the organization since 1994, Delisa has brought over three decades of community development experience and a deep legacy of service to this leadership role.

Throughout her tenure at NeighborWorks Waco, Delisa

has counseled thousands of families on their journey to homeownership. She holds a residential mortgage lending license and is an approved HUD Certified Counselor.

Delisa's leadership and commitment to the community extend far beyond the walls of NeighborWorks Waco. She has served on the boards of numerous nonprofit and civic organizations, including the Family Abuse Center, Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, Centex African American



**DELISA BURNELL-SMITH**

Chamber of Commerce, City of Waco Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, City of Waco Building and Standards Commission, and the Camer-

on Park Zoological and Botanical Society, Inc. She currently serves on the Community Race Relations Coalition, the Waco Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency Advisory Board, Cadence Bank Community Advisory Council and Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc. Delisa is also a proud member of Delta Upsilon Zeta of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Delisa is a native of Waco and earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas. Further demonstrating her commitment to excellence in leadership, Delisa completed the prestigious Achieving Excellence Program at Harvard Kennedy School, an inten-

sive 18-month executive education program designed to strengthen organizational performance in the nonprofit sector.

Delisa's guiding principle comes from Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Her faith, strong community ties, and lifelong dedication to empowering others make her a natural fit to guide NeighborWorks Waco into its next chapter.

NeighborWorks Waco is honored to have such a dedicated, knowledgeable, and community-minded leader at the helm. We look forward to the continued impact of her leadership across Central Texas.

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amplifies voices that are often overlooked. Your support allows us to continue printing, publishing, and reaching people where they are.

To our Friends of The Anchor, thank you for believing enough to give. Some of you give monthly. Some give annually. Some give when you are able. Some have supported faithfully over the years, and others are finding their way back. Every gift and every gesture matters more than you know.

I also want to offer personal thanks to those who work closely with me behind the scenes. To my husband, who faithfully gets the paper out and patiently puts up with my late hours, thank you for your steady support. To my design-

er, who does his best every issue to bring my vision to life, thank you for your creativity and patience. To my son, who serves as our website designer and often inconveniences himself to get something done for me, I am deeply grateful. To my editors, including my daughter, who step in, step up, and do what needs to be done, thank you for your dedication. And a special thank you to Evangelist Ruby McCray, who has written faithfully since the very first issue 23 years ago and recently stepped down. Your voice, your faith, and your consistency helped shape the foundation of The Anchor. I also remain grateful for my advisor, whose wisdom and guidance continue to be timely

and invaluable. To our distributors and distribution partners, thank you for your faithful support of The Anchor.

Support does not always look the same, and seasons do change. What never changes is the value of partnership. The Anchor exists because people choose to stand with it in big ways and small ones.

As we move forward, I remain grateful for every prayer, every word of encouragement, every advertisement, every donation, and every person who believes in what we are building together.

From my heart to yours, thank you for being part of The Anchor family.

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Remembering 2025 | NEWS THAT MADE HEADLINES

# HOMETOWN SON BECOMES THE FIRST BLACK MAYOR

REPRINTED FROM  
JANUARY 2025

In a groundbreaking election, Waco native Monroe Nichols was elected as the first Black mayor of Tulsa, Oklahoma, marking a significant moment in the city's history. Former State Representative Nichols won the race with 56% of the vote, defeating Tulsa County Commissioner Karen Keith who secured 44% of the vote.

"I know the road ahead will take work, and there will be setbacks and challenges. But I also know the people of Tulsa are strong, determined, and unwavering in their commitment to make this city the best it can be," said Mayor Nichols during his inauguration speech on December 2, 2024.



MONROE NICHOLS

"Thank you for your trust and partnership. Our work to build a strong, prosperous and united city takes all of us, and it starts today!"

A WACO NATIVE SON

The son of Dr. Ramona Curtis, Nichols was born in Waco, Texas. He participated in the Zeta Gents Youth Program, Teen Leadership Waco, Jack and Jill Beautillion, and The United Methodist Youth Fellowship (One Fellowship UMC). He played high school and college football at Bishop Louis Reicher Catholic School and the University of Tulsa, respectively.

Nichols first called Tulsa home when he began attending the University of Tulsa, where he received a bachelor's degree in political science and economics. Shortly thereafter, he received a master's degree in public administration from the University of Oklahoma. Throughout his career Nichols has been active in government, private busi-

ness, higher education, and the nonprofit sector.

Before serving as mayor, Nichols represented House District 72 in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and served as Chair of the Oklahoma Legislative Black Caucus. He has one son, Gavin Monroe Nichols.

**A CAMPAIGN WITH A VISION**

Nichols ran on a platform of ending homelessness as we now know it, increasing student outcomes, increasing support for public safety, increasing affordable housing, and co-governing with Tribal Nations. Throughout the campaign, Nichols' team emphasized specific approaches to fostering the vision that Tulsa will be the safest big city in the nation.

**A HISTORIC FIRST**

Tulsa, Oklahoma was the site of one of the most violent racial incidents in United States history. In 1921, hundreds of African-American Tulsans lost their lives, homes and businesses when a white mob attacked the af-

fluent neighborhood of Greenwood, then known as Black Wall Street, then one of the most prosperous Black communities in the United States. In its 112-year history Greenwood has never had a Black mayor. The promise of this election is that prioritizing and investing in all parts of Tulsa will bring hope that everyone has an equal shot.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

Mayor Nichols assumed office on Monday, December 2, 2024, succeeding former mayor, G. T. Bynum. For now, Tulsa celebrates a historic milestone, with many of its residents hopeful that this new chapter will pave the way for a more prosperous future.

Nichols will be the 2025 Guest Speaker at the Waco NAACP's Scholarship Banquet on Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 7PM at the Lee Lockwood Library and Museum. Tickets are currently on sale via CashApp (\$WacoNAACP), PayPal, or Eventbrite. Individual tickets are \$50 each; a table of 8 is \$400.

# WANDA B. GUNTER: A PILLAR OF SERVICE IN HARKER HEIGHTS

REPRINTED FROM  
JUNE 2025

In the heart of Harker Heights, Texas, Wanda B. Gunter stands as a beacon of community service and leadership. Her unwavering commitment to civic engagement and uplifting others has left an indelible mark on the city.

Wanda's journey in community involvement began decades ago, rooted in a deep-seated belief in the power of collective action. She has been instrumental in organizing local events, from neighborhood clean-ups to educational workshops, fostering a sense of unity and purpose among residents.

Beyond event organization, Wanda has served on various city committees, offering her insights and advocating for policies that promote inclusivity and growth. Her leadership style, characterized by empathy and determination, has inspired many to take active roles in community development.



WANDA B. GUNTER

One of Wanda's notable initiatives includes mentoring young adults, guiding them towards educational and professional opportunities. Her dedication to youth empowerment has not only transformed individual lives but also strengthened the community's future.

In recognition of her tireless efforts, Wanda has received accolades from local organizations, celebrating

her as a true community champion. Her legacy serves as a testament to the profound impact one individual can have through dedication and service.

Wanda B. Gunter's story is a shining example of how passion and perseverance can drive meaningful change, making Harker Heights a better place for all its residents.

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**Grassroots Community Development** will be received at **Walker Partners, 823 Washington Ave., Ste. 100, Waco, TX 76701** until **2:00 PM, on January 13, 2026** for the **Renaissance at Sanger Heights**. Bids will be opened publicly and read aloud shortly thereafter on the same date in the **conference room of Walker Partners, 823 Washington Ave., Ste. 100, Waco, TX**. Copies of the bidding documents can be obtained electronically via CivCast ([www.civcastusa.com](http://www.civcastusa.com)). For more information, contact **Amy Jo Moreno** at 254-714-1402.

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MORNING WORSHIP  
11:15 a.m.

SUNDAY EVENING  
6:00 p.m.

MONDAY BIBLE STUDY  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY  
PRAYER WORSHIP  
7:00 p.m.

Pastor Matthew Reed and wife, Helen

# Remembering 2025

# Business DIRECTORY

## STANFORD'S WACO-BORN LEADER TACKLES CANCER EQUITY

REPRINTED FROM  
AUGUST 2025

BY DR. PEACHES HENRY

Dr. Marvin Langston, son of Wacoans Lovie and Henrietta Langston, has received national attention for his cancer research. An assistant professor of Epidemiology and Population Health in the Department of Epidemiology and Population Health at Stanford University School of Medicine, Dr. Langston was selected to be in the inaugural cohort of President Joseph Biden's White House Cancer Moonshot Scholars. The Cancer Moonshot Scholars program is designed to support early-career scientists, researchers, and innovators from diverse backgrounds, including from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences research workforce.

"These emerging leaders in cancer research and innovation will use this funding to help change what is possible, with



DR. MARVIN LANGSTON

projects to increase prevention and early detection efforts for patients from underrepresented populations [and] create new cancer treatments for all Americans" declared the White House. One of eleven scientists selected for the program, Dr. Langston is examining diverse risk-based approaches to prostate cancer screening.

An epidemiologist by training who focuses on prostate and kidney cancers, Dr. Langston is a member of the Stanford Cancer Institute and Urologic Cancer Epidemiology Lab. His research interests also include health equity and causal inference approaches. Dr. Langston is involved in several projects, including one on tailored prostate cancer screening to address priority research gaps in a racially diverse study population.

Dr. Langston was born in Dothan, Alabama. Dr. Langston received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Notre Dame followed by a Master of Public Health degree from Saint Louis University. He received his PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Arizona's College of Public Health followed by post-doctoral training in Cancer Prevention and Control at Washington University in the Saint Louis School of Medicine.

Langston describes himself as a "huge politico" who enjoys Warriors games and playing tennis.

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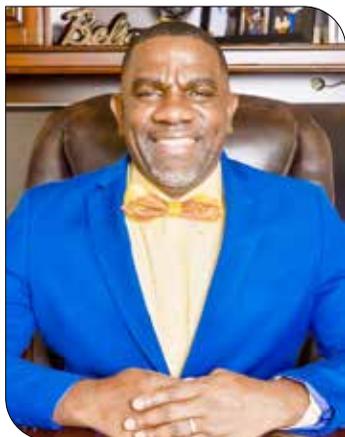
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## DR. COFFIE: BRINGING HEALING AND HOPE TO KILLEEN



DR. LINCOLN G. COFFIE

REPRINTED FROM  
OCTOBER 2025

Apostle Dr. Lincoln G. Coffie has built a life and ministry dedicated to transforming lives, restoring hope, and uplifting communities. As Senior Pastor of Open Fire International Fellowship and Overseer of the Open Fire International Fellowship Network, Dr. Coffie has spent more than a decade leading with passion, vision, and unwavering faith. He also serves as Chancellor of Open Fire Bible College and is recognized internationally as a dynamic speaker whose messages resonate with power and clarity.

Known for his compassionate heart and commitment to God's people, Dr. Coffie has made it his mission to nurture spiritual growth and provide healing for those who are hurting. His ministry is marked by the gift of healing and deliverance, with countless testimonies of lives changed both locally and abroad. His revelatory teaching style consistently points men and women to Christ, bringing encouragement and strength to those in need.

In 2024, Dr. Coffie was affirmed as an Apostle, further confirming his calling as a leader of leaders. With a mandate inspired by Isaiah 54:3 to re-

talize desolate cities, he and his wife, Dr. Apryl, have launched several impactful community initiatives. These efforts include the creation of a food truck park, the opening of an automotive repair shop, and the long-awaited establishment of Killeen Urgent Care in September 2025—meeting a critical healthcare need that had gone unmet for two decades.

Dr. Coffie's journey is rooted in both faith and academic excellence. He began his higher education at McLennan Community College in Waco, where he graduated with Highest Honors and was among the first recipients of the prestigious Bill Gates Scholarship. He continued his studies at Baylor University, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Forensic Science,

and later completed his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. His career has included serving as Medical Director for the Killeen Free Clinic, blending medical expertise with his heart for service. He also holds a Doctorate of Divinity from Real Knowledge Bible College, reflecting his deep devotion to spiritual scholarship.

Beyond his public ministry and professional achievements, Dr. Coffie treasures his role as a husband and father. He and his wife, Dr. Apryl, are the proud parents of four children—Lincoln Jr., Lindel, Lael, and Ethan. Together, they continue to serve as examples of faith, family, and perseverance, leaving a legacy that inspires all who encounter them.

## Church DIRECTORY

### Tree of Life NDC

1612 Austin Avenue, Suite A | Waco, Texas 76701  
Pastor/Founder – RT Allen | Co Pastor – Sandra Allen

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Sunday Morning Worship – 10 a.m.  
Tuesday Night Bible Study – 7 p.m.  
Friday Night Prayer – 6 to 7 p.m.  
Monday through Friday Prayer – 6 a.m.

*All services except Monday through Friday 6 a.m. prayer are both in the church and on our virtual platform.*

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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP 11:30 a.m.

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SUNDAY EVENING.....6:00 p.m.  
MON. BIBLE STUDY.....7:00 p.m.  
WED. PRAYER WORSHIP...7:00 p.m.

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