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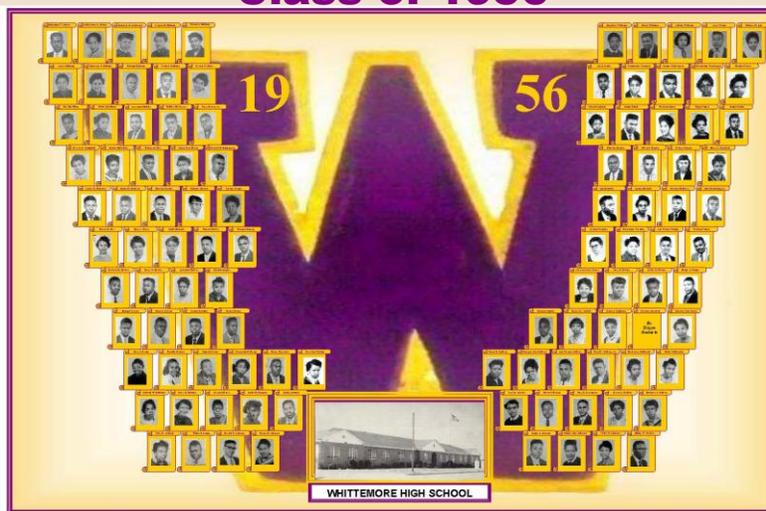
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FEBRUARY 2026

## CELEBRATING The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of Whittemore High School Class of 1956



### WHERE ARE THEY?

See Pages 22 & 23

# HEART HEALTH

month

## Inside This Issue:

- *Our Health Editor Asks the Question, "Is Health Insurance Doing its Job?"*
- *The American Heart Association Elaborates on Why February is American Heart Health Month.*
- *WCM Congratulates Whittemore High School Class of '56 on its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.*
- *WCM Georgetown Contributor Opines on "What a Fool Believes He Saw in Minneapolis."*
- *The Life of Baby Boomers Continues with WCM Contributor Darlene Lewis with Love, Marriage & Dating.*
- *Extensive, But Interesting, Research Investigating Academic Outcomes of Students Affected by Poverty*
- *New Study Shows Staying Healthy Decreases Cancer Risk*
- *High Blood Pressure Causes Faster Cognitive Decline, New Study Finds*

## Is Health Insurance Doing Its Job?

*By: Christian Newman*



**Christian Newman**  
*WC Magazine*  
*Health Editor*

Americans spend more on healthcare than any other country in the world, yet millions still struggle to cover medical bills. Health insurance is supposed to protect us from financial disaster and ensure access to care, but for many Black Americans, it feels like an expensive promise that rarely delivers. Understanding how health insurance works is essential, but the system is complicated and full of pitfalls.



*Above info Courtesy of UCosn Today*

Premiums, the fixed monthly payments to an insurance company, can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Then there are deductibles, the amount you pay out of pocket before your coverage begins to pay for services, plus copayments, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket maximums. Even after reaching the maximum, some services may not be fully covered. Networks, the list of doctors and hospitals contracted with a plan, limit which providers a patient can see affordably, and going outside these networks can result in surprise bills. Health insurance plans come in many forms. Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) often restrict which providers a patient can see. Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs) give more flexibility but cost more. Government programs such as Medicare, which covers seniors and people with disabilities, and Medicaid, which provides coverage for low-income individuals, have their own limitations and gaps. Some insurance plans also allow patients to

use Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), which are accounts that let you set aside pre-tax dollars for eligible medical expenses. FSAs can cover copayments, prescription medications, medical equipment, and certain treatments not fully covered by insurance. While FSAs can help reduce out-of-pocket costs and provide financial relief, the funds are usually use-it-or-lose-it each year, which can make them challenging to manage for families with unpredictable medical needs. Despite



*Above Info Courtesy of BASIC*

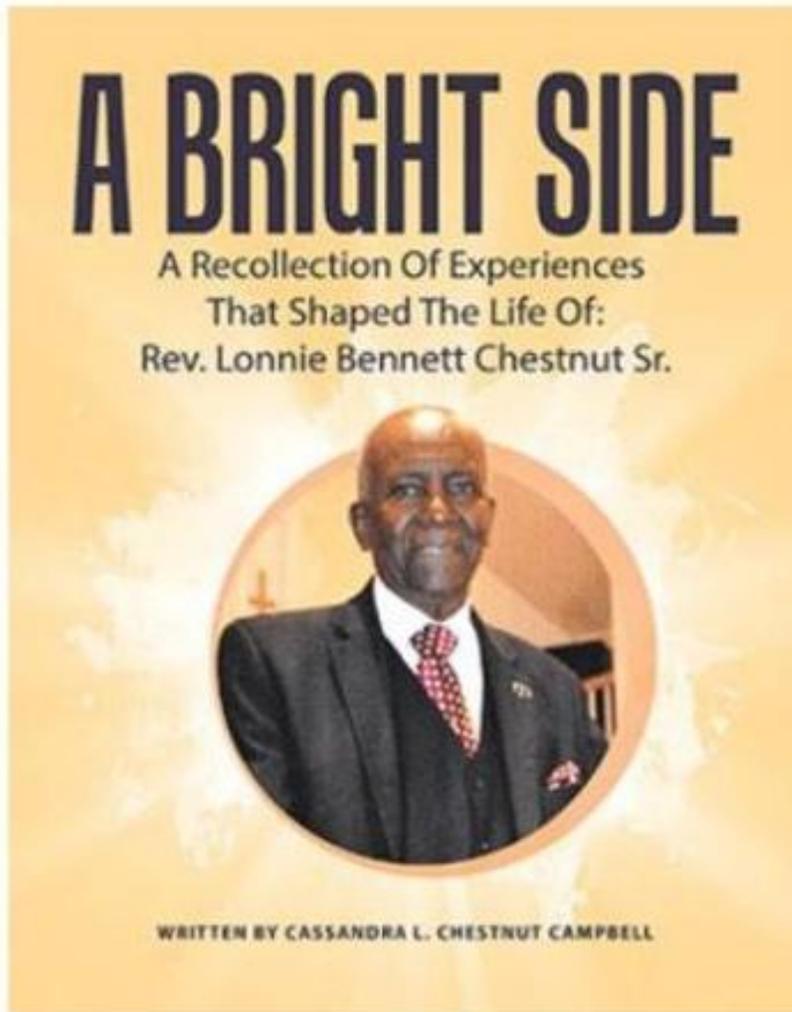
the challenges, health insurance can provide real benefits. Health insurance covers major medical costs, like hospitalizations, emergency care, and surgeries, that would otherwise be financially devastating. Preventive care, including annual checkups, cancer screenings, and vaccinations, is often covered with little to no cost for patients. Health insurance can also improve access to prescription medications, chronic disease management, mental health services, and specialty care, which are critical for long-term health outcomes. Ultimately, having insurance can provide peace of mind, knowing that sudden illness will not automatically lead to financial ruin. For many Black Americans, however, the costs remain overwhelming. Deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses can be so high that insurance feels inaccessible until a major emergency occurs. Even routine care, such as getting laboratory work done or seeing a specialist, can be delayed for weeks while paperwork is processed. Coverage gaps for mental health, dental, vision, and preventive care leave critical needs unmet. Prescription medications, especially specialty drugs for chronic illness or cancer, often cost hundreds of dollars, with

*Continued on Page 7*

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Written by

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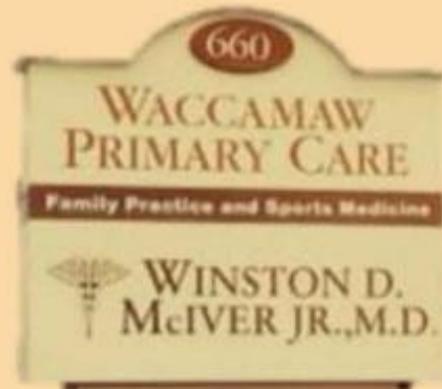
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The observance traces back to Presidential Proclamation 3566 in December 1963, which led to February 1964 becoming the first official February American Heart observance. President Lyndon B. Johnson urged citizens to confront “the nationwide problem of the heart and blood-vessel diseases,” launching a national focus on prevention and public education.

## How the observance started

“the nationwide problem of the heart and blood-vessel diseases.”

The proclamation followed a congressional joint resolution and aligned with a major public health shift: in January 1964 the Surgeon General released a landmark report linking smoking to disease, which strengthened national prevention messages and campaigns.

## Why the observance still matters

Cardiovascular disease causes about one in four deaths in the country each year, making heart disease a leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. The good news: many deaths are preventable through screening, early treatment, and sustained lifestyle changes.

## Why awareness is year-round

**Use February as a yearly reset:** schedule checkups, review family history, and recommit to movement and healthier meals. Today we know more about risk factors—including diet, physical activity, blood pressure, cholesterol, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), and tobacco use—so small, steady steps over the year have the biggest impact on long-term risk and awareness. For historical sources and current guidance, consult the American Heart Association and CDC pages on heart disease.

American Heart Month: Heart Health Tips to Lower Your Risk of Heart Disease

*Practical tips and easy routines make preventing disease feel achievable and lasting.* Use these short, clear actions to know your numbers and build habits that protect blood, circulation, and overall heart health.

## Know your risk factors and what they mean

**Check family history, age, smoking status, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), and daily habits.** These factors help you and your clinician estimate long-term risk and choose the most effective steps to reduce risk of heart disease.

## Eat a heart-healthy diet

Choose more vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Swap one ultra-processed meal for a simple grain bowl with greens, beans, and grilled fish today — small swaps add up. (Tip: aim for more fiber and less added sugar and sodium.)



## Is Health Insurance Doing Its Job?

*By: Christian Newman*

*Cont'd from Page 2*



**Christian Newman**  
*WC Magazine*  
*Health Editor*

insurance covering only a portion. So, having health insurance does not always mean being fully protected. Access to care is an additional concern. Common health insurance options in South Carolina include Medicare, Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina, United Healthcare, Aetna, Cigna, and Humana. While these plans can provide access to preventative care, emergency services, and major medical coverage, many patients still face prior authorization delays, claim denials, and discouragement from untimely care. Geographic and economic disparities make the problem worse. A family in a rural area may technically have insurance but struggle to find a provider who accepts it. Seniors on Medicare often find themselves paying substantial premiums and out-of-pocket costs for medications, screenings,

and long-term care. Insurance companies benefit from this complexity. Restrictive networks, rising

premiums, and hidden costs often leave consumers paying more for less. Meanwhile, preventive care, which could reduce long-term costs, is often underused because of limited coverage or cost-sharing. Furthermore, the problem is not only financial. Patients often describe feeling trapped, forced to choose between paying bills and staying healthy. Patients will delay care, juggle medications, and skip doctor visits because their insurance plan may not cover the expense

or treatment. These instances highlight how health insurance

can sometimes fail the very people it is designed to protect. Fixing the health insurance system will not be easy; however, paths are going forward. Greater price transparency could allow patients to make informed decisions and seek care more effectively. Expanding coverage for preventive care can reduce emergency visits and long-term healthcare costs. Holding insurance companies accountable for surprise bills, claim denials, and restrictive networks will be essential. Patient education is monumental.



*Above Courtesy of Advance ESG*



*Above Courtesy of Health Insurance Marketplace*

Understanding premiums, deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket maximums before choosing an insurance plan empowers consumers to make better decisions. Utilizing tools like Flexible Spending Accounts, where the annual contribution limit is \$3,300 per year per employee, can also help manage medical expenses when used appropriately. As healthcare costs continue to rise, some Americans point to universal healthcare systems abroad as evidence that broader coverage and lower costs

are possible. All in all, health insurance should act as both a financial safety net and a gateway to care.

Many Black Americans pay premiums faithfully, only to discover that essential care is partially covered, delayed, or denied. Policymakers, insurance companies, and patients alike must work together to ensure that health insurance fulfills its promise of protecting our overall health. Health insurance can certainly be beneficial, but it often comes with barriers and high costs that leave families financially exposed. Until the system catches up to expectations, Americans will continue to ask if health insurance is really doing its job or if they are just paying for the promise of security. For more information:

<https://www.healthinsurance.org/glossary/health-insurance/>.

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# What a Fool Believes He Saw in Minneapolis.

*By Steve Williams, Formerly of The Georgetown Times*



One of my favorite songs (perhaps yours too) is the song ‘What a Fool Believes’ recorded by the Doobie Brothers in 1978. The song was co-written by legendary singers and songwriters Michael McDonald and Kenny Loggins. That year, the song pulled off a rare double-dip by hitting No. 1 on the Billboard charts and winning Grammy Song and Record of the Year honors.

What is the song really about? Beyond its catchy tune, moving melody, and Michael McDonald’s soaring falsetto, the song delivers a poignant refrain: ‘what a fool believes he sees, no wise man has the power to reason it away.’ This line artfully captures the essence of self-deception. It delivers a profound look at the lies we often tell ourselves and gives us a portal into how the human mind works and its capacity to see what is there or what is not there.

The refrain is a clever oxymoron that combines contradictory concepts: a fool’s subjective illusion is so strong that it cannot be undone by our objective, logical reasoning. For me, I’m reminded of something I’ve heard dozens of times:

*When Abram lamented to the Lord that Lot had received the lion’s share of the promised land, the Lord said to him, lift up thine eyes and look from where you are as far as you can see, north, east, south, and west, and I will give you all that thine eyes can see.*

“Seeing is believing,” and the biblical proverb, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” The song’s prophetic words are not in the Bible or even a traditional old axiom or maxim (I checked); however, its inverse (believing is seeing) hints of biblical teachings.

When Abram lamented to the Lord that Lot had received the lion’s share of the promised land, the Lord said to him, lift up thine eyes and look from where you are as far as you can see, north, east, south, and west, and I will give you all that thine eyes can see. Abram was viewing things with human vision, but God was using divine vision, showing Abram that seeing physically is not the same as believing. But believing with faith is tantamount to having a thing. It suggests if we can’t see a thing with our spiritual eyes, we can’t have it. We do not behold what is: we behold the interpretations of our mind. But our minds can deceive us and often do.

Our understanding of reality is molded by our parents, environment, education, and personal experiences. Yet, beyond these mental constructs lies an entirely different realm—one that transcends our limited, three-dimensional thinking. Consider how people have grappled, often earnestly, with the concept of God. To some, God is white; to others, black. Some envision God’s nature as masculine, others as feminine. There are those who see God as jealous and wrathful, while others view God as peaceful, loving, and forgiving. Some believe God shows no favoritism, while others are convinced God favors America.

Many believe God resides in heaven, while others see God as present here on earth. Some feel God’s spirit most strongly within orthodox religious settings; others sense it everywhere, in all things. But who’s right? Every term we use to define God is merely a human attempt to describe the indescribable—each one a finite concept for the infinite, a name for the nameless. God doesn’t come in dimensions or degrees and doesn’t fit nicely into our three-dimensional thoughts.

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# What a Fool Believes He Saw in Minneapolis.

*By Steve Williams, Formerly of The Georgetown Times*



*Cont'd from Page 10*

God is not a word, nor any of the countless synonyms our limited minds use in an attempt to define the divine. God is formless, faceless, nameless, limitless, and eternal—a presence that can be experienced, but never truly described. God transcends every label: neither rich nor poor, strong nor weak, male nor female, Jew nor Greek, black nor white, bond nor free, young nor old, or any other human distinction. No description can contain the infinite. As one wise thinker once said, God is the nucleus of everything and the circumference of nothing.

We live and move and have our being in God, yet many still don't know of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. They are like a fish swimming in the water, but does not know it. A bird knows nothing about the air; it is flying through it but living unthinkingly. In a moment of pure enlightenment, Francis Thompson, a very astute poet, wrote these words about man's misplaced identity- "O World invisible, we view thee. O world intangible, we touch thee. O world unknowable, we know thee. Inapprehensible, we clutch thee. Does a fish soar to find the ocean, the eagle plunge to find the air? That we ask of the stars in motion. If they have rumor of thee there?"

The scriptures tell us, "In all thy getting, we must get understanding. "We must not reduce God to our limited understanding. For instance, if we don't transcend our

***Likewise, in light of the recent events in Minnesota, many people are allowing their thoughts to be reasoned away by individuals who allegedly know more about the facts.***

human thoughts, we can never reach the level of understanding the first chapter of Genesis, which contains two completely contradictory accounts of creation. In the first chapter of Genesis, there is light before there is a sun or a moon; there are crops growing in the ground before seeds are planted; and there is a man before there is a woman. Still, many believe the mystical things in the Bible are not for us to opine; rather, they're the domain of religious leaders because surely, they must know more about God than we do?

Growing up, I, too, outsourced matters of faith to wiser people, like my Sunday School teacher or my preacher. I was conditioned to view things through the lenses of my parental influence, my environment, my religious education, and personal experiences. These four things colored my thoughts, words, and actions. Instead of letting God reveal the truth about spiritual things, I allowed these learned leaders to reason away my simple thoughts.

Likewise, in light of the recent events in Minnesota, many people are allowing their thoughts to be reasoned away by individuals who allegedly know more about the facts. Instead of the proverbial "wise man," like the one mentioned in the Doobie Brothers song, many have outsourced what they witnessed with their own eyes to so-called "wise people." Of those who saw the events, half say they witnessed two people being ruthlessly murdered, and the other half say they saw an unfortunate, but justifiable killing of two people.

Our social, political, racial, educational, and religious conditioning simply won't allow us see anything other than what's in our minds because we do not see with our eyes, we see with our minds. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

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*Continued from Page 6*

## Be physically active

Movement improves blood flow and fitness. Try brisk walking, cycling, swimming, or twice-weekly strength sessions. If 30 minutes is hard, break it into three 10-minute brisk walks — start small and build up.

## Watch your weight with sustainable steps

Focus on portion control, consistent activity, better sleep, and stress management. Avoid extreme diets; steady, repeatable changes are the most effective long term.

## Check blood pressure regularly

High blood pressure raises heart disease and stroke risk. Take readings at home or a clinic and share elevated numbers with your clinician. Start: schedule a blood pressure check this week.

## Manage cholesterol

Lower LDL and support HDL through diet, activity, and medication when advised. Talk to your provider about your target LDL — it's individualized based on overall risk.

## Screen and treat obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)

**Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)** is common and raises blood pressure and cardiovascular risk. If you snore loudly, feel very sleepy during the day, or have witnessed pauses in breathing, ask your clinician about home sleep testing — treating OSA can improve blood pressure and reduce heart risk.

## Quit smoking and reduce tobacco exposure

Tobacco damages blood vessels and increases risk. Use supportive resources and medical options to quit — even one attempt helps long-term heart health.

## Recognize warning signs

Know common signs of a heart attack or stroke: chest pain or pressure, sudden shortness of breath, arm or jaw pain, sudden numbness or weakness, trouble speaking, or sudden vision changes. Call 911 immediately if you suspect a heart attack or stroke.



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## “CAUGHT GREEN HANDED”



**Eric Johnson**

*December 2025*

*Caught Green Handed Recipient*

**The Horry County Solid Waste Authority** recently recognized Aynor resident **Eric Johnson** as the “Caught Green Handed” recipients for the month of **December**.

“The ‘Caught Green Handed’ recognition is presented monthly to a Horry County resident caught in the act of recycling” stated **Esther Murphy**, Director of Recycling and Corporate Affairs for the Solid Waste Authority. “It’s the Solid Waste Authority’s way of recognizing and thanking citizens who have made the effort to recycle. Through their recycling efforts, natural resources are saved and the amount of waste being landfilled is reduced.” **Mr. Johnson**, a regular recycler at the **Aynor Recycling Convenience Center**, was surprised and honored to receive this recognition.

*For more information on recycling, please contact  
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# How Staying Heart-Healthy Will Decrease Your Cancer Risk



Healthy habits used to combat heart disease could also be helpful in reducing a person's risk of developing cancer.

**New research has found that a heart-healthy lifestyle will not only lower your risk of heart disease but could also cut your chances of developing cancer.**

**The findings suggest the risk factors that cause cardiovascular disease could also lead to cancer.**

**Healthy habits used to combat heart disease could also be helpful in reducing a person's risk of developing cancer.**

New research suggests that following a heart-healthy lifestyle can lower the risk of heart disease and may also cut chances of developing cancer. The study, published in the March 2021 issue of JACC: Cardio Oncology, found that cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk — including traditional risk factors like age, sex, and smoking, along with natriuretic peptide levels — is associated with an increased risk of cancer.

The findings suggest the risk factors that cause CVD could also lead to cancer. Therefore, the healthy habits used to combat CVD could also be helpful in reducing a person's risk of developing cancer.

"A healthy diet and making sure other medical issues, like hypertension and diabetes, are controlled is important for many reasons, and it turns out that cancer risk is one of them," says [Dr. Collin Vu](#), a medical oncologist and hematologist at Memorial Care Cancer Institute at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, California.

***Participants who adhered to heart-healthy lifestyle behaviors — managing blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and weight and diet — had a lower risk of developing cancer.***

## Heart-healthy lifestyles lower cancer risk, too

Researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and other centers in the United States and the Netherlands evaluated health data from 20,305 people who did not have cancer when they enrolled in the study. Over 15 years, 2,548 people developed cancer. The researchers found that traditional CVD risk factors — age, sex, and smoking status — were independently associated with cancer. They also found that higher levels of natriuretic peptides — markers that indicate stress on the heart — also predicted higher risks of cancer. Study participants with the most natriuretic peptides had a 40 percent greater chance of developing cancer.

Participants who adhered to heart-healthy lifestyle behaviors — managing blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and weight and diet — had a lower risk of developing cancer. "This seems to say that the heart disease does not in itself contribute to the development of cancer but that the same risks or behaviors that make a person more likely to have heart disease are also more likely to cause cancer," says Vu. "The link between cardiovascular heart disease and cancer may not be much of a direct link at all but may be that we have traits or behaviors that seem to lead to both at the same time," Vu added.

Participants who adhered to heart-healthy lifestyle behaviors — managing blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and weight and diet — had a lower risk of developing cancer. "This seems to say that the heart disease does not in itself contribute to the development of cancer but that the same risks or behaviors that make a person more likely to have heart disease are also more likely to cause cancer," says Vu. "The link between cardiovascular heart disease and cancer may not be much of a direct link at all but may be that we have traits or behaviors that seem to lead to both at the same time," Vu added.

## Inflammation is at the root of both conditions

Dr. Joyce Oen-Hsiao, the director of clinical cardiology at Yale Medicine and assistant professor of clinical medicine at Yale School of Medicine, says inflammation is at the root of both CVD and cancer. Research Trusted Source has found a link between inflammation and colorectal cancer. Furthermore, chronic inflammation caused by obesity and cigarette use — two risk factors for CVD — "can increase cancer risk and stimulate cells to mutate or cause cancers to progress," says Oen-Hsiao.

A crucial component of a heart-healthy lifestyle is eating a low-cholesterol diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Oen-Hsiao says fruits and vegetables are packed with antioxidants and other beneficial nutrients that help fight inflammation.

## Managing a healthy lifestyle

The study found that people with CVD tend to have worse outcomes if they get cancer. People with CVD may have issues with sleep or live a sedentary lifestyle, putting them at increased risk for these cancer outcomes, explains Oen-Hsiao.

Oen-Hsiao recommends eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep to manage stressors in your life.

If someone smokes, quitting might be the most heart-healthy change they can make to cut their risk of cancer, according to Vu.

Vu says our behaviors today can make a difference for us later in life. "By following a heart-healthy lifestyle to reduce our risk of heart disease, incidentally we will get the added bonus of reducing the risk factors for the development of cancer," Vu said.

## The bottom line

New research has found that a heart-healthy lifestyle will not only lower your risk of heart disease but also could cut your chances of developing cancer. The findings suggest that the risk factors for cardiovascular disease could also lead to cancer. Therefore, healthy habits used to combat heart disease — eating a balanced diet, exercising, and managing cholesterol and blood pressure — could also help reduce a person's risk of developing cancer.

*Above info courtesy of Julia Ries / Healthline*

***If someone smokes, quitting might be the most heart-healthy change they can make to cut their risk of cancer, according to Vu.***

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Companion Services

## Love, Marriage, and Dating

By Darlene G. Lewis, Ret. Educator & WCM Contributor



“Marriage is like a walk in the park. Jurassic Park!” “Marriage is like a deck of cards, when you first get married it’s all hearts and diamonds. After 20 years you wish you had a club and a spade!” These are some humorous takes on the nature of marriage I’ve come across over the years. The longer you’re married the funnier (and maybe more truthful) they are. *I’ve been married to the same man for 42 years.* No separations, no moving out, however, the flow of marriage, as we know, is not linear. Marriage is like the tides, some days the tide is in, good communication, lovey dovey, blissful companionship, and other times the tide is out. (You know what I’m talking about Boomers!)

Love, Marriage, and dating have meant many different things to Baby Boomers. Our years have been shaped by social changes, personal growth, and lived experiences. Boomers came of age when traditional courtship was the norm. Marriage was the expected path for women and men after high school or college. Marriage for Boomers has often been seen as a lifelong commitment, grounded in partnership, responsibility, and shared values. Most of us married young, building families while balancing careers and economic pressures. Over the years some marriages endured, others evolved, and some ended in divorce as ideas about divorce became more acceptable.



My hubby and I met in college and got married after graduation. We did what most couples did; got married, bought a house, had our children and worked through our careers. When we found ourselves empty nesters, we pulled up stakes and moved to South Carolina. Moving to a new state, new jobs, and a new house was refreshing and invigorating. Now, as grandparents, we relish time with family and friends and continuing family traditions with our grandchildren. Our family goals have always been in tandem with each other. We started out as a team, raised a family as a team, and even though the life terrain was rocky and difficult at times, we remained committed to our shared



life goals. Marriage’s ebb and flow but we’ve allowed each other to evolve, grow, and change even if it meant some uncomfortable feeling for the other. Never stifling the others’ search for fulfillment, or peace, or sense of self. Leaving space for your spouse to become or find themselves is a very important part of marriage. We vacation together as well as vacation apart. We have friends in common and others who may not be. I don’t ride motorcycles with my husband anymore, but he still rides often and happily. My hubby doesn’t like the beach, but it’s in my DNA as an Outer Banks native. I go often.

Compromising, acceptance, and willingness to allow the other to grow, has worked for us after 42 years. It may not be your definition of happily ever after, but it works for us. Let’s look at a few things that shape or change our marriages over the years:

### ***Boomers and Loss***

For Baby Boomers, losing a lifelong spouse or partner is losing the person with whom you shared decades of memories, routines, and identity. Grief at this stage of life is often layered; there is pain of emotional loss alongside practical changes such as managing finances alone, redefining daily structures, and adjusting to life as a single person after being part of a couple for many years. It’s common to feel disoriented and isolated, especially when friends may still be partnered or unsure how to offer support. Allowing

*Continued on Page 24*

# High Blood Pressure Causes Faster Cognitive Decline, New Study Finds



High blood pressure is common, affecting one-third of American adults and nearly two-thirds of adults age 60 and older. Many people don't know they have "the silent killer" because it has no symptoms. Only about half of people with high blood pressure, including those who treat it with medication, have it under control. People with high blood pressure levels face a faster erosion of their ability to think, make decisions and remember information than those with normal blood pressure levels, a new study finds.

The researchers traced high blood pressure's association with declining brain function over years, in data from six large studies that they pooled and analyzed.

They show that blood pressure-related cognitive decline happens at the same pace in people of Hispanic heritage as in non-Hispanic white people.

The team had set out to see if differences in long-term blood pressure control explained why Hispanic people face a 50% higher overall risk of dementia by the end of their life than non-Hispanic white people in the United States. But the new findings suggest that other factors may play a bigger role in that disparity. *Nevertheless, the new study in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease serves as an important reminder of the key role that controlling blood pressure plays in long-term brain health, says Deborah Levine, M.D., M.P.H., lead author of the study and director of the University of Michigan's Cognitive Health Services Research Program.*

"Since other studies have shown that people of Hispanic heritage in the United States tend to have higher rates of uncontrolled hypertension than non-Hispanic white people, due in part to worse access to care, it's vital that they get extra support to control their blood pressure even if blood pressure is only part of the picture when it comes to their higher dementia risk," she adds. "A risk factor like uncontrolled high blood pressure that is more prevalent in one group can still contribute to substantial health disparities."

***Having a stroke can increase the risk of dementia fifty-fold.....***

Levine and her colleagues looked at changes in the thinking and memory abilities of adults over 18 who took part in six long-term studies conducted over the past five decades. On average, they had access to nearly eight years of data from each person, including systolic blood pressure, which is the top number in any blood pressure reading.

The size of the data set allowed them to trace blood pressure readings and changes on tests of cognitive performance, executive function and memory in Hispanic and non-Hispanic white adults more clearly than any one smaller data set could.

The data come from 22,095 non-Hispanic white adults and 2,475 Hispanic adults, none of whom had a history of stroke or dementia when they enrolled. At enrollment, the average systolic blood pressure was lower in Hispanic adults than non-Hispanic white adults (132.5 mmHg compared with 134 mmHg), despite Hispanic adults having older age than non-Hispanic adults (62 versus 54) and blood pressure tending to increase with age.

Overall, the downward trend in thinking and memory due to high blood pressure happened at the same pace in both groups.

When Levine and colleagues looked just at the two studies that had deliberately recruited people of Hispanic origin, they saw a faster decline in overall cognitive performance in the Hispanic group compared with the non-Hispanic white group.

But differences in blood pressure between the groups did not explain the differences in cognitive decline -- perhaps because Hispanic people had lower blood pressure than the non-Hispanic white people in these studies.

Levine notes that the studies included data on years of education. But they did not include full information about factors known as social determinants of health -- including income, education quality, early life experiences, family factors, living circumstances and more --; that might drive disparities in cognitive decline between Hispanic and non-Hispanic white people.

Two years ago, members of the study team reported on their findings from a similar analysis of data from Black and White people in some of the same studies. That study found that differences in blood pressure control over time helped explain the faster decline in cognitive performance in Black individuals.

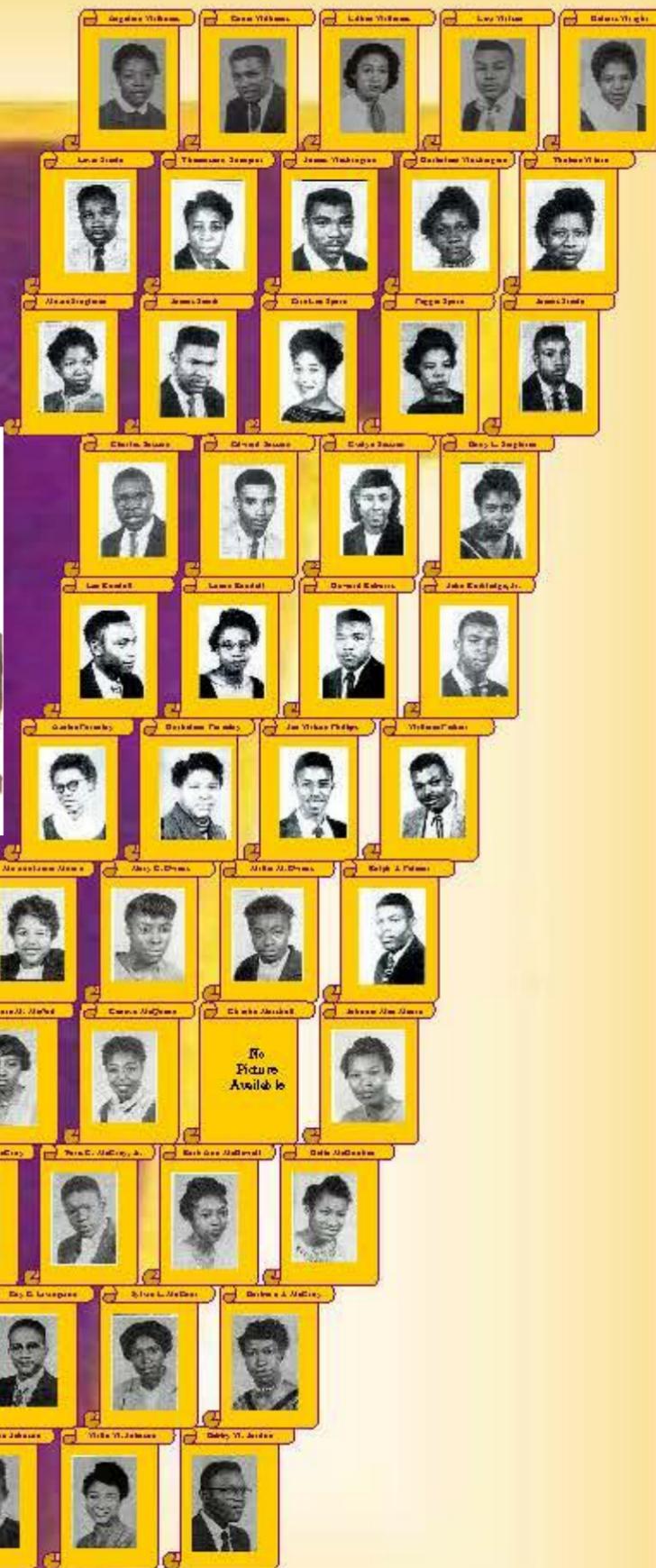
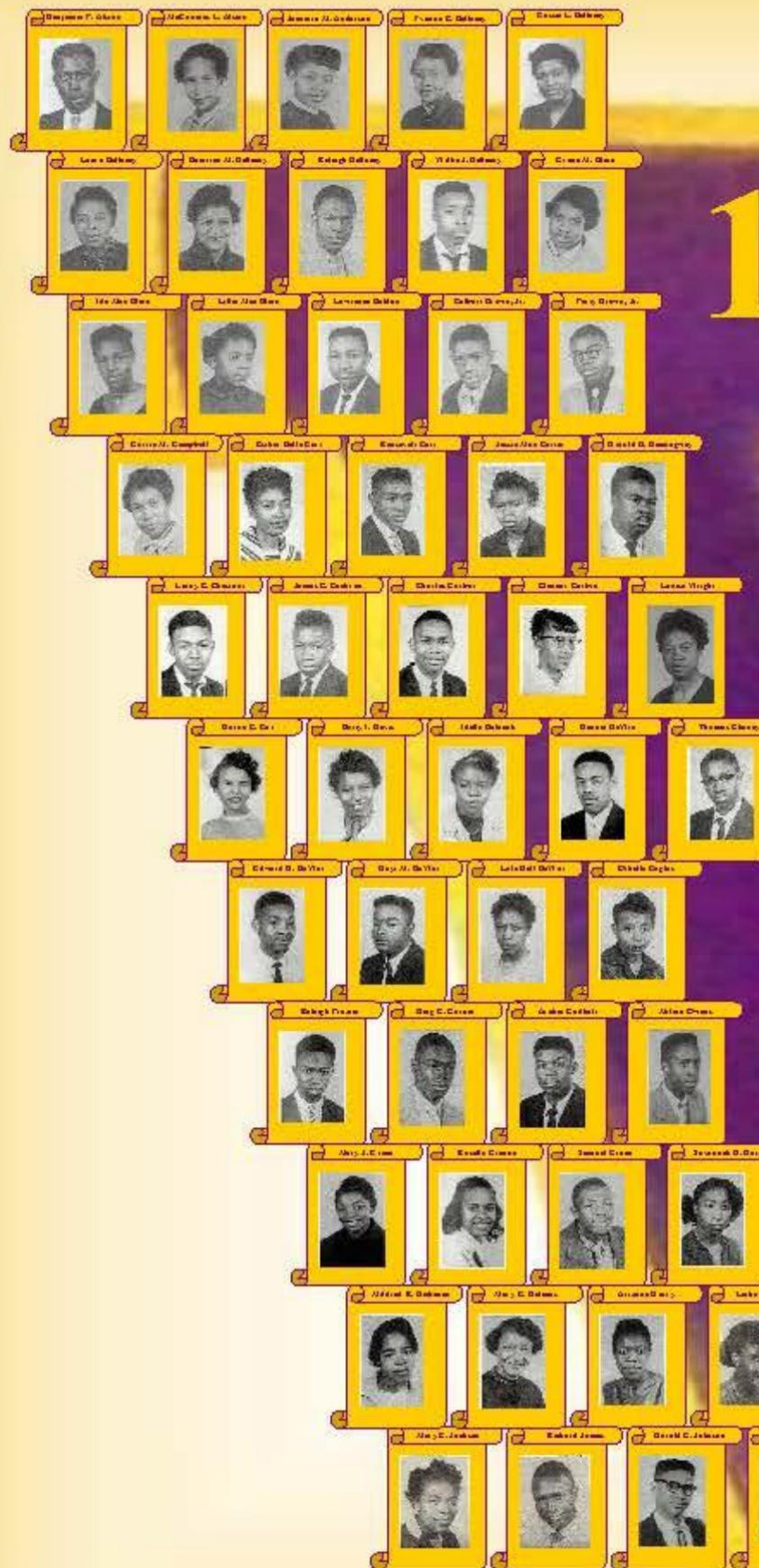
Levine and colleagues at the U-M Frankel Cardiovascular Center are currently studying other aspects of cognitive decline disparities, including her own team's research on post-stroke cognitive declines, and Lewis Morgenstern, M.D., M.S.'s BASIC Cognition study. Having a stroke can increase the risk of dementia fifty-fold, but it is not known yet what impact controlling vascular risk factors such as blood pressure and blood sugar can have on dementia risk after stroke.



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WHITTEMORE HIGH SCHOOL

# Boomers: Love, Marriage, and Dating

By Darlene G. Lewis, Ret. Educator & WCM Contributor



*Cont'd from Page 20*

yourself to grieve in your own way and on your timeline is normal and necessary. Reaching out to local grief counseling services sometimes offered at local churches in groups or online or in person counseling can give you directions on how to move through the transition process.

## ***Boomers and Divorce***

“Gray divorce” (divorce after age 50) has doubled since 1990, according to a 2022 study in the *Journals of Gerontology*, with 36% of U.S. divorces now involving this demographic, while the rate for those 65+ has tripled! Divorce in this life stage can be especially challenging because it disrupts long-established routines. After decades of marriage divorce may bring feelings of grief, failure, resentment and uncertainty. There are practical concerns as well including retirement planning, housing, and healthcare. Despite these difficulties many Boomers also



experience divorce as a turning point towards personal growth and renewed independence. I ran into a former colleague last year and she looked fantastic, trim, and glowing with energy. I asked her what her secret was and she told me she had “lost 250 pounds”. Really, I replied and she said yes, “I divorced my husband”! Truly for her it was a time of self-renewal as well as emotional upheaval. Gray divorce is driven by increased longevity, higher remarriage rates, and a desire for self-fulfillment, this trend sees Baby Boomers redefining later life relationships. Women often initiate these separations, seeking to escape unfulfilling marriages during their remaining years. Changing social norms, women’s financial independence, empty nest and retirement are some of the drivers of this decision. Gray divorce can, however, cause significant financial disruption, often impacting women more severely due to shared assets and retirement funds needing to support two households instead of one. Building new routines, strengthening friendships, and seeking financial and legal and counsel and leaning on family and friends is crucial for navigating this impactful transition. While the process can be painful, divorce in later life can also open the door to greater self-understanding, resilience, and a more intentional next chapter.

## ***Staying Connected- Dating for Boomers***

Okay Boomers, I had to do research on this topic, having been “off the market” for years. Dating, once governed by clear rules and expectations, looks very different for Boomers today. Whether re-entering the dating world after divorce or loss of a spouse/partner or choosing companionship over remarriage, Baby Boomers approach dating with intention. There is more focus on emotional connection, compatibility, and shared lifestyle. Love later in life can feel both familiar and refreshingly new. Boomers often know what they want and what they will no longer accept. Love



becomes less about proving oneself and more about kindness, trust, emotional intimacy, laughter, and mutual support, As Boomers we understand even more now, that connections and meaning never fades-it gets wiser. Most Boomer are and should be weary of dating online which comes with many possible traps, but there are many online dating platforms specifically geared to seniors and senior activities. Many Boomers prefer meeting people “the old-fashioned way”. In-person social activities, mutual connections,

*Continued on Page 33*

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## *Circulating the Black Dollar*

The idea of the “circulating dollar” helps explain a big economic gap in how money moves through different communities. In many neighborhoods, one dollar can pass from business to business for weeks before it leaves the area. In most Black neighborhoods, though, studies often show that the dollar leaves in just a few hours. That isn’t an accident, it’s a carefully crafted plan to make it hard for Black communities to build and maintain strong local economies.

One major reason for this is the lack of local ownership. Many Black neighborhoods have few grocery stores, banks, medical offices, and professional services. When those essentials aren’t nearby, people have no choice but to spend their money elsewhere. As a result, money earned through Black labor ends up flowing straight

out of the community and into the hands of outside corporations. That constant drain makes it nearly impossible to build a solid economy, which then affects school funding, road maintenance, and other public services feeding the same cycle over and over again.

There’s also a psychological side to this issue. For generations, major corporations and luxury brands have aggressively marketed their products as symbols of success, often targeting Black consumers in particular. Over time, this has helped create a culture where spending money on outside brands feels like a reward or a sign of “making it.” But when those companies don’t reinvest in Black communities, that spending does little to build collective wealth. Without a shared mindset that treats supporting Black-owned businesses as a form of empowerment, the community continues to act as a pipeline for wealth rather than a place where it can grow.

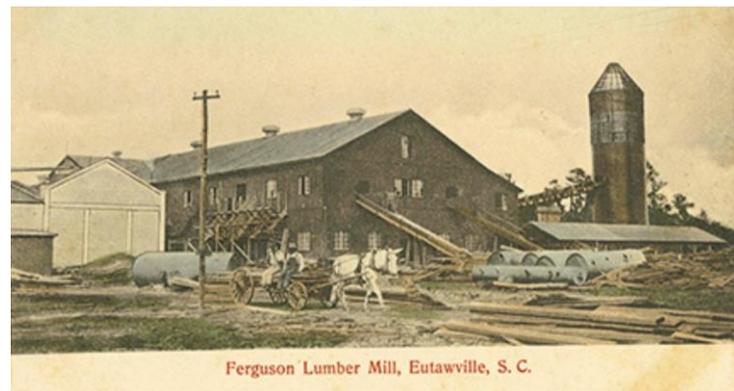
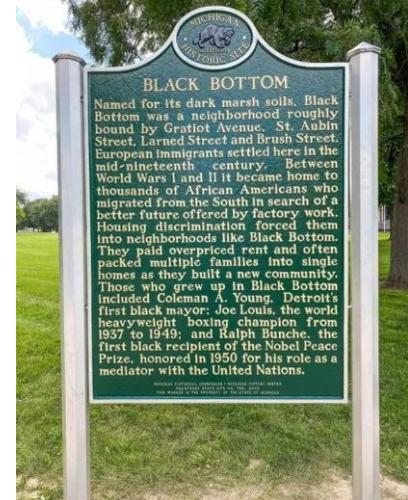
Changing this pattern requires intentional choices. Supporting Black-owned is important, but so is creating systems that help new ones start and survive through community investment and shared resources. When money stays local, it multiplies. A Black-owned business hires people from the neighborhood, those workers spend their pay at nearby shops, and those shops rely on local accountants, lawyers, and service providers. Over time, that cycle builds stability and power. Keeping the dollar circulating isn’t about isolation, it’s about survival and self-determination. Being mindful of where money goes is one of the most practical steps toward long-term economic independence and closing the racial wealth gap.

At the end of the day, economic change doesn’t start with billion-dollar policies; it starts with everyday habits. Where money is spent, who is supported, and what businesses are allowed to grow all shape the future of a community. When dollars are intentionally kept in circulation, they become tools for stability, opportunity, and self-determination. Over time, those small, consistent choices can turn neighborhoods into ecosystems that sustain themselves, reduce dependence on outside systems, and lay the foundation for real, generational progress.

We have to begin thinking along the lines of re-building communities like; *The Greenwood District (Tulsa, Oklahoma - 1921)*, *Rosewood (Florida - 1923)*, *Seneca Village (New York City, New York - 1857)*, *Ocoee (Florida - 1920)*, *Black Bottom & Paradise Valley (Detroit, Michigan - 1950’s-60’s)*, *Ferguson, South Carolina (1940’s)* and *Scanlonville, SC (1868)* just to name a few...



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*By Priscilla Wyman Fuller, WCM Contributing Editor*



**Priscilla W. Fuller**  
**WCM Contributor**

In this new column, various things that occur in our community that will impact our community will be discussed. You, as a reader, may not agree with my perspective, but here you have an opportunity to express your opinion as I have expressed mine.

The Conway community has grown tremendously since the time I grew up. I see the growth of numerous businesses and countless homes being developed. That is a good thing to keep the town growing, but where are our voices leading a voice about WHAT GOES INTO our community? There are various mechanisms that are available, but are we utilizing them in our community? *The City Council meetings, the Planning Board meeting, and meetings with elected officials.* All of these are methods to let our voices be heard. Increased taxes on homes and other regulations are being put in place without your input. All of us pay taxes, which are utilized for development. We are justified to say that we have a voice on how those funds are being used and where those funds are used. We are so important to the process, but oftentimes our voices are just complaints to each other. Vote and Demand more of the people we elect for any public office. They are elected to represent the community. Let us demand that they do that !

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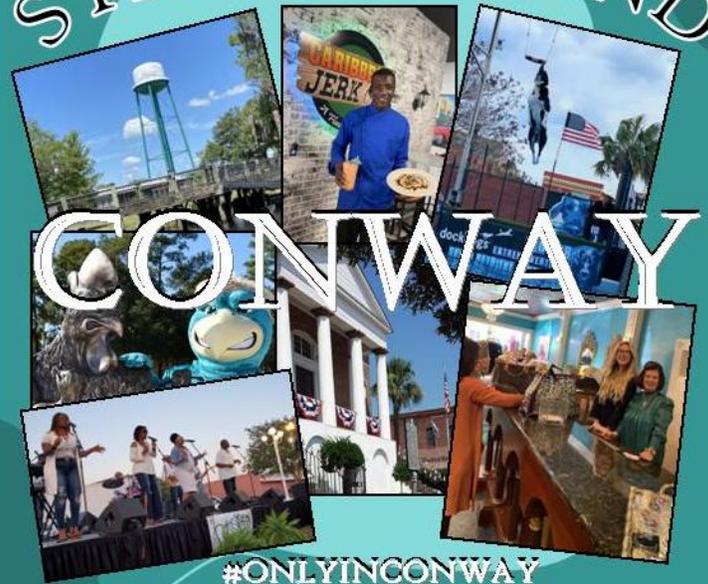
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**David C. Wilson**  
WCM Guest Columnist

*By David C. Wilson, WCM Contributor*

Extensive research has investigated the academic outcomes of students affected by poverty compared to their peers, identifying resources that may alleviate educational disadvantages for those impacted. This report (see link to report at the bottom of this report) does not aim to validate differences in achievement between these groups; instead, it presents graphical analyses to illustrate observable patterns and disparities. The provided visualizations depict the extent of disparity among students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

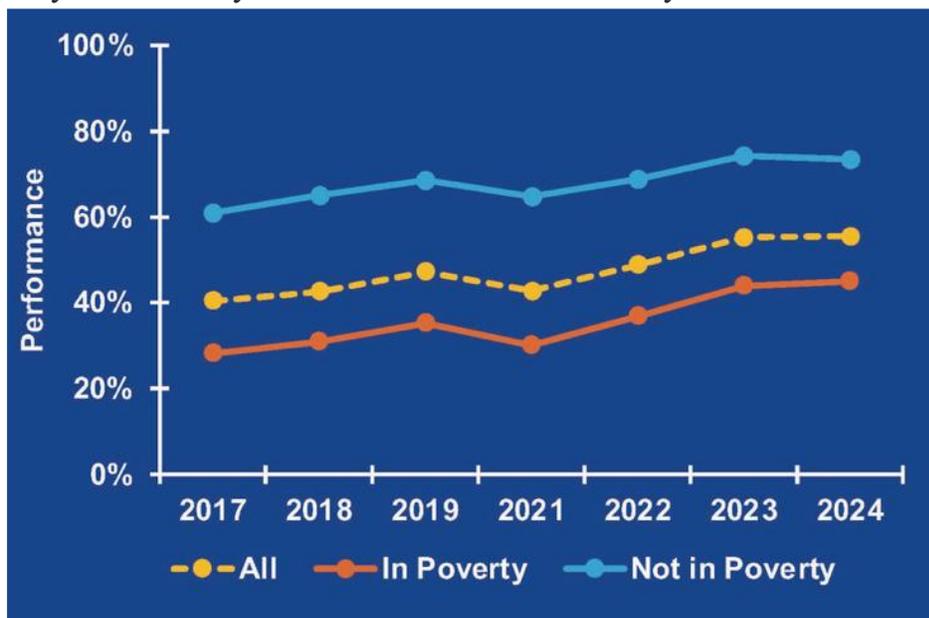
The data utilized encompasses all public schools within South Carolina (SC) collectively, as well as four distinct districts: Horry County Schools (HCS), Georgetown County School District (GCSD), Charleston County School District (CCSD), and Orangeburg County School District (OCSD).

Each chapter employs graphical tools to highlight the performance gap between students experiencing poverty and their counterparts within each district, effectively demonstrating the adverse influence poverty can exert on student outcomes. These negative effects exemplify the “poverty paradox”—a concept where apparent inconsistencies reveal deeper insights upon closer examination. For example, while the United States demonstrates considerable wealth and high per pupil expenditure relative to other industrialized countries, certain states and districts continue to report elevated levels of student poverty. Research indicates that individuals living in poverty often possess attributes making them more susceptible to economic hardship (Rank, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires consideration of strategies such as expanding participation in federally funded early education initiatives like Early Head Start and Head Start, as well as investing in community school models that provide comprehensive support and enrichment opportunities for students (Mader, 2023). Across all socioeconomic strata, intrinsic motivation—students’ personal aspirations—and strong parental engagement remain fundamental drivers of educational success.

For additional analysis regarding the poverty paradox, readers are referred to *The Poverty Paradox: Understanding Economic Hardship and American Prosperity* by Mark Robert Rank (2023).

Despite substantial resource allocation following desegregation—including advanced teacher training, expanded tutoring services, technological interventions, health provisions, and free or reduced-price meals—the achievement gap between students in poverty and those not in poverty persists throughout K–12 education and beyond.

Historically, programs such as President Johnson’s War on Poverty during the 1960s sought to address poverty through targeted financial assistance and specialized initiatives. Nevertheless, poverty remains widespread, particularly among Black and Hispanic populations. This is evident in OCSD, where 74.0% of students identify as Black and 87.8% live in poverty, raising questions about expected improvements in academic outcomes amid ongoing performance gaps.



*Continued on Page 37*

**Trans fat is double trouble for heart health**

**Trans fat increases your "bad" cholesterol and lowers your "good" cholesterol. Find out more about trans fat and how to avoid it.**

Trans fat is considered the worst type of fat to eat. Unlike other dietary fats, trans fats — also called trans-fatty acids — raise "bad" cholesterol and also lowers "good" cholesterol. A diet laden with trans fats increases the risk of heart disease, the leading killer of adults. The more trans fats eaten, the greater the risk of heart and blood vessel disease.

Trans fats are so unhealthy that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has prohibited food manufacturers from adding the major source of artificial trans fats to foods and beverages.

Here's some information about trans fats and how to avoid it.

## **What are trans fats?**

Most trans fats are formed through an industrial process that adds hydrogen to vegetable oil, which causes the oil to become solid at room temperature. This partially hydrogenated oil is inexpensive and less likely to spoil, so foods made with it have a longer shelf life. Some restaurants use partially hydrogenated vegetable oil in their deep fryers, because it doesn't have to be changed as often as do other oils. Some meat and dairy products have a small amount of naturally occurring trans fats. However, it's not clear how these trans fats affect health.

### **Trans fats in your food**

The manufactured form of trans fat, known as partially hydrogenated oil, can be found in a variety of food products, including:

- (1) Commercial baked goods, such as cakes, cookies and pies. (2) Shortening (3) Microwave popcorn (4) Frozen pizza**
- (5) Refrigerated dough, such as biscuits and rolls (6) Fried foods, including french fries, doughnuts and fried chicken**
- (7) Nondairy coffee creamer (8) Stick margarine**

## **How trans fats harm you**

Doctors worry about added trans fats because they increase the risk of heart attacks, stroke and type 2 diabetes. Trans fats also have an unhealthy effect on cholesterol levels.

There are two main types of cholesterol:

- **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.** LDL, or "bad," cholesterol can build up in the walls of arteries, making them hard and narrow.
- **High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol.** HDL, or "good," cholesterol picks up excess cholesterol and takes it back to the liver.

Trans fats increase LDL cholesterol and decrease HDL cholesterol, which can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke.

## **Reading food labels**

In the United States if a food has less than 0.5 grams of trans fats in a serving, the food label can read 0 grams trans fats. Products made before the FDA ban of artificial trans fats might still be for sale, so check to see if a food's ingredient list says partially hydrogenated vegetable oil. If it does, that means the food contains some trans fats, even if the amount is below 0.5 grams. These hidden trans fats can add up quickly, especially by eating several servings of different foods containing less than 0.5 grams a serving.

## **How low should you go?**

Experts recommend keeping the intake of trans fats, particularly the manufactured variety found in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, as low as possible.

## **What should you eat?**

Foods free of trans fats aren't automatically healthy. Food makers might substitute other unhealthy ingredients for trans fats. Some of these ingredients, such as tropical oils — coconut, palm kernel and palm oils — contain a lot of saturated fat. Saturated fat raises your total cholesterol. In a healthy diet, about 20% to 35% of total daily calories can come from fat. Try to keep saturated fat at less than 10% of total daily calories. Monounsaturated fat — found in olive, peanut and canola oils — is a healthier option than is saturated fat. Nuts, fish and other foods containing unsaturated omega-3 fatty acids are other good choices of foods with healthy fats.

# Boomers: Love, Marriage, and Dating

By Darlene G. Lewis, Ret. Educator & WCM Contributor



Cont'd from Page 24



and joining clubs, classes, and volunteer activities offer the opportunity to meet like-minded people and a chance for you to get to know the person in a safe setting. Tell friends and family you are open to meeting new people, attend singles' events and step out of your emotional comfort zone and be approachable.

What's the secret to a long-lasting marriage? *After 42 years of marriage, I still don't have a magic formula, but I know this to be true: you are not the person you were when you first married.* Allowing your partner and yourself to evolve and grow without feeling insecure,

allowing you and your partner time and space to do things they love with or without you, allowing and understanding that change is inevitable in both you and your spouse, accepting each other's shortfalls and propping up and supporting each other's ideas is vital for a long life together after the children are gone. Communication is key but so is silence and room to think and grow. Accepting that life is no longer about those hair-on-fire moments and more about those sitting in front of a warm fire together, safe and secure in the knowledge that when it comes down to it you will have each other's back. is enough.

*Okay, Boomers, you've got this and Happy Valentines Day!*

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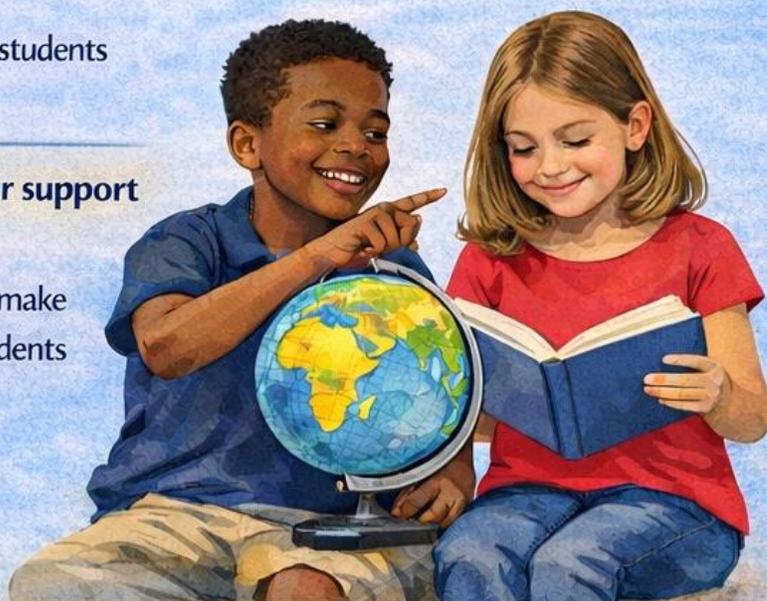
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By David C. Wilson, WCM Contributor

*Cont'd from Page 31*



**David C. Wilson**  
WCM Contributor

Key determinants of educational attainment for students facing poverty include:

- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Student aspirations and self-motivation are vital factors.
- **Parental Support:** Consistent and active parental involvement is essential for fostering educational engagement.
- **Resource Allocation:** Significant investments in student support have been made, yet notable achievement gaps persist.
- **Additional Considerations:** Further investigation into characteristics associated with student poverty and exploration of policies beyond increased funding is recommended.

Collectively, these elements underscore the complex nature of educational inequality and highlight the imperative for comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to addressing persistent disparities.

**My biography:** David C. Wilson, originally from Horry County and a graduate of its public school system, including the former Chestnut Consolidated High School (now North Myrtle Beach High School). He is an IBM retired engineer and adjunct professor. Dave taught in higher education part-time for 26 years. After his retirement, he has built a diverse career as a consultant, statistical practitioner, family history researcher, author, and self-publisher. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in electrical engineering from CUNY—The City College of New York and Manhattan University (formerly Manhattan College), respectively.

Link to reference report: [https://wilsonconsultingservices.net/wcs\\_studentpoverty.pdf](https://wilsonconsultingservices.net/wcs_studentpoverty.pdf)



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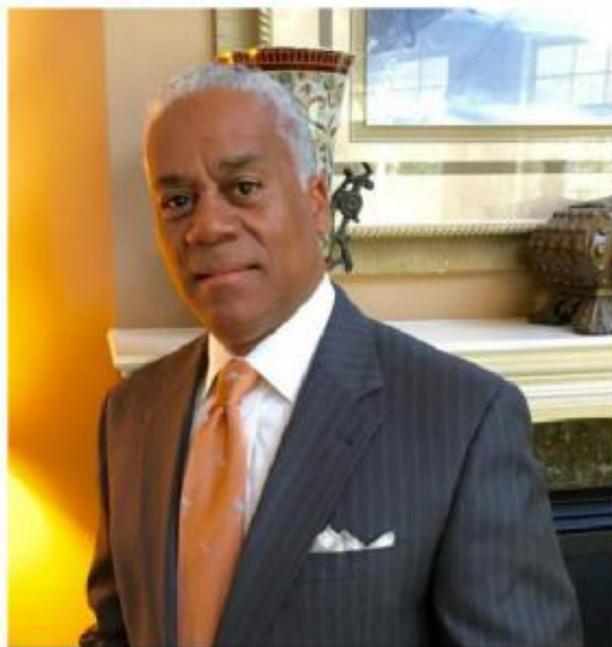
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Pastor James L. Lee -Superintendent**

**Irish Evans**

*Iris Lee Walker-Evans* was born and raised by the late Vela Walker and Junious Walker in South Hill, Virginia, on **June 5, 1938**. Iris Evans departed from this life to her Heavenly Father and savior Jesus Christ on **January 14, 2026**,



**1938 - 2026**

in Myrtle Beach, S.C. She had many gifts and talents and attended John Groome Public School in Virginia. She last attended True Worship United Pentecostal Church, Pastor Ben Cooke, in Conway, S.C., with her loving and devoted daughter, Iris Yvonne Gordon. Iris Lee Evans was predeceased by her parents Junious and Vela Walker; late husband, Bennie Evans; her son, Larry Evans; her step-son, Bennie Evans, Jr.; her grandson, Lurell Evans; her granddaughter, Tyisha Evans; her brother, Cody Walker; her sisters, MaryAnn Allen, Jean Clayton, Linda Thomas, Vandora Walker, Elaine Willis, and Marion Vaughn; and goddaughter, Tracey Pope. Although all her siblings have preceded her in death, she loved and missed them all. *Iris Evans leaves to cherish her love, legacy, and memories her daughters, Iris Yvonne (Jerry) Gordon and Rossa Evans; her son, Lonnie (Sheila) Evans; and her godson, Todd Clayton. She also leaves to cherish a host of loving grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.*



**Otto Gettys, Sr.**

*Mr. Otto Leonard Gettys, Sr.* was born on **March 9, 1961**, to the late Jerry Myer, Sr. and Mattie Gettys. On Saturday, **January 10, 2026**, God called him from labor on this earth to eternal rest. He attended the public school system of Horry County and graduated from Conway High School Class of 1979. As a young child, he joined Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Conway, South Carolina. Otto was employed at AVX for many years and decided to further his education at Horry-Georgetown Technical College, where he obtained his Certified Driver's License (CDL). *Otto leaves to cherish his memory two sons, Bibb Collier III of Madison, Alabama and Otto (Lofennie) Gettys, Jr. of Longs, South Carolina; two sisters, Imogene Funnye of Conway, South Carolina and Albertha (Edison) Best of Aynor, South Carolina; two brothers, Jessie (Lena) Gettys of Conway, South Carolina and Wilbert Gettys of Charleston, South Carolina; a special cousin, Jimmy Gagum, who was raised as brothers of North Carolina; one grandson, Otto Gettys, III; one granddaughter, Treasure-Jai Collier; one sister-in-law, Elouise Gettys, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and friends.*



**1961 - 2026**



**Tre DeWitt**

*Tre' Leander Dewitt* was born on **February 10, 1995**, in Conway, South Carolina. While God sat upon His throne in glory, He reached out his hand and called our beloved Tre' Dewitt home to eternal rest on **January 6, 2026** where he passed at his residence. Tre' graduated from Conway High School and attended Ability Beyond Barriers School. He loved spending time outdoors, being surrounded by nature, and he cherished every moment with family and friends. Tre' was preceded in death by his mother, Linda Remy Dewitt of Conway, South Carolina, and stepfather, Jerome Remy of Conway, South Carolina. *He leaves to cherish his memory his loving sisters, LaQuasha (LaQuintan) Vereen and Ronezia King; his brothers, Chaz Nelson and Tarik Harriott; a niece, Jenesis Vereen; a nephew, Zalin Dewitt; his grandmother, Gwendolyn Grissett; his aunts and uncles, Edward (Tezra) Grissett, Nelson (Alicia) Edge, Willie Joe (Terrie) Dewitt, Johnny (Mary Kat) Grissett, Jacob (Audrey) Booth, Elizabeth Dewitt, Sandra Wells, Mary Dewitt, Sandi Grissett and her special friend (Jamie) Meadows, Janice Days, Ethel Washington, and Johnnie Mae (Edison) Grate; along with a host of other aunts, uncles, other sorrowing relatives and friends.*



**1995 - 2026**



**Katherine Ferguson**

*Katherine Rebecca Ferguson* was born on **March 21, 1951**, in Easley, South Carolina, to Thomas and Jessie Lee Ferguson (Allgood). She was the third daughter out of eight girls and moved to Springfield, Massachusetts, as a child, where she lived for most of her life. She was also a member of Third Baptist Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. Katherine passed away at Roper Memorial Hospital on **Friday, January 2, 2026** with her son Tremaine by her side. Kathy, or Kat as she was lovingly called, loved life and enjoyed many hobbies, such as gardening, crocheting, cosmetology, and photography. She moved to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in 2022 to be near her son, Tremaine, and often spoke about how much she enjoyed being so close to the beach. *She leaves to cherish her memory her children, Paul, Taki, Robert, Tremaine, and Monique. 8 grandchildren, a great-grandson, and a host of nieces and nephews, with special recognition to her niece Krystal, whom she often referred to as her "bonus daughter." Kathy also leaves behind her seven sisters, Thomasina Ferguson Johnson of Rochester, New York, Sharon Ferguson of Houston, Texas, Dianne Ferguson Francis of Dallas, Texas, Dee Ferguson Kilcrease of Dallas, Texas, Lela Banks of Texas, Deborah Ferguson of Springfield, Massachusetts, and Elaine Aniton of Dallas, Texas. Kathy was loved and will be missed by many.*



**1951 - 2026**



**Little George McLeod**

*Little George McLeod IV* was born on **December 28, 1962** to the late Edma Mae Williams and the late George McLeod III. He departed this earthly life on **Monday, January 5, 2026**. George was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, Vivian Ann McCray; a brother, Charles McLeod; his grandmother, Ernestine Jett; and his grandfather, Reef "Daddy" Dozier. *He leaves to cherish his memory his children, Lolita McCleod, Latisha McCleod, Tearra Washington, Latresha Calloway, and Quentin Smith; his siblings, Willie Bell Rodgers, Barbara Jean (Melvin) Milligan, Ernestine "Mookie" McCleod, Jeanette (Earl) Moore, Mary (Snow) McCleod, Shevone (Pat) McCleod, and Phillip "Phil" McCleod; his grandchildren, Dontejah, Michael "Mike Mike", Rod'Shawn, Patrick, Kamalia, V'asia, Lil Vincent, Va'lencia, Kay'den, and Vincent, Jr. "VJ"; his great grandchildren, Royal, Alanna, Princeton, and Ryse. He also leaves behind a stepfather, Curtis Williams; along with a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and friends. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him.*



**1962 - 2026**



**Terry Wright**

*Terry Eugene Wright* was born on **December 13, 1964**, in Spartanburg, South Carolina, to Norma Jean Allison and Horace Wright, Jr. On **Friday, January 2, 2026**, Terry transitioned from life to eternal rest in Loris, South Carolina. He attended Cleveland Junior High School in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Terry was a home repair technician who loved fishing, hunting, doing yard work, and spending precious time with his family. Terry was preceded in death by his parents, Norma Jean Allison and Horace Wright, Jr., and a sister, Tammy Suchil. The bond between them was broken, but now they are together again. *His memory will live on in the hearts and minds of one son, Terry Joshua Wright; three daughters, Ashley Wright, Heather Wright, and Danielle Wright; his brother, Jerry Wright; ten grandchildren, Gracie Ann Ramsey, Clayton Jaxon Myers, Natalie Rose Aguilera, Nolan Adam Aguilera, Kayden Carter Buckner, Leonel Mattias Gonzalez, Josiah Thomas Gonzalez, Caylie Wright, Edwin Wright, and Carson Wright.*



**1964 - 2026**



**Hazel Gee**

On **December 29, 2025**, **Mrs. Hazel Gee**, departed this life. Hazel, the daughter of the late Leo and Elizabeth Jackson Pierce, was born on **June 21, 1954**, in Marlboro County. She moved to Horry County in 1969, where she met her future husband, Sammie



1954 - 2025

Lee Gee. She and Sammie were married in 1970 and were blessed with three wonderful sons. Hazel was preceded in death by her parents; her youngest son, Rodney O'Neil Gee; an adopted son, Wade Gee Thompson; and three brothers, Howard Pierce, Alonzo Pierce, and Roger Pierce. *She leaves to mourn her passing but will forever cherish her memory her husband, Sammie Lee Gee; sons, Jerome (Brenda) Gee of Aynor, South Carolina and Leon (Yolanda) Gee of Georgia; her sisters, Rose Marie Roberts, Nelline (George) Holmes of Aynor, South Carolina, and Jessie (Adam) Pierce of Daytona, Florida; her brothers, James Truman (Sarah) Pierce, Melvin (Sheila) Pierce of Aynor, South Carolina, and Robert (Edward) Pierce of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; four brothers-in-law, Charles Gee, Jerry (Francis) Gee of Marion, South Carolina, Cliff Gee, and Frank Gee both of Florida; one sister-in-law, Elizabeth Liz Pierce of Latta, South Carolina; two aunts, Evangelist Ida W. McKiver and Evangelist Sarah W. Simmons both of Marlboro County; special friends, Bessie Carter, Carolyn McQueen, Donna McKeith, and Brenda Beaty; 14 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren, and 1 great-great grandchild; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and a multitude of friends far and near.*



**Nicole Yvette McDuffie**

**Nicole McDuffie**, affectionately known as "Cole." Nicole was born on **June 16, 1970**, in Buffalo, New York, to the late Girlevia Croskery. She transitioned from this earthly life on **Sunday, January 11, 2026**. Nicole was preceded in love and legacy by her great-grandmother, Ann Bell Dawson; her grandmother, Gladys McDuffie; her beloved mother, Girlevia Croskery; and her cherished Auntie Jan. *Nicole leaves a cherished legacy through her loving family: her children, Marketa McDuffie and Joshua Corbin (Noely Quezada); her special daughter, Lusiana Quezada; her grandchildren, Khalif Sessoms and Paris-Burges William; her brothers, Maurice McDuffie Sr. and Dawan (Swanie) Croskery; her nephews, Maurice McDuffie Jr. and Clifton McDuffie; and her nieces, Sasha, Jada, and Jasmin McDuffie. Nicole was also blessed with a devoted sisterhood of lifelong friends who stood by her in love, strength, and loyalty throughout her journey. This cherished circle includes Marketa Pointer, Nicole Ragland, Sandra Cotton, Vanessa Diaw, Marla Gillette, Tracey Harvey, Monieca Morgan, and Tammela Young, whose unwavering support, laughter, and friendship brought immeasurable joy and comfort to her life.*



1970 - 2026



**Moria Dearmond**

In loving memory of **Moria "Mo'Betta Mo'ria" Jayne DeArmond (Brown)** of Conway, SC. Beloved wife, daughter, sister, cousin, aunt, and niece. Born on **July 11th, 1975**, Moria passed away at the age of 50, on **December 19, 2025**. She was



1975 - 2025

preceded in death by her mother, Virginia "Mourning Dove" Auldridge Lamb, her father, Harold J. Reed, and her youngest sister, Grace Noel Levy. *She is survived by her husband, Brian Shaun DeArmond, her sister Gillian Ivy Clinton, Brother-in-law Kevin Clinton, nephews Chase Clinton and Sebastian Clinton. She is also survived by her long lost and finally found younger sister, Jessica Brown and Moria's nephews Noah and Henry, whom sadly never got the opportunity to have met her in person. Her Aunts, Sue Gardner and Joan Warren, and Uncle Maurice Brown, her cousins Deni Huttula, Chelsea Plant, Nathan Simpson, Casey Simpson, Jessica Becker, Christopher Brown, and Samuel Brown and all her extended family, all love her and mourn Moria's passing.*



**William Vereen, Jr.**

**William Vreen, Jr.** was born on **August 27, 1934**. He departed this life on **December 29, 2025**.



1934 - 2025



**Bobby Levonne Knight**

**Bobby Lavonne Knight** was born on **December 7, 1963**. He departed this life on **January 19, 2026**. *Left to cherish his memory are three sisters: La-Ruth Jordan, Eartha White and Donell Grissette.*



1963 - 2026



**Liston Randall**

**Mr. Liston Randall** was born on **January 23, 2045** to Herman and Geneva Randall in Brunswick County, North Carolina. He departed this life on **February 2, 2026**



1945 - 2026



**Jaxson Joseph Livingston**

**Jaxson Joseph Livingston** passed on **Monday, January 19, 2026**, at the tender age of 2 years old, just shy one month of turning the age of 3. He was born on **February 17, 2023**, at Conway Medical Center in Conway, South Carolina to Joshua LaMarcus Livingston



2023 - 2026

And Renee Monique Frazier. From the moment Jaxson entered the world, he filled our lives with joy, warmth, and love. Sadly, he was preceded in death by his great grandmother, Jeanette Livingston, grandfather, Clarence Joseph Frazier, Sr., and great aunt, Michelle Stevenson. *Jaxson's sweet spirit will always be remembered by his parents, Joshua LaMarcus Livingston and Renee Monique Frazier; his sister, Ava Denise Alston of the home; his grandmothers, Lee Livingston of Little River, South Carolina and Cassandra Bradford of Columbus, Ohio; his grandfathers, Mark Jordan of Loris, South Carolina and Allen Hemingway of Longs, South Carolina; his great grandmother, Cheryl Williams of New York, New York; his great grandfather, Lee Grant Livingston of Little River, South Carolina; four aunts, Allyiah Livingston of Hinesville, Georgia, Nina Frazier and Brittany Montgomery of Columbus, Ohio and Selena Livingston of Longs, South Carolina; an uncle, C.J. Frazier of Columbus, Ohio; along with a host of other relatives and friends.*



**Michael Smalls**

**Michael Dewayne Small**, affectionately known as "Mike" and "Little Wolf," was born on **May 20, 1967**, in Miami, Florida, to the late Phillip Small and Coralee Gee Small. In 1993, Michael met Lynda



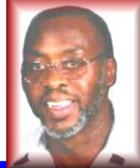
1967 - 2025

Williams, and in 1994 they were united in holy matrimony. From this union, one son was born, Michael Phillip Dewayne Small, Jr. Michael Dewayne Small transitioned from this earthly life on **December 25, 2025**. He was preceded in death by his parents, Phillip Small and Coralee Gee Small. *He leaves to cherish his loving memory his children: Michael Phillip Dewayne Small, Jr.; Calvin Williams; Kelvin Williams (Deja); LaRue Parrish (MAE); Jeavonna Parrish; Arsenio Jenkins; Eddrick Clay; Kylon Clay; Michael Small AND Marquell Small. He is also survived by his beloved grandchildren: Kahlia Small, Kayden Small, Elijah Small, La'Ro-Yeh Parrish, La-ROI\_YAH Parrish III, Markevion Parrish, Jay Carter, Jayden Williams, Jordan Williams, Javien Parrish, Lauren Parrish, Josiah Myers, Jayceon Williams, Tamarree Williams, Tahniya Williams, Hannah Williams, Alysia Gundich, Anna Williams, and Kayson-Jream Williams. Additional survivors include his aunt, Deloris Stukes; uncles, Charles Gee, Sam Gee, Clifford Gee, Jerry Gee (Frances), and Frank Gee; a special friend, Tony Gallone; and a host of other relatives and dear friends.*



**Marion Livingston**

**Marion Francis Livingston, Sr.**, the son of the late Maceo and Lavern B. Livingston, was born on **August 13, 1948**, in Wampee, SC. He departed his life on **December 30, 2025** following an illness.



1948 - 2025

Preceded him death, two sons: Marion, Jr and Edwin Cox; two brothers: Ronald J. Livingston, and Nelson L. Livingston. He attended and graduated from Chestnut High, and he attended Denmark Technical College in Bamberg, SC. He was a member at Poplar AME Church. *He leaves to cherish his loving wife of 51 years, Roxie G. Livingston. Five children were born to this union, Ricky D. (Delicia) Livingston of Loris, SC, Maceo (Natasha) Livingston of Longs, SC, Julius and Julian Livingston of the home; one daughter, Mareatha (Twian) Smith of Sumter, SC; eight grands: Rayshawn, Jaquan, Desha, Tevin, Kristin, Darnell, Julian Jr, and Jaisley; two great-grands, Cortlin and Courtney; two sisters: Vivian D. Livingston of Longs, SC and Stephonie (Bryan) Smith of Ash, NC; three brothers: George (Cindy) Livingston, Claude (Carrie) Livingston, and Anthony (Alfreda) Livingston; six sisters-in-law: Marva Livingston of Longs, SC, Peggy Livingston of Longs, SC, Murda Green of Longs, SC, Nancy Bellamy of Loris, SC, Linda Benford of Conway, SC, and Jenne Vereen of Longs, SC; one brother-in-law, Van (Teresa) Lane of Longs, SC; a special aunt, Seval Goings, a special niece, Vickie Green, a special nephew, Wesley (Shumein) Green all of Longs and a host of nieces, nephews, relatives and friends*



1949 -2026



**Robert Lee Cochran**

**Robert Lee Cochran**, age 81, of Conway, entered into eternal rest on **Saturday, January 10, 2026** Robert was born on **February 4, 1944**, in Conway, SC, to the late Joe and Ostina Cochran. He was preceded in death by his siblings:



1944 - 2026

James E. Cochran, Wendell Coch Woody Cochran, and Ezell Cochran. *He leaves to cherish his memory; his children: Maurice (Ricky) Mosley (Andrea), Robert Bryant (Zena), Reggie Bellamy (Stacy), Tangela Cochran, Eight Grandchildren; Alyssia Mosley, Alexander Mosley, Sadae Bellamy, Robert Bellamy, Reginald Bellamy, Jr., Shavez Bryant, Kiara Walker, Jeremiah Coran; two great-grandchildren, one sister, Geneva Cochran Bellamy, three brothers; Joe Cochran, Sr., Tommy Cochran, and Cornell Cochran, one aunt, Zenobia Steele, and a host of other family and friends.*



**Harold Wade Fairwell**

**Harold Wade Fairwell** was born on **October 7, 1948**, to the union of Maty Ellen Williams and Evelyn David Fairwell in Loris South Carolina. He graduated from Whittemore High School in Conway, SC class of 1966.



1948 - 2026

Harold married Gertrude Grayer and to this union two daughters were born; Kimberly Denise (1971) and Angela Katrina (1972). After returning to Conway, SC, Harold married the love of his life, Nora Bernice Wallingford Fairwell. He departed this life on **January 8, 2026**. He was preceded n death by his wife, Nora Bernice Fairwell; his parents, Mary and Evelyn Fairwell; three sisters, Norma Sanders, Peggy Brockington, and Queen Jackson; one brother, Frank Sanders; one brother-in-law, Donald Hudson, one sister-in-law, Lena Fairwell; and one bonus son, Herbert Only. *He leaves to cherish his memory; two daughters, Kimberly grayer and Angela Fairwell; four bonus daughters: Carmella (Donald) McNaughton Christine Dozier, Stephanie (Donald) King, and Teresa Brown; two bonus sons; Jeron (Cathy) Ann) Wallingford and Michael Doozier; three brothers: Evelyn Fairwvlll, Ernest Fairwell, and Tony (Jennifer) Fairwell, One loving and devoted sister, Princess Diane Hudson, two sisters-in-law; Lunette Sanders and Bonnie Jenkins; one brother-in-law, Charles Wallingford; one Godson, Tony Denario Fairwell; one Goddaughter, Latosha Lucas; one adopted brother, Richard Harris, one adopted son, Jerome West; his close friend, Ike Davis; his best friend /dog baby Girl, and a host of grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.*



**Daisy Peterson Arnold**

**Mrs. Daisy Pernice Arnold**, born Daisy Pernice Peterson, was born on **April 13, 1926**, in Alcolu, South Carolina, to the late Mrs. Willie Bessie Peterson and Mr. Robert Peterson. Mrs. Daisy was a faithful and devoted member of Sandy



1926 - 2026

Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. She departed this life on **January 17, 2026**. *Mrs. Daisy was a loving grandmother to two grandsons, the late Dr. Rodney Irvin Arnold and Mr. Nicklous Jermaine Arnold, and a cherished great-grandmother to eleven great-grandchildren. Dr. Rodney Arnold was the father of four children: Ashley Arnold, Drayton Arnold, Lauren Arnold, and Kaden Arnold. Mr. Nicklous Jermaine Arnold was the father of six children: Jermaisha Arnold, Jelicia Edwards, Ni'Angel Edwards, Javon Arnold, Em'Montae Arnold, and Naima Arnold, stepdaughter, Annette Burney, and step grandchildren, Andrew "Cliff" Burney and Belinda Burney. One of twelve children born to Mrs. Willie Bessie Peterson and Mr. Robert Peterson, Mrs. Daisy leaves to cherish her memory her sister, Mary Lou Hickman (Alcolu, SC) and her brothers, Hiawatha Peterson (New York, NY) and Roosevelt Peterson (Norwalk, CT). She also leaves behind a special niece, Ivory Knox, along with a host of other relatives, friends, and loved ones.*



**James Johnson**

**James Chris Johnson** was born on **December 25, 1957**. He departed this life on **January 9, 2026**.



1957 - 2026



**James Steven Ward**

**James Steven Ward**, born **December 10, 1964**, in Warren, Ohio, to Bernice (Williams) Ward and Willie Ward, Departed this life on **January 9, 2026**. *He leaves to cherish his memory his beloved wife, Lori Ward, his children, Chantel Ward, Clayton Lewis (Tameika), and Jamori Ward; his grandchildren, Harper Lewis, Jhamari McCormick, and Jayceon Stewart; his parents, Bernice Ward and Willie Ward; his sisters, Aerthea Carter, Elizabeth Brown, and Tiffany Hines; and a host of cousins, nieces, and nephews. He was preceded in death by his sister, Terri D. Johnson.*



1964 - 2026



**Oree D. Bell**

**Oree Delean Bell** was born on **May 23, 1949**, to the late Thomas J. and Leola Johnson Bell in Horry County, South Carolina. He departed this earthly life on Monday, **January 19, 2026**. Oree was preceded in death by



1949 -2026

grandson, Kameron Lee Bell, and two brothers, Glenn Austin Bell and Thomas Edison Bell. He attended Horry County Public Schools. Oree then relocated to Timberlake, NC, and married the late Ruby Lee Bell. After retirement, Oree moved back home to Little River, SC, and became a member of Mt Calvary #2 Missionary Baptist Church. *He leaves to cherish his memories, daughters: Sandy (Chris) Woods, Greensboro, NC; Mary Bell, Lumberton, NC, and Oreada Bell, Little River, SC, and one stepson, Michael (Jewel) Jenkins, Little River, SC. three grandchildren: Chris Woods, Alayna Bell and Kai Bell; four siblings; Rosa L. Wilson, Azalee (Joe) Satterwhite, Ruby (Earl) Gore and Sally (William) Pittman; three sisters-in-law, Sherry Jenkins Durmmon, Rochester, NY; Sarah Jenkins Harrell, Timberlake, NC; and Frances Bell, Longs, SC; a special friend, Estelle Marlowe, and a host of loving nieces, nephews and other loving relatives and friends.*



**Ashley Lenora Alston**

On **Tuesday, January 6, 2026**, **Ashley Lenora Alston**, age 41, departed this earthly life and entered into eternal rest. Born **December 7, 1984**, in Conway, she was the daughter of the late Jackie Lenora Alston and the late Samuel



**1984- 2026**

“Sammy” Jurion Scott. In her younger years she attended Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church in the Sandridge Community. Ashley was preceded in death by: her mother, Jackie Lenora Alston and father, Samuel Jurion Scott, maternal grandparents William Earl and Maggie Mae Brown Alston, and paternal grandparents Paul and Elouise Graves Scott. *Fond memories will forever be cherished by her fiancé, Shaquelle Marsh, her sister LaToya Scott, her brother Thomas “TJ” Jakes, her nieces; Za’Niya Floyd, Robyn Scott, Aubree Wilson, and Ta’Liya Jakes, her nephews; James Gagum, John Wilson Jr., and Jamarius Jakes, a special aunt, Karen Alston Anderson, cousins Whitney Anderson, Geneva (Jerald) Crummy, Taylor Crummy, and Jerald “Jay” Wendell Crummy II. Ashley especially loved spoiling Taylor and “Jay,” a joy she carried with her until her health declined. She also cherished a special friendship with Ms. Tunisia McCray. She is also survived by her aunts, Verlinear Richardson, Lorrienne (Shabazz) Ahmed, Pamela (Timmy G.) Bacchus, and Melissa Woodberry; her uncle, James E. Anderson; and a host of great-aunts, great-uncles, cousins, and friends. Ashley shared a special bond with her beloved pets, Bella, Coco, and Austin.*



**Mollie Jean Vaught Jackson**

**Mollie Jean Vaught Jackson**, lovingly known by her family and friends as "Little Momma," "Aunt Fee," and "Grannie Fannie," was born on **August 1, 1928**, in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. She was the beloved daughter of the



**1928- 2026**

late Odrick Vaught and Hattie Vaught. She passed away peacefully on **January 7, 2026**, in Orlando, Florida, at the age of 97. Mollie married Ulyssess Bellamy who proceeded her in death in 1955 and to this union they were blessed with 5 children-- Ulyssess Bellamy (Deceased) Betty Woods (Hookie) Charleston S, C, Josephine Washington (George) Lakeland, Florida, Joseph Bellamy (Deceased) Jean Vaught, Little River, SC. Mollie was preceded in death by her father Odrick Vaught, mother Hattie Williams, Uncles-- Spencer Vaught Twin sisters--Pauline Williams and Margaret Stevenson. Grand children—Ramona Bellamy, Andrew Jackson (Peewee), Debbie Allen, Tyrone Bellamy, Leon Bellamy, Angela Cecil Bellamy, and Kenneth Wortham. She raised a large and loving family that continues to grow and thrive. *Her legacy extends through five generations: 33 grandchildren, 37 great-grandchildren, and an extraordinary 67 great-great-grandchildren, and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins.*



**Evangelist Mary Martin DeWitt**

**Elder Evangelist Mary Hazel Martin DeWitt** peacefully transitioned from a faithful laborer to eternal reward at home in Lexington, Kentucky, on **January 6, 2026**. She was born to the late Reverend



**1930 - 2026**

Thomas and Sallie Martin in Washington, Georgia, on **June 22, 1930**. She was married to the late Deacon Timothy H. DeWitt. *Evangelist DeWitt leaves to cherish her memory her only daughter, Mrs. Undrail D. Izlar of Lexington, Kentucky (the late Pastor James L Izlar, Jr.), granddaughters Marissia Izlar-Hunt (Clifton), Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, Evangelist Tamera N. Izlar, Lexington, Kentucky, Jamie L. Izlar, Esquire, Lexington, Kentucky, one sister of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Rev. Dr. Elizabeth T. Hodge (the late Theo Hodge, Sr.), sisters-in-law Dr. Wilma DeWitt (the late Attorney Franklin DeWitt), Conway, South Carolina, Mrs. Amaree Woods (the late Bill Woods), Evansville, Indiana, brothers-in-law James DeWitt (Etta) of Conway, South Carolina, Mack DeWitt of Trenton, New Jersey, niece and second daughter, Sharolyn DeWitt of Conway, South Carolina, special niece and godchild, Pamela Hodge of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, and a host of nieces, nephews, godchildren, spiritual children, friends, a faithful cat, Kitty Gray, that has lived and traveled with Evangelist DeWitt for many years, and a "granddog" that loved to sing with her, "Deacon" Zishev.*



**Mike Wallace Jordan, Sr.**

**Mr. Mike Wallace Jordan, Sr.** was born on **October 19, 1952** to the late Jessie Jordan and Ms. Olivia Bellamy Jordan. He was raised in Horry County, South Carolina and attended Horry County Public Schools. In 1983 he was united in marriage to the



**1952 - 2026**

late Barbara Jordan and two children were born from that union. Mike devoted more than 35 years of faithful service to AVX. He departed this life on **January 1, 2026**. Mike was preceded in death by his father Jessie Jordan. *Left to cherish his memory are his beloved mother, Ms. Olivia Jordan of the home; his children: Keesha Richardson of Bonaire, Georgia; Tabitha Steele of Conway, SC; Emmanuel James of Niagara Falls, NY; Monica brown (Quantrel) of Conway, SC; Carletta Dozier of Conway, SC; and Mike Jordan, Jr. (LaShaunda) of Streamwood, Illinois. He also leaves behind his grandchildren; Jayla DeWitt, Kamryn Johnson, Aaron Sarvis, Brianna Saba, Tytianna Dozier, Jayden Jordan, Mikaela Jordan, Destiney Jordan, Tyrone Hopkins, Timothy Steele, Caro James, and Tameisha Sumpter. Mike is also survived by his loving siblings; sister Edith Jordan, Teresa Jordan, Amy Williams, Bonnie Manigo, all of Conway, SC, and Sandra Holmes (Franchella) of Conway, SC and James Jordan (Angelia) of oak Harbor, Washington. Additionally, he leaves a host of uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends who were touched by his life.*



**Edward Richard Newton**

**Mr. Edward R. Newton** was born on **May 14, 1935** in Conway, SC to the late Mr. Hoyt Newton and Mrs. Cecil Monroe Newton. Ed was educated in tire public schools of Con- way, South Carolina and graduated front Whittemore High School. He furthered his education



**1935 - 2025**

at Claflin University in Orangeburg, SC with a bachelor of science degree in 1959. . He eprted this life on **March 3, 2025**. He was a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, a member of the South Carolina State Athletic Commission, Served on the York County Library Board and was a member of the North Carolina medical center board. Ed was preceded in death by his first wife, Kittye Gilmore Newton, the mother of Charlene. *Ed leaves to cherish his memory, his lovely wife, Mrs. patricia A. Newton., his daughter, Mrs. Charlene Newton Reid (Paul) of John Creek, Georgia and his son, Jonathan Edward Newton of the home. His grandchildren, Ariel Reid of San Jose, California and Alex Reid of the Yniversity of Madrid, madrid Spain. He also leaves a host of cousins and friends whom he loved dearly.*



**Pamela Alicia Lindsay**

**Pamela Alicia Lindsay** was born on **February 1, 1968**. She departed this life on **January 16, 2026**



**1968 - 2026**





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