



# North Dallas Gazette

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# STEM Solution: Focusing on the fields of the future

## Part 2: Math and Engineering

By Katherine M. Brown  
NDG Contributing Writer

The Labor Bureau of Statistics reports that careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) are rising. In 2023, there were reported to be 10,712.4 STEM occupations. By 2033, it's predicted that there will be 11,822.8 STEM occupations.

Dallas ISD is training students to pursue careers in math and engineering. Aaron Aguirre-Castillo is the Executive Director of Curriculum Design for Math at Dallas ISD. He explains the math curriculum used at Dallas ISD.

"In Pre-K 3, the primary tier 1 curriculum that we use is Frog Street. And Pre-K 4 our students have access to Pre-K On My Way," explains Aguirre-Castillo.

"Kindergarten through 5th grade, students have access to Great Minds Eureka. 6th grade through Algebra II our students receive Carnegie Learning. And then post Algebra II is like AP Precalculus, AP Calculus, et cetera.

"Those course's curricula come from the College Board specifically. Pre-K through 8th grade students have a grade level specific math, and so for example they'll have 5th grade math, 7th grade math, et cetera. Once we get into 8th grade, students, depending on their middle school pathway, either take 8th grade math, or they're already positioned to take Algebra I in 8th grade."

By the time students reach high

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*A North Dallas Gazette two-part Special Report*

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### People In The News ...



Melvin Mitchell



Rep. Bennie Thompson

*NDG Quote of the Week: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."*  
- Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Melvin Mitchell

Melvin Mitchell, one of Black Dallas' respected entrepreneurs and founder of Mitchell's Bookkeeping & Tax Service, died Friday December 27, 2024 after a relatively short illness.

He was born July 5, 1940 in Dime Box, Texas, the youngest of his parent's eight children, and moved to Dallas in 1961.

Mitchell earned a mathematics degree from Bishop College in Dallas in 1965 and founded his tax and bookkeeping business in 1969. His office building, at 3730 N. Westmoreland Road, was a familiar



landmark in the West Dallas community between Singleton Boulevard and Canada Drive.

The entrepreneur was known for his wide-ranging careers and business involvements. He was a

former teacher at Madison High School and Sarah Zumwalt Middle School renamed in honor of Dr. Frederick D. Todd Sr.

While studying for his degree at Bishop College, Mitchell's diverse employment included being a barber, construction worker, carpet-layer and working at a bowling alley. He joined Omega Psi Phi Fraternity at Bishop and has been a deacon at North Park CME Church in Dallas.

Mitchell and his wife, Bobbie Watkins Mitchell, met while students at Bishop College and were married for 59 years. Mrs.

Mitchell was an assistant for her husband at his tax and bookkeeping service.

Their business was known for satisfied customer service and served generations of clients from parents and business owners to their children and adult grandchildren.

Mitchell's hobbies also were wide-ranging. Relatives say he was passionate about restoring old cars, including several Mustangs and trucks. He remodeled houses and did contracting in the tax off-season.

He spent enjoyable time on a family farm and was a devoted Dallas Cowboys

fan, whether the team won or lost.

Mitchell was a mentor and role model to many who sought advice and counsel on business and life issues. He was a Cub Scout and camping leader while his sons were growing up.

The Mitchell's two accomplished adult sons are Melerick Mitchell, a corporate consultant/trainer, speaker and author, and

Ramel Mitchell, a corporate Artificial Intelligence innovator and executive management App developer.

Besides his wife and sons, Mitchell's survivors include two grandchildren, Preston and Hannah Mitchell, and many nieces and nephews, and beloved relatives and friends. Funeral services still are pending through Laurel Land Funeral Home.

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## Rep. Bennie Thompson

President Joe Biden announced that he would honor 20 Americans with the Presidential Citizens Medal during a ceremony at the White House. Among the recipients were Mississippi Congressman Bennie Thompson and former Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney, who co-led Congress' investigation into the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The bipartisan committee, formed after the Capitol riot, investigated the attempt by Donald Trump supporters to disrupt the certification of Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election. Their work included public hearings and a final report in December 2022 that accused Trump of engaging in a "multi-part conspiracy" to overturn the election results.

Thompson, a veteran civil rights advocate, grew up in segregated Mississippi and was inspired by the movement for racial



justice. His career in public service began with grassroots organizing and voter registration efforts. Elected to Congress in 1993, he became the longest-serving African American lawmaker in Mississippi history. As chair of the January 6 Committee, Thompson was pivotal in investigating the insurrection and holding Trump accountable.

Cheney, a conservative Republican and the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney spent two decades in public service, including her tenure as a member of Congress representing Wyoming. Known for her sharp criti-

cism of Trump, Cheney lost her House seat in 2022 after standing against him and advocating for the investigation into the Capitol attack. Despite political backlash and numerous threats against her, Cheney stood her ground and called Trump's actions a direct threat to democracy.

The Presidential Citizens Medal, established in 1969, recognizes individuals who have performed what the White House called exemplary deeds of service for the country. Along with Thompson and Cheney, Mary L. Bonauto was honored for her instrumental role in the fight for marriage equality, culminating in the landmark Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. Civil rights attorneys Louis L. Redding and Collins J. Seitz, both honored posthumously, received recognition for their groundbreaking work dismantling school segregation.

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# In its final days, the Biden Administration delivers big time for America's coastal communities



**Ben Jealous**  
Sierra Club  
Exec. Dir.  
and U. Penn  
Profeswsor

It may be the dead of winter, but when we think about our beaches none of us want to picture them covered in oil. That is true for those of us who live along the water and those who live hundreds of miles from any ocean. Regardless of our generation, we can all picture what it looks like. For some, it is the 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara, California.

For others, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill by BP in the Gulf of Mexico. No matter what disaster comes to mind, we can all agree on one thing: we must protect our waters and our coastal communities. President Biden not only agrees, he just took decisive action to prevent future disasters from happening.

This week, in the waning days of his administration, President Biden announced he would use his authority under Section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to permanently withdraw 625 million acres from leasing for oil and gas drilling and exploration off our nation's coasts. The protected waters include the entire eastern Atlantic coast, the eastern Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific coast of California, Oregon, and Washington, and portions of the Northern Bering Sea in Alaska.

This move is the latest

chapter in Biden's historic climate legacy. It safeguards coastal communities and economies, marine wildlife, and ecosystems from the threats posed by offshore drilling. It will protect the health of those living closest to the pollution and other negative effects of offshore drilling. And it will bolster the already-underway clean energy transition that ends our reliance on fossil fuels, strengthens our economy with family-sustaining

majorities oppose offshore drilling. Sixty percent of Americans opposed efforts by the first Trump administration to lift offshore drilling bans. In the 17 states along the coasts that would have been impacted, 64% opposed lifting the ban. Coastal communities, business groups, and governors of both parties oppose offshore drilling. Presidents of both parties – including every president in the 21st century – have used their Section 12a authority

heating bills. And it is a win for endangered marine mammals, fisheries, and ecosystems along most US coast lines.

No matter what propaganda corporate polluters push, the fact remains there will never be a safe way to desecrate our waters to extract fossil fuels. This is why we must keep pushing to protect the central and western Gulf of Mexico as well, where oil and gas drilling is already deeply established. The communities, species, and ecosystems of this region continue to shoulder the environmental and health hazards brought on by widespread fossil fuel development. Indeed, another spill catastrophe in this region could lead to devastating public health, economic, and extinction-level impacts.

As we continue our transition to a clean energy economy, we can look forward to a day when all of America's waters and coasts are protected from the harms of offshore drilling. When that day comes, we will look back on this move by President Biden as perhaps the biggest step that got us there.

In the meantime, it is not too early to say: Thank you, President Biden. There are still some crucial remaining days to this president. Let's encourage the president to keep taking bold action until the very last day.

*Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.*

***"This latest action marks a major stride in the Biden administration's America the Beautiful initiative to conserve, restore, and protect 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030."***

jobs, and makes our air and water cleaner and safer.

This latest action marks a major stride in the Biden administration's America the Beautiful initiative to conserve, restore, and protect 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030 (often called "30 by 30"). It is one more feather in the cap of an administration that has shown remarkable dedication to conservation with the creation and expansion of national monuments, protections for millions of acres in the Arctic, and priority shifts at key agencies like the Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service.

And it is a move that should be popular with Americans of all political stripes. Strong bipartisan

to remove portions of the US coastline from oil and gas drilling. And bills that would ban offshore drilling have enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress.

Despite propaganda from Big Oil and Gas, this is a major win for all Americans and especially those in communities that depend on coastal waters for their livelihoods and local economies. It is a win for every American, as the climate crisis increasingly impacts all of us. Prices at the pump will not go up (the cost of gasoline is determined by global oil prices and consumer demand, not changes to federal leasing policy). There is no evidence that expanded leasing and domestic production in federal waters would lower

Keep up with the news

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# Ditch TV and Read a Book: UniSA Research delivers best moves to reduce dementia risk

Newswise — It's that time of the year when most of us get the chance to sit back and enjoy some well-deserved down time. But whether you reach for the TV controller, or a favourite book, your choice could have implications for your long-term brain health, say researchers at the University of South Australia.

Assessing the 24-hour activity patterns of 397 older adults (aged 60+), researchers found that the context or type of activity that you engage in, matters when it comes to brain health. And specifically, that some sedentary (or sitting) behaviours are better for cognitive function than others.

When looking at different sedentary behaviours, they found that social or mentally stimulating activities such as reading, listening to music, praying, crafting, playing a musical instrument, or chatting with others are beneficial for memory and thinking abilities. Yet watching TV or playing video games are detrimental.

Researchers believe that there is likely a hierarchy of how sedentary behaviours relate to cognitive function, in that some have positive effects while others have negative effects.

It's a valuable insight that could help reduce risks of cognitive impairment, particularly when at least 45% of dementia cases could be prevented through modifiable lifestyle factors.

In Australia, about 411,100 people (or one in every 1000 people) are living with dementia. Nearly two-thirds are women.



DWG Studio

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that more than 55 million people have dementia with nearly 10 million new cases each year.

UniSA researcher Dr Maddison Mellow says that not all sedentary behaviours are equal when it comes to memory and thinking ability.

“In this research, we found that the context of an activity alters how it relates to cognitive function, with different activities providing varying levels of cognitive stimulation and social engagement,” Dr Mellow says.

“We already know that physical activity is a strong protector against dementia risk, and this should certainly be prioritised if you are trying to improve your brain health. But until now, we hadn't directly explored whether we can benefit our brain health by swapping one sedentary behaviour for another.

“We found that sedentary behaviours which promote mental stimulation or

social engagement – such as reading or talking with friends – are beneficial for cognitive function, whereas others like watching TV or gaming have a negative ef-


fect. So, the type of activity is important.

“And, while the ‘move more, sit less’ message certainly holds true for cardiovascular and brain health,

our research shows that a more nuanced approach is needed when it comes to thinking about the link between sedentary behaviours and cognitive function.”

Now, as the Christmas holidays roll around, what advice do researchers have for those who really want

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**McKinney Housing Authority  
2025 ANNUAL & FIVE-YEAR PLAN**

**PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

The Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires the McKinney Housing Authority to submit an Agency Plan each year.

The PHA Plan is a comprehensive guide to public housing agency (PHA) policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals. There are two parts to the PHA Plan: the 5-Year Plan, which each PHA submits to HUD once every 5th PHA fiscal year, and the Annual Plan, which is submitted to HUD every year. Below is a list of meetings that are scheduled to review and discuss the Agency Plan documents for the 2025 fiscal year. Program participants, the public and staff are encouraged to attend the meetings.

**Autoridad de Vivienda McKinney  
PLAN ANUAL Y QUINQUENAL 2025**

**REUNIONES DARSE CUENTA**

La Ley de Vivienda y Responsabilidad Laboral de Calidad de 1998 requiere que la Autoridad de Vivienda de McKinney presente un Plan de la Agencia cada año.

El Plan PHA es una guía completa de las políticas, programas, operaciones y estrategias de las agencias de vivienda pública (PHA) para satisfacer las necesidades y los objetivos de vivienda locales. Hay dos partes en el Plan PHA: el Plan de 5 años, que cada PHA presenta a HUD una vez cada quinto año fiscal de PHA, y el Plan anual, que se envía a HUD cada año.

A continuación hay una lista de reuniones que están programadas para revisar y analizar los documentos del Plan de la Agencia para el año fiscal 2025.

Se anima a los participantes del programa, al público y al personal a asistir a las reuniones

Tuesday January 28, 2025	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Merritt Homes Community Center	1200 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX 75069
Thursday February 13, 2025	4:30pm	Public Meeting	Newsome Homes Community Center	1450 Amcott St. McKinney, TX 75069
Tuesday February 25, 2025	4:30pm	Board of Commissioners Meeting	Merritt Homes Community Center	1200 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX 75069

A draft of the proposed ANNUAL and Five Year Plan is available for review at the MHA main office located at: 603 N. Tennessee St. McKinney, TX.

Comments can be submitted by hand delivery, mail, or email to McKinney Housing Authority Main Office; 603 North Tennessee Street; Attn: Roslyn Miller; McKinney, TX 75069 or [info@mckinneyha.org](mailto:info@mckinneyha.org). The final public hearing for plan adoption will be held on Tuesday, March 25th at 4:30pm – Merritt Homes community center.

# New Year brings a wave of new laws across the United States

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

As 2025 begins, jurisdictions across the United States enact new laws that impact gun safety, healthcare, consumer privacy, and transportation.

## Washington, D.C.

In the nation's capital, insurance providers must now cover infertility diagnosis and treatment, including three rounds of in vitro fertilization (IVF) and associated costs for surrogacy. Families with children under six will benefit from a new child tax credit, offering up to \$420 per child based on income.

A "bill of rights" for student loan borrowers prohibits deceptive practices by loan servicers and provides debt forgiveness for individuals with total or permanent disabilities. The District has also mandated bird-friendly construction materials for new com-



Image via NNPA

mercial and multifamily buildings to reduce avian deaths caused by building collisions.

Businesses in D.C. are now required to accept cash payments, with limited exceptions. At the same time, a ban on right turns at red lights is enforceable only at intersections with posted signage due to funding limitations.

## Maryland

In Maryland, new laws emphasize worker and public safety. Stricter penalties for speeding in work zones are now fully imple-

mented, with fines ranging from \$60 to \$1,000 based on the severity of the offense. Health insurers must now cover hearing aids prescribed by licensed audiologists, capped at \$1,400 per device every three years. Hospitals across the state must stock opioid overdose medications, implement treatment protocols, and support patient transitions into community-based care.

## Virginia

Virginia has launched a shared solar program that allows Appalachian Power

customers to participate in solar energy facilities and earn bill credits. The state's minimum wage has risen to \$12.41 per hour under a cost-of-living adjustment tied to the federal consumer price index. Protections for children's personal data now bar online vendors from using data for targeted ads or geolocation without parental consent.

Virginia will no longer adhere to California's stricter vehicle emissions standards. Health insurers must now cover colorectal cancer screenings, including follow-up colonoscopies, without deductibles or cost-sharing.

## Gun Safety Laws Nationwide

With new laws in several states, gun safety will take center stage in 2025. In Colorado, handguns stored in unoccupied vehicles must now be locked in a hard-sided container and hidden from view, with the vehicle itself locked. Be-

ginning July 1, applicants for concealed carry permits must complete an eight-hour training course, including a written exam and live-fire exercise. Certain misdemeanors within five years of application will disqualify individuals from obtaining permits.

In New York, gun dealers must post warning signs about the risks of gun ownership starting January 7, and the state will implement a registry for extreme risk protection orders. Minnesota has banned binary triggers, and Delaware extended its Safe School Zone laws to include university campuses, making firearm possession on campus a felony.

Monisha Henley of Everytown for Gun Safety noted the importance of these measures. "America's gun violence epidemic is not inevitable, it is the logical outcome of lawmakers' callous inaction in service to the gun lobby,"

Henley said. "As we head into 2025, not a single consequential law rolling back our progress on gun safety will go into effect, but countless laws making our communities safer will."

## Transportation and Public Safety

California's "Daylighting to Save Lives Bill" bans parking within 20 feet of crosswalks to improve pedestrian visibility. Colorado has imposed stricter penalties for express lane misuse and requires individuals convicted of violent crimes to serve 85% of their sentence before parole eligibility. Washington state has enacted tougher penalties for negligent driving that results in fatalities.

## Consumer Privacy and Protections

Delaware, Iowa, Nebraska, and New Hampshire have implemented new privacy laws granting

See LAWS, Page 14

## Colorado star Travis Hunter's mom headlines first Sports Mom Conference

Colorado star Travis Hunter was college football's best player in 2024, and he has the trophies to prove it.

Hunter, who won the Heisman Trophy, awarded annually to college football's best player, is expected to be among the first players selected in April's NFL draft. Hunter isn't just a football star – he's a brand with multiple endorsement deals, including Adidas and United Airlines agreements.

Hunter's mother, Ferrante Edmonds, headlines the 1st annual 2025 Sports Moms Conference on Feb. 1, 2025 at Trinity Christ Church in Cedar Hill, Texas, presented

by Can We Talk Sports & Can We Play Inc. She'll be joined by DeSoto resident Mistee Salter, who has two sons playing football for Power 5 programs, including quarterback Kaidon Salter, a graduate transfer who recently committed to play for Colorado coach Deion Sanders.

The conference also features local experts participating in panel discussions and breakout rooms on NIL, recruiting, branding and marketing, youth sports, mental health, and more. Registration is \$149 for individuals and \$229 for families. Student-athletes attend free with the purchase of a

ticket by a parent or guardian.

"I created this conference because parents need to know. There's so much going on in the sports world every day that's happening every day, and parents are not at the table," said event organizer Karen Reese, whose son played college football. "As parents, things are going on in every area of sports, and we need to know. Ferrante Edmonds and Mistee Salter have experienced everything as a sports mom. The knowledge and information they can provide will be invaluable."

See MOMS, Page 13

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# How Head Start installs confidence for two generations

By Olivia Harvey

The founders of Head Start have always viewed parents as critical partners in their work to educate young children. They also understood that this partnership meant parents should help decide which services would most benefit their families and those in the community. As a result, Head Start created a formal leadership and policymaking role for parents and community members called the Policy Council.

Thank you to Head Start parent, Policy Council member, and alumna Olivia Harvey for recently sharing her story.

A few years ago my daughter Maliya was six years old and had just started kindergarten, after graduating from the Children First Head Start program in Sarasota County, Florida. It was hard to believe we'd reached this major milestone, but with all the love, care, and guidance she received from her incredible teachers, I'm confident that she will continue to blossom and thrive. Children First



*Head Start is a changemaker for all communities. Child by child, family by family, the seeds that are sowed continue to blossom as they stretch higher and higher toward the sunshine. (Image via NNPA)*

and the Head Start program have always been close to my heart, and the hearts of my family. My husband Malik is also a proud Head Start graduate along with some members of his family. He's a wonderful support system and understands our shared mission of raising the healthiest, happiest family possible. Our lives are centered around family, and in addition to Maliya, we also have two other children, our sons Jeremiah and King. When we had our kids, we knew we didn't have to look far to find quality, affordable childcare with amazing teachers we could trust. With the challenges we were facing, we knew we could

turn to Children First's Head Start program to help us find our path to success.

My family has been involved with Children First since Jeremiah was a toddler. Our family advocate, Ernestine, was there for Maliya and our entire family every step of the way. I know that even when my daughter is in high school, Ernestine will be there in a heartbeat if we ever need anything. The teachers care so deeply about the kids, and they never forget their faces. One day, Maliya came home with a photo taken by her teacher, Miss LaTonda. It was a baby picture of me because Miss LaTonda had been my teacher

as well. I couldn't believe she had kept it for all these years! It was such a special memory to share with my daughter, and it's moments like this that let me know we will always be a part of the Children First family. Through Head Start, I also found a lot of support personally and as a parent. Due to the pandemic, I had reduced hours and was forced to seek other employment. During this time, I needed something that would allow me to feel professional and help me keep my skills up while at the same time offering me the flexibility to be a mom.

Luckily, Children First was offering a Job Skills Training Course as part of the agency's Family Strengthening services. The class was perfect because it provided a sense of accountability and belonging. I learned about identifying and overcoming obstacles related to employment, and there was a special focus on resume writing, interviews, and 'acing' the first 90 days at a new job, which has benefited me! After a mock interview with my vocational

family advocate Laura and her colleagues, I felt so confident with the skills that I had learned, and I decided to reach a higher goal in the workforce. I was offered a position at Sarasota School of the Arts & Sciences, where I have been working as a paraprofessional. While working full-time, I've also had the opportunity to go back to school to earn my bachelor's degree to become a history or math teacher. My ambitions have led me to be a working professional, a full-time mom, and now, a student, but I'm not stopping there. In the future, I would like to earn my master's degree and work as an administrator, with one of my ultimate goals being to run for the school board.

Because of Children First, Head Start, and my vocational coach, Laura, it feels like a whole new world of possibilities has opened. While I was unexpectedly unemployed but fighting to stay engaged, I was supported every step of the way. Laura and the team at Children First continue to guide me and my family on our journey to success. Al-

though we still face unique challenges, I feel grateful and am so proud of how far we've come. Because Malik and I were able to grow and thrive in a healthy environment at the earliest stages of our lives, the lives of our children have been transformed for the better. Right now, some parents, families, and caregivers are struggling financially and socially. They need lower childcare prices, full workday hours with childcare coverage, and free transportation to and from daycare.

Head Start is a changemaker for all communities. Child by child, family by family, the seeds that are sowed continue to blossom as they stretch higher and higher toward the sunshine. Their promise is simple: every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, can reach their full potential. As I look to the future — from my youngest child thriving, to earning my teaching degree, to raising my beautiful children alongside my husband and beyond that, I know that thanks to Head Start, there is nothing to fear.

## THOMPSON, from Page 2

tion and laying the groundwork for the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi, also posthumously recognized, challenged the unjust internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, paving the way for thousands to rebuild their lives. Frances Visco, a

breast cancer survivor, was celebrated for her advocacy that increased federal funding for breast cancer research and improved access to healthcare for women.

Biden also recognized two of his longtime allies, Ted Kaufman and Chris Dodd, for their decades of public service and signifi-

cant contributions to financial reform, childcare legislation, and international diplomacy. Diane Carlson Evans, an Army nurse during the Vietnam War, was honored for founding the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation, ensuring female service members received long-overdue recognition.

Carolyn McCarthy, who became a leading advo-

cate for gun safety after her family was impacted by gun violence, was recognized for her 18 years of service in Congress. Thomas Vallely, a Marine veteran turned peace advocate, was celebrated for fostering U.S.-Vietnam relations and establishing Fulbright University Vietnam. Paula Wallace, who transformed professional education through her work at the Sa-

vannah College of Art and Design, was also among the honorees.

Trump, who will be sworn in as president again on January 20 after his November election victory, has repeatedly criticized the committee and its leaders. In an interview with "Meet the Press," Trump said, "Cheney did something that's inexcusable, along with Thomp-

son and the people on the un-select committee of political thugs and, you know, creeps," claiming, without evidence, that the committee had "deleted and destroyed" testimony. He has also promised to pardon the January 6 rioters after taking office.

"The country is better because of their dedication and sacrifice," Biden asserted.



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## STEM, from Page 1

school, Aguirre-Castillo says that the core sequence can vary depending on students' entry points.

"Students end up taking Geometry, Algebra II and then from there, they have a series of options in terms of courses they can take based on their pathway," says Aguirre-Castillo. "They might go to Math Models or Algebraic Reasoning. They might go to Statistics. They might go to AP Calculus depending on the school that they are enrolled in and the offerings. Some students have access to IB math courses, and so the offerings at the high school level are a little more robust."

Aguirre-Castillo explains that different age groups use different types of math tools. Elementary uses manipulatives, such as colorful discs called counters, and unit or snap cubes. For secondary, he says that this age group uses algebra tiles, protractors, rulers, and geometric solids. As students start taking Algebra I, they begin to use calculators regularly. Students use iPads or Chromebooks, where they can use digital applications such as MATHia.

Mijo Joy is a teacher at Dallas ISD. He teaches Electronic Technology as part of the Principles of Manufacturing course.

Joy uses different tools to teach his students. These include digital multimeters, soldering kits, schematic diagrams, and circuit boards. They also include hands-on activities like troubleshooting challenges, soldering projects, and circuit-building exercises. Additionally, Joy utilizes

group projects, educational videos, and simulation software.

A typical day starts with a brief discussion or demonstration, followed by hands-on activities. Students might be assembling circuits, working on group projects, or analyzing problems using their tools and knowledge. The focus is always on practical application.

"One of my favorite lessons involves teaching students to assemble and solder a Christmas tree circuit board," writes Jo of a lesson that he particularly enjoys teaching. "The objective is to apply soldering techniques while understanding basic circuitry. Resources include soldering irons, safety equipment, and pre-printed circuit boards. By the end, students create a functional LED-lit tree while mastering soldering skills."

Along with technical skills, Joy says that students also develop employability skills such as project management, teamwork, and communication; all of which he intends to prepare his students for work in the STEM field.

"Students gain industry-relevant skills, such as safety practices, soldering, and the use of technical tools, making them workforce-ready," writes Joy. "They also learn to collaborate, plan, and execute projects, key traits in STEM fields."

"I enjoy seeing students engage with hands-on projects and develop real-world skills," writes Joy. "Watching their confidence grow as they solve problems and complete tasks is incredibly rewarding."

UT Dallas students are also learning about math and engineering.

Dr. Octavious Smiley teaches Probability and Statistics, along with Introduction to Data Science at UT Dallas. He has taught these two classes for almost two years. He says there is a solid curriculum for students in math at his school.

"The curriculum at UTD is going to offer a broad range of courses designed

them."

Smiley says a typical day in his classroom will begin with a quiz if there was homework assigned. Throughout the school, students are often seen working together near whiteboards, collaborating with their peers, and helping each other as they work through the material. Occasionally, Smiley observes his students in the classroom, working together,

ditional probabilities and all the implications of having different conditions, a game I like to play with my students is 'guess which hand the marker cap is in,'" Smiley says. "I will take a marker cap, put it behind my back and I'll ask about 5 to 10 students which hand the cap is in. I will ask them to also explain why they feel like the cap is in that hand. Some students are going to take the naive 50/50 approach and just make a random guess and explain that. While others are going to try to use personal information about me, such as me being right-handed to try to say 'It's probably in your right hand' or 'You're a trickster so it's probably in your left hand because you're right-handed.'

"They seem to readily see when it's my turn to guess that from my perspective, it is certain which hand the marker is in, but from theirs it is not. That's a way that I can talk about how different conditions and different perspectives - because these words are going to be interchangeable that I'm going to be using with them - is going to impact the actual probabilities and related to how every type of probability question is going to be conditional in real life. Playing this game softens the impact before we actually bring in the mathematical representation of their perspective, my perspective, which then allows us to bring in base theorem a little bit later."

Smiley notes math students have the opportunity to pursue various career paths. These include entrepreneurship, industry, government, and further graduate studies. Smiley explains

that fields are generally open to students skilled in mathematics and statistics, especially those with strong communication abilities. With the technical expertise in math and statistics, students can also venture into law, as demonstrated by a Morehouse College graduate who, after being a physics major and valedictorian, went on to attend Yale Law School. Medical school is another possibility, along with many other career avenues. While the primary focus may be on industry, government, or graduate studies, opportunities are available across a wide range of fields.

Smiley offers advice to students who want to pursue a math career.

"I would say seek to understand what you are doing and not simply memorize the formulas," says Smiley. "Because once you understand it, it's going to naturally impact your thinking and habits in a manner to increase your recall ability years later."

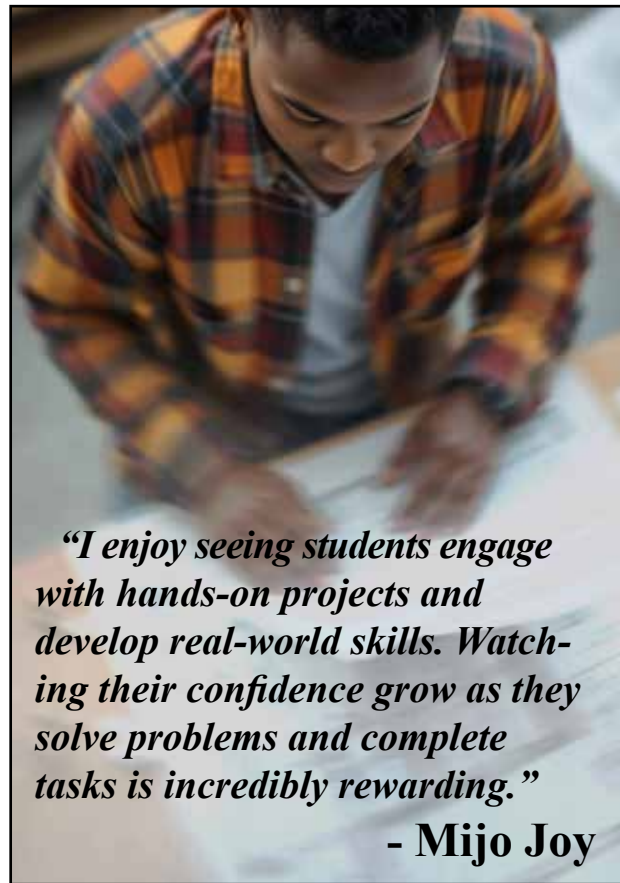
And Smiley also has an extra tidbit of information for students.

"The only mathematically possible way to give 110% of your effort is to reach out for support and as such, you must support those who reach out to you."

Dr. Nandika D'Souza has been teaching mechanics at UT Dallas for 30 years. She says that students take different courses for different degrees.

"We have a national accreditation board that gives us guidance on what are the components of different engineering degrees," explains D'Souza. "It's

**See STEM, Page 12**



***"I enjoy seeing students engage with hands-on projects and develop real-world skills. Watching their confidence grow as they solve problems and complete tasks is incredibly rewarding."***

**- Mijo Joy**

DWG Studio

to more so prepare students for careers in industry, government, or further graduate studies," explains Smiley. "The emphasis is going to be on foundational courses like Calculus I,II,III, computational courses like Introduction to Programming, as well as advanced proof and skill-based courses to help them deepen their understanding of the common mathematics around us and around

which brings him a sense of pride. When students approach him with enthusiasm, asking, "Hey Dr. Smiley! Can I ask you a quick question?" it signals to him that they are engaged, making an effort, and genuinely interested in the subject.

Smiley explains an educational game that he likes to play with his students.

"When discussing base theorem and probability and how to work with con-

# Dallas Cowboys end season with more questions than answers

By Jamal Baker  
NDG Contributing Writer

The 2024-2025 regular season will be one to forget for the Dallas Cowboys. This past Sunday served as poetic justice for current Washington Commanders head coach Dan Quinn as he handed his former team their final loss of the season. The Cowboys fell to the Commanders 23-19 and finished their regular season campaign with a 7-10 record. The Cowboys secured the 12th overall pick in the NFL draft and currently have a staff full of coaches on expiring contracts—head coach Mike McCarthy included.

“Mike’s one of the best coaches that I think there is. He was made the coach here because I thought that, and he’s done absolutely nothing to diminish my opinion of him as a coach. And I am really impressed with the way the players identify [and] are with him,” Owner, President, and General Manager Jerry Jones said postgame.

McCarthy is a superbowl champion and has won 174 games as a head coach—13th all time in NFL history. Admittedly, letting someone with such pedigree walk out of your building can be a diffi-



NDG Composite Image

cult decision to make. The Chicago Bears are ready to pounce as they have already requested permission to interview McCarthy this week. Jones is expected to take his time with the head coaching decision, and one he must get right while players like Dak Prescott, Ceedee Lamb, and Micah Parsons are still in the prime of their careers.

The Cowboys also have a bevy of roster decisions to make this offseason. For starters, they should not play with food and do the right thing like Spike Lee by extending Micah Parsons—instead of procrastinating next offseason.

“I called upon the star. I landed on it, and I’m grateful. I feel like I got one of the best jobs in America. I’m just super grateful for the opportunity that Jerry Jones gave me and I don’t take it for granted,” Parsons stated postgame.

Defensive linemen Demarcus Lawrence and Osa Odighizuwa are also due for new deals and set to hit free agency. Lawrence has been a bookend with Parsons at the defensive end position and will certainly return to the Cowboys on an incentive-based team friendly deal. Odighizuwa improved each year in his four seasons with Dallas and developed into a force at defensive tackle—the Cowboys would be silly to let him walk.

Dallas has many holes that need to be filled on the roster, making the 2025 NFL draft all the more important. The last time the Cowboys had the 12th overall pick, they struck gold, and selected Parsons out of Penn State in 2021. Prospective prospects within their range include running back Ashton Jeanty, wide receiver Luther Burden III, and defensive

tackle Derrick Harmon. Jeanty would pair nicely with current running back Rico Dowdle by providing power and explosiveness. If Dowdle decides to walk in free agency, Jeanty is more than capable of being the bell cow. Burden III is

instant offense at the wide receiver position. Burden III’s presence would unlock Prescott another weapon outside of Lamb and tight end Jake Ferguson. Interior defensive line has been a problem for years within

the Dallas organization, and adding a 6’5” 310-pound man in Harmon will certainly shore up this weakness. The Cowboys have a chance to reshape their roster and staff this offseason and build on the foundation they have already set.

## READ, from Page 4

to indulge in a myriad of Christmas movies or a marathon of Modern Family?

“To achieve the best brain health and physical health benefits, you should prioritize movement that’s enjoyable and gets the heart rate up, as this has benefits for all aspects of health,” Dr Mellow says.

“But even small five-minute time swaps can have benefits. So, if you’re dead set on having a Christmas movie marathon, try to break up that time with some physical activity or a more cognitively engaged seated activity, like reading, at some point. That way you can slowly build up healthi-

er habits.”

This research was conducted by a team of UniSA researchers including: Dr Maddison Mellow, Prof Dot Dumuid, Dr Alexandra Wade, Prof Tim Olds, Dr Ty Stanford, Prof Hannah Keage, and Assoc Prof Ashleigh Smith; with researchers from the University of Leicester, and the University of Newcastle.





Ryan Destiny and Bryan Tyree Henry in *The Fire Inside* (Image via NNPA)

## Film Review: 'The Fire Inside' burns up the screen

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*\*) “What do you think about girls boxing,” says coach Jason Crutchfield (Brian Tyree Henry). His wife Mickey (De’Adre Aziza) calmly replies, “Don’t see no reason why she can’t. She got hands.”

As a young girl in Flint, Michigan, Claressa Shields keeps stopping by Crutchfield’s boxing gym. Since female pugilists are frowned upon, she can only do exercises and shadow boxing. No stepping into the ring. That’s banned. Years go by, and Claressa gains entrance. She boxes opponents and beats boys’ asses. She’s grown into a young woman (Ryan Destiny) who can bob and weave, throw heavy right crosses and go where girls have never gone before. To the top. How good is she? So good she earns a tryout for the Olympics at age 15 and is destined to compete for a medal in the 2012 games. The rest is history.

Telling Shields breakthrough story has been a dream of director/writer/producer Barry Jenkins (Moonlight) for almost a decade. His based-on-fact script became the blueprint that cinematographer Rachel Morrison

(Black Panther, Mudbound) used to mark her feature film directing debut. Visually, with the help of cinematographer Rina Yang (Nanny), she captures the drama in Shields family that includes a reckless mother (Olunike Adeliyi), needy young siblings and a father (Adam Clark) who was out of the picture for various reasons. Until he isn’t. Morrison shows a gift for guiding the main and supporting actors. Nothing seems fake. Not the emotions, upheavals or triumphs. The script puts plenty of hurdles in Shields way, and every problem she conquers seems hard fought.

For viewers, the chance to see how athletes train and compete for the Olympics makes this film an eye opener. It’s even more engaging because females are active in a sport that’s been dominated by men—for centuries. All the stress, determination and triumph it takes to win—at the highest levels—is on view. For young girls wondering how pioneers paved the way and what it takes to become a worldwide champion, there’s a road map. Also included is the harsh reality of not making a living from the sport and other hard truths. This well-written sports narrative doesn’t miss a beat and peaks in

a third act that is as vital as the first.

Bryan Tyree Henry is Shields’ surrogate father. Nurturing, questioning his inabilities and growing as a person. Ryan Destiny plays the real-life protagonist audiences will admire and is supported by the other young actresses who play Shields in her earlier years (Jazmin Headley, Kylee D. Allen). She exhibits a feisty nature that likely propelled the real boxing champ from inner city Flint to world stages. Idrissa Sanogo and Taytem Douglas portray her love interest Lil’ Zay, as a teenager and a kid respectively. Both show young impressionable black males how they can be supportive to Black women, and still be manly. Something audiences don’t see enough of in films these days.

There are countless sports hero movies out there. This one distinguishes itself by being about a girl who became a woman, a bread winner and a Gold Medal world boxing champ. Jenkins and Morrison have crafted more than just another story about a gifted athlete. They’ve created a bio that’s a handbook for female athletes looking to excel.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrownInk.com](http://DwightBrownInk.com).

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## NDG Book Review: 'On Love' is a great read to celebrate the life of MLK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Turn the volume up, please.

You need it louder because this is something you've been waiting to hear. You need to listen very closely; these words mean a great deal to you and they might change your life. As in the new book, "On Love" by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the message beneath the message is the most important.

As the grandson and great-grandson of pastors and the son of the senior pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, it may seem as though young Mar-



tin Luther King, Jr., born in 1929, already had his life set.

King entered college at age fifteen and after graduation, he was named associate pastor at his father's church. At age twenty-

five, he became the pastor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. In late 1956, he was apprehended for his part in the bus boycott there, his first of many arrests for non-violent protests and activism for Civil Rights.

But when asked if those things were what he hoped he'd be honored for in years to come, King said he wanted to be remembered as "someone who tried to love somebody."

His words, essays, letters, and speeches reflect that desire.

In a 1955 sermon in Montgomery, he used a parable to explain why white

people needed love to gain compassion. In 1956, he wrote about the bombing of his home, telling his readers that no retaliation was needed, that to "confront the problem with love" was the righteous and better thing to do.

Later that year, he said, "I want you to love our enemies... Love them and let them know you love them." And in November, 1956, he said, "... if you have not love, it means nothing."

"Love is the greatest force in all the world," he said in 1962.

He wrote a book on the subject, *Strength to Love*, in 1963.

In 1967, just months before his assassination, he said that "power at its best is love..."

When we talk about Dr. King's life and his legacy, so much focus is put on his work on behalf of Civil Rights and equality that it's easy to lose sight of the thing which he felt was more important. In "On Love," any omission is rectified nicely.

This book, "excerpted to highlight the material where King specifically addressed the topic of love," is full of pleasant surprises, words with impact, and thought-provokers. King's speeches hammered home

a need to love one's enemies, woven into messages of gentle resistance and strength. He explained the different "levels" of love in a way that makes sense when related to equality and justice. The bits and pieces collected here will linger in reader's minds, poking and prodding and reminding.

If your shelves are full of books about Dr. King, know that this is a unique one, and it's perfect for our times, now. Don't race through it; instead, savor what you'll read and keep it close. "On Love" is a book you'll want to turn to, often.

## Bringing Black Voices to the Stage: Why it matters in classical theater

By Carl Cofield

Theater has always been a mirror reflecting society's triumphs and tribulations. Yet, for centuries, that mirror has often failed to capture the richness and diversity of all its audiences. The Classical Theatre of Harlem (CTH) stands as a beacon in the movement to change that narrative, drawing inspiration from Harlem's cultural legacy and the enduring significance of the Harlem Renaissance. As the organization celebrates its 25th anniversary amid the centennial of the Harlem Renaissance, it reminds us of the urgent need to amplify Black voices in classical theater.

Black characters and stories have long existed in the classical canon, but they are too often overlooked, obscured by a Western-centric lens. By unearthing these narratives, CTH ensures that audiences experience



Carl Cofield (Courtesy photo)

the full spectrum of human stories and the complexities of the Black experience.

Traditional Western theater has historically prioritized white, European narratives, leaving little room for diverse perspectives. This exclusion has created cultural gaps, depriving Black audiences of seeing their stories reflected in classical works. The lack of representation also narrows the perspectives of other audiences, fostering a theater landscape that falls short of its potential to inspire empathy and under-

standing.

CTH is taking bold strides to address this imbalance by spotlighting Black characters who deserve a place on the classical stage. Take, for instance, *Memnon*, the Ethiopian king who fought at Troy. In July 2025, CTH will present the New York premiere of *Memnon*, a production helmed by myself and written by Will Power. This narrative revival brings to life a story steeped in heroism and African history, enriching the classical canon with a fresh perspective.

Other Black characters already within the canon, such as Shakespeare's *Othello*, bring nuance to exploring race, jealousy, and identity. Meanwhile, characters like Brutus Jones and Beneatha Younger delve into power dynamics, self-discovery, and the search for independence. Works like Joe Turner's *Come and Gone* reflect the enduring

struggles of identity and freedom post-slavery.

From *Hester* to *Sethe* to *The African*, these characters collectively dismantle stereotypes, showcasing Black individuals as complex and multidimensional—heroes, dreamers, leaders, and survivors.

Bringing Black voices to the stage enriches the narrative landscape and builds bridges of understanding. Diverse stories allow audiences to engage with Black history and culture in ways that transcend textbooks and stereotypes. By seeing Black characters take center stage, audiences are challenged to rethink ingrained biases and embrace a broader human experience.

Today, the themes explored by these characters resonate powerfully with modern issues, from racial justice to identity and resilience. Their stories inspire future generations of

Black artists, proving that their history and heritage deserve recognition on the world's stage. Representation matters not only for Black audiences but for everyone—it validates that art thrives when it reflects the breadth of human experiences.

Theater companies have a responsibility to do more than diversify their casts; they must be intentional about the stories they choose to tell. This includes revisiting the classical canon through an inclusive lens and commissioning works that elevate overlooked narratives.

CTH leads this charge through its innovative arts education initiative, Project Classics, which introduces Harlem youth to classical theater. Programs like this ensure the next generation sees their stories as vital, beautiful, and worthy of being told.

As CTH looks toward the

future, its ambitions extend beyond the stage. The organization's goal of establishing a permanent home in Harlem underscores its commitment to being a cultural pillar for the community. Black voices in the performing arts can flourish for generations in this space.

In supporting CTH and other theaters celebrating diversity, audiences, artists, and institutions contribute to a richer, more inclusive cultural landscape. The stage is set. Now is the time to step into the spotlight and champion the stories that make us all more empathetic and connected.

*Carl Cofield is Associate Artistic Director for CTH and directed several plays for the organization before joining as a staff member in 2018. He holds an MFA from Columbia University. Mr. Cofield is on faculty at NYU and Columbia University.*

## AARP Texas welcomes Charlotte McKenzie of Frisco as State President

Charlotte McKenzie, an accomplished business and civic leader residing in Frisco, will serve as the AARP Texas State President, the organization's top volunteer leadership position in the state.

McKenzie's appointment -- effective immediately -- is announced by AARP Texas Director Tina Tran. The pair share the responsibility of leading the AARP Texas Executive Council, and they will work with AARP Texas staff and volunteers across the state to establish strategic goals and objectives that are consistent with AARP's national strategies.

In welcoming McKenzie to the role, Tran said: "Charlotte brings a wealth of experience and professionalism, along with a pas-

sion for delivering AARP's message and mission in our state and community. I am confident that Charlotte will lead our Executive Council to even greater heights."

Holding a Master of Science degree in Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, McKenzie retired from the biotech and pharmaceutical industry, having worked with Fortune 500 corporations and startup companies as an award-winning clinical science specialist. She is accomplished in research, team leadership, new business development, executive training, sales and marketing.

Since her retirement, McKenzie has been an active volunteer with AARP

and has served for several years on the AARP Texas Executive Council. She has been intimately involved with AARP Texas advocacy work and its Dallas/Fort Worth Steering Committee. While volunteering with AARP, she has helped conduct telephone town-halls for local and statewide issues and has facilitated numerous community discussions around AARP priority topics.

McKenzie takes over the role of State President from John Vasquez of San Antonio, who held the position from 2020 to 2024. During his tenure, Tran said AARP Texas grew and strengthened its Executive Council, fought for and won key legislative victories, and set a strong foundation for continued success.

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## STEM, from Page 7

called ABET Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology. So, we offer degrees that meet the criteria for that. And then we do a lot of applications which are beyond that.”

UT Dallas provides resources and technology to train students, such as UT Design.

“It’s got a lot of equipment and any student can get trained on using different machining tools,” says D’Souza. “They can use computer-aided design, and they also have a program

where people can provide a societal need that students will solve and teams under the EPICS program. Computer science does all the different levels of computing, and they run a bunch of hackathons, so there’s a lot of outside-the-classroom opportunities for students to do 3D printing, design, fabrication, testing.”

Students in the engineering program at UT Dallas can learn about various topics. These include project programs, material science, nanotechnology, semiconductors, computer science, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and programming. They also include software, electric hardware, wireless communication, signal processing, biomedical imaging, tissue biocompatibility, brain health, biomedical computer science, electric materials, and systems engineering.

“We do something like a cell phone tower. Students really enjoyed figuring out how to design something aesthetically with the least amount of the long arms,”

D’Souza says of her favorite engineering lesson plan. “And then they learned that there are some bars that are put purely for aesthetic reasons. They don’t actually carry any weight of the structure. To do that, we teach the principles of how a structure bears load. I think the students enjoyed using the aesthetic component, making it have a shape, and then learning design, creativity and performance - how they interact with each other.”

D’Souza explains what UT Dallas does to prepare students to work in the STEM workforce.

“Their preparation for the workforce is very high. They start out in the first year - they have an opportunity to grow in their communication skills design,” says D’Souza. “All the faculty love to have undergraduates do research with them, enjoy future research projects because UT Dallas has a very successful research program, and they engage the undergraduates in it. I think the internships at the career center are outstanding. We have a large number of companies that want to hire UT Dallas students, so there’s both the internships. There’s the work and learn options. And then finally job placement, so there’s quite a high industry engagement at UT Dallas.”

D’Souza says that engineers have a lot of job opportunities after graduating from college. These include designing, manufacturing, computing, software development, embedded sensing autonomous vehicles, and wireless networks.

D’Souza emphasizes that Dallas ISD students have the opportunity to take classes at UT Dallas. The university offers a strong system that allows DISD students to earn dual credit while still in school. These credits can later be applied toward a degree at UT Dallas. Additionally, students

to come in prepared to explore.

“There is a script that engineering is all about mathematics, but it’s really applying mathematics. The engineering you’ll do in college, the math you’ll do in college, is very, very enjoyable because you’re always applying it to some-

portunity to engage with students throughout the day. It’s very positive, and it’s probably one of the few jobs that you can also concurrently push the envelope on the next technology through your research.”

Varun Poondi first started working in engineering as a college sophomore at UT Dallas. He graduated college in Spring 2024. He now works as a software engineer at State Farm.

“I develop software, I test software, and I deploy software. I interact with people from various suites at State Farm, regardless if they are a developer,” explains Poondi. “They could be a technology analyst or they could just be the business point of contact. I connect with various people at State Farm to address any business-related issues or obstacles that are needing to be resolved for our current application.”

Poondi describes the typical workday routine, beginning around 8:30 a.m. with stand-up meetings, which usually last about 30 minutes. During these sessions, team members provide updates on the work completed the previous day and outline their tasks for the day. The group also reviews any defects identified in the code or during system testing. Poondi works in a production team actively developing software for public release, specifically in the field of commercial telematics. The team is focused on building an application for that sector. After the stand-up, the team moves on to system testing, conducting end-to-end tests on various code

components. Once the infrastructure is tested and any issues are identified, the system testing phase ends. The afternoon is reserved for individual work, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Working at State Farm, Poondi utilizes various technologies.

“The advantage with State Farm is that we’re really geared towards implementing the newest and latest technologies. We are a pretty old company and because of that, there’s a variety of tools that State Farm uses,” explains Poondi. Poondi feels that engineering is important for society and the world.

“I’m a computer science student and this is not just computer science in specific. You could be a chemical engineer, petroleum engineer or biomedical engineer,” says Poondi. “Engineering as a whole has contributed so much to humanity’s growth. Engineers have basically helped address various problems.

“Even if we don’t have a solution right now, the beauty of engineering and science in general is that we work towards a systematic approach in which we can get better results and more tested and true defined results through the process of the scientific process. Engineering is really helpful.

“I would personally say that a lot of the advancements that we’re seeing in this world is due to engineers, researchers taking time and effort and coming together to make this world a better place. Engineers are very important in the advancement of society, I would say.”

***“Even if we don’t have a solution right now, the beauty of engineering and science in general is that we work towards a systematic approach in which we can get better results and more tested and true defined results through the process of the scientific process. Engineering is really helpful.”***

**- Varun Poondi**

have the option to enroll concurrently at both the Dallas College system and UT Dallas, enabling them to pursue degrees from both institutions. D’Souza is particularly focused on promoting this pathway as a way to provide affordable educational opportunities for students to earn degrees directly from school.

For incoming college students interested in an engineering career, D’Souza would encourage them to attend summer camps and

thing you want to build, D’Souza says.

“I love the interaction between creativity and calculations, so being quantitative about something that can also be high functioning,” says D’Souza. “Helping people. Most people have some issue, whether it’s rehabilitation or energy management to have low electricity bills. Engineering is problem solving to help people. My job - I like it the most is the op-

## MOMS, from Page 5

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### Real Talk for Real Challenges

This isn't a feel-good event with vague advice and motivational speeches. The 2025 Sports Moms Conference provides survival guides for modern sports. Here are the topics scheduled:

- NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness): This is the game-

changer everyone's discussion. Learn how to help your athlete secure deals, stay eligible, and plan for the future.

- High School Recruiting: Coaches and recruiters have their process, and parents need their playbook. Get the strategies that will help your athlete stand out.

- College Transfers: The transfer portal has changed the game. Learn to navigate the process as a backup,

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# Aches, Pain and Another Year Older

Dr. James L. Snyder

It's hard to believe another year has already started. How many of these new years can a person have without going crazy?

That's my explanation to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage about why I am crazy. She believes I am crazy, but she doesn't accept my reason for thinking I'm crazy.

The past year was rather challenging. I had some health issues, not too serious, but aggravating all the same. I've seen my doctor more than my wife this past year. Believe me, I'm not too excited in seeing my doctor. He must be related to Dracula because he always wants my blood.

However, when I have a physical issue, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage makes sure I see my doctor. I tell her that I'm okay and don't need to see a doctor. She smiles at me and says, "I didn't hear what you said, but you're going to see the doctor."

I'm not complaining; I do have some health issues, but I sure don't have anything serious in the health department. I have some

friends that are really sick and some that are in the hospital, and so I pray for them and thank God that I'm not that sick.

As this year begins, I've noticed that I am achy with pain in just about every area of my body. I can't remember ever having this kind of pain before but there it is.

I used to make fun of my father when he was complaining about some of his pain. I just wish he were alive so that he can see I'm going through the same kind of pain as he went through and then he could laugh at me.

I don't know who's laughing at me because my hearing isn't 100%. I have my suspicions.

Every once in a while, I have trouble with my right leg, and it seems to pass out or something. I have a hard time walking when my leg is like that. It is not really serious just aggravating.

I'm not to the point where I need a walking cane, let alone a wheelchair.

A relative of mine who is about one year older than me is in a wheelchair and cannot walk at all.

My doctor has prescribed a lot of medication for me, and The Gracious Mistress

of the Parsonage ensures I take my medicine daily. If I didn't know better I would think I was a drug addict.

Keep this a little secret between you and me, but sometimes, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage forgets to give me my medicine. Being the crazy guy that I am, I never remind her of that. I just snicker on the inside and count it one victory for me.

In the many years of our marriage, I have discovered that what the wife doesn't know doesn't hurt the husband.

My wife's memory is 150%. But there are times when she forgets my medicine because of her busy schedule, and who am I to tell her about it?

I don't get away with very much, but when I do get away with something I'm thrilled.

Once in a while The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will come into my office and see me smiling and then say, "Okay, what did I forget to do?"

Even when she forgets something, she remembers that she forgot something. There's no winning in this situation.

I was complaining about

streamline the juvenile expungement process and require autism training for law enforcement officers.

- Alabama: The "Sound of Freedom Act" imposes harsher sentences for human trafficking involving minors.

- Florida: Social media platforms must terminate accounts of users under 14, with substantial fines for non-compliance.

my body aching in various places, and I looked at my wife and said, "I think I'm going to go to a body shop and get some parts replaced. Do you have any recommendations?"

Without skipping a beat, she replied, "I know an antique store you could go to."

I pretended not to hear that, but she knew I heard it. It's interesting that there are a lot of things that I can't hear, but then there are things that I can hear, and it's aggravating.

One thing I have discovered is that when I walk with a cane people will hold the door open for me and let me go through. At first I was a little embarrassed by that. But then one day I was standing in line

at McDonald's I happened to have my cane along for some reason I'm not sure why, and because I was walking with a cane they let me go to the front of the line.

I'm beginning to see some good aspects to getting old. This year, my New Year's resolution is to find all of these good aspects and cash in.

My father used to say, "When life gives you a lemon make some lemonade." At the time, I didn't quite understand what he was saying, but now that I have reached this age, I do understand what he meant. Next week I'll set up a lemonade stand.

It doesn't pay to complain; rather, it pays to find out how to look on the pos-

itive side of things.

In my devotions I read some scripture that was encouraging.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

My focus this year must not be on my pain, but on the One who gives me strength everyday to life for Him.

*Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnsnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.*

## LAWS, from Page 5

consumers greater control over their personal data. Tennessee and Florida now require minors to verify their age on social media platforms. Florida's law includes significant penalties for violations, although parts are under legal challenge.

### Other Notable Laws

- Colorado: All eggs sold

must come from cage-free facilities.

- Connecticut: New minimum wage and healthcare laws take effect.

- Nevada: Constitutional language updates remove outdated terms and prohibit slavery or involuntary servitude as criminal punishment.

- Illinois: New laws

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# Quotes by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
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His famous speech in Washington, I Have A Dream, is well known, but perhaps less known are other quotes that are just as thought provoking as his most talked about speech.

Listed are other quotes, from Dr. King that are worth pondering: "A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus." "A lie cannot live." "A man can't ride your back unless it's bent." "A man who won't die for something is not fit to live." "A nation or civilization that continues to produce soft-minded men purchases



its own spiritual death on the installment plan." "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom."

"A right delayed is a right denied." "A riot is the language of the unheard." "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking


excellence." "All progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem." "Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better."


"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." "An individual who breaks

a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience

of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law." At the center of non-violence stands the

principle of love." *(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in January 2012. It has been edited for space and timeliness.)*

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