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Good News You Can Use • February 6, 2025 • Vol. 11, No. 2 • Canton, Mississippi

Celebrating influential African Americans

By Courtney Warren

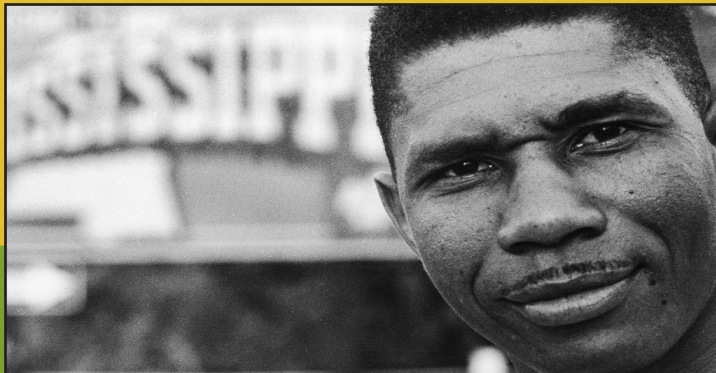
As Black History Month graces us once again, it's time to celebrate the remarkable African Americans who have shaped history. Nestled in the heart of Mississippi, Canton - a town known for its vibrant culture and rich heritage—has been home to numerous influential figures whose legacies continue to inspire.

Medgar Evers: A Legacy of Justice

One of Canton's most iconic connections to the Civil Rights Movement is through Medgar Evers.

Though born in Decatur, Mississippi, Evers' work as the state's NAACP field secretary deeply impacted Canton and its residents. Evers organized

boycotts, voter registration drives, and protests against systemic racism in Madison County and beyond. His unyielding commitment to equality made him a symbol of courage and resilience. Today, his



sacrifice is honored nationwide, and his efforts in Canton remain a cornerstone of its history.

Sister Thea Bowman: A Voice for Faith and Justice

Born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, and raised in Canton, Sister Thea Bowman was a trailblazing educator, speaker, and advocate for social justice. As a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, she used her dynamic voice and cultural heritage to bridge divides within the Catholic Church and beyond. Bowman's passionate teachings and music

celebrated African American spirituality and emphasized unity and understanding across racial and cultural lines. Her legacy continues to inspire through her writings, recordings, and the work of those

she touched.

Markers on the Civil Rights and Historical Trails

Canton is an integral part of the Mississippi Civil Rights Trail,

with several markers commemorating pivotal moments and figures. One notable marker is located at the Canton Freedom House Civil Rights Museum, which served as a safe haven and organizing hub during the Civil Rights Movement. Visitors can learn about the brave activists who strategized and sheltered there while fighting for justice.



All photos Special to The Canton News

Another significant marker is at the Madison County Courthouse, where many pivotal protests and voter registration drives were organized. This site reminds visitors of the tireless efforts of local leaders and community members who risked their lives to challenge systemic oppression.

Hickory Street, often referred

cont. on page 5

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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Chaves recognized for CPSD contributions



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Thomas and Deanne Chaves were recently named the Canton Public School District 2024-25 Parents of the Year, for their unwavering commitment to supporting students and staff and

ensuring a successful school year. They were also named the Reuben B. Myers Canton School of Arts and Sciences, as well as the District Parents of the Year. Parents were recognized for each CPSD school.

- Other Parents of the Year include:**
- Reneu Bridgeman - Nichols Middle School
 - Kesha Young - Canton Elementary School
 - Camiosh Cotton - McNeal Elementary School
 - FaShannalyn Blackmon - Jimmie M. Goodloe School
 - Cassie Bates-Huntley - Huey L. Porter Middle School
 - Annie Williams - Canton High School



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Cantonian celebrates 90th birthday



Special to The Canton News

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Cantonian Mrs. Arista D. Ware celebrated her January 2nd birthday on January 4, 2025, at the Northeast Madison County Community Park in Camden.

Family and guests visited from Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, California, Indiana, Ohio, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia and from throughout Mississippi.

Mrs. Ware spent the evening surrounded by her children, grandchildren, great grands, nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws, church members, and others across the country who affectionately know her as Mama Ware.

Everyone enjoyed fellowship with each other. It was an evening of music, singing, playing games, Family Trivia, Jeopardy, bingo, taking photos, winning prizes, laughter,

food, and FUN!

Just before it was time to enjoy a slice of her beautifully decorated birthday cake, Mrs. Ware happily addressed her audience, "I want to thank you so much for coming. Taking out your precious time to come and help me celebrate this day. Ninety years is quite a while. But I want to Thank you so much. Thank you for spending this much time with me."

Delta State announces new education program

Special to The Canton News

Delta State University recently announced the creation of a new Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (BSSE) program, a milestone in the university's commitment to developing future educators. The program was officially approved at the December State Board meeting of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), setting the stage for its launch in 2025.

The BSSE program was designed to address the growing need for qualified secondary educators and was developed through a collaborative effort between Delta State's leadership and faculty. The program combines rigorous academic coursework with practical teaching experience, equipping graduates with the skills and knowledge required to excel in the classroom.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Leslie Griffin,

one of the key contributors to the program's development, expressed her gratitude to the dedicated team involved: "This fantastic news is the result of the diligent team and leadership that shepherded the process. Under Dr. Merideth Van Namen's leadership, alongside the contributions of content faculty and the tenacity of Mandy Johnson and Anjanette Powers in navigating licensure processes, the program came together in an effective and timely manner despite many challenges."

Delta State University President Dr. Daniel J. Ennis celebrated the program's approval, saying, "This is fantastic news. The BSSE program embodies our dedication to shaping the future of education by producing well-prepared, passionate secondary school teachers."

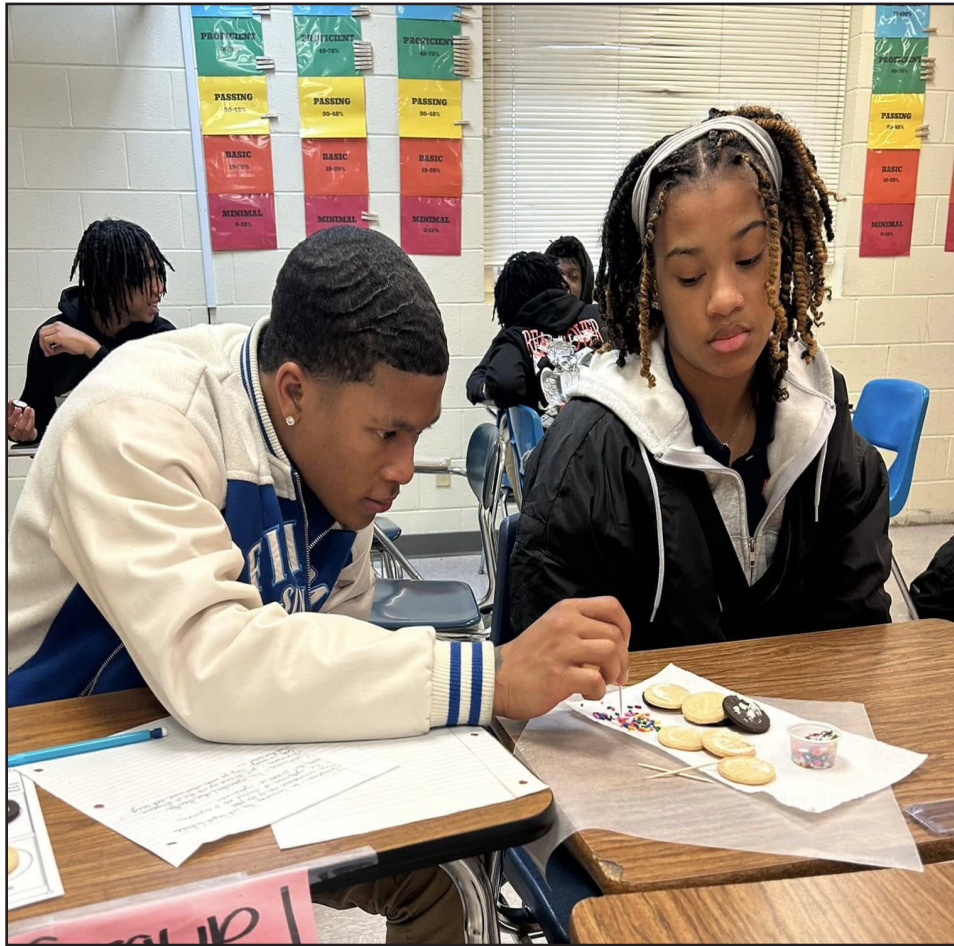
The program's approval follows an extensive development and review process. Mandy Johnson, Unit Assessment Research Director

& CAEP Coordinator, shared the news after the State Board meeting, stating, "I hope this will open new doors for students and contribute to educational excellence across Mississippi."

Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences Dr. Merideth Van Namen said, "The approval marks a significant milestone in Delta State's history, and we're excited to take the next steps to ensure the program is fully operational and impactful for future students."

The BSSE program will begin enrolling students after a mandatory 30-day implementation period, with preparations already underway for a smooth rollout. For more information about the program and enrollment, please visit Delta State University's website at <https://www.deltastate.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/bs-secondary-education/>.

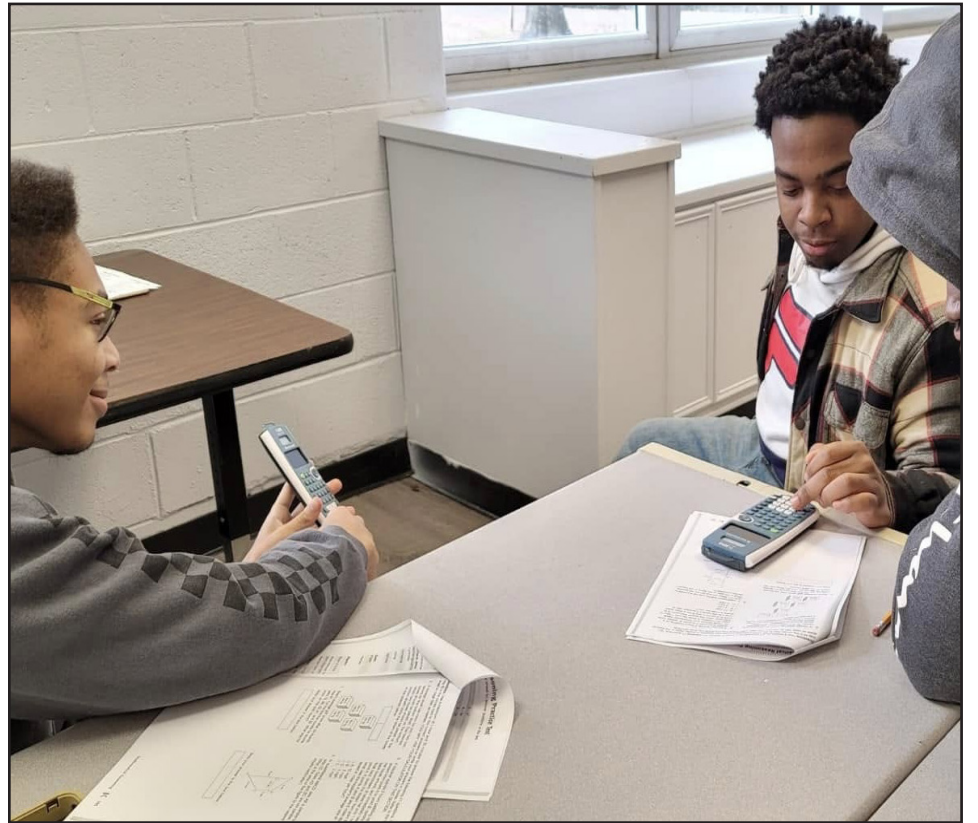
CHS students get a sweet lesson



Special to The Canton News

Learning about mitosis has never been sweeter! Canton High School students in Ms. Archie's Learning Strategies class used Oreo cookies and sprinkles to model each phase of mitosis, and then enjoyed their delicious creations.

Davis volunteers to help scholars



Special to The Canton News

The Canton Public School District remains steadfast in its commitment to provide students with the necessary skills to succeed on their upcoming MAAP assessment. Jaleal Davis, a senior at Canton High School, recently volunteered to tutor students in math, concentrating on calculator usage. Davis' academic record is distinguished, featuring a composite score of 27 on the ACT, with a notable 27 in math. Students were receptive to his instruction and also engaged in peer tutoring. Moreover, students who have successfully completed a part of the GED recognize the value of supporting their peers in achieving similar success.

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Hunter and Luckett win Dr. MLK Jr essay contest



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Two Canton High School scholars recently won the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Echoes of the Dream” Essay Contest.

The first-place winner, CHS Senior Amya Hunter, received a \$1,000 scholarship, while the second-place winner, sophomore Alexandria Luckett, was awarded a \$906 scholarship.

Hunter and Luckett had the opportunity to read their winning essays at the MLK Scholarship Gala hosted by the Rho Xi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, which took place on January 25 at The Venu by Roseburgh.

This contest allowed the scholars to showcase their creativity, criti-

cal thinking, and civic awareness. It aimed to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and explore his potential thoughts on contemporary issues. The essay theme was “Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Reaction to the 2024 Presidential Election and Voter Engagement.” The students shared their insights on how

Dr. King might respond to today’s political landscape, offering wisdom about democracy, voter engagement, and the ongoing journey toward equality. Thanks, Rho Xi Lambda Alphas, for providing our scholars with this excellent opportunity to help reduce college expenses as they pursue their dreams.

CA students honored by Rotary Club



Special to The Canton News

Recently, The Canton Rotary Club honored Canton Academy students, Addison Cado, Amelia Cook and Zayn McCalman, for their accomplishments at the 2025 MAIS Student Organizations Convention. Webster Ford - Canton Rotary Vice President, Trey Baxter-Madison County Board of Supervisors, District 2, CA junior, Addison Cado, CA senior, Amelia Cook and John Martin - Rotary President. (Not pictured: CA sophomore, Zayn McCalman)



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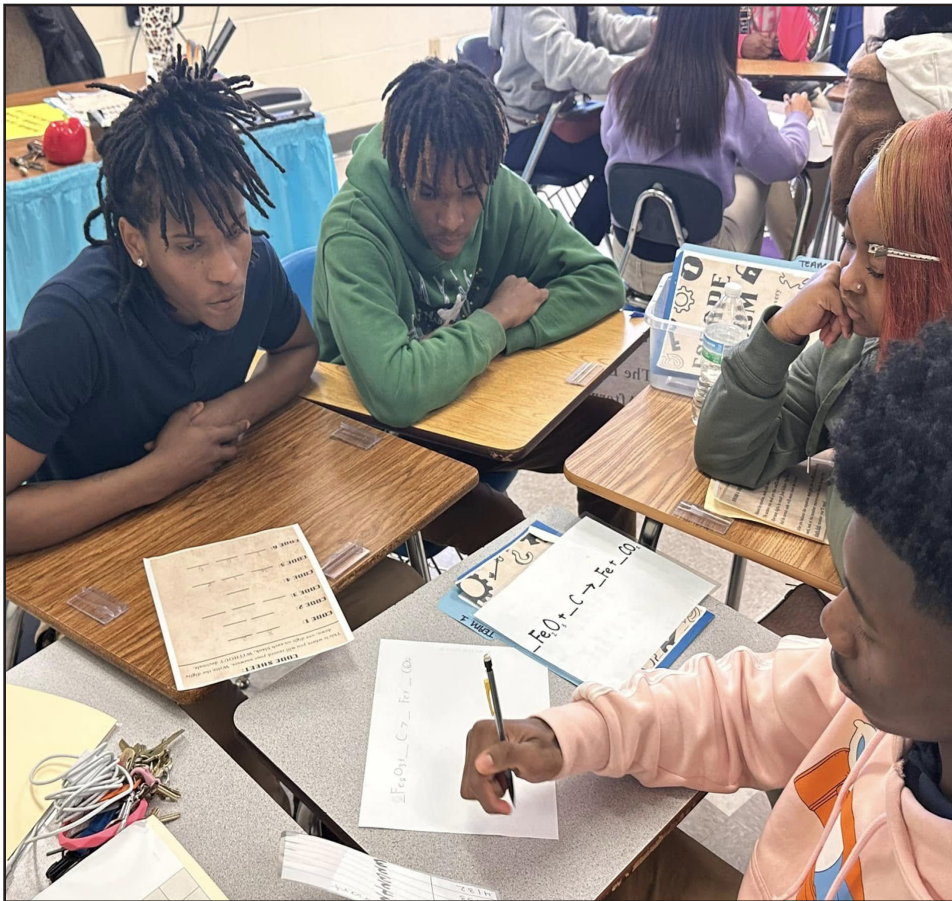
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CHS chem students engage to learn



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Students in Mrs. Hart's Canton High School chemistry classes worked in small groups to complete an escape room activity focused on Avogadro's lost discovery, during which they analyzed and computed equations involving Avogadro, Boyle, Gay Lussac, and the ideal gas laws.

CHS shares strategies with parents



Special to The Canton News

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Canton High School leaders held an English II Parent/Student Meeting to share strategies for success on the upcoming MAAP assessment. Educators encouraged parents to motivate their students to pass the state test by:

- Reading nightly,
- Studying vocabulary words,
- Utilizing learning platforms like IXL,
- Taking practice exams for state

subject area tests available on the MDE website,

- Practicing writing skills,
- Avoiding chronic absenteeism,
- Using homeroom time for tutoring assistance, and
- Getting sleep at night - not during class time.

Additionally, teachers are available for parent-teacher conferences each school day from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., if parents wish to discuss their concerns.

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2024 Honor Roll

University of Mississippi Announces Fall 2024 Dean's Honor Roll

The University of Mississippi announced students named to the Fall 2024 Honor Roll lists. The following local students were named to the Dean's Honor Roll, which is reserved for students who earn a semester GPA of 3.50-3.74:

- **June Clarke**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Public Policy Leadership program.
- **Graham Lambert**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S. in Integrated Mktg. Communications program.
- **Sara Lampkin**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S. in Integrated Mktg. Communications program.
- **Cooper Lampkin**, of Canton, MS, in the B.B.A. in Finance program.
- **Noah Landress**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S.M.E. in Mechanical Engineering program.
- **Allison May**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Allied Health Studies program.
- **Aidan Ray**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S. in Integrated Mktg. Communications program.
- **Mckenzie Stanley**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Computer Science program.
- **Tammiyah Sutton**, of Canton, MS, in the B.B.A. in Management program.

University of Mississippi Announces Fall 2024 Chancellor's Honor Roll

The University of Mississippi announced students named to the Fall 2024 Honor Roll lists. The following local students were named to the Chancellor's Honor Roll, which is reserved for students who earn a semester GPA of 3.75-4.00:

- **Khalil Abualya**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Arabic program.
- **Ryan Augustine**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Allied Health Studies program.
- **Aleesa Booker**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A.J. in Journalism program.
- **Richard Burnside**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Allied Health Studies program.
- **Seth Capel**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Psychology program.
- **Dennis Chandler**, of Canton, MS, in the B.Accy. in Accountancy program.
- **Ammar Dimachkie**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in International Studies program.
- **Ella Edwards**, of Canton, MS, in the B.B.A. in Marketing program.
- **Harmony Gore**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S.L.S. in Law Studies program.
- **Aubrey Grace**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S. in Dietetics and Nutrition program.
- **Sophia Hummer**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Psychology program.
- **Darion Hunter**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Allied Health Studies program.
- **Jagger Jones**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Political Science program.
- **Chelsea Kiner**, of Canton, MS, in the Pharm.D. program.
- **Jacob King**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Biochemistry program.
- **Charles Lofton**, of Canton, MS, in the B.Accy. in Accountancy program.
- **Jianna Lowe**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences program.
- **Elizabeth Maxey**, of Canton, MS, in the B.B.A. in General Business program.
- **Griffin Ray**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A.J. in Journalism program.
- **Rhyin Singleton**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Allied Health Studies program.
- **Brandon Smith**, of Canton, MS, in the B.A. in Biological Science program.
- **Marvin Spann**, of Canton, MS, in the B.S. in Public Health program.
- **Madeline Strickland**, of Canton, MS, in the B.Accy. in Accountancy program.

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Kaitlyn Richardson of Canton Wins National Title at UDA / UCA Competition



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Northwest Mississippi Community College (NWCC) cheer and dance teams brought home multiple national championships from the 2025 UCA/UDA College Nationals in Orlando, Florida.

Kaitlyn Richardson of Canton was one of the students who placed at Nationals.

The NWCC cheer team, led by head coach Brandon Casey and assistant coach Rainy Bordelon, captured national titles in the Open All-Girl Traditional division and the Open Co-Ed Game Day division. The cheer squad secured back-to-back victories in the All-Girl Traditional category, reaffirming their dominance in collegiate cheerlead-

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Cuddled up and cozy in Canton: how to stay warm and safe this winter

By Courtney Warren

As Canton braces for a spell of freezing temperatures, residents are urged to take proactive measures to safeguard their homes, care for their pets, and ensure the well-being of elderly family members and neighbors.

To prevent damage from freezing temperatures, consider the following steps:

- **Insulate Pipes:** Wrap exposed pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip slightly to prevent freezing.
- **Seal Openings:** Use caulk and weather-stripping around doors and windows to keep cold air out. Consider installing storm windows or covering them with plastic.
- **Prepare Heating Sources:** Store dry, seasoned wood for fireplaces or wood-burning stoves. Ensure all heating equipment is in good working order and that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are functioning properly.
- **Avoid Using Stoves for Heating:** Never use your stove or oven as a heating source. This practice can lead to dangerous carbon monoxide buildup or pose a fire hazard.

Pets are vulnerable to cold weather and require special attention. Keep pets inside as much as possible. If they must be outside, provide a warm, dry shelter with bedding and ensure access to fresh, unfrozen water. For small breeds and those sensitive to cold, limit walks to fifteen to twenty minutes when temperatures drop below freezing. Schedule walks during the warmest part of the day, typically between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Shivering, lethargy, and whining can indicate that a pet is too cold. If observed, bring them inside

immediately and warm them gradually.

Elderly individuals are particularly susceptible to cold-related health issues. Maintain indoor temperatures in main living areas between 64-70°F (18-21°C) and other occupied rooms above 61°F (16°C). Wearing multiple layers can help retain body heat. Encourage the elderly to dress warmly, even indoors. Frequent visits or calls can ensure they have the necessary supplies and that their heating systems are functioning properly. Assist with errands to minimize their exposure to the cold.

By taking these precautions, Canton residents can mitigate the risks associated with freezing temperatures and ensure the safety and well-being of their families, pets, and community members.



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Torrey awarded Student of the Month by MCB&F



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Pictured left to right: Charles Matthews, Jr., Instructor, Automotive Services, Canton Career Center; Michael Ellis, Director, Canton Career Center; Allen Joseph Torrey, IV, Student, Automotive Services, Canton Career Center; Jon Hill, Executive General Manager, Cadillac of Jackson; Jan Collins, Executive Director, Madison County Business League & Foundation

Special to The Canton News

Allen Joseph Torrey, IV, a sophomore at Canton Career Center, was recently awarded the January "Student of the Month." Jon Hill, Exec-

utive General Manager of Cadillac of Jackson and a member of the Madison County Business League & Foundation, presented Allen with a \$100 gift card.

Allen is enthusiastic about pursuing a career in the automotive field and is currently enrolled in the Automotive Service Program at the Career Center. The Student of the

Month award program aims to connect businesses and industries with students, promoting the skills needed to meet the workforce demands of Madison County.

cont. from front page

Celebrating

to as the heartbeat of Canton's Civil Rights activities, is another must-visit landmark. This street was a hub for rallies, meetings, and community gatherings during the height of the movement. Walking down Hickory Street today, one can feel the echoes of determination and unity that defined the era.

Additionally, Canton is home to historical trail markers that celebrate the cultural contributions of its African American residents. These markers highlight the rich musical heritage of the city, including its ties to gospel and blues traditions.

Preserving Canton's Heritage

Canton's historic sites, like the Canton Freedom House Civil Rights Museum, serve as testaments to the city's role in the fight for justice and equality. These


landmarks preserve the stories of local activists who, despite daunting challenges, stood firm in their pursuit of freedom.

Inspiring the Next Generation

Today, Canton continues to produce trailblazers in various fields, from education to entertainment. The city's rich cultural and historical fabric inspires its youth to strive for greatness while honoring the legacy of those who came before them.

This Black History Month, let us remember the stories of Canton's influential African Americans. Their contributions not only shaped their community, but also enriched the tapestry of American history. By reflecting on their achievements, we are reminded of the enduring power of resilience, unity, and hope.

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Letter from the editor: wearing the belt of truth

By Courtney Warren

I'm presenting at chapel soon so forgive me for double dipping and sharing that talk as my letter this month.

Anxiety and self-doubt can feel like shadows that never quite leave you. I know this firsthand. For years, I wrestled with overwhelming feelings of inadequacy, constantly battling thoughts that whispered, "You're not enough. You'll never measure up. You're a failure." It's exhausting living with those voices in your head, and they can make you feel isolated and defeated.

I thought I could keep it all together on the outside, but inside, I was crumbling. I would come to school and feel like an absolute rockstar – I'm surrounded by amazing students and teachers who lift me up and make me so excited to teach and learn. However, the second I leave and my mind gets quiet, those thoughts are right back there. I didn't realize how much I needed to know the truth of the Bible until one night, in the middle of my despair, I cried out to Jesus.

That night is still vivid in my memory. I woke up suddenly, feeling overwhelmed by the weight of my own thoughts. It wasn't just a restless night - it was a deep ache in my soul that I couldn't shake. I felt like I couldn't breathe under the pressure of my own mind, and all I could think to do was pray. But when I tried to pray, I froze. The words wouldn't come. I didn't know how to talk to God - at least, not in that moment. I felt like a failure even in prayer. I woke up my husband to pray with me, but I couldn't get him to truly understand the feelings I was having and how afraid I was. I was so desperate and felt like he had let me down because he didn't get it, and I had let myself down. I was supposed to be this saved Christian, and here I was unable to pray.

So, instead of trying to find the perfect words, I turned on worship music. I sat in silence, letting the music speak for me. I stayed on the bathroom floor, with my back pressed to the wall and my hands flat on the cold floor for hours. I listened to the lyrics, and, slowly, my heart began to soften. I didn't need to have the perfect prayer or the right words - I just needed to be present with God. In that quiet moment, something began to shift inside me. I even said out loud, "Lord,

just because I don't hear you and don't feel you in this moment, does not mean you aren't here."

That moment marked the beginning of a journey - a journey into understanding the armor of God. I started studying Ephesians 6, specifically the armor of God that Paul describes. And the very first piece of that armor struck me deeply: the belt of truth. At first glance, it may seem like a small or insignificant piece of armor compared to shields or swords. But the more I studied, the more I realized how foundational truth is. The belt holds everything together. Without it, the rest of the armor falls apart.

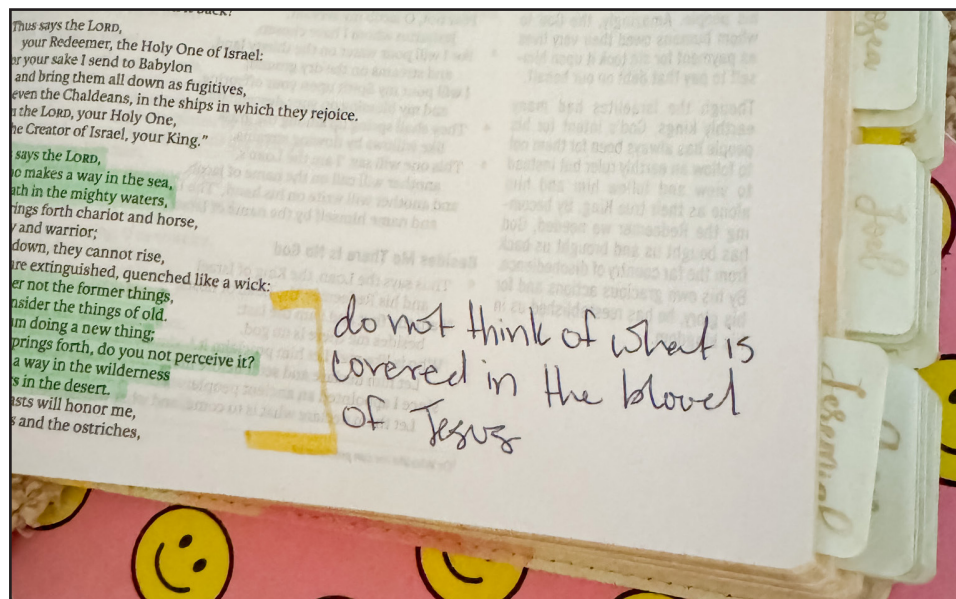
I love the history of this. By the time Paul starts talking about the armor of God, he's using these items as symbols. Ephesians is broken into two true chapters. Chapters 1-3 are full of who you are and what you have. Chapters 4-6 switch to telling us how to use the tools we've been given. Eph 5:13 says "but all things become visible when they are exposed by the light."

The overarching principle present in all of Satan's attacks toward us is deception. Satan is the master illusionist. An illusion is something that is deceiving by producing a false or misleading impression of reality. Satan can craftily make you think that God does not mean exactly what He says. The minute we have doubts, we sink. But Satan's suggestions can never stand up against the light of God's Holy Word.

As an English teacher, I've always loved the concept of textual evidence. In literature and writing, we teach students to back up their claims with evidence from the text. It's not enough to have an opinion - you need proof to support it. That's what the belt of truth is. It's the evidence we need to combat the lies we believe about ourselves. It's not just positive affirmations or wishful thinking - it's solid, unchanging truth from God's Word. And that changed everything for me.

One of the most powerful truths I learned during this time was that my feelings are real, but they aren't always true. A preacher I follow said those words, and they became a lifeline for me.

"Your feelings are real," he said. "Your anxiety, your sadness, your fear - all of it



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is real. But that doesn't mean it's true."

That statement hit me hard. For so long, I had believed every thought that entered my mind. If I felt worthless, I assumed I was worthless. If I felt like a failure, I assumed it was true. But the Bible taught me something different. The Bible taught me to compare my thoughts and feelings against the truth of God's Word.

The world tells us to follow our hearts, but the Bible reminds us in Jeremiah 17:9 that "the heart is deceitful above all things." My emotions were real, but they couldn't always be trusted. Instead of relying on how I felt in the moment, I began to rely on what God said about me. And what He says is far more powerful than any negative thought or feeling.

God's Word says I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). It says I am loved with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). It says I am chosen, forgiven, and redeemed (Ephesians 1:4-7). These truths became my anchor. When anxiety threatened to pull me under, I clung to them like a lifeline.

Studying the Bible with this perspective changed how I approached my thoughts. I started to ask myself, "Is this feeling or thought backed up by God's Word?" If the answer was no, I rejected it. When I felt unworthy, I reminded myself that God says I am worthy through Christ. When I felt like a failure, I reminded myself that God's grace is sufficient, and

His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It wasn't an instant fix—it was a process. But it was a process rooted in truth. The more I immersed myself in the Word, the more equipped I became to stand firm against anxiety and self-doubt. I didn't need to rely on my own strength or my own understanding. I had the unshakable truth of God to guide me.

I'm sharing this because I know so many of us battle with thoughts and feelings that tear us down. We live in a world that's constantly bombarding us with mixed messages about who we are and what we should believe. But the truth of the Bible stands firm. It's the ultimate source of wisdom, comfort, and strength.

If you're struggling, I want to encourage you to start with the belt of truth. Go to the Word of God. Ask yourself, "What does God say about me?" and hold on to that. Your feelings may fluctuate, but God's truth never will.

Knowing the truth of the Bible isn't just important - it's life-changing. It equips us to stand firm in a world that constantly tries to knock us down. It reminds us of our true identity and gives us the confidence to face each day with hope and assurance.

So, let us put on the full armor of God. Let us fasten the belt of truth around our hearts and minds. And let us walk in the confidence of who God says we are.

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Canton Tourism honors Wright



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During Black History Month, Canton Tourism shows honor to Flonzie Brown Wright, a trailblazer in civil rights and a beacon of courage. Her contribution to the Civil Rights Movement resonates deeply in Can-

ton. Her Freedom Trail Marker is more than a sign — it's a story of progress, perseverance, and pride. Canton Tourism will highlight more Civil Rights activists throughout the month on their social media platforms.

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On the shelf: celebrating black literature

By Courtney Warren

As Black History Month unfolds, it's the perfect time to explore stories that reflect the African American experience. From historical accounts to contemporary narratives, these four books offer something for every reader. Whether you enjoy fiction or nonfiction, our world is not in black and white, but rather in screaming color, making it more important now than ever to include stories from all of God's people on our shelves.

1. *A Voice of Hope: The Myrlie Evers-Williams Story* by Nadia Salomon

According to the publisher, this inspiring biography tells the story of Myrlie Evers-Williams, a trail-blazing civil rights activist, author, and the widow of Medgar Evers. Through poetic prose and vivid illustrations, Nadia Salomon brings Myrlie's journey to life for readers of all ages. From her unwavering commitment to justice to her leadership as the first woman to chair the NAACP, Evers-Williams's story is a testament to courage and perseverance.

Why read it? This book is perfect for those seeking a moving introduction to one of the most influential figures in the Civil Rights Movement. Its accessible storytelling makes it ideal for young readers and families alike.

2. *James* by Percival Everett

According to the publisher, Percival Everett crafts a powerful, thought-provoking exploration of identity, history, and memory. Through the lens of James,

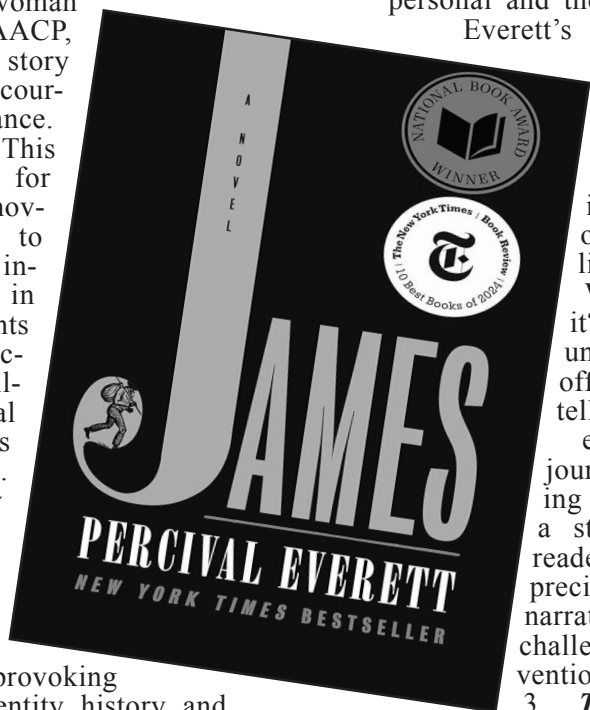
the book's enigmatic protagonist, readers are taken on a journey that blurs the



boundaries between the personal and the universal.

Everett's signature wit and incisive commentary elevate this novel into a work of profound literary art.

Why read it? Everett's unique voice offers an intellectual and emotional journey, making this book a standout for readers who appreciate layered narratives that challenge conventions.



3. *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride

James McBride

According to the publisher, this novel, set in a small Pennsylvania town, weaves a tale of love, community, and the shared humanity that binds us. McBride's masterful storytelling introduces an unforgettable cast of characters, anchored by the bond between Jewish immigrants and Black residents.

Themes of belonging, redemption, and resilience shine vividly through, making this book both timely and timeless.

Why read it? McBride's rich prose and heartfelt narrative make this novel a celebration of multicultural unity, perfect for those who enjoy stories steeped in history and heart.

4. *Black Star* by Kwame Alexander

It's no secret that I have been a huge fan of Kwame Alexander from the moment I met him at a Society of Children's

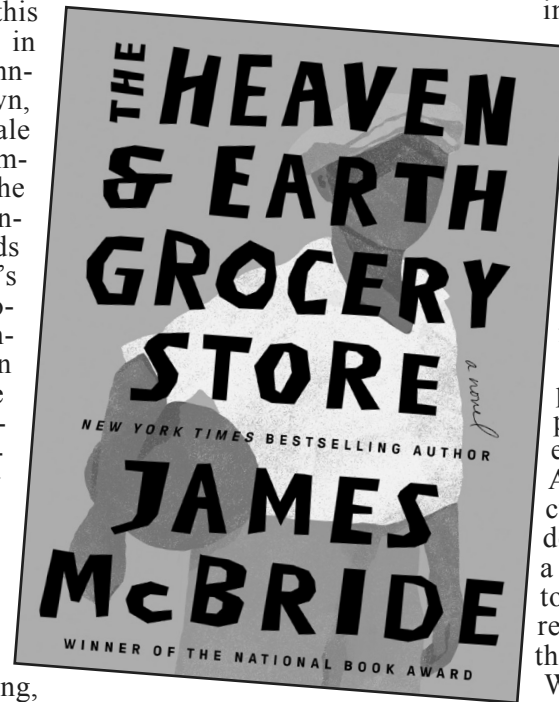
Book Writers and Illustrators conference. According to the publisher, in this latest work,

award-winning author and poet Kwame Alexander delivers a stunning ode to Black excellence and creativity. Combining poetry, photography, and personal reflections, Black Star celebrates the power of self-expression and the enduring legacy of African American culture. Alexander's work is both a tribute and a call to action, inspiring readers to embrace their own potential.

Why read it? This visually and emotionally captivating book is ideal for readers who appreciate poetry and art that uplifts and inspires.

These books not only celebrate Black history, but also invite readers to reflect on the ongoing journey toward equality and justice. Whether you're seeking inspiration, entertainment, or a deeper understanding of the Black experience, these titles promise to enrich your bookshelf and your perspective.

Visit your local library or bookstore this Black History Month and discover these remarkable stories that honor the past, celebrate the present, and inspire the future.



THE CANTON NEWS

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December Showers Bring... January Flowers?



Special to The Canton News

Guest Columnist Jessica Stein

Canton Garden Club reconvened for 2025 at the breath-taking home of Kathy Demesa, with herself as hostess, joined by Stacey Irwin, Margo Burnside, and Elaine Gager. Members enjoyed refreshments and browsed the vast art collection before gathering to discuss club business.

Notably as always, Keep Canton Beautiful has put in heroic effort beautifying town spaces. This committee, led by Kathy Ozborn and Andre Hines, has tracked an incredible number of projects these last few months. At Liberty and Union, the sign has been repainted, and 250 daffodil bulbs have been planted. 400 more bulbs have been added to the depot and 100 more will go in at the square. Many bulbs also went in at Rogers Park. Keep Canton Beautiful also continues work on the pavilion across from the Co-op. We encourage everyone to go visit to see the improvements of the first phase of renovation. With Parks and Rec, KCB has worked to prune trees and repair the lamps at the 22 on-ramp.

So many ongoing projects! They will also plant bulbs with children next month. Would you like to participate and Keep Canton Beautiful? We are looking for plant donations for the pollinator beds at the depot.* The club will also begin to work on the pots in the square, then keep your eye out for the Great Canton Clean-Up on March 22nd! We hope to see you out having fun and tidying the streets with us. On other business, the Garden Club voted to rejoin Garden Clubs of America as one of the oldest, longest-running affiliates in Mississippi, and we also began very preliminary work on this year's Upstairs Downtown.

Beyond giggling over snacks or getting to work, we all appreciate what a learning opportunity Canton Garden Club

offers. Dana Nowell of Twelve2 Flower Farm gave a riveting presentation on cut-flower farming for this month's program. Dana moved here with her Mississippi-born husband from California 18 years ago. They had five children here, and for years dreamed of running a business together while saving money and living a traditional suburban life. Finally, after nearly two decades, they found 20 perfect acres outside of Canton. Dana's family felt so blessed and overwhelmed by this gift, and wanted to find a way to share it with the community. Her husband drew strength from two Bible verses: Hebrews 12:2 and Romans 12:2, and these focused lines eventually set the tone and the name for their farm: Twelve2 Farm. For several years they grew vegetables and raised livestock, until their eldest daughter requested some flowers. Over the last few years, and after a transformative symposium, the farm has become not just a cut-flower fiesta, but also a destination for photos, weddings, and more.

Dana taught us about soil blocking, a heritage method for starting seeds; chicken and rabbit tractors for tilling; and the importance of leaf mulch. Twelve2 takes a low-plastic, organic approach, and still grows rows and rows of beautiful flowers. While they continue as a presence at the Old Jail Farmer's Market in the summer, they have opened their operation as a U-Pick flower farm, as well as providing monthly bouquet subscriptions. In the coming year they hope to add more community events, field trips, and classes to get people of all ages outside to learn something new. Visit their website at www.twelve2farm.com to shop and learn more. Next month, Felder Rushing will give the Club garden program at the Sacred Heart Parish Center.

*Contact jessica.stein.11@dartmouth.edu with questions.

A letter from the CPSD Superintendent

Guest Columnist Gary Hannah

Dear Canton Public School District Parents,

We understand that recent news about immigration enforcement across the country has caused concern for many families. While there have been incidents in the community, there have been no immigration-related actions involving Canton Public School District.

Our top priority is always the well-being of our students. We want to assure you that we are committed to supporting all students and families within our legal and ethical responsibilities. Here are some important things to know:

- Legal Compliance & Student Rights: Canton Public School District follows all state and federal laws, which include respecting the rights of our students and families. If presented with a valid legal request, such as a subpoena or warrant, we consult with our legal team to ensure compliance while prioritizing student safety.
- Right to Education – Plyler v. Doe: Under the Plyler v. Doe (1982) Supreme Court ruling, all children, regardless of immigration status, have the right to a free public education. Schools cannot ask about or disclose a student's immigration status, nor can they deny enrollment based on a child's or family's immigration background. Canton Public School District remains committed to upholding this legal right for all students.



- Support for Families: Our schools have clear protocols in place to help students and families. Staff members are available to provide guidance and can connect families with trusted community organizations that offer support, such as the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA). MIRA specializes in immigration assistance and can be reached at 601-968-5182. While school staff cannot offer legal advice, they are prepared to help direct families to appropriate resources.

- Emergency Contacts & Student Privacy: We encourage families to keep their emergency contact information up to date to ensure their children's safety. Additionally, student records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), meaning personal information cannot be shared without proper consent.

We understand that this may be a stressful time for many in our community. Please know that Canton Public School District remains committed to treating every student and family with compassion, dignity, and respect. We will continue to monitor federal policies and assess their impact on our students.

If you have any concerns or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to your school.

Sincerely,
Gary Hannah
Superintendent
Canton Public School District

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Gilmore keeps everyone in check



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy fifth grader Dylan Gilmore recently won the Dogmud Tavern New Year's Chess Tournament. Not only was Gilmore named champion of the tournament, he also won the award for "Fastest Checkmate."

Way back when: Streets of Canton



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Photo Courtesy of the Canton-Madison County Historical Society

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Canton Academy Student Council and Honor Society prove successful



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy Student Council and National Honor Society officers recently attended the annual MSAIS State Organizations Convention, where student officers from every school statewide convene to campaign for state offices. Eleventh grader Addison Cado was elected MAIS State Student Council Vice-President, tenth grader Zayn McCalmanwon MAIS State Honor Society Vice-President, and senior Amelia Cook was honored with the 2025 MAIS Honor Society Scholarship. Other CA officers helped campaign for their candidates.

Hutchinson makes artistic donation



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy Class of 2022 alum John Hollis Hutchinson is in his junior year at Mississippi State University in their School of Architecture. Hutchinson came back for a visit recently to donate one of his class projects to the high school art program. The project is a 1/4 scale model of a modern boathouse made of basswood and polycarbonate.

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Panthers get a feel for pelts



Special to The Canton News

Celia Miller from the Mississippi Conservation Education Program recently visited the Canton Academy third-grade students to share and teach about animal pelts. Students learned which animals are native to the area, discussed their habitats, and got to feel each pelt, noting the difference for each one.

Matter matters to CA Panthers



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy students in Coach Ratcliff's eighth-grade physical science class recently studied matter. During lab, students went to six stations, testing different liquids and objects to determine their classifications and properties.



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cont. from page 9

Kaitlyn

ing. With these wins, the NWCC cheer team has now earned a total of six national championships in their five years of competition under Casey's six-year tenure.

"It's an incredible achievement for our team to defend our title in the All-Girl Traditional division and reclaim the Co-Ed Game Day championship," Casey said. "Our athletes have worked tirelessly, and their dedication and passion have truly paid off."

In the Open All-Girl Traditional finals, NWCC secured the gold medal with a score of 82.9, finishing ahead of Pearl River, which earned an 81.2 event score. The cheer squad also ex-

celled in the Open Co-Ed Game Day division, earning an impressive score of 94.8333 to claim first place over Mississippi Gulf Coast and Campbellsville University.

The NWCC dance team, led by head coach Patrice Christian, achieved their second consecutive national championship in the Open Hip-Hop division. This marks the third year for the NWCC dance team to compete at UDA Nationals, their third consecutive year medaling, and their second year claiming a national championship. The team delivered an outstanding performance, finishing with a raw score of 99.9333 and an event score of 95.1746, out-

performing runners-up West Chester University by nearly five points.

"Winning back-to-back national titles is a testament to our team's hard work and perseverance," Christian said. "Their commitment to excellence and passion for dance have made this victory possible."

The NWCC dance team also earned a third-place finish in the Open Game Day division, continuing their impressive showing at the national level.


Adding to the excitement, Casey's wife, Skylar Casey, who serves as the head coach of Ole Miss Cheer, led her team to their first-ever Division IA Traditional

All Girl National Championship this weekend, making it a championship-winning weekend for the Casey family.

These victories mark a historic moment for NWCC, reflecting the college's strong athletic program and the unwavering support of its administration, faculty, students, and community.

"We are incredibly proud of our cheer and dance teams for their outstanding achievements on the national stage," NWCC President Dr. Michael Heindl said. "Their success showcases the talent and dedication of our students and the excellence of our programs."


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