



THE CANTON NEWS

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Canton News
P.O. Box 1163, Canton, MS 39046

Cantonians assist in opening Civil Rights Museum

By Susie A. Wolfe

The \$90 million Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and the Museum of Mississippi History opened in Jackson on December 9 in conjunction with Mississippi's Bicentennial. Many Cantonians were part of the development of the Civil Rights Museum and the opening ceremonies.

Civil Rights veteran Flonzie Brown-Wright said, "The new museum shows courage, dignity and culture." She said she wants to go back when she can spend quality time reviewing each of the galleries. Brown-Wright helped with the music for the main gallery, and one of the exhibits in the museum includes a photograph of her teaching voter registration classes in Canton in her role as the first black female election commissioner. In 1968, Canton was seventy percent black, but only 100 blacks out of



Photo by The Canton News

10,000 were registered to vote.

John Spann, Director of Education, Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, said, "The Museum honors members of the Civil Rights Movement's past, and also uses their light to push forward and illuminate the present so we can have

a better Mississippi in our future."

The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum's eight galleries focus on the years 1945-1976, when Mississippi was ground zero for the national Civil Rights Movement. James Meredith, who was in Canton earlier this year for the fiftieth anni-

versary of the March Against Fear, agreed and said, "Mississippi is the center of the universe for the Civil Rights Movement."

Cynthia Goodloe Palmer served as the music coordinator for the State of Mississippi for the opening day and Bicentennial Celebration for the State of Mississippi, Museum of Mississippi History, Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and the premiere reception.

Canton's blues artist Grady Champion was a performer during the opening, as was Nissan Canton's Pamela Confer. She wrote a song, "Mississippi Beautiful," which she performed at the opening, that is featured in the "Where Do We Go From Here?" gallery.

Related stories:

Mt. Zion Children's Choir members make history, on page 6.
Confer brings new energy to Canton Chamber, on page 14.

Canton sees snow in a '17 December wonderland



Photo by Hardy Case

On the morning of Friday, December 8, Canton woke to five inches of snow blanketing everything. Hardy Case lives on the Historic Canton Square and was able to capture this photo of untouched beauty.

Nissan supports STEM with "Motion" program

Special to The Canton News

Thirty-nine Canton Public School District (CPSD) teachers (K-2) had hands-on training with SAE International's award-winning "A World in Motion" (AWIM) program in November at Goodloe Elementary.

The training, along with ongoing teacher support and classroom materials and curriculum for over 1,000 students, has been made possible through continued support by Nissan.

AWIM is a teacher-administered, industry volunteer-assisted program that brings science,

technology, engineering and math (STEM) education to life in the classroom for students in kindergarten through grade eight. Benchmarked to the national standards, the AWIM program incorporates integrated STEM learning experiences through hands-on activities that reinforce classroom STEM learning.

"Nissan has been instrumental in the community for their long-term commitment to education," said Chris Ciuca, director of pre-professional education for SAE International, said. "Their support highlights the importance

cont. on page 4

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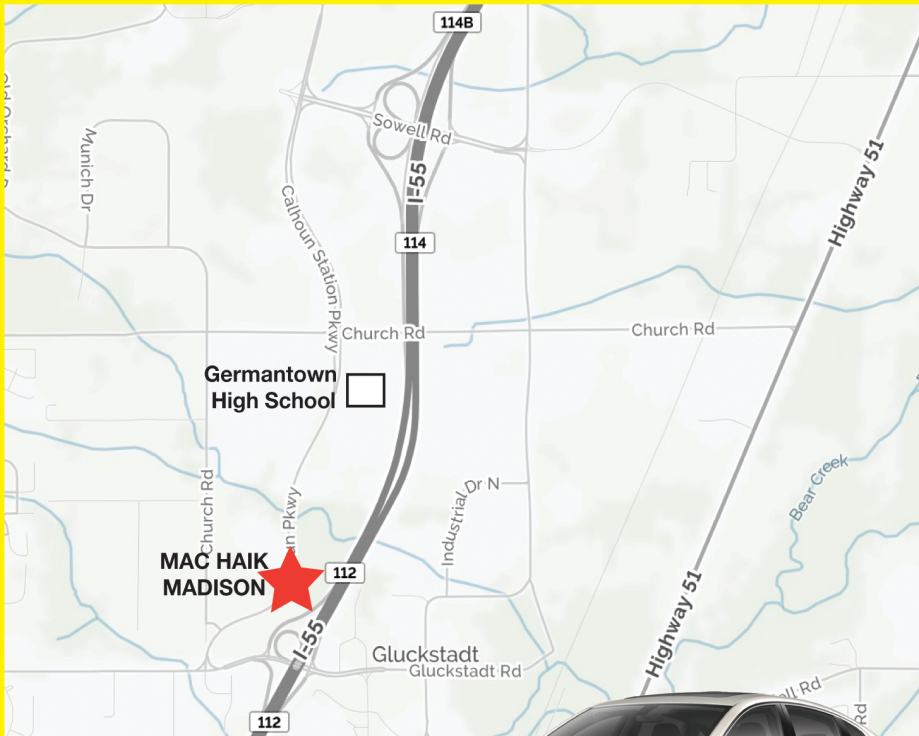
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MCBL&F announces board members



Special to The Canton News

The new MCBL&F Board pictured (l to r) front row, are: Cecil Harper of Harper Rains Knight & Co.; Vice Chairman Donna Sims, of BankPlus; Chairman Phil Buffington, of Adams & Reese; Secretary/Treasurer Brad Maley, of BancorpSouth; and Renee Rice, of First Commercial Bank; and top row: Doug Hederman, of Hederman Brothers; Advisory Board member Along Bee, of Regions; Jim Smith, of Merrill Lynch; John Brunini, of Butler Snow; Brad McMullan, of bfac.com; Dr. Dwight Luckett, MCEDA appointee; Doug Jones, MCEDA appointee; Bill Senter, of Atmos Energy; and Jan Collins, MCBL&F executive director. Not pictured is Rodney Grogan, of MMC Materials, Inc.; Wesley Goings, of C Spire; and Calvin Harris, MCEDA appointee.

Special to The Canton News

The Madison County Business League & Foundation (MCBL&F) announced the 2017-18 Board of Directors elected by its membership.

The Madison County Business League & Foundation was created in 2008 by the Madison County Economic Development Authority

(MCEDA) and the Madison County Board of Supervisors to promote economic planning and development.

According to the organization's website, the mission of the Madison County Business League & Foundation is to bring together, under one organization, the voice of numerous entities in order to es-

tablish a clear and concise message for the future. The organization, which is comprised of elected, appointed, business and individual leaders of Madison County, seeks to enable all partners in business and economic development to participate collectively in bringing together the overall vision for Madison County.

CA helps MadCAAP during holidays



Special to The Canton News

The Canton Academy (CA) Student Council spent time at MadCAAP packing food boxes and helping organizing supplies for the holidays. Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Sydney Thomason, Jensen Williams, Allie Parkinson, Taylor Rosamond, Macy Gordy; middle row: Ava Dickerson, Betsy Pace, Leah Brooke Irby, Virginia Grace Lavender, Lyric Stewart and Edi Craft; and back row: Andrew Hankins, Brayden Brumfield, Hayden Vaughn, Chris Clanton, Tony Handy, Lane Martin, Jacob Lott, Mrs. Lucy Johnson, Colson Lambert and Case Lambert.

Check out a mystery at the Madison Co. library

Special to The Canton News

Looking for a good mystery? The Madison County Library System encourages residents to start the year reading. After noticing that there are many mystery/thriller readers in the area, one of the local librarians thought someone might enjoy trying a new author to



start 2018.

Below is a list of the best 2017 mystery/thriller novels as voted by readers through *Goodreads*, a website that launched in 2007 to help people find and share the books they love. All of these titles may be found at the Canton Library or may be requested from one of the branches in the Madison County Library System.

Top Picked Books

1. *Into the Water* by Paula Hawkins
2. *Origin* by Dan Brown
3. *Glass Houses* by Louise Penny
4. *The Good Daughter* by Karin Slaughter
5. *The Dry* by Jane Harper
6. *Secrets in Death* by J. D. Robb
7. *The Girl Before* by J. P. Delaney
8. *Stillhouse Lake* by Rachel Caine
9. *Mississippi Blood* by Greg Iles
10. *The Breakdown* by B. A. Paris
11. *Never Let You Go* by Chevy Stevens
12. *Golden Prey* by John Sandford
13. *The Marriage Lie* by Kimberly Belle
14. *Behind Her Eyes* by Sarah Pinborough
15. *The Night Bird* by Brian Freeman



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Nissan supports STEM with "Motion" program



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of cooperation among industry and education to ensure that our young students have the learning tools they need to succeed."

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lenges were developed through the support of Nissan in 2011. Each primary challenge requires students to participate in different engineering-related activities, then measure and record data based on their observations.

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Madison County Youth Leadership Class named



Special to The Canton News

The Youth Leadership class for the 2017-2018 school year has been chosen. Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Jacob Carter, Canton Academy; Jessica Hamer, Ridgeland High School; Madisyn Nichols, Germantown High School; Anna Kump, Tri-County Academy; Leeyah Hughes, New Summit School; and Preston McWilliams, Jackson Academy; second row: Wendalyn Towner, Velma Jackson High School; Jack Ferguson, St. Andrew's Episcopal School; Morgan Williams, Canton High School; Tyler Welch, Germantown High School; Olivia Osborne, St. Joseph's Catholic School; and Robert Jordan, Jackson Prep; third row: Haaris Patel, Madison Central High School; Jacob Harkins, St. Joseph's Catholic School; Justin Kelly, Velma Jackson High School; Morgan McCray, Ridgeland High School; Bonnie Hill, Madison Central High School; and Ariel Cox, St. Andrew's Episcopal School; and top: Wyatt Butler, Tri-County Academy; Rucell Harris, Jr., Canton High School; Madeleine Blaylock, Madison Ridgeland Academy; Madeline Hughes, Jackson Prep; Elizabeth Pace, Canton Academy; and Ridge Futral, Madison Ridgeland Academy. Not pictured: Gabrielle Morris, Jackson Academy.

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Know Your Neighbor: Jon B. Love worked for senator

By Guest Columnist Jim Ritchie

Sometimes actions to achieve a career goal can lead to a completely different path. This month's neighbor is an example of such an aspiration.



Special to The Canton News

Meet Jon B. Love, doorman for the U.S. House of Representatives, practicing attorney, law clerk for a Mississippi Supreme Court justice, Vietnam veteran, campaign organizer for a U.S. Senator, head of the senator's Jackson, Mississippi, office, public affairs specialist for a VA Medical Center, attorney for the Department of Veteran's Affairs, past president of the Canton Rotary Club, and past member of the vestry at Grace Episcopal Church.

All this came to pass because, while growing up and working in his father's service station in Tupelo, Love's dream was to become an FBI Special Agent. While in school at Ole Miss, Love wrote to Mississippi Congressman Thomas G. Abernethy, asking the congressman to assist him in acquiring a summer job with the FBI. The congressman, evidently impressed with Love's initiative, informed him that the FBI didn't hire summer help, but he could offer Love the job of doorman to the U.S. House of Representatives.

This position allowed Love to listen to debates on the House floor and interact with members of Congress while providing them with messages from visitors who wished to speak to them, and so began his lifelong

association with a myriad of governmental functions. After this summer job, Love returned to his studies at Ole Miss and simultaneously enrolled in the Jackson School of Law.

During this time, he joined an Army Reserve unit in Greenwood. Studies were put on hold when the unit was called up and sent to Vietnam. When his tour in Vietnam was over, he resumed his studies and graduated from Ole Miss and the Jackson School of Law in the same year.

After serving as law clerk for Justice Neville Patterson in the Mississippi Supreme Court, he practiced law in Hernando, Mississippi, for three years and then was chosen by U.S. Senator John Stennis to serve as a legal and legislative assistant and to organize the Senator's reelection campaign in the Tupelo-Hernando area. When Senator Stennis was reelected, Love was selected to run the Senator's Jackson office until Stennis retired. The positions with the Department of Veterans Affairs mentioned above followed until his retirement in 2003. Love and wife, Teresa, enjoy traveling and spending time at their condo in Oxford. In spite of all his accomplishments, however, he never became an FBI agent. It was the FBI's loss.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jim Ritchie is a published author, storyteller, entertainer and grandfather of eleven. He is amazed at the number of talented and accomplished people who live in the Canton area, and he thinks you should know about some of them. Ritchie and professional artist wife, Perry, live in the Shocco community out from Canton. View their work at: www.southernstories.com.

Local choir makes history



Photo by Cynthia Goodloe Palmer

Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Kameron Brooks, Amaris Nason, Kyrie' Dunigan, Anijha Dunigan, Edward Dunigan, III and Demaryea Brown; and back row: Dennis McDonald, Edward and LaDanna Dunigan.

By Cynthia Goodloe Palmer

On February 18, members of the Mt. Zion M. B. Church Children's Choir participated in a recording session at Malaco Studios in Jackson to record songs for the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. The museum opened on December 9. Canton native Cynthia Goodloe Palmer was asked to coordinate singers and record two songs for a special "This Little Light of Mine Interactive Sound and Light Sculpture," honoring the late Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer. Palmer said that the children were invited because of their rich voices and their unique blend together.

"They were timely, disciplined and were open to various arrangements of the two songs that they recorded, "This Little Light of Mine" and "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Round." They

were also compensated for their services," said Palmer.

Their voices were added to other singers, including members of the Touglao College Concert Choir, Civil Rights Veterans, and professional singers from the Jackson community. Visitors to the new Mississippi Civil Rights Museum can listen for the children's voices in the middle surrounding the sculpture.

Dennis McDonald, Minister of Music at Mt. Zion, who also is featured on the recordings, rehearsed with the children. Edward and LaDanna Dunigan, also members of Mt. Zion, served as chaperones and transported the children to the studio.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Palmer serves as the founder and president of the Canton Gospel Music Association.

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Canton Music Club hears music honoring America



Special to The Canton News

In November, the Madison Station Elementary School Honor Choir entertained the Canton Music Study Club with a program of American music. The Honor Choir was led by club member Princess Thompson.

Special to The Canton News

The Canton Music Study Club met at the First Methodist Church in Canton in November. After welcoming guests, the club president, Kathy Hammack, announced the club's participation in the Parade of American Music sponsored by the National Fed-

eration of Music Clubs.

During November, the Canton club celebrated America's musical heritage by presenting American music on the radio, in schools, in churches and in music clubs. The audience was invited to join the club members in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the song of the month,

"The Yellow Rose of Texas."

Hammack introduced the November Musicians of the Month, the Madison Station Elementary fifth grade Honor Choir, led by club member Princess Thompson. The choir entertained the club members and their parents with a program of music honoring America. The choir sang

"God Bless America," "Thank You, Soldiers," "On Veterans Day," "The Song That Nature Sings" and "Fly High, You Grand Old Flag." The choir ended their program by presenting the club with a check for Project 88 to raise money to purchase a piano for The Seasons, an assisted living facility in Canton.



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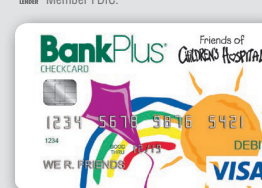
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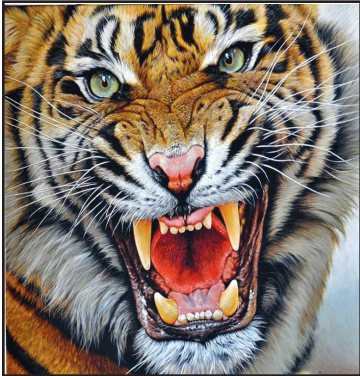
Reuben B. Myers initiates the Roaring Tigers Club

Special to The Canton News

On Thursday, October 26, Reuben B. Myers School of Arts and Sciences inducted forty-six students into their inaugural class of scholars for their Roaring Tigers Club. The club recognizes students who scored proficient or advanced on their first nine weeks exam in math, English or both. Over the course of the week, students enjoyed lunch with the principal, an ice cream social, painting canvases and finally an induction ceremony, followed by a reception with their parents.

The hope is that participation in the club will incentivize other students to do their best on common, district and state assessments. Each nine weeks, new students will be added, depending on how well they do on their district assessment. The overall goal is to create a culture of success and high academic achievement.

Students inducted into the club



Special to The Canton News

for the first nine weeks include:

Third grade: Keontra Glover, Serenity Murry, Zavien Buckner, Asia VanBuren, Jocsan Hernandez, Emanuel Hightower, Abraham Torrey, Amber Griffin, Madisyn Brim, Esmond Griffin, Jordan Williams, Rozariah Sumler, Abraham Johnson, D'Avain King, Kaliyah Mitchell, Kamira Goldman, Monica Johnson, Zihomara Lopez, JaTaila Green and Ty'Kenisya Watson;

Fourth grade: Jayvynn Gray, Jakari Gray, Cameron Warren, Karyn Lewis, Hylten Martin, Katorri Fleming, Zavier Donaldson, Cody Morgan, Demetria Bell, Phillip Black, Cynlasia Walker, Ariel Brown, Ja'Niya Jackson, Kamari McCracken and Jaylin Jones; and

Fifth grade: Dartavious Brooks, Kristen Rhodes, Kendelgrius Bouldin, Amaya Hunter, Jakierra Johnson, Kevin Nichols, Shavonsha Williams, Kaitlyn Dixon, Katelyn Flint, Atlantis Hudson and Zakira Nason.

Students learn a lot from the Sandy Hook tragedy



Special to The Canton News

Sandy Hook Promise brought the "Say Something" event to Olde Towne Middle School on October 19. The event was jointly hosted by Shirley D. Simmons Middle and Olde Towne Middle schools' student government associations (SGA). Funding was provided by a grant written by Simmons Middle School SGA sponsor Sarah Horton. Students learned the importance of speaking up to prevent violence and heard powerful words from Nicole Hockley, who lost her son in the Sandy Hook tragedy. Pictured (l to r) are, kneeling: Veonsha Dortch, Lazerra Craig, RaKyha Hawkins, Jonquinette Jackson, Kenyatta Ford, Cayla Myers and Shawnquala Carter; and standing: Jarvious Ousley, Laila Young, Ciara Kiner, RaNaya Hawkins, Jernesia White, Jasmine Williamson, Jakaja Anderson, Alaela Middleton, Tashyra Carter, Camellia Kilbert, Anastasia Brown, Chadericka Harvey and Jeremiah Harris.

Leadership Mississippi graduates two Cantonians

Special to The Canton News

Mississippi Economic Council (MEC)'s Leadership Mississippi program graduated 50 in the Class of 2017 in December, including Canton native LaMarcus Smith and Nissan Canton's Rodney Francis.



Special to The Canton News

LaMarcus Smith

LaMarcus Smith is a retail accounts specialist at Sanderson Farms, headquartered in Laurel, Mississippi. Smith began his career with the third largest poultry producer in the nation in 2005 as a member of the company's Corporate Trainee Program.

In his current position, Smith is responsible for sales, business

development and customer service. He is a graduate of Sanderson Farms 2020: Vision for our Future mentoring program.

He graduated from Alcorn State University in Lorman where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics. Smith currently resides in Gluckstadt.

Rodney Francis is a director, Human Resources (HR) for Nissan North America's Canton facility. A native of Conroe, Texas by way of Kaplan, Louisiana, Francis has been a resident of Mississippi for more than 20 years. He received his Bachelor of Science and MBA from Delta State University where he also lettered in basketball.

Francis began his career in HR

at Baxter Healthcare in Cleveland, Mississippi, and after years of progressive growth in the profession with Mississippi stops at Textron, Faurecia, and BorgWarner;

Francis joined the Nissan HR team in 2014. He currently resides in Madison with his wife Nicole and their three kids Anna, Amber, and Michael.

The Class of 2017 celebrated their completion of the program at

a graduation ceremony held at the Old Capitol Inn in Jackson. Participants completed five sessions in locations across Mississippi: Jackson, Camp Shelby, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Brookhaven, and Greenville.

Leadership Mississippi is the second oldest statewide leadership program in the nation and is conducted by the M.B. Swayze Foundation.

Since its inception in 1974, Leadership Mississippi has graduated more than 1,300 alumni active in Mississippi business and politics. Mississippi's top business executives have participated in Leadership Mississippi as a way to expand their networks. Many elected leaders, including a former governor, are graduates and recognize the value of the Leadership Mississippi experience.



Special to The Canton News

Rodney Francis



Special to The Canton News



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I am so very grateful to be serving the Canton Chamber of Commerce as an ambassador. Canton is filled with friendly, welcoming people and I was able to spend a good deal of my childhood here. Being chosen an ambassador is a wonderful opportunity for me to give back serve the community.

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!!CAN Mentors



L to R: Ben Barnette-ASSET Engineering, Kari Johnson-Walton- Assistant Principal, Toya Veals-Canton Chamber of Commerce, Monica Williams - 9th Grade Academy, Jayden White - 9th Grade Academy, La'miyah Williams - 9th Grade Academy, Ernest White - 9th Grade Academy, Michael Jackson - ASSET Engineering, Mike Yost - ASSET Engineering, Marsha Small-Warfield, Interventionist. Not pictured Kathy Amos - Turning Point Ministries

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Meeting

January 25, 2018

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

The Opera House

Speaker: First Lady Deboral Bryant

Key Investors



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KCB celebrates one year



Special to The Canton News

By Guest Columnist Joy Dodson,
Director Keep Canton Beautiful

Keep Canton Beautiful (KCB) is officially one year old, and we are proud of the various achievements we have made over the past year. It's hard to believe what we have been able to accomplish with no funding and the use of volunteers! The only fuel we need is to know that Cantonians are behind us and rooting for our success.

Keep Canton Beautiful has received donations from local businesses in the form of gift cards, which allowed us to reward our community during our first event, "Ritches in the Ditches."

Barnett Phillips stepped up and donated paint and supplies to help us revitalize the Price Lewis station. Buttross Department store got t-shirts made for KCB featuring our one-of-a-kind logo designed by a Canton artist and resident. The Public Works Department agreed to pick up the trash that was tagged during "The Great Canton Cleanup." Area high school art students are sharing their gifts by add-

ing artwork to some of the storefront windows. Local Canton artists have agreed to install an interactive mural in the Hollow in the weeks to come.

Keep Canton Beautiful is honored to give back to Canton, but we must all raise ourselves to a higher standard. We need to see the things that we usually walk right past and ignore; make the phone calls to change something we aren't satisfied with; attend a City meeting to see what the people we have elected are planning; and go shop in a local Canton store or eat in a Canton restaurant and help these places thrive.

I will close with a quick update from our second "Great Canton Cleanup," which collected twenty-eight tons of garbage. That's over ten more tons than our first cleanup.

As always, follow us on Facebook at Keep Canton Beautiful. We are wishing everyone a spectacular New Year!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joy Dodson lives in Canton with her husband Gary and their two sons.

Smith-Vaniz is Canton name



Special to The Canton News

Jan and Larry Smith-Vaniz lived in Canton for twenty-six years before moving six miles north of town on Highway 43. They built a home on 235 acres of family land surrounded by pastureland and timberland.

By Susie A. Wolfe

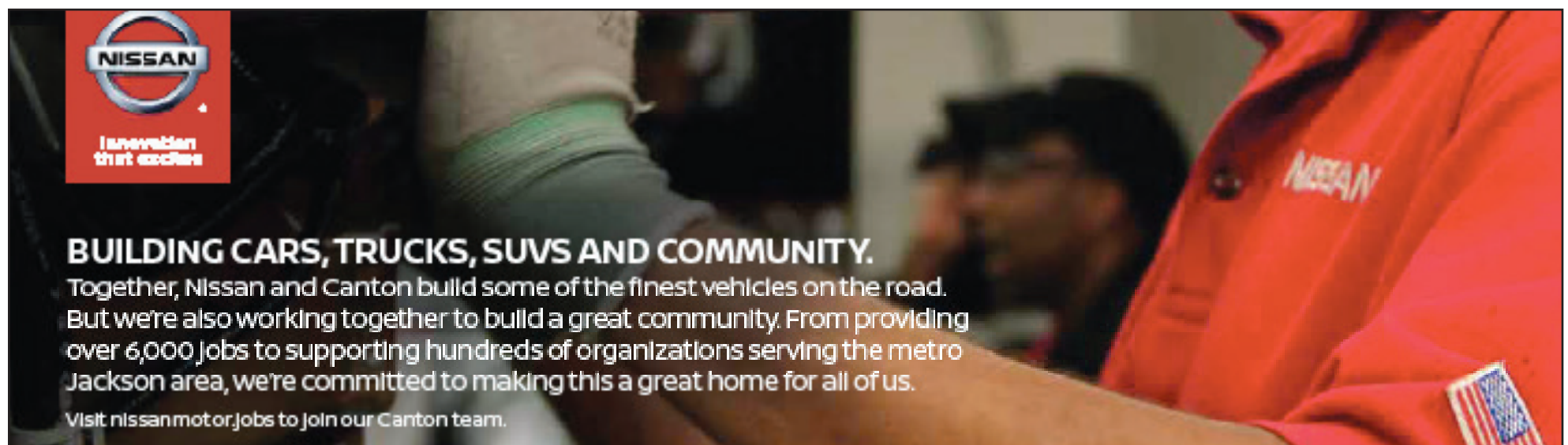
Larry Smith-Vaniz is a native Cantonian. In fact, he is a decedent of generations of Smith-Vanizes in Madison County. A real estate attorney and real estate broker, Smith-Vaniz currently operates Larry Smith-Vaniz Realty, LLC out of a former garage apartment that was recently converted to office space at his home just north of Canton on a piece of family land.

His great-grandfather, Dr. George Washington Smith, a physician in Canton, had the same name and initials as a local minister. Because there was a lot of confusion, the doctor determined to change his name. He had each of his five children draw a letter from a hat to make a new name. They drew "a," "i," "v," "n" and "z." "No one really knows the order the letters were drawn for certain, but they did the best they could do to end up [with] something close to a word" said

Smith-Vaniz, "but the resulting name became the hyphenated Smith-Vaniz. We do not know the year the change was made, but we are now getting into the sixth generation of Smith-Vaniz family members, so it appears the name might stick."

Larry and his wife, Jan, have two children, Dees Guidry and Reid Smith-Vaniz; and five grandchildren, Alex and Sam Guidry of Jackson; and Sheridan, Amelia and Laird Smith-Vaniz of Atlanta. In addition to Larry, his siblings that live in the Canton area include Sam Smith-Vaniz, JoAnn Smith-Vaniz Phillips and Tommy Smith-Vaniz.

Larry's real estate business focuses primarily on agricultural, recreational (hunting) and timberland properties plus commercial land. For more information on commercial land or hunting or other rural properties, contact Larry Smith-Vaniz at lsv@lsvrealty.com or call or text him at 601-720-5733.



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Start the new year off *right*

By Guest Columnist Pastor Guy Odom,
First Baptist Canton



Photo by The Canton News

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2018. Most people are probably glad that 2017 is over, but others probably did not want 2017 to end. Whatever the case, time moves forward, not backwards.

Take a moment and think about what you would like to commit to in 2018. I am sure everyone will be different, but I want to give you one goal to be mindful of. Here it is: Do the right thing! Remember Joseph? He did the *right* thing; and, in the world's eye, it cost him, but, in the end, he came through without blemish for not sleeping with Potiphar's wife!

One scripture says, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is *right* in the eyes of everybody." [Romans 12:17]

Another scripture says, "Since we know that all who do what is *right* are God's children." [1 John 2:29] The fruit of doing what is *right* has eternal significance! Accepting Christ as your Lord and Savior is the *right* thing to do. Living for Christ and doing what is right has both earthly and eternal significance. However, it doesn't come cheap or without cost. It does cost a believer something to do what is right. It may cost you a job, it may cost you a relationship, or it may cost you a friendship. But it is worth every penny! God will see you through, that's for sure!

Scripture teaches that in the end, doing the right thing will come with a reward: Eternal Life with Christ. That is a long time. God bless and, until next time: It's all about Jesus!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Guy Odom has been pastor at First Baptist Church of Canton since 2012. He and his wife, Tommi, have two sons, Ely and Cy. He is originally from Vicksburg.

It's always worth the wait

By Guest Columnist Kathy Amos



Photo by The Canton News

Have you ever seen something for the first time that absolutely stole your heart? It was love at first sight! Perhaps it was a person, a place or something you saw in a dream or vision. It ignited your passion and started the wheels of your mind racing with ideas and thoughts that would bring it to pass. And then, you suddenly realize that no matter how many ideas you use or thoughts you think to bring it to pass, nothing would deliver it into your hand any faster - except time.

The Bible declares that Joseph waited eighteen years before his dream came true. Abraham and Sarah waited until they were old before the promise of their son Isaac came to pass. The single most treasured possession each one of these leaders shared was an

authentic appreciation of the time and process of which they endured to bring about the promise.

Great leaders will go the extra mile and decide that, if it's worth having, it's also worth the wait. Somewhere down the road, the light bulb finally comes on and makes the journey a lot clearer and ultimately more appreciated. This New Year will be the year for which some have waited for a long time and for others will be the beginning of a long wait for the dream in their hearts to come to pass. Don't neglect to appreciate the process of your journey! For those who wait on the Lord shall be renewed.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Kathy Amos is a coach, speaker and teacher with The John Maxwell Team. She serves as executive pastor of the Turning Point Fellowship Ministries International Church, along with her husband, Joe. Kathy is also the president and founder of the Empowering Progressive Women's Association.

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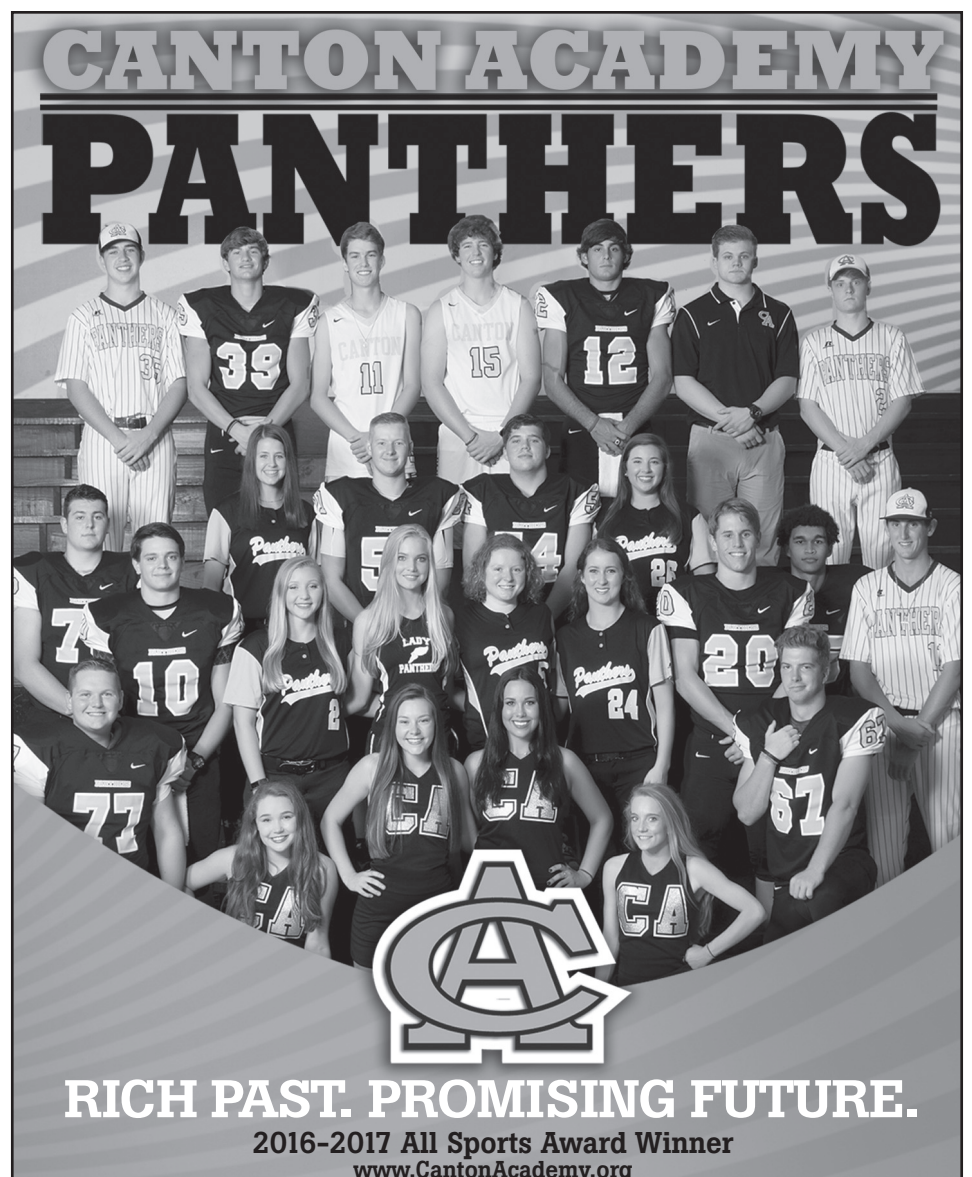
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Kids win putting contest | WIUFCl holds tournament



Special to The Canton News

The Women in Unity for Christ Inc. held their eighth annual Dr. Larry Day Memorial Charity Golf Tournament in September at the Canton Country Club. The Kids Putting Contest first-place winner was Ahmirica Jones. Pictured (l to r) are Women in Unity for Christ Board Members John Proctor, Minnie Shaw, winner Ahmirica Jones, Dorothy Davis and Larry Shaw. The second place winner, not pictured, is Aleylah Jones.



Special to The Canton News

The Women in Unity for Christ Inc. (WIUFCl) held its eighth annual Dr. Larry Day Memorial Charity Golf Tournament recently at the Canton Country Club. Winners in the adult division pictured (l to r) include: first place: Plas McAdory and Curtis Potter; and second place, Bernard Jones and Willie Abston (not pictured).

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Meeko, a new black bear, arrives at the Jackson Zoo

Special to The Canton News

Animal care staff at the Jackson Zoo recently announced the arrival of a new species to the park at 2918 West Capitol Street, the Asiatic black bear. Two-year-old “Meeko” arrived in late November from the Metro Richmond Zoo in Mosely, Virginia, and has been getting to know his keepers and new home.

Asiatic black bears are omnivorous (eating both plants and meat), can weigh up to 250 pounds and can live up to thirty years in protected habitats like zoos and refuges. Although Meeko was hand-raised from infancy, his wild cousins are primarily found in Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of southeastern Asia, and so are also known as Himalayan black bears or Tibetan black bears. Since they often have a pale half-moon of fur on their chest, they are also commonly referred to as “moon bears.” They share a close common ancestry with their cousin, the American black bear, but the Asiatic black bear has a longer mane and a slightly longer snout.

Their sense of smell is acute and is how they recognize their territory, avoid predators like tigers, wolves, and humans, and forage for food. In fact, Meeko has been seen “sniffing” in the direction of guests who stop and say hello.

Unlike their American cousins, moon bears are listed as “vulnerable” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) endangered

species list, as their numbers are dwindling from habitat loss and illegal hunting. With only approximately 50,000 left in the

wild, the Jackson Zoo staff hopes that Meeko will help people better understand and raise awareness of the importance of sustainable practices, even so far away from the endangered habitats. Sustainability is using ecology, economics, politics

and culture to ensure the continuation of all the planet’s biological systems indefinitely.

The Jackson Zoo works with other organizations and accredited zoos across the nation to help raise awareness of ways we can help endangered wildlife and ecologies, with twenty-five cents of every admission going towards local and national conservation efforts.

Guests of all ages can visit Meeko and the other nearly 400 animals every day of the year between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., except Christmas Day (the zoo will close at 2 p.m. on Christmas Eve). Adult admission is \$8, children ages two through twelve years old are \$5, those under two are free, and there are senior, military and group discounts available. People can also “like” Facebook.com/JacksonZoo for real time announcements and activities, and follow @JacksonZoo on Instagram, which is updated several times a day by the Jackson Zookeepers. Opportunities for animal sponsorship and other ways to support the Jackson Zoo can be found at:

jacksonzoo.org/support.



Special to The Canton News

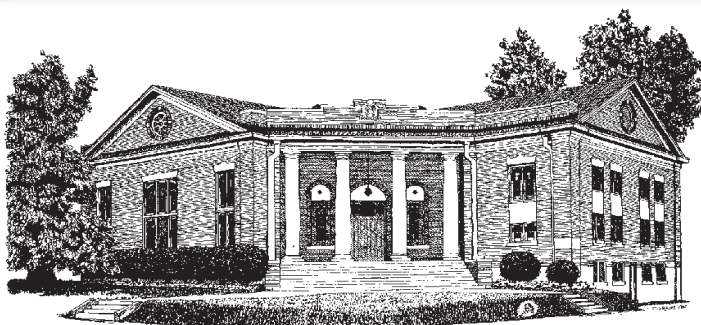
Meeko, a two-year-old Asiatic black bear, now lives at the Jackson Zoo.

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Confer brings new type of energy to Canton Chamber

By Susie A. Wolfe



Special to The Canton News

Pamela Confer took over as the new Canton Chamber of Commerce president in December. In addition to being the director of community and public relations for Nissan Canton, Confer is also a motivational speaker, jazz artist, songwriter and musical director. She directs the Nissan Canton Gospel Choir, the only choir in the U.S. automotive industry.

She wrote a song, "Mississippi Beautiful," that debuted at the Mississippi Capitol just prior to the state's Bicentennial on December 10. The song will be part of the "Where Do We Go From Here?" gallery at the recently-opened Mississippi Civil Rights Museum.

Confer's goals for the Canton Chamber in 2018 include spurring economic development, encouraging ownership and exploring Canton's uniqueness.

"Canton is a wonderful town," she said. "I want everyone to see the beautiful city that we are. I want to see the businesses prosper and the kids get a great education."

Confer claims Mississippi as her home. She grew up in Memphis and Jackson and has family in the state. Her mother lives in Oxford, and her father lives in Memphis, where she

has four siblings.

A graduate of Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, Confer studied both sociology and communication. She participated in the Miss Tennessee Pageant in 1991, where she won the talent competition by singing the song "I Am Changing." She has lived in Jackson for the last twenty-five years, where she served as the first woman constable in Hinds County.

Performing with her group, "Jazz Beautiful," which she started in 2007, she was voted "Best Local Jazz Artist" by the *Jackson Free Press* for 2012 and 2013; the Jackson Music Awards' 2013 and 2015 "Jazz Group of the Year;" and the MS Jazz Foundation's 2015 "Jazz Ambassador of the Year." She is also one of the *MS Business Journal's* 2015 "Top 50 Leading MS Businesswomen;" a 2016 Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi "Woman of Distinction;" and, the *Jackson Advocate* newspaper's "2017 Woman of the Year."

She also started Speak BIG!, a communications and public speaking program, in 2007 and is currently at the dissertation stage of a Ph.D. in public policy and administration from Jackson State University. Confer says she is a high-energy person who enjoys writing children's books, walking her dog, and participating in clay shooting contests. She recently won her third competition.

She said that this quote describes her philosophy of life, "It's not how you shine. It's who you polish."

Wilson loves sharing Canton

By Hannah Saulters

Charlotte Wilson, with a chic bob and round glasses, approaches her job as a tour guide with the Canton Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CCVB) the same way she did teaching at Canton Academy and being a grandmother, with passion.



Photo by The Canton News

Charlotte Wilson has shared her love of Canton with visitors for more than nine years at the Canton Tourism Office.

"I love history. I love Canton. And I love to talk about it!" she said. Wilson has served as a tour guide for nine years. Her typical day includes leading groups through the museum and on tours of the Canton Square. With a wealth of information at the front of her mind, Wilson can tell visitors from all over the country, and the world, a story about every building, mural, or spotlight on the Square.

"I don't want them to leave without feeling warmed and welcomed... I love making connections."

And those connections reach wide and far. At the beginning of each year, the CCVB starts tracking which states visitors come from, one year recording forty-seven states. From overseas, families come to follow the Blues Trail and get a taste of small town life. Wilson is an adamant proponent of the benefits of living in Canton. She said, "Home, school and church are what make America work. Little towns do that; Canton

does that."

In her twenty-four years of first grade students, her grandchildren, and even her tour groups, Wilson has tried to instill a sense of pride and understanding for the "Mayberry" life.

"I want them to know and love their country," she said, "and that starts in town."

Executive Director Jana Dear said, "She's our number one tour guide. I don't book a tour unless Charlotte can do it."

While the CCVB has tossed around the idea of changing their programming to audio guides or a short video, each time someone returns from a tour praising Charlotte Wilson's attention to detail and personable demeanor, they agree that having personal tour guides is an invaluable contribution to their success.

In addition to their daily tours, the CCVB is responsible for several seasonal events around town, including the Christmas festival each December, in which Wilson proudly dons the role of Mrs. Claus. She sees it as one more way to contribute and maintain connections with the town.

"I love it when my [former students] bring me their children and I get to say, 'Oh, I read to your mama when she was just your age!' This past year, I got three Christmas cards with me and their child!"

Whether she is leading people on a tour, studying up on the Blues, or reading to children on the Square, those who know her agree that Charlotte Wilson makes the Canton Convention and Visitors Bureau a place worth visiting.

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Canton Public School District begins Leadership Cohort



Dr. William Daggett (center) and Superintendent Cassandra Williams (just right of him) with the 2017-2018 Leadership Cohort.

Special to The Canton News

By Guest Columnist Cassandra Williams, CPSD Superintendent

During the month of November, specially-selected teachers and administrators in our district were chosen to be members of our 2017-2018 Leadership Cohort. Our participants have already demonstrated that they are change agents in their schools, and we wanted to capitalize on their strengths.

Generally, when we think of a leadership cohort, we think of a program that provides teachers who have exhibited leadership potential with the skills that they will need to become effective principals or directors. However, we decided to think outside of the box in developing our group of leaders. We looked for a model that would allow us to fully embrace our core values of teaching, nurturing and learning. Rather than create a group of future administrators, we wanted

to empower teachers to be able to impact change in their current roles. We wanted to reverse the traditional top down approach.

Our district is on the cusp of phenomenal growth and achievement, and we need to implement measures that will allow us to dive deeper into conversations and actions that will result in our students being successful in college and in their careers. I immediately knew who I needed to help us embark upon this journey.

Dr. William Daggett is an internationally-known educational researcher whose Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships Framework has made him a superstar in educational circles. After years of extensive research, Dr. Daggett concluded that the key to improving student performance is a tireless focus on providing rigorous and relevant instruction, and that every level of a school district must be tightly aligned and

carefully coordinated around that singular goal.

Prior to Dr. Daggett's visit, we provided our cohort with an introduction to his work. We spent time analyzing our current processes and practices to identify potential gaps. Two weeks later, Dr. Daggett took our schools through his entire framework. Our cohort learned how to quickly fine tune our instruction and assessments to ensure that we are leading students to not only the acquisition of knowledge, but more importantly, the application of learning.

Dr. Daggett will provide a follow-up training to our cohort in February. In the meantime, participants are refining their lesson plans and instructional delivery based on Dr. Daggett's model, and principals are assisting their teachers by providing quality feedback on their progress.

Our team is also working to build

stronger relationships school-wide; Dr. Daggett has taught us that rigor cannot occur without the development of relationships. Our implementation plan will expand in the 2018-2019 school year as our cohort of teachers will serve as building leaders who will support all of the teachers in their schools as we create a comprehensive system of focused and relevant instruction. This leadership cohort is one of the many ways that we are working to increase our students' achievement and impact their lives not only today, but well into adulthood.

EDITOR'S NOTE: With over twenty years in education, Cassandra Williams' focus as superintendent of the Canton Public School District is to increase student achievement through an invigorated emphasis on teaching, learning, and nurturing.

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KPNA holds annual event to honor fallen nurses



Special to The Canton News

In November, the Knights of Pillar Nurses Association (KPNA) held their third annual Memorial at St. Paul Church. The annual event is held in memory of fallen nurses and others in the nursing profession. Special selections were sung by Dr. Jennifer Hicks and Bernadette Russell. A praise dance was done by Quintoria Oliver. Pictured (l to r) first row, are: Ruby Johnson, Ida Thomas, Katie Hamlin, Mary Johnson, Evangelist Mary Simes, Helen Owens, Sylvia Grant and Nettie Travis; and second row: Bertha McGruder, Shirley Thompson, Cassandra Sojourner and Pearline Hatcher.

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