

THE VOICE OF THE SPARTAN COMMUNITY

SPARTAN ECHO

2025

A SPRING SEMESTER RECAP

A NEW ERA



SPARTAN FEST '25 THE ECHO IS ALIVE

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FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dear Spartans,

The Spartan Echo Newspaper is ALIVE and WELL! For those who don't know me, I am A'lauren Gilchrist, a rising senior studying journalism here at NSU. In February, I became the Editor-in-Chief of this publication. My first task was revitalizing the website *spartanecho.org* to make it visually appealing and to relaunch our digital presence. Since then, I have worked hard to rebuild this paper's reputation by spreading the word that the Echo is ALIVE and WELL! Even after facing several challenges.

Last semester, our old office was taken from us, causing us to shift into a new location, and 3 of the Spartan Echo pioneers are graduating, leaving gaps in our staff. Yet through it all, the Spartan Echo is still ACTIVE, and this print issue is comprised of the richest stories of the semester that haven't been published yet online. Each writer has worked hard this semester, and this issue showcases it!

Enjoy this print issue and WATCH OUT because the Spartan Echo is BACK and BETTER THAN EVER!

I dedicate this issue to *Ahmad Garnett, Chloe-Ryan Woolfolk, Sierra Jones, and Ian Williams*. Thank you for teaching me the ropes and leaving a foundation.

A'lauren Gilchrist

Editor-in-Chief

EST. 2025



EDITORS FOR THIS ISSUE

ALAUNA MARABLE - SPORTS EDITOR

Alauna Marable is a rising Junior from Detroit, Michigan, who is passionate about all things sports! Alauna has made her mark on NSU's campus through her storytelling, covering large-scale events such as the 2024 MEAC vs SWAC game in Atlanta and the City Circle Classic in Indianapolis. Alauna has worked in the professional realm with professional sports teams and is a 2025 initiate of the Epsilon Theta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.,



BRIANNA RUCKER - GENERAL NEWS EDITOR

Brianna Rucker is a proud editor for The Spartan Echo. Brianna is a senior Mass Communications major set to graduate in May 2025. She is grateful to contribute to such an impactful issue, and although her time with the organization has been brief, she has found it to be "incredibly rewarding." As her senior year comes to a close, Brianna plans to further her education in graduate school.



TATYANA CANTY - PHOTO EDITOR

Tatyana Canty is a junior is currently majoring in Mass Communications with a focus in General Broadcast. She is also a hardworking out-of-state student. During her first semester at NSU, she focused on building her experience and resumé. Tatyana started as a photographer for the Spartan Echo. After just her first semester, Tatyana was then promoted to Photo Editor. Tatyana looks forward to the many possibilities and fun opportunities that NSU has to offer.



GRADUATING EDITORS



DESTINEE BROADDUS
FORMER EDITOR IN CHIEF



CARLOS TANKARD
FORMER EDUCATION EDITOR



VICTOR SILAS MORGAN
FORMER PHOTO EDITOR

NSU PARTNERS WITH ODU TO HOUSE OVERFLOW STUDENTS

BY MICHELLE HILL

Norfolk State University students are being moved from Wyndham hotel to Old Dominion University apartments, due to an alleged breach of contract.

In early January, students were moved into the ODU apartments after the two universities formed a partnership, though no official announcement was made.

This move is part of Norfolk State's ongoing efforts to address its housing challenges.

In recent years, Norfolk State has faced housing shortages due to increased enrollment and a lack of dormitories to accommodate the growing student population.

In 2023, 13 News Now reported that approximately 6,000 students were admitted into the university, but there was only enough space on campus to house about 3,000 students.

To meet this demand, the university's administration decided to house some students off-campus in hotels around the Norfolk area.



The response from students housed in these hotels has been mixed. Some reported unsafe living conditions, including mold and bed bugs, while others preferred the hotel because they had their own individual room.

As students transition from hotels to ODU apartments, their reactions continue to vary as well. Some see the apartments as an improvement. One student, who wished to remain anonymous, shared their experience:

"Personally, my experience from moving from the hotel to ODU has been a very neutral experience. I can't complain too much about living space since I have a kitchen, my own bedroom, and bathroom. I have the opportunity to have privacy now versus being in the hotel room and living 1 inch away from my roommate. It's definitely a positive change from the hotel."

However, other students are frustrated by the constant moves and transportation issues that come with being housed off-campus.

Zené Clayton, a sophomore at Norfolk State, expressed her concerns about the housing shortage and the unreliability of the shuttles which transport students between the apartments and NSU's campus for classes and activities.

Clayton said, "It's very difficult having to commute every single day and relying on shuttles that are just unreliable. Honestly, I'm very disappointed because of the amount of money that the school gets and puts into places that most students can't benefit from. I haven't even been here a full two years and I've already been four different places. I'm just very disappointed."

Currently, students will continue to be housed in ODU apartments for the remainder of the spring semester, but the details of the joint partnership remain unclear. Additionally, no long-term plans have been made to address the university's ongoing housing shortage.

Without a clear solution, many students are left uncertain about how these housing challenges will be resolved in the future.

SPECIAL TOWN HALL MEETING

SPARTANS, JOIN US TO DISCUSS THE RECENT FEDERAL CHANGES THAT MAY IMPACT YOU! WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR CONCERNS AND GIVE YOU FACTUAL INFORMATION.

STUDENT CENTER **FEBRUARY 7, 2025**
ROOM 149 START FROM 3PM - 5PM



TOWN HALL GRAPHIC. CREDIT NSU SGA

SGA HOLDS SPRING TOWN HALL: HERE'S A RECAP

BY ZION HOLLINS-DREW

If you missed the town hall on February 7, 2025, here's everything you need to know to stay informed about the current climate at Norfolk State University. For those who aren't familiar with a town hall, it's an opportunity for students to voice their concerns and comment on issues affecting the university, including those that can have federal implications.

There were several university officials in attendance including, President, Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, Dr. Brown, and Dr. Fitzgerald, as well as other faculty members. The Town Hall started promptly at 6 PM, with opening remarks from the president of the Student Government Association, Za'Chary 'Prince' Jackson.

The floor was open for questions following Dr. J's introduction. Students approached the podium one by one in a calm, organized manner to ask questions about D.E.I. (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and how students would be impacted by the policy, along with some concerns regarding ICE.

They inquired about what the university intends to do to protect those affected students and their families. To prevent students from growing more concerned, Dr. Brown took the floor to respond to many of the questions with response:

"At this time, the University is not being targeted, and we are not under any real threat."

This response remained consistent throughout the Town hall. Many students went around in circles, not receiving a direct answer to any one question. The university is evidently trying to remain in control of the narrative and is hesitant to respond directly to any questions.

Bridgette Gabson Savage is a freshman majoring in political science with a minor in government. She aspires to become a future political candidate and challenges the university with questions that aim to alleviate some of the confusion felt by the student body.

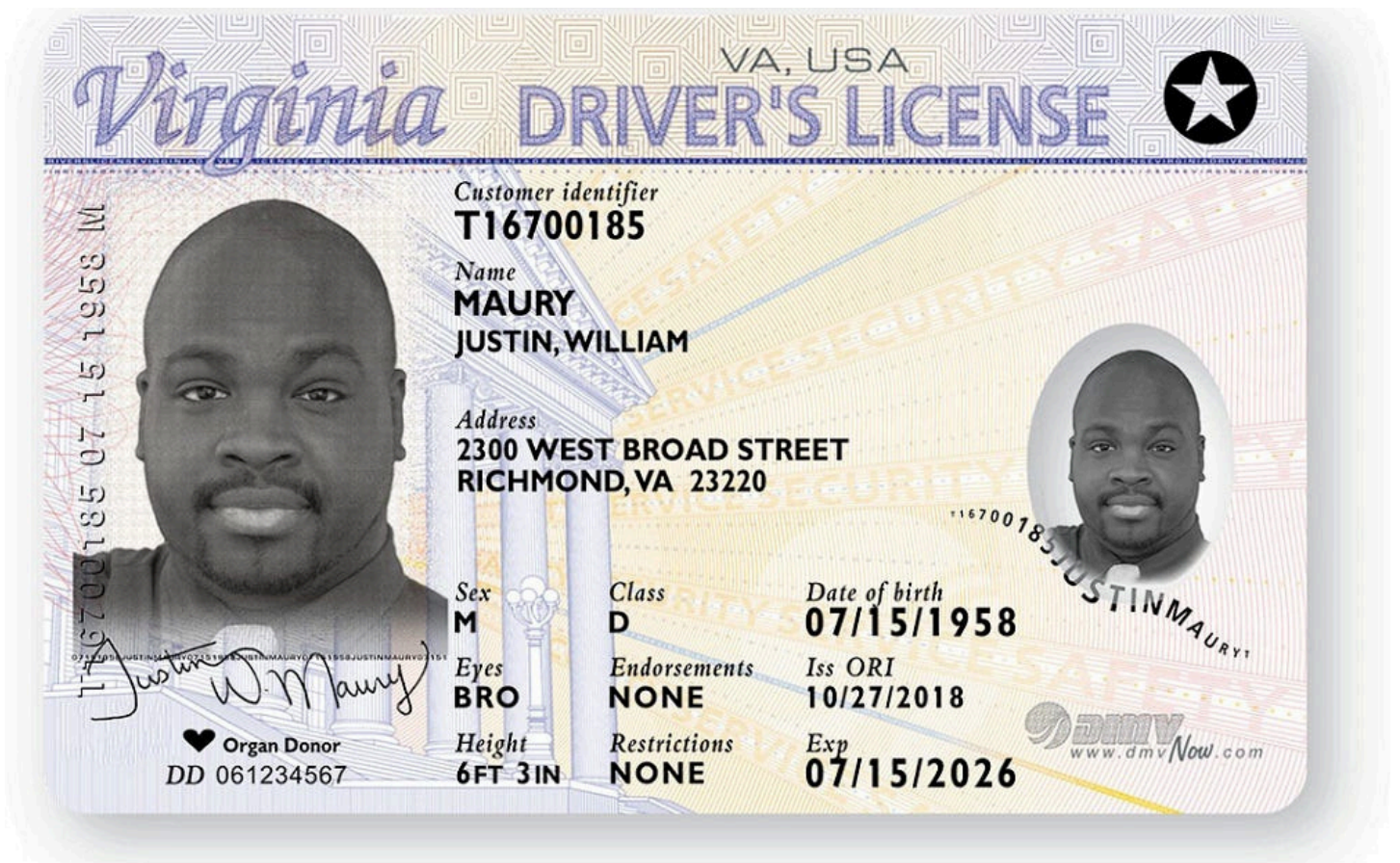
When funds get low, what funds do you use to keep things afloat?" What if a worst-case scenario happens? And how are you prepared to react?

That won't offset students mentally or hinder their ability to not finish what they started."

In response, Dr. Brown and Dr. Gerald Ellsworth Hunter (VP of Finance & Administration) emphasized the importance of students focusing on their academics and producing high marks. To ensure that students can take full advantage of federal grants. The Education Data Initiative projected that:

"Students missed out on at least \$4.0 billion in unclaimed federal grants for the 2023-24 academic year."

Students are encouraged to do their due diligence in staying informed about all current events and verify the information being shared on social media. The University may not have all the answers at this time but will do its best to find the answers that the student body needs to feel a sense of security.



A REAL ID EXAMPLE. CREDIT: THE NEWS LEADER

VIRGINIA'S REAL ID ROADMAP: HOW TO TRAVEL IN 2025

BY QUIANA NORTHERN

Virginia citizens, like those across the United States, will need a REAL ID or another form of valid identification to board domestic flights and use federal facilities beginning May 7, 2025. But what exactly is a REAL ID, and how can you obtain one before the deadline? Here's everything you should know.

A REAL ID is a driver's license or identification card that meets federal security criteria established by the Department of Homeland Security. These IDs are intended to improve security by guaranteeing that state-issued identification documents are correctly vetted and issued. In Virginia, the REAL ID will be identified by a gold star in the upper right corner of the card, making it easy to identify from ordinary licenses.



A REAL ID EXAMPLE. CREDIT: ABC NEWS



DMV IN RICHMOND, VA . CREDIT: DMV ONLINE

Beginning May 7, 2025, a REAL ID will be required for, board domestic flights, A REAL ID-compliant license allows you to board commercial flights within the United States without requiring a passport.

To enter federal buildings, you will require a REAL ID. Access military bases, some military locations may demand a REAL ID to access. You will be unable to use your regular state-issued ID for these reasons unless you have a REAL ID or another authorized form of identification (such as a passport).

Getting a REAL ID in Virginia is a simple process, but it requires you to gather certain documents and visit a Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office. Here's what you need to do: Proof of Identity. You will need to provide a document proving your identity, such as, U.S. Passport or Birth Certificate. Proof of Legal Presence, in addition to proof of identity, you'll need a document verifying that you're legally allowed to be in the United States. This can include a U.S. passport, a Permanent Resident Card or U.S. visa or other immigration documents. Social Security Number: You will need to provide proof of your Social Security number, which can be shown through your Social Security card, Tax return or W-2 form

To apply for a REAL ID, go to a Virginia DMV location. While you can begin the process online by checking your eligibility or gathering relevant papers, an in-person visit is required to authenticate your identification and take a photo for your ID. You can arrange an appointment online or in person at your nearest DMV facility.

The deadline to receive a REAL ID is May 7, 2025. After this date, a regular state-issued driver's license or ID card will no longer be valid for federal reasons, such as flying or entering government buildings. If you haven't gotten a REAL ID before, then you can still use other types of identification, like a passport or military ID, for these purposes.

Do not wait until the last minute to obtain a REAL ID in Virginia. Beginning May 7, 2025, it will be critical for air travel and federal building access. Make sure to check the DMV's website for the most recent requirements and prepare your documents ahead of time. Obtaining your REAL ID now will prepare you for future trips and activities.

HBCU'S FACE CLOSURE DUE TO SENATE BUDGETS

BY OLIVIA ROYSTER



3 HBCUS THAT COULD BE IMPACTED. CREDIT: CLUTCHPOINTS

Mississippi's 3 HBCUs and other public universities could close in the future due to newly proposed legislation from the State Senators.

Senate Bill 2726 in Mississippi was proposed by Senator John Polk (R-District-44), an appointed member of the Senate Committee of Universities and Colleges. On February 19, 2024, he proposed this bill that would mandate 3 colleges to close by June 30, 2028, and for the decision to be announced on June 30, 2025. Of the 8 state public universities, the 3 HBCUs are at great risk of permanent closure. The schools that could potentially close are Alcorn State University, Mississippi Valley State University, and Jackson State University.

It would require the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning to decide which universities would be selected. The criteria all 8 schools would have to present to the Board Members is how their institution contributes to the state's infrastructure, economy, and health/wellness services for the state's citizens. The grave loss includes the confiscation of assets, property and funds that would be transferred to a "another state agency, political subdivision, or sold to a non-profit entity" (Mississippi Senate Bill 2726, 2024). In addition, research centers would be available for other universities in the area to occupy.

Alumni of Mississippi's HBCUs have been active and vocal about fighting this proposed legislation. A petition of protest initiated by the alumni leadership collected more than 13,000 signatures (WJTV). Their efforts effectively got the attention of Senator Polk, who urged for the message to be shared about the bill dying so he could "sleep at night" (Mississippi Today).

Although Bill 2726 died in the committee on March 5, 2024, this was not the first or last proposed legislation that would impact the legacy of Mississippi's HBCUs. Senate bill 2725 seeks to close universities based on criteria set by the "Mississippi University System Efficiency Task Force." However, there is a greater issue of similar conversations in numerous states like Maryland and Missouri that have questioned state funding and DEI and ultimately put HBCUs in jeopardy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS GROWING ISSUE AND HOW THIS IMPACTS STUDENTS NOW IN 2025, CHECK OUT:

<https://www.wjtv.com>
<https://defendernetwork.com>
<https://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2024/pdf/history/SB/SB2726.xml>
<https://mississippitoday.org>

SPARTA IN COLOR

THE MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM TAKE THE MEAC CHAMPIONSHIP

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: MYLES BLAND

PHOTOS FEATURE: CHRISTIAN INGS KULUEL MADING, CHRIS FIELDS JR., BRIAN MOORE JR., TYREL BLADEN



PHOTOS FEATURE: CHRISTIAN INGS KULUEL MADING, CHRIS FIELDS JR., BRIAN MOORE JR., TYREL BLADEN



PHOTOS FEATURE: CHRISTIAN INGS KULUEL MADING, CHRIS FIELDS JR., BRIAN MOORE JR., TYREL BLADEN





STUDENTS VIBING



JEREMIH



MONALEO



YFMJEWEL



TOPFLOGWAP



STUNNA 4 VEGAS



STUNNA 4 VEGAS & MONALEO



NOAH



STUDENTS VIBING

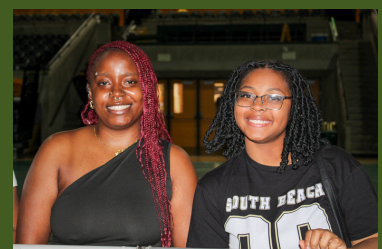
SPARTA IN COLOR PT. 2

A RECAP OF THE SPARTAN FEST CONCERT FEATURING JEREMIH, MONALEO, & STUNNA 4 VEGAS



**PHOTOGRAPHY BY:
A'LAUREN GILCHRIST**

SPARTAN ECHO 10



NORFOLK SET TO WELCOME \$750 MILLION RESORT CASINO BY 2027

BY CARLOS TANKARD



MARKUP DESIGN OF THE FUTURE CASINO. CREDIT: BOYD GAMING



MARKUP DESIGN OF THE FUTURE CASINO. CREDIT: BOYD GAMING

The city of Norfolk is set to become home to a new resort casino, projected to open by Fall 2027. In a partnership with Boyd Gaming, a major developer known for resort and casino projects, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe is leading the \$750 million development, which city officials say will generate significant economic benefits.

According to Norfolk.gov, city leaders anticipate the casino will create new job opportunities, increase wages, and establish Norfolk as a premier tourist destination. The project is expected to bring in an estimated \$290 million in annual revenue and generate approximately 825 new jobs.

Plans for the casino include 1,500 slot machines, 50 table games, a 200-room resort hotel, a spa and gym, eight food and beverage venues, and an amenity deck.

The project has faced several changes since discussions began in 2019. According to WAVY.com, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe initially planned to collaborate with W.M. Jordan Company and a Suffolk-based construction firm. However, Boyd Gaming has since taken over as the primary partner, working alongside S.B. Ballard Construction.

Norfolk voters approved the casino's construction in 2020, initiating a five-year timeline for completion. With the deadline approaching, Boyd Gaming has announced plans to open a temporary gaming facility later this year, with the full resort slated for 2027.

The casino's development comes at a time when Norfolk is gaining increased attention, especially following the recent hiring of former NFL quarterback Michael Vick as Norfolk State University's new head football coach. Many students and residents believe the city is on the verge of becoming a major destination.

"I think [the casino] is a good idea because Norfolk isn't really alive," said NSU freshman NaSya Doswell. "If there were more tourist attractions, the city would have more opportunities... we could make a big change and bring more livelihood to the area."

However, not all residents are fully convinced of the casino's benefits. Some have raised concerns about whether the promised job opportunities will truly be available to Norfolk residents.

"I would like the city to provide more details about how many jobs are going to be offered to Norfolk residents versus being outsourced from other casinos or the Pamunkey Tribe itself," said Norfolk native Damon Nicholson.

Golden Eagle Consulting, the company overseeing the casino's development, is primarily owned by Boyd Gaming, with the Pamunkey Indian Tribe holding a 20% equity stake, according to WHRO.org.

Nicholson also expressed concerns about potential gentrification, questioning whether the economic benefits would truly reach longtime Norfolk residents.

"I don't want this to be another stepping stone in gentrification," he said. "I hope the money generated from this goes back into the community's needs and not toward pushing people out."

These concerns aren't unfounded. WHRO.org reports that Norfolk's ongoing redevelopment projects—including the I-264 highway interchange—have displaced families, leaving many skeptical about the city's claims that these initiatives aim to support underdeveloped communities.

As construction progresses, residents will be watching closely to see whether the casino delivers on its promises of economic growth and community revitalization—or if it follows the path of other redevelopment projects that have left longtime Norfolk residents behind.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Check out the BOYD GAMING website to see all that's coming with the casino project.

<https://norfolk.boydgaming.com>



LEFTOVER WRECKAGE OF AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 5432 FLOATS IN THE POTOMAC RIVER NEAR RONALD REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA. CREDIT: BRANDON GILES/US COAST GUARD/GETTY IMAGES

BACK-TO-BACK PLANE CRASHES: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN U.S. AIRSPACE?

BY KANIYA LAWRENCE

On Wednesday night, January 29, 2025, around 9 p.m., an American Airlines regional jet, Flight 5432, collided with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter near Ronald Reagan National Airport in Arlington, Virginia. All 67 people aboard both aircraft were killed.

Just two days later, on January 31, another deadly crash occurred involving a Learjet 55 medical plane transporting six people. Everyone onboard died, along with a bystander in a vehicle.

At least 22 civilians were injured. Flight 5432, operated by PSA Airlines, departed from Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport in Kansas between 6 and 6:30 p.m. CST. The flight to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport was smooth, with no reported issues, and was set to arrive on time. Weather conditions were clear.

As the plane neared its destination, air traffic control requested it use a shorter runway. The pilot agreed and began rerouting.

Around the same time, the Army helicopter was conducting a training exercise. Thirty seconds before the collision, air traffic control asked the helicopter crew if they had the plane in sight but received no response. Seconds later, the aircraft collided midair.

The explosion and burst of flames sent the aircraft plunging into the Potomac River, just a few miles from Washington, D.C.

The airspace around Reagan National is notoriously tight, often shared by both helicopters and commercial planes. Although the cause remains under investigation, airspace congestion is being considered a contributing factor.

Senator Tim Kaine told WTKR News 3, "I have been warning about this for years... Even after a near collision last year, my colleagues voted to add more flights to already congested airspace."

All passengers and crew members aboard Flight 5432 and the Army helicopter died on impact. Many of the passengers had been returning from a national figure skating camp in Wichita, including athletes Jinna Han and Spencer Lane and their mothers, as well as Russian figure skating pair Naumov and Shishkova.

Recovery crews faced major challenges due to the wreckage being submerged in icy water. However, with help from the Department of Forensic Sciences, the Public Health Lab, and the FBI, over 100 personnel worked around the clock. By February 5, all bodies had been recovered and identified, except one still awaiting official confirmation.

The second tragedy happened on Friday evening, January 31, when a small medical jet operated by Jet Rescue Air Ambulance—a Mexico-based company—crashed in Northeast Philadelphia shortly after takeoff.

The aircraft was transporting six Mexican nationals to Tijuana, including a child patient who had just completed treatment at Shriners Children's Hospital.

The jet departed from Northeast Philadelphia Airport at 6:07 p.m., reached an altitude of about 1,600 feet, then rapidly descended and crashed near Roosevelt Mall. It was in the air for only a minute and was just three miles from the airport. The crash destroyed four homes, critically damaged six others, and caused additional damage to 11 more. Power was knocked out to more than 200 residents.

An eyewitness told 6ABC Philadelphia, "I heard a loud roar, then I saw a fireball in the sky... It exploded right on the block. I actually saw a body fly across the street."

Victims of the crash were:

- Capt. Alan Alejandro Montoya Persales (pilot)
- Copilot Josue de Jesus Juarez Juarez
- Dr. Raul Mexa Arredondo
- Paramedic Rodrigo Lopez Padilla
- Valentina Guzman Murillo (child patient)
- Lizeth Murillo Ozuna (mother)

A bystander, 37-year-old Steven Dreuit, was also killed while sitting in his vehicle near Roosevelt Mall. Several other individuals were seriously injured and remain hospitalized.

Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker urged the public to stay away from the scene, stating, "Several dwellings and vehicles were impacted. If you see debris, call 911. Don't touch anything."

So far, no issues were reported by the aircraft to air traffic control before the crash. Controllers initially received a response after departure, but further attempts to communicate went unanswered.

The jet lost contact just moments after takeoff. Investigators are analyzing the cockpit voice recorder to determine the cause. Both crashes have raised renewed concerns about flight safety, air traffic control communication, and airspace congestion, as officials and families of victims demand answers.

SEAN "DIDDY" COMBS' LAWYER QUILTS SEX TRAFFICKING CASE

BY NYAH WARD



SEAN "DIDDY" COMBS. CREDIT GETTY IMAGES

In a crucial move in Sean "Diddy" Combs' legal case, defense attorney Anthony Ricco has legally withdrawn from representing the music mogul in his upcoming federal sex trafficking and racketeering trial. Ricco filed his application to withdraw from the case on February 20, 2025, commenting,

"Under no circumstances can I continue to effectively serve as counsel for Sean Combs, consistent with the ABA Standards for Criminal Justice."

However, the lawyer did not specify his reasoning behind the decision to remove himself from the case because of "attorney-client privilege." While I am aware that the Local Rule requires that an application for withdrawal of counsel is supported and granted 'only upon a showing by affidavit or otherwise of satisfactory reasons for withdrawal,' Ricco continued, "there are sufficient reasons (related to the protections afforded by the attorney/client privilege) for brevity in my application for withdrawal as counsel in this case."

Ricco's departure comes as Combs faces a slew of criminal charges, including sex trafficking, racketeering, and transportation for prostitution. These accusations are the result of numerous lawsuits and criminal prosecutions that claim Combs used his riches and power to sexually exploit people, repeatedly using assault, coercion, and intimidation.

Combs' former long-term romantic partner, singer Cassie Ventura, filed a lawsuit accusing him of rape, sex trafficking, and physical abuse over a ten-year period in November 2023, making the legal issues more severe than before. Although this lawsuit was quickly resolved just 24 hours later, it paved the way for countless other victims to come forward with similar charges.

Additionally, Combs was accused of throwing wild "freak off" parties in his mansion since the early 2000s, where much criminal activity allegedly took place, according to anonymous sources. These incidents ultimately resulted in Combs' arrest in September 2024 on federal charges, to which he maintains his innocence.

Ricco's departure is remarkably notable given the timing, with Combs' trial scheduled to begin on May 5, 2025. Despite Ricco's withdrawal, Combs continues to be represented by five other attorneys, and the trial is expected to proceed as planned. As the trial date approaches, the withdrawal of a key defense attorney adds another layer of complexity to an already high-profile lawsuit.



COMBS IN TRIAL. CREDIT: REUTERS

MISTER NSU: MORE THAN A CROWN, AN INSPIRATION

BY AYANNA TILGHMAN

Matthew Morse, better known as Mister NSU, made history as the first Mister Norfolk State University to place in the top five at the annual Mister and Miss HBCU Pageant.

Competing on a national stage for the first time, he earned the title of first runner-up—a remarkable achievement considering his pageant experience began at Norfolk State in their Royal Court Pageant.

One of the biggest challenges Morse faced was overcoming his nerves. Despite holding the title of Mister NSU, performing in front of large crowds—especially singing—can be daunting. However, he found strength in the camaraderie of his fellow kings and queens, recalling a moment backstage when they gathered to pray over one another before taking the stage.

When a video of Matthew Morse singing at the Mister and Miss HBCU Pageant hit the internet, it made an immediate impact. His powerful performance resonated with viewers, but for Morse, stepping into gospel music on stage was uncharted territory.



MATTHEW MORSE (MISTER NSU) WITH TORI PAIGE (MISS NSU). CREDIT: MATTHEW MORSE

His advisor, William Bynum, had encouraged him to embrace his gospel side, believing it was important for audiences to see that part of him. While Morse had performed publicly many times—including a Donny Hathaway song at the NSU Pageant—he had never sung a gospel song in competition.

Determined to deliver an authentic performance, Morse put his heart and soul into preparing. He had a custom track created, with someone playing the organ to bring it to life. Still, doubt crept in during rehearsals. He admitted that early on, he “wasn’t feeling it,” but he pushed through.

“Singing gospel is not something you can replicate,” Morse said.

As his time as Mister NSU comes to an end, Matthew Morse reflects on a journey that made NSU history. The thought of passing the torch is “bittersweet”, but he’s excited to see who will succeed him, mentor the next Mister NSU, and witness the legacy they build.

His advice for anyone aspiring to take on the role? Prioritize yourself. “Take time for you,” Morse said. Being Mister NSU is challenging, and it can consume your identity. Make sure people know who you are outside of that. “Never lose sight of yourself.”

In the words of Mathew Morse, Mister NSU, “Za’ Chary [Jackson] made it to the top 10. I made it to the top 5. Now it’s your turn.”

TIM REID: HBCU—BORN, HOLLYWOOD—BUILT

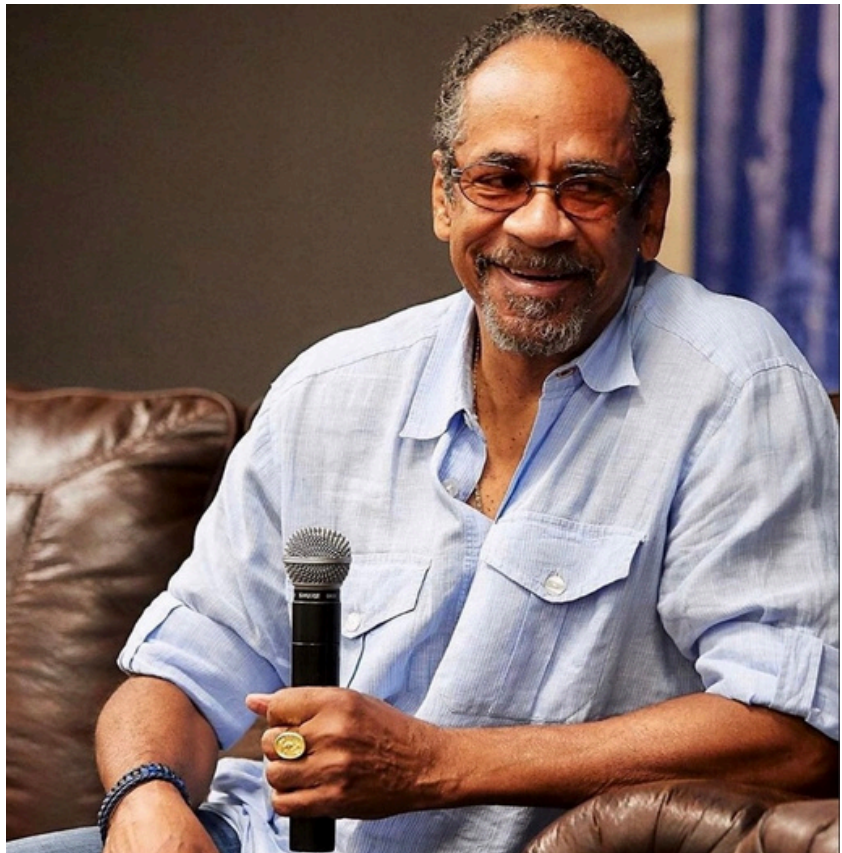
BY MALIK DAVIS

Tim Reid is an actor, director, philanthropist, and proud HBCU alum. From the campus of Norfolk State University to his unforgettable role on *Sister, Sister*, Reid's journey is one of purpose, passion, and legacy. Born and raised in Virginia, Reid's roots run deep. But it was at Norfolk State University where his dreams took shape. Stepping onto campus, he found more than just an education he found community, identity, and the beginning of a remarkable career.

It was at NSU that Reid first discovered his love for storytelling and performance, a passion that would carry him to national acclaim. And it was there that he also met the love of his life, making the university not just a starting point, but a cornerstone of his personal and professional life.

After graduation, Reid blazed a trail in the entertainment industry at a time when opportunities for Black actors were limited. His perseverance paid off, and he soon became a fixture on American television screens.

His most iconic role as Ray Campbell, the wise and loving father on the beloved 90s sitcom *Sister, Sister* captured the hearts of millions.



THE LEGENDARY TIM REID. CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES

Through that role, Reid helped reshape how Black fatherhood was portrayed on TV. Reid's impact goes far beyond the screen.

Throughout his life, he has remained deeply committed to giving back. Whether through his nonprofit work, mentorship programs, or his efforts to increase representation in media, Reid has made it a mission to uplift the next generation of Black creatives and leaders.

In 2010, he further cemented this commitment by joining the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., through the Eta Lambda Chapter an organization known for its dedication to scholarship, leadership, and community empowerment.

Today, Tim Reid stands not only as a respected figure in Hollywood but also as a living testament to the power of HBCUs to shape greatness. Norfolk State University didn't just prepare him for a career it nurtured his voice, his vision, and his values.

From the classroom to the soundstage, and from fraternity service to philanthropy, Tim Reid's journey is a shining example of what it means to lead with purpose and passion. And through it all, he continues to prove that legacy isn't just about what you leave behind, it's about the lives you touch along the way.

KYLE O'QUINN: BOUNCING BACK TO NSU

BY REBEKAH "BECK G" GAINES

Kyle O'Quinn IS NSU basketball. Known worldwide for his basketball career, O'Quinn first made headlines as a Norfolk State University student-athlete. His career spans from high school, to college, to the professional ranks, including a nine-year stint in the NBA and overseas basketball. The 6'9" New York native has been honored and recognized for his basketball achievements since 2011.

At Campus Magnet in Jamaica, Queens NY, O'Quinn did not play basketball in his junior year. He returned as a star player in his senior year averaging 20 points, 12 rebounds, and 3 blocks per game. By the time he was ready to graduate, Norfolk State University offered him a full athletic scholarship, although his original plan was to play football. Making a decision to hone his skills and begin his professional basketball career at Norfolk State University turned out to be history making.

As told to MEAC, he said "Once they offered me a full athletic scholarship, I looked at my parents and we shook our heads yes," O'Quinn said. "There was no discussion after that."



KYLE O'QUINN DURING HIS RUN AT NSU. CREDIT: THE VIRGINIAN PILOT

O'Quinn's college basketball efforts started upon his arrival. As a freshman, he played in all 31 games even including starting twice. The Mid-Eastern Atlantic Conference (MEAC) named him as the rookie of the year two times. In his sophomore year, he started in 29 of the 30 games, was twice recognized as the MEAC Defensive Player of the Week. His junior year was a record-setting year.

Amongst his accolades, he was the first player in NSU's history named as the MEAC Defensive Player of the Year. As well, MEAC recognized him as Player of the Week and Defensive Player of the Week four times each. In 2012, O'Quinn's senior year was monumental. He won more MEAC recognition as Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year. In addition, he was also awarded the Lou Henson Award as the nation's top mid-major player. He led his team as a #16 seed to the NCAA Division 1 men's basketball tournament for NSU's first ever postseason appearance and led them to victory over #2 seed Missouri Tigers in the second round of the tournament which garnered him international attention.

After earning his bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from NSU in 2012, O'Quinn began his career with the NBA. First, he was drafted in the second round as 49 th pick to the NBA's Orlando Magic, even earning the 2012-13 Hustler Player of the Year. He stayed with that team for three years until he was traded to his hometown team of the New York Knicks in a four-year, \$16 million dollar deal. In 2018, he signed a one-year contract with the Indiana Pacers then another one-year deal with the Philadelphia 76ers in 2019. He played overseas from 2021-2024, and on April 12, 2025, he announced his retirement from pro-basketball.

Post-basketball season, O'Quinn comes full circle. He recently announced his return to NSU as the Executive Director of Athletic Advancement. In this role, he will mentor young athletes and contribute to the growth of the athletic department. He brings the ability of a player and the passion of a mentor. In an interview with Forbes magazine, O'Quinn says,

"Being back at the university means a lot to me and my family. [I'm] lucky to be back, grateful to be back, love being there every day, love being, going to tennis matches, softball games, and baseball games. All the sports that our university provides and just being that piece that helps turn the page at the university for, potentially, the next Kyle O' Quinn, and many others."

LEON H. CARTER BUILDING BRIDGES AND BREAKING BOUNDARIES

BY: ALAUNA MARABLE



LEON CARTER. CREDIT: THE ATHLETIC

A pioneering figure in sports journalism, Leon H. Carter is an alum of Norfolk State and the Editor at Large for The Athletic. He has reshaped the industry through mentorship, inspiring generations of writers, and bridging gaps in newsroom diversity.

"You can do whatever you want to do, but you have to make that commitment toward excellence," said Carter. "You cannot make shortcuts and expect to be excellent and expect to succeed... work your butt off."

Leon Carter's interest in sports journalism began during his summer breaks in rural Halifax County, Virginia, where he would clip articles from the local newspaper, rewrite them, and record himself as a broadcaster. In junior high, he wrote for what was considered the school newspaper, then later took newspaper classes in the 10th grade of high school.

Carter's senior year of high school is where his love for Norfolk State blossomed. He visited the Mass Communications Department at Norfolk State and learned about the Spartan Echo Newspaper. Intrigued by its system, he envisioned himself working at a publication where the paper came out once a week.

"After visiting, I came back home and began thinking about it more and more. I decided to go back to Norfolk State over the summer and commit to going just to learn a little bit more," said Carter. "On day two, I joined the Spartan Echo and stayed there until I graduated four years later."

Publishing only three stories in his first year, Carter eventually found balance between being a student and a journalist. Overtime, he pushed the Spartan Echo to produce more stories, moving from publishing every week to covering important events, including the CIAA Tournament. During his tenure at the Echo, he was assistant sports editor his sophomore year, sports editor his Junior year, and assumed the role of editor-in-chief in his senior year.

"Just as I knew that writing or journalism was going to be part of my future, I knew I was going to be a sports editor someday and go down a path where very few minorities had gone down, and that was on the management side," said Carter. "I was going to run my own department, and I was going to help direct coverage. It was not so much trying to be a writer... I wanted to be the boss."

The accolades Carter received throughout his career speak for themselves and showcases the trailblazer that he is. While at The Athletic, the Leon H. Carter Newsroom Internship Program was started in the fall of 2024. He received the 2023 Roone Arledge Award and was the third African American to receive the Red Smith Award in 2022. On top of that, Carter has held numerous monumental positions as the first African American in certain companies and in the world.

"When I joined the Louisville Courier-Journal, I was the first African American sports copy editor on the sports desk. When I joined Newsday, I was their first African American copy editor on the sports desk, and when I got to the New York Daily News in 1994, I later became their first African American sports editor, one of the few to reach that position in the country," said Carter.

Even with the plethora of barriers he has broken, Carter is most proud of founding the Sports Journalism Institute. SJI is a training internship program for college students interested in sports journalism careers. Beginning in 1993 at Norfolk State, it is now welcoming its 33rd cohort and has assisted women and minorities break into the journalism industry.

The idea of the institute stemmed from Carter teaching classes at Norfolk State for a program. It was a great experience to see the progress in the students he worked with both in his classes and the Spartan Echo. Carter had received a grant after the sabbatical was over at Norfolk State and wanted to create SJI to continue pouring into college students interested in sports journalism.

"SJI has had a tremendous impact on lives and that is what you want to do when you go through life: to have an impact on other people's lives and to be able to do something that will open the door for other people," said Carter. "That has been the thing that has kept me going for 33 years dealing with SJI. You see the impact that you are making on young people and also on the industry."

NEW ERA BEGINS: MIKE VICK MAKES COACHING DEBUT WITH SPRING BALL SCRIMMAGE

BY: ALAUNA MARABLE

With the 2025 football season fast approaching, Norfolk State finished its spring season with their annual Spring Ball scrimmage on April 19th at William "Dick" Price Stadium. The match signaled the start of a new era for the program as newly appointed head coach, Mike Vick, made his first game appearance on the Spartans' sideline.

"It's a weight off of my shoulders just to get through the spring. Going through winter workouts, getting here, getting to know the guys, getting to understand what it takes to get to this point, and putting my coaches hat on each and every day," said Vick. "It's really been a great spring for us and I'm pleased with the turnout."

The Spring Ball scrimmage served as a first look at the foundation Mike Vick is building heading into the 2025 season. Spartans ran through a mix of position drills, seven-on-seven matchups, one-on-one battles, and full-team live periods—offering fans an early glimpse of the team's progress and Vick's hands-on coaching style. It was a sneak peek at both the energy he brings to the sideline and what Spartan football could look like this fall.

"We try to treat everything like game day, but it's nothing like gameday in a sense, so it just gives you chills," said transfer player from Delaware State, Kahleef Jimmison. "Everything was an evaluation — just trying to stay on our stuff at the end of the day. Vicks looking at the little things; he's also being a 'players coach', so it was helping us in the process."

Following the scrimmage, fans gathered to show their support for the Spartans, lining up to get team schedule posters signed by the players. The energy around the program was undeniable, with excitement for the season ahead on full display. Coach Vick, who arrived on the field two hours early, was excited for a strong turnout and the buzz surrounding the future of Spartan football.

"Today just with the energy, the crowd, the family, the players and their enthusiasm and energy, I just wanted to go out there and get a feel for what we were about to experience and soak it all in," said Vick. "I actually beat all the guys out there and it's good when your coach is the first one out there. It definitely makes a difference — makes a statement."

Several Hampton Roads legends were present at the game to show their support for Vick and the team, including NBA icon Allen Iverson, NFL veteran Tyrod Taylor, lightweight boxing

champion Keyshawn Davis, Virginia State Senator Aaron Rouse, and Congressman Bobby Scott. It was an inspirational moment for the players, being able to talk with figures who they looked up to growing up.

"I'm just blessed to be a part of the Coach Vick experience. It shows you guys what Coach Vick is bringing to the table and what we got going on for the fall. Just hearing words of wisdom from those guys, it means a lot to us, it means a lot to the team and we just try to implement those tips that brought them too far into our game, so I really appreciate Coach Vick for setting this all up for us." said transfer quarterback Israel Carter.

The 2025 season is fast approaching and the Spartans still have work to get done. They will kick off the fall season against the Towson University Tigers on August 28th at the William Dick Price Stadium. With preseason preparations underway, the team is determined to build momentum and set the tone for the year ahead.

"I understand what it takes each and every day to make this team better, keep them going, keep the energy going, keep building the culture, keep getting to know everybody from a personal standpoint and if the tough decisions have to be made, being able to make them and make them with accuracy," said Vick.



(LEFT TO RIGHT) ALLEN IVERSON, KELVIN DAVIS, MIKE VICK, TYROD TAYLOR(BACK), FAN (FRONT), AARON ROUSE, AND BOBBY SCOTT CREDIT: (MATTHEW PATTERSON/NSU ATHLETICS)



ISRAEL CARTER RUNNING THE BALL. CREDIT: (MATTHEW PATTERSON/NSU ATHLETICS)

THIRD TIME IS THE CHARM: NSU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM CLAIMS THIRD VICTORY

BY REBEKAH "BECK G" GAINES

In an exciting three-peat, Norfolk State University Women's basketball team earned the 2025 Mid-Eastern Atlantic Conference Championship on March 15 th at Scope Arena. This is the team's third straight MEAC win, entry to NCAA, and championship face off against the Howard University Bison (No. 2)

"Honestly, it's really about legacy," said Spartan senior guard, Kierra Wheeler, in a press conference. "We've done it two years in a row, but now it's about continuing to build the winning culture at Norfolk State."

SPARTAN ECHO 21



HEAD COACH LARRY VICKERS RECEIVING THE TOURNAMENT OUTSTANDING COACH AWARD. CREDIT: MEAC

The theme for the women's team this year is legacy, making history, and gaining national visibility. From the quarterfinals to the semi-finals then leading to the big win, the women left their opponents in the dust and took home a few more honors to sweeten the win. This is their record setting 30th straight season win and their fourth conference win overall.

In the quarterfinals on March 12th, the Spartans faced the South Carolina State Bulldogs and secured a commanding 81-55 victory. Spartan guard Anjanae Richardson, who was recognized as the 2025 MEAC Sixth Player of the Year, contributed significantly to the score in the fourth quarter, helping the Spartans achieve their largest lead with 4:26 remaining.

Many familiar faces flooded into the Scope Arena to witness the highly anticipated championship game. There were alumni, students, local spectators, families, other schools watching from their seats, and Norfolk State President, Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, affectionately known as "Dr. J".

"I like how they played. They play with heart, they're very smart, and we win," said Dr. J. after the quarterfinal win.

The legacy and camaraderie are apparent with the spartan team. The Spartans dominated the Coppin State Eagles in the semi-finals game with a decisive 72-33 win, advancing them to the championship game.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM CELEBRATING THEIR MEAC CHAMPIONSHIP . CREDIT: MEAC

In a highly anticipated third consecutive matchup against the Bison, the Spartans emerged victorious with a 68-56 scoreline. This win marked their third back-to-back MEAC championship title and secured their spot in the NCAA Tournament. The Bison and Spartans are no strangers on the MEAC court. In the 2022-23 and the 2023-24, the Spartans claimed victory against the Bison with tight four-point and five-point gaps, 56- 52 and 51-46, respectively.

Guard Diamond Johnson is a graduate student and had an outstanding 2024-2025 season, earning multiple accolades for her exceptional performance. Johnson led the team with an average of 19.0 points per game and was named MEAC Player of the Year, a recognition of her leadership and skill on the court. She also earned Player of the Week and Defensive Player of the Week during MEAC week. Senior forward Kierra Wheeler was instrumental in the paint, averaging 9.0 rebounds and 2.3 blocks per game, anchoring the team's defense. Wheeler was recognized as the MEAC Tournament Outstanding Player.

Although the NSU Women's team plays hard, they still exude sportsmanship strongly in part due to the model behavior of their coach. Coach Vickers a two-time MEAC Coach of the Year, in 2022-23 and again in this 2024-25 season, while also being recognized as Tournament Outstanding Coach.

The Spartans earned a No. 13 seed in the NCAA Tournament and faced the No. 4 seed, the University of Maryland Terrapins. This seeding is the highest a MEAC women's team has received since 2014, reflecting the Spartans' outstanding season. The Spartans' remarkable journey through the MEAC Tournament and their NCAA appearance underscore the team's resilience, skill, and determination.

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