



# THE CANTON NEWS

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## Canton High School Class of 2026 celebrates achievement, leadership and a record-breaking senior class

*210 graduates leave a legacy of excellence and prepare for bright futures ahead*

By Courtney Warren

The Canton High School Class of 2026 is making history.

With 210 graduates, the largest graduating class in more than fifteen years, Canton High School seniors are leaving behind a legacy defined by academic achievement, leadership, service and determination. As graduates crossed the stage at L.C. Greenwood Stadium on May 23, family members, teachers and community supporters celebrated a class that has demonstrated excellence both inside and outside the classroom.

The Class of 2026 earned nearly \$1 million in scholarships, highlighting years of hard work and dedication. Students also excelled academically, with 98 graduates earning Highest Honors or Honors recognition, and 24 students graduating with endorsements.

Standardized testing and career readiness benchmarks further showcased the class's success. Fifty-seven students scored above a 20 on the ACT, while 40 students earned Silver status or higher on ACT WorkKeys assessments. Twenty graduates completed industry certifications, demonstrating preparation for careers in high-demand fields.

Beyond academics, Canton High School seniors proved their talents extend into athletics, music, entrepreneurship and service.

Seven graduates signed to play collegiate sports, while two students earned full band scholarships. Seven members of the Class of 2026 will pursue military service, fifteen graduates plan to attend vocational or technical schools, and 87 students will continue their education by pursuing college degrees.

The entrepreneurial spirit was also evident among this year's seniors, with seven graduates already owning

businesses before receiving their diplomas.

School leaders recognized the accomplishments of the Class of 2026 Top Ten Scholars, whose academic excellence distinguished them among their peers.

Leading the class as Valedictorian is Arianna Williams, followed by Salutatorian Kinsley Pierce. Kimberly Guevara earned recognition as Distinguished Scholar.

Additional Top Ten Scholars include Chrishawn Grant, Ke'ambriah Goines, Seth Branch, Brooklyn Cole, Phillip Black, Rochelle Williams, Zanieya Turner and Dekendra Mitchell.

Together, these students represent a graduating class that has embodied Canton High School's guiding message: "Excellence Today. Leaders Tomorrow."

As the Canton High School Class of 2026 begins the next chapter, whether in college classrooms, military service, technical training programs, businesses or careers, school officials say graduates carry with them lessons learned, friendships built and a foundation prepared to shape the future.

The Canton community now celebrates not only what this class has accomplished, but what it is certain to become.



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# Canton Public School District Tiger Tycoons earn second place



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Canton Public School District recently announced that the Tiger Tycoons have earned a commendable second place in the highly competitive 2026 Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE) State Personal Finance Challenge. The event took place at the Mississippi Public Broadcasting facilities, where the team faced off against three other tal-

ented teams in their division. Throughout the competition, coordinators said the Tiger Tycoons demonstrated financial literacy skills, critical thinking and outstanding teamwork, all of which were crucial for navigating the challenging scenarios presented to them. Their ability to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts was reportedly impressive, showcasing the rigorous preparation they undertook lead-

ing up to the event. In recognition of their achievement and dedication, each team member received a \$250 scholarship, not only highlighting their success but also serving as a stepping stone for furthering their education and financial acumen. School district representatives said, "Congratulations to the Tiger Tycoons for becoming two-time State Champions and three-time state winners! Your hard

work, determination and commitment to excellence continue to make us proud. You consistently represent our organization with integrity and skill, and we look forward to your future accomplishments!" The dynamic Tiger Tycoons team is comprised of Alexandria Lockett, Nelly Cardona-Rosales, Jalyynn Dunigan and Henser Vicente, and they are coached by Teena Ruth.



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# Building a better tomorrow: A journey of faith, family and service

By Guest Columnist Dr. Paul Harvey Fleming

I have always believed that a true passion for serving extends far beyond traditional protocol. As a born-again, God-called and ordained preacher, I strive every day to exemplify the true meaning of a faithful servant of God. My mission for the world is simple yet profound: to bring spiritual enlightenment, encouragement and empowerment so that others may live an abundant life through Jesus Christ.

This mission is the heartbeat of The Church of Empowerment, which I founded alongside my high school sweetheart and wife of twenty-five years, Lady Dr. Matilda Gee Fleming. Our church began its journey at the family center in Camden, Mississippi. After much prayer, God led us to move our ministry to Canton. He specifically guided us to ask Rev. Bacon of In His Steps Ministries to allow us to use his facility. Rev. Bacon and In His Steps have truly been a magnificent blessing to The Church of Empowerment, giving us a welcoming space to gather. Currently, we are praying in faith that God will provide a permanent building and campus for our growing church family.

The Church of Empowerment is built firmly on the promise of Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We are a Word church that deeply loves God and His people. We believe wholeheartedly in the "E3 Factor"—Empowerment, Enlightenment, and Encouragement through the Word of God. Most importantly, we do not merely teach the Word; we strive to live the Word every single day.

My deep roots in this community and my calling to serve were planted by my parents, retired Pastor-Emeritus Carl E. Fleming and First Lady Savannah Fleming. In fact, my very existence is a testimony of God's divine providence. Years ago, my father was living in California, and my mother was living in Chicago with her three children. My father traveled to Mississippi to preach a revival for his uncle. During that same time, my mother was visiting her grandmother in Mississippi and was invited to hear this visiting preacher from California. They met, a beautiful long-distance relationship blossomed, and one year later, they were married.

Early in their marriage, a doctor delivered devastating news, informing them that my father would never be able to have children. But God had another plan. One day, while my father was at home alone, an angel appeared to him holding a baby. The angel instructed him to name the



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Pastor Paul Fleming and First Lady Matilda Fleming

child Paul. Just a few months later, my mother fell ill. When she went to the doctor—the very same doctor who had given them the initial prognosis—they received the miraculous news: she was pregnant with me.

My father went on to set a profound example of dedication, pastoring Mary Grove Missionary Baptist Church for 42 years, serving as the local barber at Soul Set Barber Shop, and dedicating numerous years to the East Madison Water Board. My mother, Savannah, is a retired nurse from the VA Medical Center who served our veterans with immense pride and honor. Throughout her life, she has worked tirelessly with non-profit organizations and currently leads the Local Prayer Walk Team. Watching her organize local pastors and community members to walk the halls and pray for the students and staff across Northern Madison County schools and the Canton Public School District, continues to inspire me Daily.

Education and continuous growth have also been the bedrock of my journey, a journey I proudly share with my wife. Lady Matilda and I have enjoyed 25 beautiful years of marriage. As high school sweethearts, we grew up together and are proud graduates of both Velma Jackson High School and Alcorn State

University. Today, we are a dynamic partnership—both of us are published authors and Certified Life Coaches—and together, we are the blessed parents of two wonderful children, Makyla and Joel. Building upon our shared educational foundation from Alcorn State, my personal pursuit of continuous growth led me to graduate from New Foundation Theological Seminary and later obtain my Doctor of Theology degree in Christian Education from the Grace through Faith School of Ministry.

My commitment to service extends from the pulpit into the workplace. Since 2002, I have had the profound honor of working as a Senior Veteran Service Representative at the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office in Jackson. In this vital role, I adjudicate and analyze claims, conduct personal interviews, and build positive relationships with veterans and their dependents. Navigating challenging situations requires emotional stability, tact, and diplomacy, and I take pride in supporting the agency's mission while ensuring our veterans receive the benefits they rightfully deserve.

This dedication naturally flows into my work as an advocate for workers' rights. I currently serve as the Chief Negotiator of the American  
*cont. on page 5*

# Letter from the Editor: This gift made me think of you

By Courtney Warren

We have wrapped up another school year! It was an absolute blast. What a blessing it is to wake up every morning excited to go to school. I definitely feel like I'm not a normal teacher in that most of the time we are asked how excited we are for summer – I am rarely ever counting down the days until summer. It's nice to have a break, but I truly miss being at school. I miss the students, my co-workers, the everyday chaos, and the happiness that permeates the walls of our middle school.

With all of that being said, as many know, the end of the year means gifts - graduation gifts, recital gifts, class gifts, teacher gifts. I love gift giving! I have a section in my notes app dedicated to gift ideas. Any time someone mentions liking something, I open my app and make that note. When it comes time to gift them something, it helps me come up with something I know they're going to enjoy.

My students ask me all of the time what kinds of gifts I like, and I tell them I literally just love that they have thought of me. They write me notes and bring me trinkets as if they were tiny middle school crows with shiny objects in their beaks, proud to present them to me. It's no secret

that I love dinosaurs, so, this year, I received several homemade dinosaur gifts and Jellycats. However, one of my favorite gifts was, of course, a book.

Our sweet First Lady of school stopped by my room during the book fair, and we had the chance to catch up. As we were talking, we began recommending books to one another. Sidebar – at Christmas, I gift each teacher on my hall a book that reminds me of them and that I think they will enjoy. With the books, I include a note about why I chose that particular book for them.

As we were talking, she recommended *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi. I excitedly told her I had been recommended the book so many times, but I was on the waitlist for it at the library and that wait was over seventeen weeks! She said I simply must read it and that I would truly love the story. I told her I'd have to see if I could get my hands on a copy.

That was on Friday. On Monday, her sweet husband delivered a package to me. It was beautifully wrapped in blue paper with a big satin bow. I tore open the paper to find a hardback copy of *Theo of Golden* inside with a note that read "Dear Courtney, I hope you enjoy this book as much as I did. Like Theo, you have a beautiful way



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of lifting others up and making them feel important."

Cue. The. Tears.

How sweet was this!? My own favorite way of gift-giving was turned around on me. I got Uno reverse card gifted! It was the sweetest thing, and a reminder that while a gift card is easy, thinking of someone makes all

the difference. In a world where we are constantly busy, rushed and moving onto the next, I encourage you to take the time to write the note, find the gift and wrap it with a bow. Because the kindest gesture is when you think of someone else.

Oh, and she was right – *Theo of Golden* was absolutely wonderful.

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# Metropolitan YMCAs of Mississippi announces expansion into North Madison County through community partnership

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The Metropolitan YMCAs of Mississippi recently announced a new collaborative effort to expand YMCA programming and community outreach into North Madison County through a partnership with the North Madison County Economic Development Council (NMED).

For generations, the YMCA has served the greater Jackson metropolitan area through programs centered on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. With branches serving communities in Flowood, Clinton and Reservoir, the YMCA has continued to evolve to meet the changing needs of families across Central Mississippi. The organization's leaders say this new initiative represents another important step in that mission.

The expansion into North Madison County reflects the forward-thinking vision of both the YMCA and local community leaders who recognize the significant growth anticipated in the region and the importance of establishing strong recreational, wellness and youth development opportunities ahead of that growth.

YMCA President and CEO LeRoy Falcon described the initiative as a



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new approach to community engagement and service delivery.

“We will operate as a ‘Y Without Walls,’ meaning that initially there is

no YMCA building, but through the many doors that are opening in this area, the YMCA will have plenty of places to implement its programs,” said Falcon. “This partnership allows us to bring quality YMCA programming directly into the community while building meaningful relationships and opportunities for families throughout North Madison County.”

North Madison County Economic Development Council representative Willie Cline expressed enthusiasm for the collaboration and the future opportunities it represents.

“The Board of Supervisors and the North Madison County Economic Development Council are absolutely delighted to partner with the Metropolitan YMCA of Mississippi to bring their exceptional programming and community impact to North Madison County,” said Cline. “Our council continues to work diligently to bring growth and development initiatives to this area, and we believe the YMCA will play an important role in enhancing quality of life for families and residents.”

For more information about the Metropolitan YMCAs of Mississippi and upcoming programs, visit Metropolitan YMCAs of Mississippi at [www.metroymcams.org](http://www.metroymcams.org).

cont. from page 3

## Building

Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Veterans Benefits Administration Mid-Term Bargaining Team and the Local President of AFGE Local 1037 in Jackson. In these roles, I have the privilege of mentoring newly-elected AFGE presidents and acting as a trainer for the “Train the Trainer” program. Driven by a vision of a revitalized community, I founded the A Better Tomorrow Foundation. This 501(c)(3) organization is dedicated to transforming inner-city and rural communities, bringing forth unity, and equipping individuals for social and economic advancement. We are building stronger families and stronger communities, regardless of social background, economic status, race or gender.

**Our Community Impact: A Better Tomorrow**

*Through the foundation, my team and I have spearheaded numerous high-impact initiatives to uplift our region:*

- **Annual High School Senior Scholarship Awards:** We award scholarships to two deserving high school seniors chosen based on their exceptional academic achievement, leadership traits, community service, and involve-

ment in extracurricular activities.

- **Back-to-School Giveaway:** Served over 15,000 children with essential school supplies.
- **Turkey Drive:** Organized an annual drive to provide warm meals to families in need across the metro area.
- **Health Fairs:** Hosted multiple events offering free health screenings and vital resources.
- **School Adoption Program:** Adopted several local schools to provide direct support to students.
- **Teacher Appreciation:** Organized TV giveaways for rural schools to honor our hardworking educators.

If you are looking a community of faith, everyone is welcome to join us at The Church of Empowerment!

### Join Us in Fellowship

- **SundayWorship:** Every Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
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- **Contact:** 769-289-8121 or [thechurchofempowerment4u@gmail.com](mailto:thechurchofempowerment4u@gmail.com)

## Old Jail Farmers Market open for summer



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The Old Jail Farmers Market is returning to downtown Canton this summer, bringing fresh produce, handmade goods, and local vendors to the historic grounds of the Old Jail.

Hosted by the The Canton-Madison County Historical Society, the market will be open every Saturday in June and July from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m. Residents and visitors are invited to shop a variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables, homemade products, artisan crafts, and more

while supporting local farmers and small businesses.

The **2026 market dates** are **June 6, 13, 20 and 27**, as well as **July 4, 11, 18 and 25**. The market is held at the Historic Old Jail grounds at 234 E. Fulton Street in Canton.

Organizers encourage the community to come out early, enjoy the summer atmosphere, and take advantage of fresh, locally sourced products each week.

For more information, visit the Canton-Madison County Historical Society's farmers market page.

# Blues legend Primer honored with marker in Camden



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A new marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail now stands in Camden, honoring the life and musical legacy of blues artist John Primer, whose journey from rural Mississippi to international acclaim has made him one of the genre's most respected performers.

The unveiling ceremony, hosted by Visit Mississippi in partnership with the Mississippi Blues Trail Commission, Madison County and Visit Canton, brought together community leaders, music supporters, family and friends to celebrate Primer's contributions to blues music and Mississippi's rich cultural heritage.

The celebration began with a program at the North Madison County Community Center before attendees traveled to Camden Park, where the permanent Mississippi Blues Trail marker was officially unveiled.

For Primer, the honor marks a return to where it all began.

Growing up in Camden, Primer first discovered music playing a diddley bow mounted on his family's home. That early passion for blues music would eventually guide him on a decades-long career built on perseverance, dedication and an unwavering

commitment to the sounds that first captivated him as a young boy.

Primer moved to Chicago in 1963, where he became part of the city's legendary blues scene. Over the years, he performed guitar with some of blues music's most iconic groups, including Willie Dixon's Chicago Blues All Stars, the Muddy Waters Blues Band, and Magic Slim & the Teardrops.

Those years as a sideman laid the foundation for a successful solo career leading his own group, the Real Deal Blues Band, helping establish Primer as an internationally recognized blues artist and ambassador for the genre. In 2023, Primer's impact on blues music was further recognized when he was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

Now, with a Mississippi Blues Trail marker standing in his hometown, Primer's story becomes a permanent part of Mississippi history, honoring not only his musical achievements, but also the enduring influence of Mississippi blues on audiences around the world.

Community members joined Primer, his family and friends during the celebration, recognizing a career that began in Camden and grew into a legacy that continues to shape blues music today.

# Industry partners honored for inspiring future workforce leaders

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The Canton Career Center is recognizing several local industry professionals for helping provide students with hands-on career exploration opportunities during the school's Non-Traditional Industry Tour held recently.

The tour focused on exposing students to career pathways in automotive and collision repair industries while highlighting opportunities for young women interested in pursuing non-traditional career fields.

Industry leaders welcomed students into their workplaces, shared professional experiences and offered insight into careers that play an important role in the local workforce.

Those recognized for their participation include Marilyn Bolden, owner of Bolden Body Shop in Jackson;

Tanya Bell-Yates, store manager at O'Reilly Auto Parts in Canton; and Tinya Lindsey, commercial specialist at O'Reilly Auto Parts.

Career Center officials said opportunities like the industry tour help connect classroom instruction with real-world applications, allowing students to see firsthand how skills learned in school translate into future careers.

School leaders also emphasized the importance of mentorship and community partnerships in preparing students for life after graduation, particularly in fields where women have traditionally been underrepresented.

By opening their doors and investing time in students, local industry professionals helped provide meaningful experiences designed to encourage, inform and inspire the next generation of female workforce leaders.



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# Shaw recognized for service



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Retired Colonel Fred Shaw of Canton was recently recognized by members of the 112th Military Police Battalion, MS Army National Guard, when he was presented with the "Legacy Award." Shaw was present-

ed with the award for his continuing support to the unit after his retirement. He served in various positions within the unit for a number of years, culminating with his assignment as the battalion commander from 1996-98.

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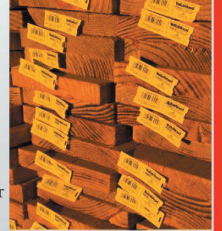
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# Cantonians Chisholm and Millican recently awarded Top Cop



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Nelson Chisholm



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Kyle Michael Millican

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Recently, Cantonians Nelson Chisholm and Kyle Michael

Millican were recognized for their work in the police force. Chisholm was recognized as the Top Cop for the Secret

Service this year and awarded by Lynn Fitch and Delbert Hosemann. Millican was named Top Cop for the Mad-

ison County Sheriff's Department. Both are Canton Academy graduates and live in the Canton area.

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# From the Desk of Canton's Mayor Tim C. Taylor

By Mayor Tim C. Taylor

As we welcome the summer season, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the 2026 graduates from Canton and surrounding communities. Whether you are graduating from high school, college, trade school, or a specialized program, your hard work, determination, and perseverance have paid off. You represent the future of our city, and we are proud of each and every one of you. Continue striving for excellence and never stop believing in your potential.

The City of Canton is also encouraging recent graduates and current college students who are interested in gaining valuable work experience to apply for summer internship opportunities with the City. Internships provide an excellent opportunity to learn, grow professionally, and serve your community. Students interested in participating should contact Dr. Chonna Anderson by email to [canderson@cantonms.gov](mailto:canderson@cantonms.gov) to express their interest.

Summer also means youth sports season, and I encourage parents throughout Canton to get their children involved in our City youth baseball program and other recreational activities. Organized sports help teach teamwork, discipline, leadership, and responsibility while keep-



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ing our youth active and engaged in positive environments. We are also seeking volunteers to assist with our youth football, baseball, basketball, and other recreational leagues. Strong

community support is essential to the success of our youth programs.

Many of us remember when Saab Park was packed every Tuesday and Thursday evening with families en-

joying baseball and softball games, fellowship, and community pride. Those were special times for Canton, and I would love to see the return of adult baseball and softball leagues in our city. Rebuilding these programs can help strengthen our community spirit and create positive activities for residents of all ages.

In addition, I am pleased to share that the City's Sanitation Department's new twice-a-week garbage collection service is now fully in effect. This enhanced service is designed to help keep our neighborhoods cleaner and improve the quality of life for our residents. We ask everyone to please read and follow the instructions located on the top of your garbage cans to ensure your trash is collected properly and efficiently.

I also encourage residents to participate in self-initiated neighborhood and community clean-up efforts. A cleaner Canton benefits us all and reflects the pride we have in our city.

As summer begins, please remain safe and vigilant. If you see something, say something. It is everybody's responsibility to help keep Canton clean, safe, and strong for future generations.

**-Mayor Tim C. Taylor**  
City of Canton

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# Board of Supervisors names May 11-15 Law Enforcement Appreciation Week



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Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Supervisors Trey Baxter, Casey Brannon, Gerald Steen (president), Karl Banks and Paul Griffin; and back row: Jan Collins, MCBL&F; Sheriff Randy Tucker; and Ellis Wise, MCBL&F.

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Madison County Business League & FThe Madison County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution proclaiming May 11-15, 2026, as Madison County Law Enforcement Appreciation Week. Even with the week in the past, the Madison County Business

League and Foundation invites the business community, schools, churches, organizations and individuals to recognize local law enforcement officers for their dedication and commitment to the protection of the citizens and businesses of Madison County.



# KEEP COOL. KEEP COSTS DOWN.

Simple summer energy tips from Canton Municipal Utilities



## Small changes can help lower summer energy use.

Try these simple tips to stay comfortable while keeping your bill under control.

### 1 Change air filters

Clean or replace filters monthly so your A/C can run efficiently.

### 2 Set the thermostat wisely

Choose the highest comfortable temperature to reduce usage.

### 3 Use fans

Circulate cool air with ceiling or box fans, but turn them off in empty rooms.

### 4 Block the sun

Close blinds, shades and curtains during the hottest part of the day.

### 5 Seal air leaks

Use weather stripping or caulk around doors, windows and ductwork.

### 6 Use a programmable thermostat

Help control costs by adjusting temperatures around your schedule.

**Stay comfortable this summer while helping keep your energy use under control.**

Canton Municipal Utilities

# Original artwork donated to historical society

Special to The Canton News

The Canton-Madison County Historical Society (CMCHS) recently received an original painting from Susan M. Kennedy of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and Canton. The painting, "Sunrise on the New Snow" c. 1983, was created by noted Mississippi artist Alfred Nicols, and Kennedy donated it from her private collection to the CMCHS.

According to the CMCHS, artistically inclined since childhood, Susan has long maintained a passion for art and creativity throughout her life. Since retiring from teaching first grade in 2013, she has devoted more time to her artwork and is also known locally through her participation in the Canton Flea Market. Meanwhile, Mr. Nicols' work has

long been recognized across Mississippi and beyond, with paintings selected for the Washington offices of both Senator Trent Lott and Senator Roger Wicker.



Special to The Canton News

A December 23, 1982, edition of the *Madison County Herald* even featured Nicols under the headline, "Behind The Judge Works An Artist."

According to southernlandscapeart.com, Nicols' paintings can also be found in the collections of the Mississippi Supreme Court, The University of Mississippi, Mississippi College School of Law, University

of Mississippi Medical Center, Mississippi Public Television, Entergy, Trustmark, Regions Bank, and numerous other institutions, businesses and private collections throughout the South.

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# Community leaders gather for Mayor's Prayer Luncheon in Canton



All photos Special to The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

Community members, pastors, elected officials, and local leaders gathered in Canton for the Mayor's Prayer Luncheon in observance of the National Day of Prayer.

The event, organized by In His Steps Ministries, provided an opportunity for attendees to come

together in unity and pray for the City of Canton, its leaders, and the community as a whole. Throughout the luncheon, participants offered prayers for wisdom, guidance, and blessings for those serving the city and its residents.

The gathering highlighted the importance of faith, fellowship, and community involvement, bringing

together individuals from various backgrounds to focus on the well-being and future of Canton. Attendees prayed for local government officials, families, businesses, schools, churches, and community organizations.

In His Steps Ministries expressed gratitude to everyone who attended, supported, and helped make

the event possible. Organizers encouraged residents to continue lifting up the city's leaders and community in prayer throughout the year.

The Mayor's Prayer Luncheon served as a meaningful reminder of the power of unity and faith as Canton continues to grow and move forward together.

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# On the Shelf: Books to remind you that you're not a robot

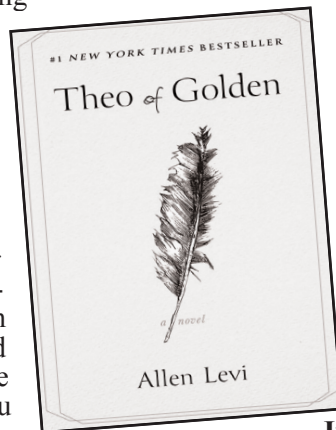
By Courtney Warren

I write a lot about fun fantasy books or new and upcoming releases, but let's take a moment for the books that make us cry. I don't mean tear up with a glistening tear sliding down your cheek as you read. I mean snot slinging, air gasping, chest grasping crying. If you haven't read a book like that, you're truly missing out.

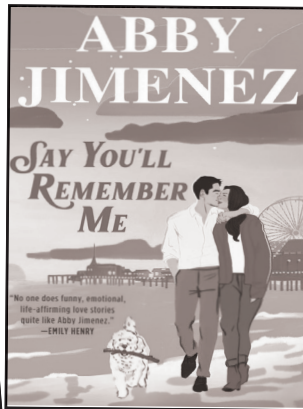
My students have started saying something is "AI" if it feels forced, fake or just overall has bad vibes. The kids are going to be alright, in case you were worried. No matter how much AI may try, it will never replace the beating of a human heart, and no robot can replicate true emotions God instilled within us. Here are some books to remind you that you're not a robot.

## *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi

I mention this in my letter from the editor, and with good reason. It's so wonderful! According to the publisher: One spring morning, a stranger named Theo arrives in the small Southern city of Golden. He doesn't explain much about where he came from or why he's there—but when he visits the local coffeehouse, where pencil portraits of the people of Golden hang on the walls, he begins purchasing them, one at a time, and giving each portrait to the person depicted. In exchange, he asks only for the person's story. And so, portrait by portrait, person by person, secrets are revealed, regrets are shared, and or-



inary lives are profoundly altered. A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, *Theo of Golden* is an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness

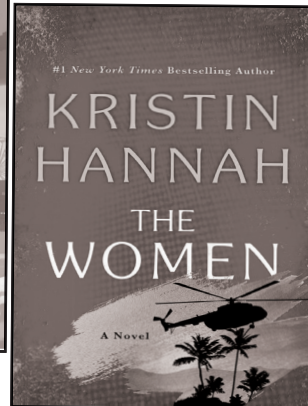


and wonder. *Say You'll Remember Me* by Abby Jimenez

As someone who has experienced losing a loved one without them passing away, Jimenez describes dementia so heartbreakingly well. According to the publisher: There's no such thing as a perfect guy, but Xavier Rush comes disastrously close. A gorgeous veterinarian giving Greek god vibes—all while cuddling a tiny kitten? Immediate yes. That is, until Xavier opens his mouth and proves that even sculpted gods can say the absolute wrong thing. Like, really wrong. Of course, there's nothing Samantha loves more than proving an asshole wrong ... unless, of course, he can admit he made a mistake.

But after one incredible and seem-

ingly endless date, Samantha is forced to admit the truth - that her family is in crisis, and any kind of relationship would be impossible. Samantha begs Xavier to forget her, to remember their night together as a perfect moment, as crushing as that may be. Only no amount of distance or time



is enough to forget what's between them. And the only thing better than one single perfect memory is to make a life - and even a love - worth remembering.

## *The Women* by Kristin Hannah

This book was so wonderful. It made it all the more special to read it before going on the annual Washington, D.C. trip with our eighth graders and visiting the Vietnam War Memorial. They were there.

According to the publisher: Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances "Frankie" McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has

always prided herself on doing the right thing. But, in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

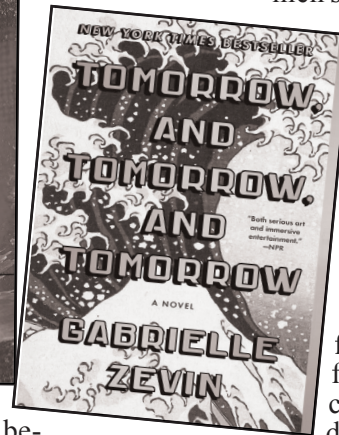
As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is over-whelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets - and becomes one of - the lucky, the brave, the broken and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

## *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin

I gift this book so often. The explanation on the cover doesn't do the book justice, so I will do my best to explain. The story is about three friends who create a video game together. Through the span of their lives and this creation, you get to see how their friendships form and change. While it's a love story, it's a love story to the concept of play, to friendship, and to our loved ones.

I couldn't recommend these books more. They are so wonderful and, once again, reminders of the beauty that is humanity. Enjoy.



## Nelson, CHS chosen for statewide initiative to revitalize journalism education

Special to The Canton News

Destanie Nelson, a teacher at Canton High School, has been selected for the inaugural cohort of the Mississippi High School Journalism Project, a grant-funded initiative set to bolster journalism education in Mississippi public high schools.

Led by The Bell and funded by Press Forward Mississippi, this new initiative will establish credit-bearing journalism classes and student newsrooms in public high schools across the state, closing a critical gap in media access and civic education.

Nelson, from Raymond, is in her first year of teaching. The English and journalism teacher at Canton High School holds a Bachelor's of English Education from Jackson State University and is currently working on her masters degree.

Nelson said she loves working with her students, whom she describes as creative, curious and full of potential. She explained that, through journalism, students are given a voice, and



Special to The Canton News

they learn that their words and ideas matter.

"Being part of the first cohort of this

initiative is a dream come true for my students and myself," Nelson said. "It provides opportunities and re-

sources that we wouldn't have even known were available without it. By joining this cohort, we have found like-minded educators and students for us to interact and bounce ideas off of, which has created a more dynamic learning environment."

While Mississippi boasts a rich literary and journalistic history, currently less than 15% of the state's five hundred public and private high schools participate in the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association (MSPA). The Bell is moving to bridge this divide in cities from the Delta to the Coast, including Greenwood, Byhalia, Jackson, Gautier and Natchez.

"From every corner of our state, we received compelling applications from schools eager to expand student journalism," said Taylor McGraw, executive director of The Bell. "School journalism programs provide vital platforms for student expression, prepare students for a wide range of careers and strengthen our civic infrastructure: a win-win-win for the whole state."

# Canton Coffee Station brewing excitement on the Square



All photos Special to The Canton News

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Canton residents will soon have a new place to gather, connect and grab their favorite cup of coffee, as Canton Coffee Station prepares to

open on the Square. The new business is bringing fresh energy to one of Canton's historic spaces, with renovations now underway inside the city's former fire station. The project marks another

step in continued investment and revitalization efforts around downtown Canton. Once complete, Canton Coffee Station is expected to offer residents and visitors a fresh place to meet friends,

study, work or simply enjoy a cup of coffee in the heart of Canton. As renovations continue, anticipation is already brewing for what could soon become Canton's newest favorite gathering spot.

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**Request shall be sent to:**  
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# Canton resident awarded Emeritus Status by Hinds Community College

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The Hinds Community College Board of Trustees recently recognized Canton resident Terri Shores Black with Emeritus status, honoring her decades of distinguished service and lasting contributions to the college.

Black, who retired in 2015 but continues to teach part-time in kinesiology, has dedicated nearly forty-four years of service to Hinds Community College. Throughout her career, she made a lasting impact both in the classroom and in athletics, serving as a coach for basketball, tennis and softball while also leading as department chair for Health and Physical Education on two occasions.

In recognition of her contributions to athletics and education, Black was inducted into the Hinds Community College Sports Hall of Fame in 2021. The following year, she earned induction into the Mississippi Community and Junior College Sports Hall of



Fame, where she currently serves on the executive committee.

As part of the recent recognition from Hinds, Black was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus of Physical Education, an honor reserved for retired faculty members and professionals who have demonstrated exceptional service and excellence throughout their careers.

Hinds Community College established its Emeritus Status recognition program in 2004 to honor retired faculty and non-teaching professionals who have served the institution with distinction. To qualify, individuals must have a minimum of thirty years in education, including at least fifteen years of honorable and distinguished service to Hinds Community College.

Officials say Black's recognition highlights a career marked by leadership, dedication and a commitment to helping students succeed.

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# CA girls capture State Title again at 2026 MSAIS Championships



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The championship tradition continues at Canton Academy, as the Lady Panthers once again proved themselves among the state's elite, earning the 2026 MSAIS Track & Field State Championship title. The team

is coached by Ben Williams, Canton Academy Athletic Director and head track coach.

With determination, teamwork and standout performances across multiple events, the Canton Academy girls track and field team claimed gold and

added another championship trophy to the school's growing legacy of athletic excellence.

The state title marks another milestone for the program, highlighting the dedication of the student-athletes and coaches whose hard work throughout

the season led to success on the state's biggest stage.

State titles included Claire Warren for first place discus, Lucy Glaze for first place two mile race, Abby Robinson for third in discus and Harper Lampkin for triple jump.



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# Panthers named to All- MAIS team



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Canton Academy baseball players Cole Ellison, Myles Stanley and Cash Johnson have been named to the 2026 MAIS Class AA All-MAIS baseball team.

Ellison, a member of the Class of 2027, was selected as a pitcher/infielder. Stanley, a Class of 2028 student, earned honors as an infield-

er, while Johnson, a member of the Class of 2029, was recognized as a catcher/pitcher.

The All-MAIS team recognizes outstanding players from across the Mid-South Association of Independent Schools. The selections reflect the contributions each player made to Canton Academy's successful season.

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# Huey L. Porter students earn top honors in CABA essay contest



All photos Special to The Canton News

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Huey L. Porter Middle School students Shilarah Brown and Jacob Gonzalez were recognized as prize winners in the Capital Area

Bar Association's (CABA) annual essay contest for seventh- and eighth-grade students across the Jackson area.

The students earned honors for essays addressing this year's top-

ic, "Why is the Role of Law Important in Our Society?" The contest is sponsored by CABA's Law Related Education Committee.

Pictured with the students is Taylor Weatherspoon of Phelps

Dunbar, who coordinated this year's essay competition. Their recognition highlights the academic achievement and strong writing skills of Huey L. Porter students.

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