

Oakland News

By Linda Ross Aldy

This year is officially half over—that date occurred on July 2 at noon! Time to decide what the rest of 2026 is going to hold for you. I think we have plenty to focus on in Oakland as we continue our work in community development. We will move forward with establishing a Montessori Pre-School. That is a huge undertaking and as you read this we will have hosted our informational meeting to help us all understand more about the Montessori concept and to hopefully recruit the necessary teachers and funding to open the school in 2027. Thanks to very generous contributions by the Meek Foundation, we have secured a building and had a new roof put on.

We still have several parts of our America250 Mississippi/Mississippi Humanities Council grant to complete, including some oral history interviews, a time capsule, and an art contest being sponsored by Friends of the Library with categories for all ages to join in.

One part of that grant included a community Happy Birthday Party which we hosted on Friday evening, July 3. It was simple and sweet and a fitting celebration for a small American town. We had watermelon with candles representing our 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, fresh squeezed lemonade, cupcakes with a patriotic flare, and hand-held flags for everyone in attendance. We were welcomed by Chamber President Timothy Booker, Sr. and Mayor Pro Temp Marzet Bland. Children ran and played, neighbors and friends visited. Chamber Youth Representative Leyah Windom, a rising Junior in high school,

spoke to us about what this occasion meant to her and what her dreams were for her generation's future. Chamber Board Member Pastor Robert Reed did a moving prayer for our community and our country. When DJ Bobby Murphree played the last song and folks folded up their chairs, volunteers began the work of moving tables and chairs back to the Chamber building. Three little boys, probably about 8 to 10-years-old ran up to me as I was packing up the cupcakes. I assumed they wanted one more, but, no, they came over to help me with my work and see what else they could do to help. Those boys just melted my heart! My son, Josh, and I walked the park to pick up left behind litter. Our work was short, I found 3 America 250 picks from the cupcakes and he found one cup left in the children's play area. Oakland folks are just the best!

If you looking for more reasons to celebrate in July, you can do a picnic on July 10 which is Teddy Bear Picnic Day. Since the Teddy Bear originated in Mississippi and is also our state stuffed animal, we should definitely participate in this one! July 11 is All American Pet Photo Day and social media will be flooded with pet photos. I personally appreciate that July 14 is Cow Appreciation Day. I remember Little Bud York of Coffeeville telling me as we discussed farming one day that cows put me through college. I have never forgotten that. Growing up on a dairy farm surrounded by those big, beautiful creatures taught me many life lessons. Finally, put Capture the Sunset Week, July 19-25, on your calendars! There are many more, but those are

some of the ones I wanted to share with you.

My nearly 1-year-old granddaughter got her first haircut this past weekend. Thanks to my niece Hillary Ross for performing the traditional first cut! My late Aunt Fae Priddy Ross did this for multiple generations of Ross children, including my first cut.

What a great surprise to open the July/August issue of Mississippi Magazine and find our own Marquitrice Mangham and her work on food deserts given a 4-page spread! She is the founder of our Oakland Farmacy Marketplace community grocery store. As the founder of In Her Shoes, Inc., a nonprofit designed to help underserved communities, she is truly impacting this part of the state. Her first store was in her hometown of Webb and she is working on one in Mound Bayou. She has created a mobile grocery store that services several Delta communities. Marquitrice has a military background as well a career in urban planning, economic development, land use, and transportation. She has also worked as a legal clerk and attended law school. She has appeared on the Kelly Clarkson Show and Kansas State University has published a case study on her approach to bringing fresh food to food deserts. We are so for-

tunate to have her working with us in Oakland and the surrounding area. I am very proud to serve on the board of In Her Shoes, Inc.

Thankfully, the heat dome we have been experiencing seems to be lifting as I write this. Please keep hydrated and remember your pets need the same! I love the businesses that put out bowls of water for our furry friends. If you have bird baths, they love fresh water in their baths and will entertain you for hours with their water fun. Here's to a cooler next few weeks!

Let me know if you have news to include. Contact me via email at oaklandarea-chamber@gmail.com or text or leave a message at 601-853-3942.



Obituary



Wesley James Crawford
Jan 21, 1933 —
Jun 27, 2026

Wesley James Crawford, 93, of Coffeeville, MS, passed away on June 27, 2026. Born on January 21, 1933, in Mobile, Alabama, he was the youngest of three children born to Fletcher and Bonnie Crawford. Wesley is remembered as a devoted husband, loving father, dedicated grandfather, and cherished friend.

He shared a remarkable 63 years of marriage with his beloved wife, Eleanor Crawford. Together, they created a life filled with love, laughter, and cherished memories. Wesley's legacy will continue through his daughter, Lisa Love (Kelly) of Texas, his

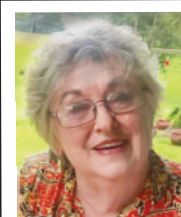
granddaughter, Caitlan Day (Joseph) of Winona, MS, his grandson, Michael Barnhill of Leakesville, MS, and his three great-grandchildren, Madison Barnhill, Matthew Barnhill, and Mikayla Day. He is also survived by several nieces, dear friends, and generous neighbors who enriched his life.

Wesley served his country bravely during the Korean War. He faced unimaginable challenges, enduring 13 gunshot wounds in an ambush that would forever alter his life. For his courage and sacrifice, he was awarded several medals, including the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, symbolizing his unwavering dedication to protecting our freedoms.

Wesley was preceded in death by his parents, Fletcher and Bonnie Crawford, and his siblings, Rebecca Davis and Fletcher the 2nd. While our hearts ache with his loss, we find solace in the love he shared and the positive impact he had on all who knew him.

A funeral service was held in celebration of Wesley's life on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 10:00 AM at Turkey Creek Messianic Assembly in Coffeeville. Friends and family were invited to gather to honor him and reflect on the remarkable man he was.

Though he has left this earthly realm, we take comfort in the knowledge that Wesley James Crawford is now at peace, his spirit forever woven into the fabric of our lives. He will be missed deeply but loved eternally.



Tillatoba News

By Patcie Deck

Eddie Simmons killed a cottonmouth that was in his hen house. Eddie has killed two snakes around his place lately. I know Vivian will look close after going in the hen house from now on. Congratulations to Faye Hartley for being the winner of the \$250 cash prize from High on the Hog in Grenada. Way to go, Faye!

Little miss Millie Kate Jackson made her arrival at 10:41 a.m. 7/2/26, 7lb 2oz and 19" long with a head full of hair. This little girl has stole all of our hearts says her mother, Marissa Jackson. She is just perfect.

Sadie Harper and family grilled hamburgers and hot dogs and she and Milton enjoyed all family there. It was too hot to be outside. I'm ready for Fall, said Sadie!

Debbie McCool said they haven't been doing much lately. We were out of town last weekend. Tommy had to work the 4th so we celebrated with KFC.

Here I am says Martha Box, thinking I'm way ahead of this Monday Morning. I mean laundry done, plans made, cleaning happening. Then my friend Pat reminds

me I'm behind on news!

It's Hot out there. So hot I'm wearing my itty bitty teeny weeny BeKini! Lol. You know I'm staying inside.

Busy busy busy week. Most joyful moment was the birth of our Princess, Millie Kate Jackson! Talk about a beauty. And yes when I said Princess GiGi is here, eyes flew open, head turned, and a huge grin rocked my soul! She and her Mom Marissa are fine, and Daddy Steven is walking tall. Candy Box and Robin Robinson are Grandma's dancing all about that Princess!

Great Fireworks and 250 yr celebrated at Willow Springs AOG Thursday night.

Wonderful message per Bro. Tommy Sunday. Love how he led us through appreciation of this 250 yr celebration, said Martha.

Your writers daughter, Donna, came up Sunday but got sick while she was here and had to go home. I called later in the afternoon and she said she thought it was a virus so after taking medicine, she went to bed and said she felt a lot better after

she woke up.

We made it through 3rd grade, said Melissa Hammond Sturdivant of her son, James Lee. He made the principal's list for the year and got honorable mention for a drawing for a stamp contest with Daughter's of the American Revolution.

Diane Dukes and some of her family celebrated the 4th of July at the "Five Roses" barn with loads of food and happiness. Thank you Diane for all the food you sent to us. It was all delicious.

Happy 6th Anniversary to Waylon and Holly Dukes on July 8th. Celebrating birthdays this week are Donnie Toole, Jason Beavers, and Ronalyn Jarrell on the 9th, Melanie Stevens on the 10th, to Ruth Jane Haley and Tammy Beshears on the 11th, LaKuana Williams on the 12th, Jackie Bowman on the 13th and Kim Wilks on the 13th. I pray you all have a great day celebrating your special day.

The Chambers family has had a eventful 4th of July weekend. Starting off Friday the 3rd. My MIL Jenny Chambers and SIL Arica Box had a bad wreck in Grenada, Ms. Arica was flown out to Jackson she had a deep laceration on the of her head which took 3 staples and a small brain bleed. After the family left Jackson I took my MIL Jenny

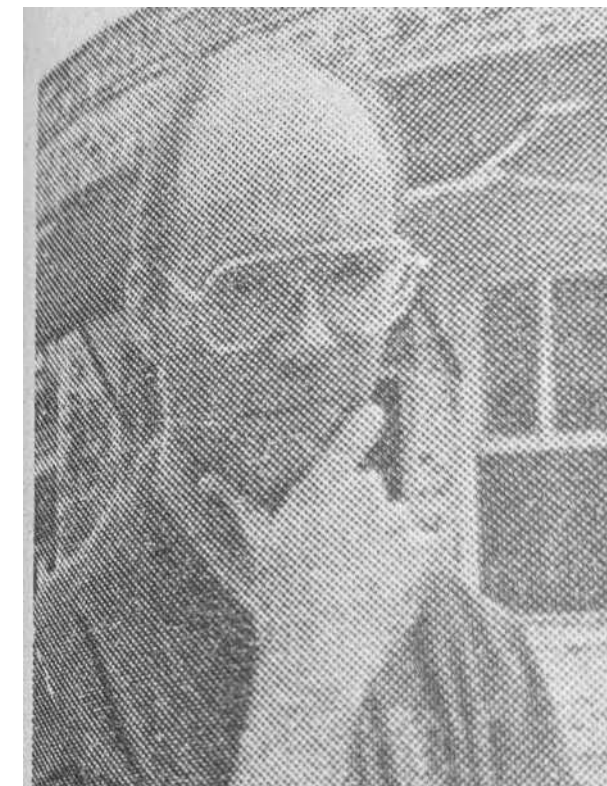
Chambers to Charleston Er to get checked out. Everything was good with her she had a great Doctor. She is just banged up really bad. We appreciate all the Prayers, calls, texts, visits. The good lord was in charge that day. Let me tell you those 2 ladies are definitely God's favorites. Me and Adam cooked out Saturday and had company over that we so enjoyed. We had food to feed Jenny and mawmaw Bettysue and enough for Arica and John Box when they came home from the hospital Sunday. The whole family needs prayers for recovery. We had one family member witness it, hear it, and one that drove up on it. Very traumatic situation for us all. Please just keep us in your prayers.

Thought for the day:

"A woman is like a tea bag: You can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water."



Who Is It?



Last week's "Who Is It?" was Ethel Horton. Victoria Gates Horton, A'Lexia Horton granddaughter, Ciara Horton granddaughter correctly identified the picture. Please call the Courier at 662-675-2446 before noon on Monday or call and leave a message or text 662-458-8939.

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