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As of press time, the full results of the **May 19th General Primary/Nonpartisan Election** have not been certified by The Board of Elections. The full results will be published in the next edition of The Savannah Tribune on **Wednesday, May 27th**. Totals may not include all Absentee or Provisional Ballots. The Unofficial Results are available on The Board of Elections website at <https://elections.chathamcountyga.gov/ElectionResults>.

Savannah State Confers Degrees to Nearly 400 Graduates During 208th Commencement Ceremony

Savannah State University (SSU) celebrated the academic achievements of the spring Class of 2026 during its 208th commencement ceremony on May 8 at the Enmarket Arena. The university awarded degrees to more than 390 graduates, marking a milestone for students representing the university's five colleges - Business Administration, Sciences and Humanities, Engineering Technology and Computing, Media, Arts and Communication, and Hyundai College of Education.

Dr. Deretta Cole Rhodes, Executive Vice President and Chief Culture Officer for the Atlanta Braves, delivered a powerful keynote address, urging the graduates to embrace their unique journeys and lead with purpose.

"As graduates of Savannah State University, you carry with you something powerful, something endur-



SSU Pres. Jermaine Whirl awards the prestigious Second Mile Award to Mr. Jinorri Jovel Wilson

ing, a legacy grounded in light and truth," Dr. Rhodes told the graduates. "You understand what it truly means to say 'you can get anywhere from here'. What you have accomplished is extraordinary. But hear me clearly, this is not your finish

line, this is your launch point. Today is the first day of boldly charting your dreams with tools no one can take from you. Not your degree, not your discipline, not your resilience, and not your purpose. Savannah State has given you more than



SSU Pres. Jermaine Whirl extends token of appreciation to Dr. Deretta Cole Rhodes after her keynote delivery

knowledge. It has given you the formation to think critically, to lead courageously, and to stand firmly in who you are even when the world tries to define you otherwise."

Reflections from the Class of 2026 were shared by

Ms. Mya Yvonne Lomax, an undergraduate business marketing major and Army ROTC commissioning officer, and Territa Naomi Williams, a graduate student obtaining a master's in public administration.

The university also honored its top academic performers. Ms. Lomax and Mr. Jinorri Jovel Wilson, an undergraduate computer science technology major, were recognized as the top undergraduate students, both graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Adding to his academic standing, Mr. Wilson, who hails from Montego Bay, Jamaica, received the prestigious Second Mile Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a graduating senior for exceptional achievement, leadership, and service.

"Mr. Wilson has been a shining example of leadership and excellence," said SSU President Dr. Jermaine Whirl. "He has demonstrated exceptional perseverance and an unwavering dedication to service that reflects the very best of the Savannah State University spirit."

Senior Citizens Inc. Honors Three Extraordinary Community Leaders at Annual Legends, Leaders and Life Well Lived Awards Luncheon

Senior Citizens Inc. welcomed community leaders, supporters, and guests to The Palmetto Club at The Landings on Thursday for its annual Legends, Leaders and Life Well Lived Awards Luncheon, a celebration honoring three remarkable individuals whose lives of service and leadership have left an indelible mark on Savannah.

This year's honorees Pat Hackney, Shirley Barber James, and Dr. Paul Pressly were recognized for their extraordinary contributions to the community, each representing the spirit of compassion, leadership, and lasting impact that defines the award.

Pat Hackney was honored for her unwavering generosity, compassionate leadership, and commitment to building a stronger Savannah through philanthropy and service.

Shirley Barber James



L-R: Pat Hackney, Dr. Paul Pressly, and Shirley Barber James

was recognized for her visionary leadership, steadfast dedication, and enduring influence on Savannah's civic and cultural life.

Dr. Paul Pressly was celebrated for preserving and illuminating Savannah's rich

history, ensuring future generations understand and appreciate the stories that shaped this community.

"Some people leave an impression. Others leave a legacy," said Patti Lyons, President of Senior Citizens Inc.

"Pat, Shirley, and Paul have each helped shape Savannah in meaningful and lasting ways through their leadership, generosity, and dedication to others."

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City Of Port Wentworth Announces Fourth Annual Juneteenth Celebration - June 19, 2026



Derek Mallow

The City of Port Wentworth is slated to host its fourth annual Juneteenth Celebration on Friday, June 19, 2026. The event will be held from 5:30-9 p.m. behind City Hall, located at 7224 GA-21 in Port Wentworth. This celebratory event is free and open to the public and will feature a fun-filled evening for the whole family.

With a meaningful blend of education and entertainment, emceed by Pat Gunn, the evening will include food trucks, vendors, historical storytelling, a children's area, and performances by Kwanzaa 365, Kimberly Gunn, Dadd's Production's corporate band with Tamekha, and The Mary Davis Experience.

During the event, the City of Port Wentworth will present the 2026 Frances Bright Johnson Humanitarian Award to Senator Derek Mallow. This award honors Frances Bright Johnson, mother of Councilman Rufus Bright, who dedicated her life to justice, equity and service to others. Johnson was recognized as a force in the local Civil Rights movement and an active community leader, serving with the local NAACP and YMCA.

"It's truly rewarding



Francis Bright Johnson

to witness the ongoing expansion and success of our city's Juneteenth celebration. Commemorating this important milestone in American history by uniting the diverse individuals who call Port Wentworth their home highlights the vibrancy and strength of our community," said event founder and Port Wentworth Councilman Rufus Bright. "It is also a privilege to recognize Senator Derek Mallow and honor my mother's legacy of championing humanity."

Derek Mallow is the current representative for Georgia's Senate District 2. After graduating from Savannah's Jenkins High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in leadership and ministry from Asbury University as well as a master's in public administration from Savannah State University. In addition to serving in the Georgia House, Mallow has served with the Boy Scouts of America for the past 13 years and has created many youth-focused programs throughout the district. He is also a member of Alpha Phi Omega, a national service fraternity; the 100 Black Men of Savannah, and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

To learn more, visit www.portwentworthga.gov.

Milnes Voice Programs Announce Winner Of Annual Sherrill Milnes Voice Scholarship Competition

The Milnes VOICE Programs hosted its 20th annual Sherrill Milnes VOICE Scholarship Competition on May 7 at the National Opera Center and named Henry Drangel as this year's grand prize winner and scholarship recipient. In this master class competition, singers work with opera legend Sherrill Milnes in front of a live audience to win a full scholarship to attend and study in the Milnes VOICE Studio in Savannah, Georgia this summer.

Sponsored by the Tom Lysaught Scholarship Fund, this national search gives artists a chance to continue refining their vocal talents with opera mentors. The judging panel included president and co-founder of the Milnes VOICE Programs Ma-



L-R: Carlee Carpenter, Henry Drangel, Marc Cioffi and Sherrill Milnes

ria Zouves, stage director Fabrizio Melano, and composer Michael Ching. Finalists sang in front of a live audience with strong selections. Marc Cioffi,

a bass-baritone, performed "Vi ravviso" from "La sonnambula" by Vincenzo Bellini; Carlee Carpenter, a mezzo-soprano, performed "There is a Garden

from "Trouble in Tahiti" by Leonard Bernstein; and Drangel, a tenor, performed "L'ultima canzone" by F. Paolo Tosti.

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