



**This Week in African American History**

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**Sigmas Donate \$750 to the Salvation Army**

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**Hamilton Co. Health Department to Begin Administering Pfizer Booster Shots to Ages 16 & 17**

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Complimentary

## *Dodds named Dean of Academic Success at Chattanooga State*

By Betty A. Proctor

Julius Dodds has been named dean of Academic Success at Chattanooga State Community College in a recent announcement made by Dr. Beth Norton, vice president, Academic Affairs.

“Julius has been serving as the director of Academic Retention since 2011, where he has led the Achieving the Dream and Title III Strengthening Institutions grant work,” stated Dr. Norton.

Prior to his work at Chattanooga State, Dodds served as director of Retention and Advisement at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and

he has served in leadership roles at other colleges where he managed academic initiatives.



Julius Dodds has been named Dean of Academic Success at Chattanooga State Community College..

## **500 Black State Legislators Address Voting Rights and Other Issues in Atlanta**



Tennessee State Representative Barbara Ward Cooper, who is 92 years old, stands next to NBCSL President Billy Mitchell after she received NBCSL's Living Legend Award. Also pictured are members of the Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators.

Washington, D.C. — Over 500 Black State Legislators from across the United States left the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) Annual Legislative Conference last weekend recommitted to addressing voting rights, health care, education, and other important issues that are impacting African American communities.

Presently, more than 20 states have passed laws that will make it harder for millions of Americans to vote. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris prepared recorded remarks that were shown during the Annual Awards Ceremony for the conference attendees.

“We have a White House that looks like America,” said President Biden. In her remarks, Vice President Harris said, “We must have a national baseline for voting rights.” “Georgia is ground zero for voter suppression,” said NBCSL President Billy Mitchell (GA). “One of NBCSL’s goals is to ensure that we support and provide the framework needed for Black Legislators to better represent their communities, which is a major reason why we’re creating a Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI),” he said.

The Institute will represent the nation’s only nonpartisan think tank dedicated to providing evidenced-based public pol-

icy research to state legislators with a focus on issues concerning the Black community.

“In addition, PPRI will provide leadership development and training for legislators to assist them in constructing and analyzing new public policy,” said President Mitchell. Vice President Harris was presented with the David P. Richardson Jr. National Nation Builder Award for her significant contributions and for laying the foundation for political progress of African Americans.

The inaugural 2021 International Nation Builder Award

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## *Why the Southern US is prone to December tornadoes*

By Alisa Hass, Assistant Professor of Geography, Middle Tennessee State University  
Kelsey Ellis, Associate Professor of Geography, University of Tennessee

On the night of Dec. 10-11, 2021, an outbreak of powerful tornadoes tore through parts of Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee and Illinois, killing dozens of people and leaving wreckage over hundreds of miles. Hazard climatologists Alisa Hass and Kelsey Ellis explain the conditions that generated this event – including what may be the first “quad-state tornado” in the U.S. – and why the Southeast is vulnerable to these disasters year-round, especially at night.

What factors came together to cause such a huge outbreak?

On Dec. 10, a powerful storm system approached the central U.S. from the west. While the system brought heavy snow and slick conditions to the colder West and northern Midwest, the South was enjoying near-record breaking warmth, courtesy of warm, moist air flowing north from the Gulf of Mexico.

The storm system ushered in cold, dense air to the region, which interacted with the warm air, creating unstable atmospheric conditions. When warm and cold air masses collide, less dense warm air rises upward into cooler levels of the atmosphere. As this warm air cools, the moisture that it contains condenses into clouds and can form storms.

When this instability combines with significant wind shear – winds shifting in direction and speed at different heights in the atmosphere – it can create an ideal setup for strong rotating storms to occur.

Atmospheric instability develops when air is warm at the surface and cold at higher levels. This causes parcels of warm air to rise and form clouds that can produce thunderstorms and, in some conditions, tornadoes.

On a tornado ranking scale, how intense was this event?

At least 38 tornadoes have been reported in six states during this outbreak, causing widespread power outages, damage and fatalities. The National Weather Service rates tornadoes based on the intensity of damage using 28 damage indicators from the Enhanced Fujita, or EF, scale. Storm assessments and tornado ratings can take several days or longer to complete.

As of Dec. 12, at least four EF-3 and five EF-2 tornadoes have been confirmed. EF-2 and EF-3 tornadoes are considered strong, with wind speeds of 111-135 mph and 136-165 mph respectively.

Strong straight-line winds also occur with severe storms and can create as much damage as a tornado. After severe storms and reports of tornadoes, the National



Damage in Mayfield, Kentucky, after a tornado swept through the area on Dec. 11, 2021. Photo: Brett Carlsen/Getty Images

Weather Service conducts in-person storm damage surveys to determine whether a tornado or straight-line winds created the reported damage and the degree of damage. Investigators will look to see if debris is scattered in one direction, which would indicate straight-line winds, or in many different directions – the hallmark of a tornado.

Expected damage from tornadoes at different levels of the Enhanced Fujita (EF) scale, using examples from a massive outbreak in 2011. National Weather Service One tornado reportedly traveled 240 miles across four states. Why is this unusual?

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