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# Chattanooga • News Chronicle

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Complimentary

## Chattanooga Remembers Mr. Sam Gooden, Rock and Roll Hall of Famer and Original Member of the Impressions

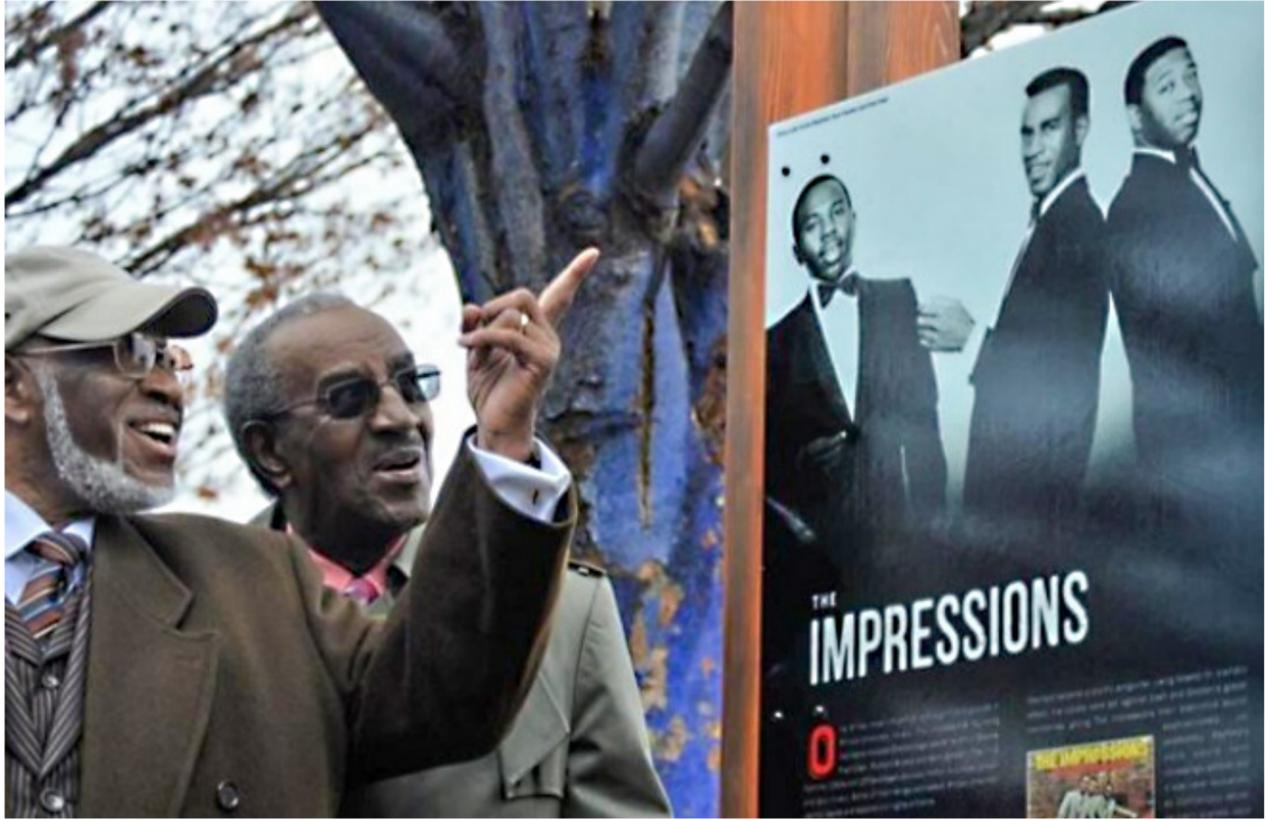
By Camm Ashford

Mr. Sam Gooden, an original member of the Impressions and a 1991 inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, passed away Thursday in Chattanooga, surrounded by family. He was just a month shy of his 88th birthday.

Known for their gospel-styled harmonies and socially conscious songs, the Impressions remained one of the top R&B and soul groups for more than five decades, with million sellers like “Gypsy Woman,” “It’s Alright,” “People Get Ready” and “Choice of Colors.”

Lead singer Curtis Mayfield left the group in 1970 for a solo career, although he continued to write and help produce for The Impressions. Mr. Gooden and fellow Chattanooga Fred Cash continued to sing as The Impressions along with other lead singers over the years, including Willie Kitchens. Mr. Gooden retired in 2017, with a final concert at the Chattanooga Convention Center.

The state of Tennessee honored the Impressions with a Tennessee Pathways sign at the Bessie Smith Cultural Center on M.L. King Boulevard in downtown Chattanooga on Dec. 3, 2019.



Mr. Sam Gooden (right) and Mr. Fred Cash, who both graduated from Howard High School, are shown on Dec. 3, 2019, when the state of Tennessee honored the Impressions with a Tennessee Pathways sign at the Bessie Smith Cultural Center. Mr. Cash and Mr. Gooden retired in 2017 with a final concert at the Chattanooga Convention Center.

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## Sheriff-Elect Austin Garrett Names Attorney Brian Bush as New General Counsel

Sheriff-Elect Austin Garrett on Monday announced that attorney Brian Bush will serve on his executive staff as General Counsel for the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO).

The General Counsel serves as the primary legal representative for the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office and provides assistance with a variety of legal matters including contractual agreements, memorandums of understanding (MOU’s), subpoenas, human resources related issues, legal training for both new cadets and annual in-service training, and is responsible for the open records process.

General Counsel also serves as liaison between the HCSO, the District Attorney’s Office, the Hamilton County Attorney’s Office, and the Hamilton County Judiciary.



Prior to joining the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office as General Counsel, Brian Bush served as an Assistant District Attorney in the Hamilton County District Attorney General’s Office.

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## BlueCross Appoints Johnny Moore to Board of Directors

Johnny B. Moore, regional president for the Tennessee Region at Truist Financial Corporation, has been named to the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee (BCBST) board of directors.

“Johnny is an experienced business leader, public servant and committed philanthropist who supports a variety of causes and organizations,” said Emily Reynolds, chairperson of the BCBST Board of Directors. “He has unique insights into Tennessee communities that will help us meet the needs of BlueCross members across the state.”

An active community member, Moore currently serves on the boards of directors for Memphis Tomorrow, National Civil Rights Museum, Tennessee Business Leadership Council and Rhodes College.

Moore earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration.



Johnny B. Moore is Truist’s senior leader in the market, responsible for supporting customers and businesses of all sizes.

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## Chattanooga State’s Zennia Nesmith Honored by House Joint Resolution

By Betty A. Proctor

Zennia Nesmith, a 2022 Chattanooga State Community College graduate, was recently honored with House Joint Resolution 1128 commending her unflagging commitment to academic excellence, exceptional resilience, and immeasurable contributions both as a student leader and within the community, and as someone who actively demonstrates her passion for advocacy, service and justice.

Presented to Nesmith on July 20 by state Rep. Greg Vital, the resolution he crafted was inspired by the selection of Zennia as the 2022 Tennessee Community College Student of the Year during the Statewide Outstanding Achievement Awards (SOAR) earlier this year.

“It is an honor to recognize an individual like Zennia who has overcome challenges in life with determination and personal desire to improve life for herself and others,” said Rep. Vital.

Nesmith’s journey to this point was long and arduous, “full of twists, turns, and bumps along the way,” as stated in the resolution. She survived early family

trauma triggering psychiatric hospitalization, became a mother, and earned her GED.

Several years later, a car accident that resulted in the traumatic brain injury of her daughter and the loss of her grandmother, led Nesmith to discover her life’s purpose by founding a nonprofit organization called Empowered Connections with Siskin Hospital to support other families who have children with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Empowered Connections made Nesmith realize that she needed a college degree to expand the work of her nonprofit, but finances were a definite roadblock until she discovered the Tennessee Reconnect Grant.

Nesmith began classes in the spring of 2020 at no cost. “When I said yes to education everything just fell into place,” she recalled.

“Zennia’s story is one of transformation,” stated Dr. Rebecca Ashford, Chattanooga State president. “She overcame a challenging beginning and redefined her life through hard work and education.



(L to R) District 29 state Rep. Greg Vital; honoree Zennia Nesmith; and Julius Dodds, dean, Chattanooga State Student Success.

She is an inspiration to all of us at Chattanooga State, and she embodies the calling that we have to work in community college education.”

Nesmith said her educational experience at Chattanooga State “was more than good grades... it was an awakening.”

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### Attention Readers

Print Schedule: Aug. 11, 25 | Sept. 8, 22

Weekly content will still be available on our website and social media!

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