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**A History
of America's
Oldest City**

**3 Top Executives
Declare Independence**

Darnell Smith, Eric Mann & Nat Ford

**Mayo Clinic Launches New
Robotic Shoulder Surgery**

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Publisher's Note

This summer's calendar may be full, but July reminds us that life doesn't always have to move at top speed. Sometimes the best times happen when we slow down. Those occasions aren't interruptions. They are life.

As our nation begins commemorating America's 250th anniversary, we remember that history isn't only measured in years. It's measured in people, experiences, and the generations that continue creating what comes next.

The United States, at two hundred and fifty years, isn't standing still. Neither is the generation redefining what it means to grow older.

Independence isn't just living alone or driving a car. It's having choices. It's continuing to write your own book.

That's why access to exceptional healthcare matters. We highlight the opening of Baptist Health's new Seven Pines Medical Center near Kernan Boulevard and J. Turner Butler Boulevard. It's an investment in the future health of our growing community.

If you're planning a family barbecue, escaping to the beach, or hanging out at home this month, I hope this issue gives you permission to meet July head on.

Celebrate America's past, appreciate the freedom we've earned, and make the most of the time you have left on this planet.

Cheers,

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Yes, women get hernias too. 8 silent signs

Hernias don't discriminate – some types are more common in women. But the signs aren't always obvious. Most common is a bulge in the abdomen, but here are other symptoms that you may be more likely to ignore:

- Pain in the pelvic area
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Constipation
- Feeling full and bloated
- Heartburn
- Weakness and muscle fatigue in the upper leg or groin
- Pain when lifting or coughing

If left untreated, your hernia could grow, get more painful, or even become dangerous at some point. And a hernia won't go away on its own. The good news is today's minimally invasive hernia treatment options, including robotic-assisted surgery, can offer you fast recovery.



**For more information or to
request an appointment:**

Visit BaptistHernia.com, call
904.202.2019 or scan the QR code.

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By Miriam Stansbury

St. Augustine – The Oldest City in the Nation Still Tells Great Stories



Pedro Menéndez de Avilés

Before there was a United States, before thirteen colonies declared independence, before Philadelphia became the birthplace of a nation, there was St. Augustine, Florida.

Founded in 1565 by Spanish admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the city has endured for more than four and a half centuries. Empires have risen and fallen. Hurricanes have reshaped its shoreline. Yet the nation’s oldest continuously inhabited European-established city remains

remarkably intact, a living archive where history isn’t confined to museums but woven into everyday life.

Walk through the city just after sunrise, before the summer heat settles over the coquina streets. The sound of church bells mingles with the cries of gulls circling Matanzas Bay. The scent of sea salt drifts inland as it has for generations, carrying echoes of explorers, soldiers, merchants, Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and immigrants who all helped shape this place.



Indigenous People exhibit at the Fountain of Youth.

At the heart of the city stands Castillo de San Marcos National Monument. Constructed from coquina sedimentary stone formed from compressed shells, the fortress has survived cannon fire since the late 17th century.

A short drive north lies Fort Mose Historic State Park. Established in 1738, it became the first legally recognized free Black settlement in what is now the United States. Here, freedom was not an abstract ideal but a hard-won reality, earned by men and women who escaped slavery and forged new lives under the Spanish Crown.



Historic Florida Militia non-profit organization creates historic interpreters at Fort Mose Historic State Park.

As America commemorates its 250th anniversary, St. Augustine offers something rare: perspective. The city’s history reminds us that the American story did not begin in a single year or a place.

Today, visitors discover more than landmarks. The history feels tangible not because it has been preserved behind glass, but because it continues to exist with modern life.

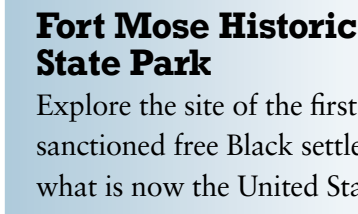
In St. Augustine, the past is not far away. It is carried in the breeze, etched into weathered stone, and in every step through a city that has witnessed the unfolding of America for nearly four hundred and sixty years. ∞

Six Historic Stops That Chronicle America’s Experience



Castillo de San Marcos National Monument

The oldest masonry fort in the continental United States, built to defend Spain’s foothold in the New World.



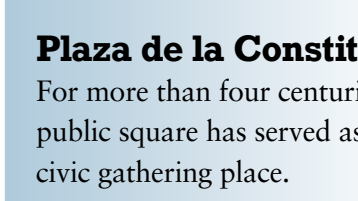
Fort Mose Historic State Park

Explore the site of the first legally sanctioned free Black settlement in what is now the United States.



Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine

The spiritual heart of the city, representing one of the oldest Catholic parishes in the nation.



Plaza de la Constitución

For more than four centuries, this public square has served as the city’s civic gathering place.



Oldest House Museum Complex

A glimpse into colonial domestic life through one of Florida’s oldest surviving homes.



Tolomato Cemetery

One of the city’s oldest burial grounds, where generations of residents reflect the diverse cultures that built St. Augustine.



For more information on the history and places to see in St. Augustine, visit FloridasHistoricCoast.com.



ElderSource's Veterans-Directed Care Program Supports Veterans Aging in Place

Fleming Island Veteran Larry Leisher spent decades working to convince the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that his disability was connected to his service in the Air Force. Even after ultimately winning that long-fought battle, he knew significant challenges still lay ahead.

Leisher is living with Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM), a progressive, degenerative muscle disease that causes gradual wasting in the wrists, fingers and quadriceps. Like thousands of other Veterans diagnosed with IBM, Leisher says his disability stems from his work in the military.

While navigating the lengthy process to secure VA disability benefits, Leisher and his wife discovered critical support through ElderSource's Veteran Directed Care (VDC) program.

"My VA doctor felt I needed more care than I was getting," the now 82-year-old Leisher said. "The VDC came through, and they were able to give me some needed assistance."

The Veteran Directed Care program is a partnership between ElderSource and the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is designed for veterans who require a nursing home level of care but wish to remain in their homes. The program allows participants to receive services from a caregiver of their choosing, including family members, friends or neighbors—giving veterans greater independence and control while aging in place.

There are no age restrictions or service-connected requirements to qualify, as long as the veteran is referred by their VA physician or case worker.

"ElderSource has been tremendous," Leisher said. "If we have any questions or a problem we know we can go to ElderSource and get answers without having to go into the computer system with the VA. ElderSource has always been there for us."

In addition to Veteran Directed Care services, Leisher and his wife—who also serves as his primary caregiver—were connected to ElderSource's caregiver support programs, including resources aimed at preventing caregiver burnout.

For more information about caregiver resources and the Veteran Directed Care program, call the ElderSource HelpLine 904.391.6699 or visit MyElderSource.org.

ElderSource is a local nonprofit organization designated by the state as the Area Agency on Aging and the Aging and Disability Resource Center for Northeast Florida. The agency provides information and referral resources for older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers in its seven-county Northeast Florida service area which includes Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia. Programs and services are funded by federal and state agencies, grants as well as private donations and endowments.



Veteran Directed Care is for Veterans who:

- ★ Need personal care services and help with activities of daily living
- ★ Have a caregiver that needs additional support

To be eligible for the program Veterans must:

- ★ Be enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration
- ★ Get a referral to the VDC program from their VA physician or case worker
- ★ Meet functional eligibility criteria as determined by the VA
- ★ Be able to direct their own services or appoint someone on their behalf to direct their own services

JUST ASKIN'

What's in a Name?



What's in a name? Sometimes, a lifetime of stories. Imagine introducing yourself as George Washington, Betsy Ross, Benjamin Franklin, Abigail Adams, or Thomas Jefferson.

This Independence Month, we're asking you to help us track down local residents who share the names of some of America's most iconic historical figures. Do you know anyone who is named after one of the founding members of our country?

If you do, send them our way by July 31st and be entered to win an overnight stay at The Jekyll Island Club this summer! Send submissions to info@firstcoastseniorliving.com.



Jekyll Island Club Resort

- George Washington ★
- Betsy Ross
- Abigail Adams ★
- John Adams ★
- Christopher Columbus ★
- John Smith
- Meriwether Lewis
- Sacagawea
- John Muir
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Woodrow Wilson ★
- Benjamin Franklin
- Thomas Jefferson ★
- Alexander Hamilton
- Amerigo Vespucci
- Henry Hudson
- William Clark
- Kit Carson
- John Wesley Powell
- Ulysses S. Grant ★
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Ronald W. Reagan

- Andrew Jackson ★
- Frederick Douglass
- W.E.B. Du Bois
- Robert E. Lee
- Sitting Bull ★
- Martin Luther King Jr. ★
- Malcolm X
- George W. Bush
- Thomas Paine ★
- Susan B. Anthony
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton ★
- Giovanni da Verrazzano
- Tecumseh
- Neil Armstrong ★
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SCAM OF THE MONTH

Utility Payment Scam Targets Local Consumers



Targeting utility customers across the country, callers claim the customer is behind on their utility payments or that their utility meter needs to be replaced. The customer is then instructed to go to a Winn Dixie, CVS or Walgreens, buy a “MoneyPak” payment card and call them back at the phone number provided with the MoneyPak card information and pin number to prevent their service from being disconnected. Don’t do it!

A scammer came close to fleecing Sandra Martinez out of a lot of money. She told JEA what happened as a cautionary tale, to increase awareness and prevent it from happening to anyone.

“It was like talking to a friend,” said Martinez, a JEA customer who got a call one weekend in early May from a disarmingly nice person who said he worked at JEA.

The caller first asked Martinez if she received a letter explaining a change in JEA’s billing system. She told him she had not. Then he proceeded to weave a complicated tale.

He explained that because of billing system changes, her online payments did not go through and her bill was overdue. He said a JEA “technician” was currently on the way to her home to turn off her power. To prevent this, she needed to go to the nearest Walgreens and make a payment using a “MoneyPak” card.

Martinez thought the call was strange but she agreed to go to Walgreens. “I actually got in my car,” she said. “But before I pulled out of my driveway I called JEA at 665-6000.”

JEA’s computerized phone system told her that her bill was up to date. “And then I got someone from JEA on the line. She told me don’t pay anything. It’s a scam.”

Martinez said the scammer called her back about twenty times after that, but she never answered the phone. “I wanted to though. I wanted to tell him, ‘Shame on you. How could you do that to people?’”

Customers who receive one of these calls are urged to notify JEA at (904) 665-6000. Commercial customers may call (904) 665-6250 to speak with a JEA Business Support Team representative.

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The Next Great

Am

BY DAVID PATTERSON

The words of the Declaration of Independence have inspired Americans for nearly 250 years.

Among its most prophetic promises is the unalienable right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

While those words are often associated with youth and ambition, they carry equal meaning for a generation entering one of life's most rewarding chapters.

This year, we witness this in the three influential executives whose combined leadership spans more than a century of service. Though their careers took different paths, each helped shape the quality of life enjoyed by residents across the First Coast.

Darnell Smith, former Northeast Florida Market President, retired after more than three decades with Florida Blue, where he was one of the company's most respected community leaders. He became a trusted advocate for health equity, economic opportunity, and neighborhood investment, making certain that corporate leadership translated into meaningful community partnerships. Colleagues often describe Smith as someone who quietly built bridges, and championed initiatives that improved lives without seeking the spotlight.

Smith plans to stick around for a bit. "I know I'll still see many of you around, and I look forward to staying connected as I step into this next season. The future is bright! I'm excited for what's ahead."

For nearly two decades, Eric Mann served as president and chief executive officer of the First Coast YMCA. Under his leadership, the organization expanded its influence far beyond fitness centers. The YMCA became a cornerstone for youth development, senior fitness, drowning prevention, after-school education, healthy living, and family support programs.

"It's been a tremendous honor to serve the YMCA and the Northeast Florida community. I'm confident the YMCA of Florida's First Coast will continue to thrive and positively impact individuals by providing services and programs that promote a healthy body, mind and spirit," said Mann.

Mann emphasized servant leadership, believing that strong communities are built by investing in people of every age. His tenure strengthened the

YMCA's reputation as one of Jacksonville's most trusted nonprofit organizations and leaves a legacy measured not only in facilities but in healthier families and stronger neighborhoods.

Nathaniel "Nat" Ford said, "Serving as CEO of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority has been one of the greatest honors of my professional life. Over the past thirteen years I have had the privilege of working alongside dedicated employees, community leaders and residents who help strengthen mobility, expand opportunity, and improve quality of life in Jacksonville."

In January of next year, Ford will leave behind one of the most transformative transportation legacies in Jacksonville history. As chief executive officer of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority for more than a decade, Ford guided the agency through significant modernization efforts, expanded regional mobility initiatives, and positioned Jacksonville as a national leader in autonomous vehicle technology.

His ability to tackle innovation brought national attention to the city while challenging traditional ideas about public transportation. Ford consistently focused on preparing Jacksonville for the next generation while improving infrastructure and planning for future mobility.

Ford noted, "I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the community that has given so much to my family and me. Jacksonville's people, spirit and promise will stay with me wherever my journey leads next."

Together, these three executives represent more than impressive resumes. They represent a generation of leaders who broke barriers, mentored future professionals, and demonstrated that leadership is measured not by profits or projects, but by people.

Perhaps that is the truest expression of the pursuit of happiness envisioned by America's founders, not merely the freedom to earn a living, but the freedom to choose how one's experience, wisdom, and gifts continue serving others.

For Jacksonville, the departure of Smith, Mann, and Ford will mark the end of an extraordinary era of executive leadership. Yet it also signals the beginning of something equally important.

Life. Liberty. And the pursuit of happiness.



Darnell Smith

American Dream



Three Jacksonville leaders leave their mark on the First Coast.

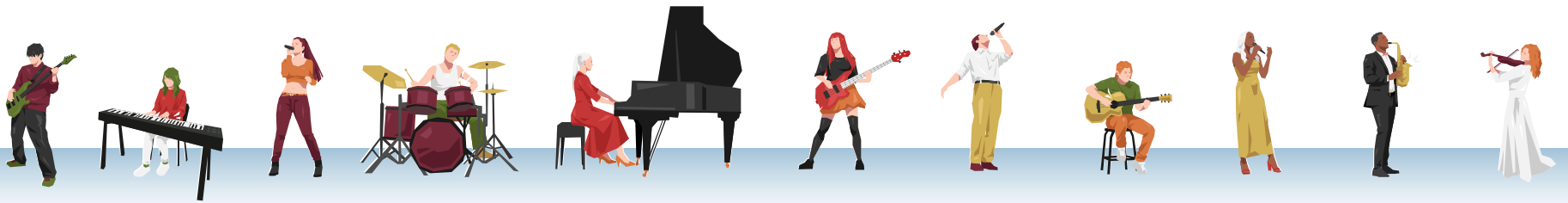


with

Eric Mann

Nat Ford

Music That Built America



America's history hasn't just been written in books. It's been sung. There are times in every American life that don't need a photograph. You hear the opening guitar riff, the trumpet fanfare, or the first few piano notes, and suddenly you're back there.

- ★ Your first dance
- ★ Your high school graduation
- ★ A military deployment
- ★ A summer road trip with the windows down
- ★ Your wedding
- ★ Holding your first child
- ★ Watching fireworks on the Fourth of July

Music has always been America's unofficial scrapbook.

As the nation marks its 250th anniversary, it's worth remembering that every generation has had its own soundtrack of songs that captured hope, heartbreak, protest, celebration, faith, and freedom. Long before social media connected us, music did.

The big band era lifted spirits during World War II. Gospel music strengthened communities through difficult times. Folk music gave voice to social change. Motown crossed racial divides with irresistible

melodies. Rock and roll challenged convention. Country music celebrated everyday Americans. Disco filled dance floors. Hip-hop told stories that had long gone unheard.

Styles changed, but the purpose remained remarkably consistent: music brought people together.

Neuroscientists have found that music is stored in areas of the brain closely connected to emotion and long-term memory, which helps explain why someone may forget yesterday's lunch but remember every lyric to a song they loved at age seventeen. Music has become an important therapeutic tool for people living with Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke recovery, and depression.

Music continues to unite generations, from the sounds of jazz clubs and church choirs to beach concerts, community orchestras, and neighborhood festivals.

As America begins celebrating two hundred fifty years, perhaps the most fitting tribute isn't asking what happened during those years.

It's asking: What was playing when it happened?

Because history isn't remembered only by dates. Sometimes it's remembered by the first notes of a song. ∞

25 Songs You Should Know by Heart

God Bless America
America the Beautiful
Respect
My Girl
Sweet Caroline
Bridge Over Troubled Water
Hotel California
Take Me Home, Country Roads

Piano Man
American Pie
Lean on Me
Stand by Me
Dancing Queen
Celebration
Born to Run
Ring of Fire
Proud Mary

What's Going On
I Will Survive
Unchained Melody
Moon River
Rock Around the Clock
Yesterday
Georgia on My Mind
God Bless the USA

Mayo Clinic Introduces Robotic Shoulder Replacement Surgery

Mayo Clinic recently performed its first robot-assisted shoulder arthroplasty in Jacksonville, marking the arrival of enhanced, precision orthopedic care for patients in the Southeast and bolstering Mayo Clinic's commitment to advancing models of care across the organization.

Shoulder arthroplasties, also known as shoulder replacements, are reserved for patients with shoulder osteoarthritis whose symptoms are not manageable with nonsurgical treatments such as physical therapy, injections and medications. Shoulder replacements have traditionally been performed using manual instrumentation and surgeon-estimated alignment. While this approach has been effective, it is inherently limited by visual estimation and anatomic variability in patients.

"What's happened over the past ten to fifteen years in orthopedics is we've started using computer navigation and now robotic assistance," says Dr. Erick Marigi, a Mayo Clinic orthopedic surgeon. "In the hip and the knee, they've been doing robot-assisted replacements for years, but



Dr. Erick Marigi believes robot-assisted procedures will be a pillar for the future of orthopedic surgery

for the shoulder (because it's a smaller complex joint), it's just been harder to develop, until now."

Erick Marigi, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at Mayo Clinic in Florida, completed the site's first robot-assisted shoulder replacement surgery in February.

"We're no longer limited by our eyes and using a guide, which has a few millimeters of variance," says Dr. Marigi. "Now it's one degree of variance and under a millimeter of precision."

Another key advantage of robot-assisted shoulder replacements is improved consistency and reproducibility, particularly in complex cases. The technology simplifies procedures for patients with significant bone wear or other challenges that make conventional techniques difficult, allowing surgeons to achieve more predictable results.

"It is the spirit of Mayo Clinic in general: constantly pushing the envelope and providing solutions that help patients," Dr. Marigi says.

Dr. Marigi believes Mayo Clinic surgeons will continue shepherding this next phase of innovation in orthopedic care. Now, for patients in the Southeast, the technology offers access to innovation closer to home. ∞

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By Miriam Stansbury

How Pool Workouts Keep You Moving in Summer Heat



When summer temperatures climb across our area, staying active can feel like a challenge. Fitness doesn't stop at the water's edge. The pool may be one of the safest and most effective places to exercise.

Water-based workouts offer a combination of buoyancy and resistance. Buoyancy reduces stress on joints, making movement easier for people with arthritis, back pain, or mobility limitations, while the water itself provides natural resistance to help build strength.

Brooks Rehabilitation offers aquatic therapy as part of its outpatient rehabilitation services, using heated pools and therapist-guided movement to help patients recover from orthopedic surgery, neurological conditions, and chronic pain.

At Brooks, aquatic therapy is often used as a bridge between recovery and independent exercise.

The YMCA of Florida's First Coast also provides year-round aquatics programming, including water aerobics, lap swimming, and senior-focused fitness classes.

Local rehabilitation centers and outpatient clinics across Jacksonville incorporate pool-based therapy to help individuals manage chronic conditions such as arthritis, joint replacements, and balance disorders.

Bobby Wilson, a physical therapist with Premier Physical Therapy says that aquatic exercise is especially valuable because it allows people to move in ways that might be too painful or difficult on land. "Many programs focus on easy movements such as water walking, gentle exercises, and balance training using flotation devices or pool equipment."

The appeal is not just physical. Water encourages confidence in movement, and often makes exercise feel less like work and more like renewal. Enjoy the splash! 🌊

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firstcoastymca.org

WINSTON FAMILY YMCA
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904 355-1436

YMCA AT BAPTIST NORTH
11236 Baptist Health Dr., 32218
(904) 592-9622
firstcoastymca.org

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jacksonville.gov/jaxparks/aquatics

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(904) 345-7600 brooksrehab.org

LA FITNESS
(Multiple Locations)
3600 University Blvd. W., 32217
(904) 900-6393
lafitness.com

The Surprising Value Hidden in Your Home

By Betsy Waltrip

Have you ever wondered if that antique clock from Grandpa, Grandma's china, your vintage jewelry, or the painting hanging in your hallway might be worth more than you think?

After a lifetime of collecting memories, our homes become filled with treasures that tell the story of our lives. While some items are priceless because of the memories they hold, others may have surprising financial value. The only way to know for sure is through a professional personal property appraisal.

Appraisals aren't just for estate planning. They're for living confidently today.

Knowing the value of your belongings can help you make informed decisions when you're right-sizing, moving to a new home, updating your insurance, donating to a favorite charity, or deciding which treasured pieces to pass along to family. Many people are amazed to discover that everyday items



tucked away in a cabinet, attic, or garage are actually valuable collectibles.

A professional appraisal also creates an inventory of your treasured possessions. If your home is ever affected by theft, fire, or a hurricane, having accurate documentation can make the insurance process much easier and help protect your investment.

Perhaps the greatest gift an appraisal provides is the opportunity to share your family's stories while you're here to tell them. You can explain the history behind cherished heirlooms, tell the memories that make them special, and decide who will enjoy them for generations to come.

Your home is more than four walls. It's a lifetime of memories, accomplishments, and treasured keepsakes. Understanding what you own gives you peace of mind, and the freedom to make decisions on your own terms.



Baptist Health Opens New Campus at Seven Pines

By Emily Sharpe

Baptist Health is helping meet the demand with the recent opening of Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines. The new outpatient facility offers a range of preventive and specialist health and wellness services in a single centralized hub within this rapidly growing master-planned community in Southeast Jacksonville.

The campus is located just east of St. Johns Town Center on Stillwood Pines Boulevard near Butler Boulevard and I-295.

“Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines represents the health system’s commitment to supporting the long-term health and well-being of the 1.25 million people living within 30 minutes of the facility,” said Eric Fletcher, MBA, FACHE, executive vice president and chief strategy officer at Baptist Health. “This area is projected to see a 10% population increase by 2030, making local access to coordinated, convenient health care more important than ever.”

It was designed to make it easier for residents to access essential health services closer to where they live, work and spend their time. Services offered at Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines include primary care, cardiology, orthopedics, rehabilitation and walk-in lab testing. It also has a wellness center, get baseline health screenings, and receive customized health plans designed to support healthy living.

“By embedding preventive health services directly into neighborhoods, we are making wellness part of everyday life and creating regular opportunities to identify health concerns early,” said Matthew A. Zuino, MSIS, FACHE, president and CEO of Baptist Health. “We want to advance community health by shifting the focus from treating illnesses to preventing them in the first place.”

For more information on services available at Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines, please visit BaptistJax.com.



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110 Birthday Candles



Photo by Heather Crawford

Willie Mae Jackson celebrates her 110th birthday.

Some people collect birthdays. Willie Mae Jackson has collected history.

Jackson has lived through nineteen presidents, two world wars, the Great Depression, television, the internet, and now artificial intelligence. Willie Mae Jackson proves that every year is a blessing.

The Jacksonville resident recently celebrated an astonishing birthday, joining one of the world's most exclusive clubs: supercentenarians, people who live one hundred ten or beyond. It's a milestone so rare that only a tiny fraction of Americans ever reach it.

So, what's the secret to living one hundred and ten years? Scientists are still trying to unlock the mystery of exceptional longevity. "Exceptional longevity is the result of a combination of genes, lifestyle and plain good luck," says Dr. Thomas Perls of Boston University's New England Centenarian Study, one of the world's foremost researchers on people who live beyond one hundred and ten.

Think about everything Willie Mae has witnessed. When she was born in 1916, Woodrow Wilson was president, automobiles were still a novelty, television didn't exist, and sliced bread hadn't even made its debut. Since then, she's lived through two world wars, the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, the moon landing, the birth of the internet, smartphones, social media and now artificial intelligence.

Now that's what you call a front-row seat to history.

Family, friends and caregivers gathered to celebrate the milestone with cake, laughter and plenty of stories. While birthdays often focus on the number of candles, this celebration was really about something far more, a life that has spanned more than a century of change.

Willie Mae's life is also a reminder that age isn't simply measured in years. It's measured in memories, and the lives touched along the way.

Happy Birthday, Willie Mae! Every birthday is worth celebrating. 🎂

Serving Our Community's Seniors Since 1962

Aging True is a non-profit organization with the mission of providing essential and innovative services and care to seniors and their families in Northeast Florida. As the lead provider agency for Duval and Clay County, we deliver more choices and resources for older adults to thrive in their homes. Examples of the many support programs we provide include:

- ◆ Daily Home-Delivered Meals
- ◆ In-Home Services
- ◆ Mental Wellness
- ◆ Adult Day Care
- ◆ Caregiver Support Services
- ◆ Home Maintenance & Modifications
- ◆ 4 Clay County Senior Centers
- ◆ And so much more!

If you're interested in learning more about Aging True, getting signed up for our services, or would like to learn more about how you can contribute to our mission, visit our website www.agingtrue.org or contact us through the information on this advertisement!

✉ info@agingtrue.org



Things To Do *this month*



July 3, 4:00-9:30 PM America's 250th Anniversary Celebration

Riverfront Plaza, 2 W. Independent Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32202

Jacksonville's official 4th of July celebration features live music, art, food, a bookmobile, and the city's largest fireworks show. It is one of the biggest free summer events in the region. Admission: Free jacksonville.gov/welcome/featured-news

July 4, 9:00 PM Jacksonville's 4th of July Fireworks Display

Downtown Jacksonville, FL 32202

The city's fireworks show launches from downtown and offers one of the biggest free holiday spectacles in the area. It is a strong anchor event for the calendar and a natural draw for all ages. Admission: Free events.jacksonville.gov/special-events/fourth-of-july-celebration

July 4, 6:00 PM City of St. Augustine's Independence Day Celebration

Historic Downtown St. Augustine, FL 32084



The event begins at 6:00 p.m. in the Plaza de la Constitución in the heart of St. Augustine's Historic District—with a two-hour live music concert, featuring the All-Star Orchestra. At 9:00 p.m., the sky lights up with a spectacular fireworks display over the historic

bayfront and the Castillo de San Marcos. Admission: Free www.visitstaugustine.com

July 15, 6:30 PM MOCA Free Movie Night

MOCA Jacksonville, 333 N Laura St., Jacksonville, FL 32202

A free museum film screening that pairs nicely with the gallery experience and offers a quieter alternative to a standard theater visit. The July screening is *Trainspotting* (1996), and the event is part of MOCA's recurring third-Wednesday program. Admission: Free; optional \$5 voucher for reserved seat, soft drink, and concession moca-jacksonville.unf.edu

July 11, 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM River City Writers: Self-Publishing Workshop with Judith Erwin

South Mandarin Library, 12125 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville FL 32223

A practical writing workshop focused on self-publishing, led by author Judith Erwin. It is a strong pick for readers who want a hands-on literary event rather than a passive lecture. Admission: Free rivercitywriters.org



July 15, 6:00 - 8:00 PM every Thurs. through 9/3 Concerts in the Plaza

Plaza de la Constitución, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Join neighbors and visitors, bring a chair or blanket



to relax on the Plaza lawn, and enjoy these summer evenings filled with music in the heart of historic St. Augustine. July 2 Hendricks Band; July 9 Los Van Guardias; July 9 Ancient City Slickers; July 23 Thick & Thin String Band; July 30 Shayla Nelson. Admission: Free visitstaugustine.com

July 16, 4:00 - 8:00 PM Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Free Third Thursday

829 Riverside Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32204

Free admission the third Thursday of every month from 4-8PM.

Free complimentary parking across from the Museum entrance and on the corner of Riverside Avenue and Post Street.

Accessible parking available in the Riverside Avenue lot. Admission: Free cummermuseum.org



July 18, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM Literary Indulgence Book Festival



FSCJ Kent Campus, 3939 Roosevelt Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32205

One of Jacksonville's premier literary festivals features 40+ authors, panels, readings, book signings, and writing-

related sessions. The event is broad enough to appeal to both casual readers and more serious book lovers.

Admission: Free

literaryindulgence.com

July 18 through March 7, 2027, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM Museum of Contemporary Art

222 North Laura Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202



The American Century Exhibit: The American Century is a celebration and examination of the emergence of a quintessential American Art, when the avant garde

mantle passed from the salons of Paris to the studios of the New York School, redefining the aesthetic landscape for a new century.

moca-jacksonville.unf.edu

July 24 through August 28, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM How Signs Tell America's Story

222 North Laura Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202

Explore one hundred years of every day life through objects often taken for granted. Led by American Sign Museum staff, this course introduces the museum's origins and features a conversation with ASM's founder about why signs matter. Explore case studies and virtual visits. Cost: \$75 for six sessions. unf.edu/pliloli



July 26, 2:00-5:00 PM

The Clubhouse at Royal St. Augustine Golf Club, 301 Royal St. Augustine Golf Pkwy., St. Augustine, FL 32095

Founded in the 1990s, the St. Augustine Jazz Society's mission is to help keep jazz and blues music alive in St. Augustine. Members of the club have formed a pick-up band of an ever-changing roster of musicians. Musician members include vocalists, pianists, brass musicians, woodwind musicians, guitar players, and drummers.

visitstaugustine.com

PARTING SHOT

By David Patterson

Starting Over at Any Age

Zelda Greenberg and The Art of Bouncing Back



Life rarely follows a straight path, and few people understand that better than author and real estate professional Zelda Greenberg. In her latest book, *The Art of Bouncing Back*, Greenberg

shares a message about overcoming adversity, managing change, and finding opportunity when life takes an unexpected turn.

Although Greenberg is widely recognized today for helping clients navigate major real estate

decisions, the inspiration for *The Art of Bouncing Back* came years before she entered the industry.

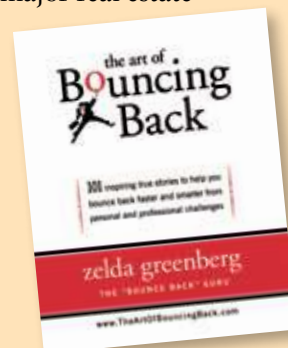
As president of her family's ninety-eight-year-old food distribution company, she faced an unimaginable challenge when a tornado devastated the business. Rather than close the doors, Greenberg led the effort to rebuild.

That experience sparked a deeper question: Why do some people emerge from hardship stronger while others struggle to move forward?

If you're facing retirement, career changes, health challenges, the loss of a loved one, Greenberg believes perseverance is a skill that anyone can develop.

Her earlier books, including *14 Days to SOLD*, *Smart Moves After 50*, and *STOP Leaving Money On The Table*, focus on helping homeowners make informed real estate decisions. *The Art of Bouncing Back* reminds readers that every successful new beginning starts with the courage to move forward.

For anyone standing at life's crossroads, Greenberg offers a reassuring message: setbacks don't define your future. How you respond to them does. ∞



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