

STATE

# Fort Myers relief

## Inlet Grove 'Canes provide hurricane aid



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IGHS

**SERVICE:** A truckload and busload left around 5 a.m. to deliver it.

By **ERNA DELICE, STACY COURAGEUX** and **MICHAELA ALPHONSE**  
*Special to South Florida Times*

FORT MYERS, Fla. – Most of the worst signs of Hurricane Ian's devastation no longer were visible Sunday when the Inlet Grove High School Hurricane Relief Drive arrived in Fort Myers with a truckload of supplies and a busload of students, teachers and staff members to distribute the aid. Clearly visible was the determination of those who had weathered through the storm to get back on their feet.

There were heartfelt conversations between the Inlet Grove Hurricanes of Riviera Beach and those who drove, bicycled, or wheelchaired to Mt. Olive AME Church on Orange Street to receive the items including hand sanitizer, paper towels, toilet paper, plastic utensils, paper plates/cups, battery operated fans/batteries, laundry detergent, wipes, Pampers, toiletries, ice and cases of bottled water, as well as freshly cooked hotdogs, burgers and other food.

The Urban League of Palm Beach County, led by Patrick Franklin, executive director, partnered in the effort.

Student members of Inlet Grove's Advanced Journalism class, Multimedia Club and Student Government Association (SGA) not only assisted in but documented the effort.

"I got really excited and emotional at the same time in putting this together because I know the help was needed," said Lynn Barnes, administrative assistant to Inlet Grove CEO Dr. Emma Banks. "I was hoping that people would really come out and help donate, which they did."

"I stay in Lehigh," said Ted Jackson of Mt. Olive, where the Rev. James C. Gibbens is pastor, "and we had a bunch of wind and rain, we didn't get that much damage, but the people that really got damage was the people here in Fort Myers. Helping another person, that's what it's all about during this time of disaster. That's when we all come together as one."

Another church member, retired educator Nancy Elaine Kelly Simms, said during the event on Mt. Olive's parking lot that because of her husband's heart rate, "It was suggested we go the ER, and they ended keeping him overnight. So for us that was the worst part of the whole ordeal. We did discover that he has a heart condition,

which was a good thing looking back because now they can start to treat him."

Abdul-Haq Muhammed, founder and executive director of the nearby Quality Life Center of Southwest Florida, Inc., said the storm "a major inconvenience in my life, and for others it has been a true tragedy." Although his home, like others in the historic Dunbar and other African-American communities, was away from the coastline, "It's near a creek, called Billy's Creek," he said. "So there was serious flooding, about two feet of flooding."

Muhammad drove CEO Banks and some journalism students in his car through some of the areas not accessible by the bus, showing and describing the storm's impact. The previous day, his Quality Life Center, widely known in the area as "The Q," had hosted an historic Town Hall & Community Visitation with members of the Florida Black Legislative Caucus, who also toured some of the areas that media reports noted had been neglected while mostly White areas had been served.

PLEASE TURN TO  
**RELIEF/3B**

STATE

# Sugarcane burning battle heating up

By **DAVID L. SNELLING**  
*Special to South Florida Times*

BELLE GLADE, Fla. – Belle Glade, a predominantly Black city in western Palm Beach County, is possibly facing a health issue over the practice of local cane sugar mills' cane-burning allegedly polluting the air and infecting people with illnesses.

Big sugar companies' pre-harvest practice of burning cane from October through May on vast farmlands east and south of Lake Okeechobee, rains soot and smoke down on towns in what residents call "black snow."

Residents have teamed up with the Sierra Club Florida and other environmental groups to launch a Stop the Burn campaign to end the burning and urged the companies to use cleaner mechanical harvesting.

The culmination of the campaign was a recent rally at Nancy Graham Centennial Square Park, which is adjacent to Florida Crystals, one of the biggest sugar-growing companies in Florida.

It was the first of many protests in an effort to stymie sugar cane-burning.

A video of the rally shows about 50 people holding placards, some anti-sugar cane-burning residents suggesting the smoke has

caused respiratory problems, lung cancer and other health issues.

"The smoke is hurting us," said one man.

Black city of Belle Glade, which is a low-income area.

"The sugar industry's always asking where's the data," Messam said. "The

health plant regrowth for subsequent crops.

The companies indicated that stopping pre-harvest burning would cost jobs.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOOTPRINT.ORG

**BELLE GLADE AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS:** Joining to stop health problems that industry disputes.

According to the Palm Beach Post, Steve Messam, a Stop the Burn campaign activist, said the issue is Black and White.

He said in 1991, the Florida Department of Agriculture banned growers from burning when winds blow in the direction of White communities such as Wellington and Royal Palm Beach following a flood of complaints.

It's a different story with the

people in Wellington didn't provide one shred of data," he added, "But when the wind is blowing west on Black and brown people, it's burn, baby, burn."

The companies pushed back, saying pre-harvest burns are not linked to health issues, and instead are essential to sugarcane harvest in South Florida including increasing safety, alleviating vehicle traffic and promoting

Sugar-cane farming provides most of the income for residents and migrant farmworkers in Palm Beach County, according to Florida Farm and Family, an agriculture online magazine.

About 70 percent of Florida's commercial sugarcane acreage is in Palm Beach County, strengthening the labor force for growing sugar cane and vegetables.

MIAMI-DADE

# Carey-Shuler honored with roadway in Miami-Dade

By **DAVID L. SNELLING**  
*Special to South Florida Times*

MIAMI, Fla. – Former longtime Miami-Dade County Commissioner and the first Black woman to serve on the board, Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler will have a roadway named in her honor, paving the way for the younger generation to serve in government and making an impact on people's lives in the Black community.

County commissioners at their Oct. 6 meeting approved a resolution to rename N.W. 22nd Avenue between State Road 112 between N.W. 79th Street as Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler Boulevard.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA.ORG

**DR. BARBARA CAREY-SHULER:** Widely credited with fostering progress.

County Commissioner Keon Hardemon proposed the resolution which was co-sponsored by each commissioner, some who served with Carey-Shuler and called her a leader and mentor.

Carey-Shuler served on the commission from 1979-1990 and 1996-2005 and served as commission chairwoman.

She was succeeded by Audrey Emondson and Hardemon won the same seat in 2020 when she was term-limited.

Carey-Shuler co-chaired the election campaign of gubernatorial candidate Bob Graham, who after he was elected in 1978, appointed her the first Black female county commissioner to replace Neal Adams who was removed from office following a corruption probe.

Carey-Shuler also served on the Miami-Dade County School Board.

County and the community credit Shuler for bringing affordable homes and economic opportunities to her district including the Brownsville Renaissance shopping plaza and revitalizing Liberty City with restaurants, shops, financial institutions, medical facilities and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Economic Development Center.

She also was instrumental in the revitalization of the shopping center at the northwest corner of N.W. 12th Avenue and 54th Street anchored by Winn Dixie.

The area, which was once occupied by a Zayre shopping store and a popular tailor shop, was in a moribund for years after the 1989 race riot.

Hardemon, an attorney, said Carey-Shuler left her mark on the Black community and the impact is still felt today.

"Her relationship and experience is still evident today," he said. "So many people are playing a part in the district because of her many contributions and leadership. It does me great pleasure to name a street on your behalf because we honor you for such great service."

County Commission Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz, who served with Carey-Shula from 2002 to 2005, said he has known her since he previously served on the Sweetwater City Commission.

When he was appointed to the county commission in 2002 to replace Miriam Alonso who was arrested for campaign finance fraud, he said Carey Shuler took him under her wings.

PLEASE TURN TO  
**DISPLACED/3B**





**WEST PALM BEACH GREENMARKET:** The “Best Farmers Market” in the country the past two years returns with this year’s “Sweet Success” theme and more than 100 vendors, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturdays at 100 Clematis St., West Palm Beach. All-day weekend \$5 flat rate parking available in public garages. Visit [wpb.org/government/community-events](http://wpb.org/government/community-events).

**OCEANSIDE FARMERS' MARKET:** Saturdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Old Bridge Park, A1A at Lake Avenue, Lake Worth Beach, featuring music and more than 80 vendors providing local fruits and vegetables, flowers, baked goods and other delicacies. Parking free on old bridge park across from Lake Worth Beach and casino complex. Visit [greenhouseeventsmanagement.com/lake-worth-beach-farmers-market](http://greenhouseeventsmanagement.com/lake-worth-beach-farmers-market).

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**TIKIMARKET AT THE MARINA:** “A taste of the islands without leaving town” is back featuring exotic treats, sensational vendors and free parking, Sundays 10 a.m. - 3, Riviera Beach Marina Village, 190 E. 13th St., Riviera Beach.

**ART BASEL EXHIBITION OPENINGS:** Oolite Arts invites the public to the opening night reception for their Two Fall exhibits “Rosie's Fare” and “Miami is Not the Caribbean. Yet It Feels Like It”, 7 - 9 p.m. on Oct. 20 at 924 and 928 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach. The two exhibits will coincide with the Miami Beach Culture Crawl and will be featured during Art Basel. Visit [oolitearts.org](http://oolitearts.org).

# IT'S MORE THAN A GAME. IT'S AN EXPERIENCE.

# RATTLERS WILDCATS

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**“STRONG COMMUNITIES EMERGING”:** The Spady Cultural Heritage Museum’s newest exhibit explores the development of South Florida following the Civil War from the perspective of a formerly enslaved person, told through photos, oral histories and narratives shared by the museum’s docent on a guided tour. Free to enter gallery, guided tour \$20, no reservations needed. Call 561-279-8883 or visit [spadymuseum.com](http://spadymuseum.com).

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**SHOWCASING LOCAL PRINTMAKERS:** The Montgomery Hall at Armory Art Center’s latest juried exhibition, “Regional Printmaking Now!” opens to the public through Thursday, Oct. 20, featuring current techniques within South Florida’s printmaking community including mixed media, silkscreen, lithography and more, 811 Park Place, West Palm Beach. Galleries free & open to the public, visit [armoryart.org](http://armoryart.org).

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**19TH ANNUAL SIGNATURE GRAND GHOUL:** Hundreds of community leaders and supporters put on their dancing shoes and stylish costumes for the Broward Health Foundation, 7 p.m. Monday Oct. 24 at the Signature Grand in Davie, with proceeds to benefit enhanced patient care and services at Broward Health. Tickets \$100 per person or \$175 for two when purchased together; VIP tickets \$150 include exclusive benefits; corporate sponsorships available. Call 954-712-3980 or visit [BHFoundation@BrowardHealth.org](mailto:BHFoundation@BrowardHealth.org).

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**CONFERENCE FOR THE CULTURE:** Blacks In Technology, LLC and the Blacks In Technology Foundation (BIT) are hosting BITCON 2022, their 4th annual conference for Black IT professionals, entrepreneurs, gamers, and afro-futurists, at Disney World, Oct. 26-28. Visit [bitcon.blacksintechology.net](http://bitcon.blacksintechology.net).



**DISNEY PRINCESS, THE CONCERT:** Be our guest as Broadway’s Belle, Jasmine, Nala and Anastasia celebrate all the Disney princesses in an unforgettable evening of story, animation and song, Saturday, Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. at the Adrienne Arsht Center, 1300 Biscayne Blvd. Miami. Tickets are \$35, \$59, \$79, \$109 and VIP \$165 at the center box office, by calling 305-949-6722, or online at [arshtcenter.org](http://arshtcenter.org).



**FLORIDA BLUE FLORIDA CLASSIC:** Tickets are on sale at [FloridaClassic.org](http://FloridaClassic.org) for the 2022 edition of the nation’s fiercest HBCU rivalry game, between the Florida A&M University (FAMU) Rattlers and Bethune-Cookman University (BCU) Wildcats, on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2:30 p.m. at Orlando’s Camping World Stadium.



**FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE LINEUP:** The 49th Winter Season features a four-show Mainstage Series and a three-show Cabaret Series that includes the original musical revues “The ’70s: More Than a Decade” featuring Rebecca Hopkins through Feb. 12, and “A Place in the Sun: A Tribute to Stevie Wonder,” Nov. 16 - March 26. To make theatre accessible to as many people as possible, FST offers all four mainstage shows for \$69, and all three cabarets for \$49. Subscriptions at [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://FloridaStudioTheatre.org) or 941-366-9000.

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**ART WITH ME BEFORE ART BASEL:** The festival comes to Historic Virginia Key Park in Miami on Nov. 26 - 27 from 1 p.m. - 3 a.m., bringing together people from around the world to enjoy music, art, wellness, and culinary experiences. The event will feature large-scale art installations and galleries, performances from electronic and live musicians across 3-4 stages, wellness activations including yoga and dance classes, breathing and mindfulness workshops. Children’s activities and vendors spanning organic cooking to ethically sourced textiles and designs and jewelry. Two-day general admission at \$80 + tax; two-day premium \$215 + tax; at [tixr.com/groups/withmeevents/events](http://tixr.com/groups/withmeevents/events).

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Obituaries

Willie Spence, gifted ‘American Idol’ star, 23

By DAPHNE TAYLOR  
Special to South Florida Times

RIVIERA BEACH, Fla. – Willie Spence, TV’s “American Idol” runner-up for season 19, was killed in a car accident in Marion County Tenn., on Oct. 18 according to a police report. He was 23.

Spence’s mother Sharon said she was told he was driving from a college homecoming to his home in Georgia when he veered off the road and collided with a semi-tractor truck, and did not survive the crash.

He was the only child from the union of Sharon and Willie Spence, Sr., and has siblings from his father.

As news of his death permeated his native Riviera Beach and around the globe, social media was abuzz with tributes. His cousin Sabrena Cooper said during a press conference last week that while it would be nice to have a private moment in the wake of the tragedy, the family realizes the young singer belongs to the world.

The crooner who won the judges’ hearts on the popular show in 2021, was embarking on some exciting projects say family members. Spence was scheduled to perform a Nov. 12 gospel concert in London, and was slated to go return as a featured guest with the Sounds of Success Community Marching Band in June 2023. The latter performance would have been before some members of the Royal Family for the Queen’s Jubilee.

Spence recently met with this year’s television “Shark Tank” winner Alexiou Gibson to discuss a possible television collaboration surrounding Willie’s health. Gibson was set to share his personal weight loss journey with Spence. Gibson’s product was

sea moss gel, which led actor Kevin Hart and NBA owner Mark Cuban to offer Gibson a deal, and Gibson was preparing to discuss the product with



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCA

**GENTLE GIANT:** Talented Riviera Beach native earned international acclaim.

Spence.

Spence recently performed at a Souls to the Polls event in Boynton Beach and told organizers he would do it again Nov. 6. The group now will pay tribute to him on that date.

Getting a group of economically disadvantaged Riviera Beach band members to London was his recent focus. He criss-crossed the globe on television promoting the Sounds of Success band and their quest to play

for the Queen’s Jubilee next June. The group is the only community band in the United States invited for the occasion.

“It is my honor to perform with them in London,” said Spence. “We have got to rally around them and create the funds to get them there. Many of them have never even flown before.”

Ironically, singing wasn’t even his first love, the family said. It was playing the drums, which they recall him

generous heart will be sorely missed.”

Spence soared to the top of “American Idol Season 19” in 2021, winning over Lionel Richie as well as the other judges. Cynthia Erivo, who played Harriet Tubman on the big screen, surprised Spence on the “Idol” set when he performed her anthem “Stand Up.” Spence ended up as runner-up, to the dismay of many who believed he should have won outright.

As a teenager in 2017 he sang on the Steve Harvey TV show. He made a video singing Rihanna’s “Diamonds” in 2018 which went viral and pushed him to stardom. That eventually led him to audition for “American Idol.”

Florida Memorial University President Dr. Jaffus Hardrick was a fan who watched Willie’s performances on “American Idol.” When he learned Spence’s mother had graduated from Florida Memorial, he met with her and Willie over dinner offered Spence to attend the HBCU. Spence had planned to take the president up on his offer at the right time.

“We’ve always wanted our son to get his formal higher education but he wanted to pursue a singing and musical career. However we are so excited that Dr. Hardrick has offered an opportunity for him to get his college degree,” Sharon Spence said at the time.

The family is arranging a scholarship fund in his name. Announcements of a musical tribute and funeral arrangements are forthcoming. Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Brown’s Funeral Home in Lantana. In lieu of flowers, donations are being accepted at [frontlineresponse.org/Willie](https://frontlineresponse.org/Willie)

Willie is survived by his parents, Willie and Sharon Singleton Spence; grandmother Ella Singleton; deceased grandfather Willie Roger Singleton; paternal grandparents Annie Lee Spence and Welcome Spence, both deceased; siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, and other family members. His pastor was Bishop Dr. Dawn Jones of Douglas, Ga.

Displaced

CONTINUED FROM 1B

"She said 'okay kid, welcome to the mess,'" he said. "She sat me down and taught me a lot. She has done so much great work in the community. She earned my respect and I couldn't have found a better mentor early in my career than her."

County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, who also served with Carey-Shuler, called her a great friend who would go out of her way to help her colleagues.

"She's an incredible professional and an incredible friend," said Sosa, who's term-limited this year. "She loved to teach, that was in her heart. It was an honor to serve with you and it was a pleasure."

County Commissioner Jean Monestime, who is also term-limited this year, didn't serve with Carey-Shuler but said she taught him a lot about leadership when she appointed him to an affordable housing committee which made recommendations to the county commission.

"She's intelligent and you always see her smile," said Monestime, who amended the resolution to extend the street name to N.W. 79th Street in his district. "She's a powerful individual with grace and she teaches you how to carry yourself. She demonstrates

someone who inspires other people and loves to teach and advise. We have learned so much from her."

The love fest for Carey Shula spilled beyond the commission chambers.

One by one, speakers lined up to pay homage to Carey Shula for the work she did in the community.

Former State Rep. James Bush III, who lost his seat to political novice Ashley Gantt in August, said his relationship with Carey-Shuler goes back almost 50 years.

He calls Carey-Shuler a trailblazer and her efforts and work reflect the five Black county commissioners sitting on the dais.

"When I see five Black commissioners on the dais today, it makes me feel good because the trailblazers came before us" Bush said. "Our community is making good progress."

Bush said 40 years ago, there were no sidewalks in his community and people were walking on dirt.

He said Carey-Shuler came to the rescue.

"She turned dirt into sidewalks," he said.

One Miami-Dade firefighter and paramedic credits Carey-Shula for her career.

She said the opportunities are difficult for a Black woman to become a firefighter but Carey-Shula made it possible with her support and encouragement.

"If it wasn't for Dr. Baraba Carey-Shuler, I would be a firefighter-paramedic today," the woman said.

Carey-Shuler, who now lives in West



PHOTO COURTESY OF FACEBOOK

Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler

Palm Beach, told county commissioners and the audience she was touched by the honor and felt so loved.

"I served with some of you and you were wonderful colleagues," Carey-Shuler said. "I'm standing here because I didn't do all these things by myself. I did those things because of your help."

She said she's proud of the work Hardemon has done thus far in the


district.

"I'm really proud of Keon and thank you," she said. "I am proud of the job you are doing."

Carey-Shuler also praised Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and county commissioners for "great" team work, especially during the Surfside condo tragedy last year.

"You guys are doing a wonderful job as a team," she said.

JAY FUNERAL HOME



Claude Gilyard, 65, ES veteran, died October 11. Service will be held 11am Saturday Covenant MBC.


Devon Brown, 62, air conditioning repairman, died October 2. Service will be held 11am Saturday at Lee C. Jay Memorial Chapel.

Linda Johnson, 67, died October 15. Service will be held 12 noon Saturday at Logos Baptist Church.

Sedrick Robinson, 26, truck driver, died October 12. Service will be held 1pm Saturday at Lee C. Jay Memorial Chapel.

Pauline Brown, 93, environmental services, died October 14. Service will be held 1pm Saturday at Second Baptist Church.

ROY MIZELL & KURTZ FUNERAL HOME



Iva E. Wallace, 95, died October 7. Memorial service will be held 11am Saturday, October 22, at St. Ann Episcopal Church (Hallandale Beach).


Verglene Thompson Webb, 92, died October 14. Service will be held 2pm Saturday, October 22, at Perkins Funeral Home (Cuthbert, GA).

Maudlyn Porter, 102, died October 7. Service will be held Sunday, October 30. Time and place to be determined.


Constance Postell, 67, died October 16. Arrangements are pending.

Wesley Ford, died October 16. Arrangements are pending.

RANGE FUNERAL HOME



Marva L. Stewart Pittman, 70, retired military nurse, died October 9 at the VA Hospital. Service will be held 1pm Saturday in the chapel.



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# Prayerful Living

## Relief

CONTINUED FROM 1B

As the 'Canes got a look at the current state of Black Fort Myers, debris that previously had blocked streets, along with damaged furnishings and flooring from homes recently flooded by the rising creeks, was piled on sidewalks awaiting removal as recovery efforts pick up steam.

"I wished we could have gone deeper into the communities where the help was really needed," Barnes said. "I just hope other people start to see what's going on and go into the areas that were most affected."

A "Thank You Jesus" sign on one street seemed to say, "Sure, we got hit. Hard. But we're still standing, by the grace of the Almighty."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IGHS

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