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# THE CHRONICLE

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## Parkland High School graduate named curator at the Smithsonian

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem's own, Rev. Teddy R. Reeves, has been named curator of religion at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

Reeves, who was raised on the southside of the city, said although he didn't know it then, his journey to the nation's capital began at St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church.

"St. Stephen was a pivotal part of my formation as a young man, as a minister, and now as a scholar of religion. I pinpoint St. Stephen and the folks that were there and still there as pivotal pieces in my development," Reeves continued. "It was a place that I could be, and be safely. These people knew that God had something in me that needed to come out."

Although he grew up in the church, Reeves said he didn't find his calling until years later. Growing up he wanted to go into journalism and become a news anchor, so after graduating from Parkland High School, Reeves decided to attend Hampton University, where he majored in journalism. "I wanted to be the next Bryant Gumbel," Reeves said, laughing.

"So I went to Hampton University because they have the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and I began to evolve in that space. Growing up reli-



Submitted photo

Rev. Teddy R. Reeves

gious was a quintessential part, but it wasn't something I wanted to do as a profession."

Shortly after arriving on campus, Reeves decided to change his major to English and that's when he started to realize his true passion. "I went to the English department and it really began to plant the seeds of shifting, because as I was reading, I found myself reading with a religious lens. I always tried

to find how this connected to the church, how it connected to religion," Reeves said.

After undergrad, Reeves took a teaching position in California before taking another position at a private school in Charlotte. But according to Reeves, religion was always there.

"I'm teaching sophomore English, so that's Brit-lit, American-lit, but I'm always pointing out and talking about reli-

gion," Reeves said. "

One day while teaching class, Reeves said he heard a voice telling him to go to theological college. Reeves told The Chronicle that he ignored that voice for a while, but it continued to get louder.

"It wasn't an unfamiliar voice - I had heard the voice of God before - but it was so clear and audible that I knew this was something that had to be done," Reeves continued. "I go

to church that Sunday and the pastor announces he's about to start the new minister-in-training class ... I was like, this is another sign."

Reeves signed up for the course led by Bishop Kenneth Yelverton, completed it, and soon thereafter became a licensed minister. After doing his research on seminars, Reeves decided to attend Princeton Theological Seminary, where he received his master's in divinity in 2013 and he is currently a Ph.D candidate at Fordham University.

In 2018 Reeves created a multi-city initiative and conversation series called "gOD-Talk," which explores ways millennials are engaging with faith in the 21st century. The initiative has received several Telly Awards, which honors excellence in video on all platforms, and the "Audience Honor" award at the 2020 Shorty Awards, which recognizes people and organizations that produce real-time short-form content on social media.

As curator and co-lead of religion at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Reeves said he will continue research on the digital aspects of religion, generational theory as it relates to religion, and the African American religious experiences as a whole from Christianity to Voodoo.

"My job is to really chronicle, preserve, and tell the stories of African

American religion that moves beyond Christian spaces that's one part of our story," Reeves continued. "African Americans in this country are still by and large Christian, but there are spaces African Americans have been in since our arrival in this country, whether that's Islam or whether that's other forms of African spiritual religion, or other form of religious practice or spiritual practice, really talking about that depth that is my work."

The NMAAHC is one of the Smithsonian's newest museums and is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American culture. When asked how he wants to be remembered at the Smithsonian and for his work in religion, Reeves said he wants to look back 20-30 years from now and see someone carrying on his work.

"Things will evolve and things will change, but I think the legacy for me is that we laid the groundwork. I pray I'm living 20, 30, 40 years from now and someone comes along and is picking up the work and doing greater work," Reeves said. "As a believer, I've always believed that someone greater will always come ... you might be the best in your time and in that season, but someone greater will come along and I welcome that."

## County begins disengagement from Cardinal, realignment with Partners

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

From now until May 5, the Forsyth County government is seeking public input on its disengagement plan from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare.

Here's what we know: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services contracts LME/MCO (Local Management Entity/Managed

Care Organization) services to different providers, but individual counties have the final say so in who provides those services. Since 2016 Cardinal Innovations Healthcare has managed the county's behavioral services, but last November the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners voted to end the relationship with Cardinal Innovations Healthcare.

In February, county staff presented a disengagement plan to the board that recommended that the county realign with Partners Behavioral Health Management and during their meeting on March 4, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the plan and essentially got the ball rolling on the disengagement process.

In order to change LME/MCOs, there are

several steps the county has to take. First, they have to inform the state health secretary of the disengagement request, who has 90 days to decide whether to approve. But before that, the county will accept public comments on the disengagement plan for 60 days and after that the comments will be posted on the county's website for another 30 days.

After the public comment period, county staff will submit a formal request to the state and if it is approved, the disengagement process will begin. According to county attorney Gordon Watkins, the process should be complete around October of this year.

Partners Behavioral Health Management was formed through a merger of three separate local



management entities in 2012. Partners' mission is to "manage a behavioral health care system funded by federal, state, and local taxpayer dollars. We ensure all individuals who are eligible for our programs have access to quality providers and effective services. We improve lives and strengthen our communities by focusing on positive outcomes and the proper use of funds entrusted to us."

Currently, Partners serves nine different coun-

ties across the state, including Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Rutherford, Surry, and Yadkin Counties. Along with Forsyth County, Partners is also working on realignment in Cabarrus County, Union County, and Stanly County.

To help ease the process, the county has established a Transition Planning Team comprised of stakeholders, healthcare providers, recipients of services, and other members of the commu-

nity. During the planning team's first meeting on March 26, Partners' CEO, Rhett Melton, said, "Partners is very honored and humbled ... that the county has elected to pursue engagement with Partners. We don't take that lightly and we don't take that as anything other than a testament to our work and the value that we try to live every day."

The disengagement plan can be found at <https://forsyth.cc/disengagement.aspx>. The public comments will be accepted until May 5. Comments can be left on the County's website or sent by mail to the Forsyth County Manager's Office, 201 N. Chestnut Street. For more information, visit <https://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/>.

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