



# Jackson encouraged to emerge as vocal leader for FSU football

SPORTS, 1B

# Tallahassee Democrat

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2025 | TALLAHASSEE.COM PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## HURRICANE KATRINA 20 YEARS LATER



Floodwaters from Hurricane Katrina cover streets on Aug. 30, 2005, in New Orleans. Much of the area was inundated as levees began to break and leak around Lake Pontchartrain. According to federal estimates, Katrina saw the third-highest death toll from a hurricane in recorded U.S. history. VINCENT LAFORET/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

# Jailhouse snitches testify on Adelson

Woman says she was offered grand piano for false testimony

Jeff Burlew  
Tallahassee Democrat  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Two jailhouse snitches who got close to Donna Adelson during their time together in the Leon County Detention Facility gave blockbuster testimony in her murder trial, with one saying the defendant admitted she was guilty and the other saying she was offered \$10,000 and a grand piano to lie to investigators.

The testimony of Patricia Byrd and Drina Bernhardt marked a climactic near end Aug. 29 to the state's case. Though two last witnesses, including a handwriting expert and a police investigator, later took the stand, prosecutors rested their case afterward.

And while prosecutors hoped their testimony would make an impression on jurors, one of Adelson's lawyers attacked their credibility during cross-examination and suggested they were looking for deals.

Both women are being held in the Leon County Detention Facility for violating their probation in unrelated cases and testified wearing purple jail jumpsuits and shackles.

The informants were not a complete secret in the case — the Tallahassee Democrat reported on them in recent months as their names came up in court hearings and filings, including one unsuccessful attempt by Adelson's defense lawyers, Joshua Zelman and Jackie Fulford, to get Leon Circuit Judge Stephen Everett booted off the trial.

And while prosecutors signaled earlier that Adelson offered the women

See TESTIFY, Page 4A

## Note to readers

We will not be printing a paper on Monday, Sept. 1, but will be providing it to you via the eNewspaper. You can always find the latest news on our website, mobile app, newsletters and social media. Subscribers can access the eNewspaper by going to our website and clicking on eNewspaper in the black navigation bar.

## Hurricane Katrina devastated the Lower Ninth Ward; remaining residents and nonprofits work to bring neighborhood back to life

Rick Jervis USA TODAY

NEW ORLEANS – Concrete steps still stand sentry over empty lots here in the Lower Ninth Ward, their houses long washed away. • Overgrown lots outnumber grocery stores. Streets, once filled with the sounds of children playing or older folks playing dominoes, are mostly quiet, punctured occasionally by the sound of a distant lawn mower. • “Wasn’t always like this,” said Harry Sims, 72, whose house, on aptly-named Flood Street, is ringed on three sides by empty lots. “Katrina chased them all away.”

It’s been 20 years since Hurricane Katrina roared ashore on the Gulf Coast on the morning of Aug. 29, 2005, and the federal levees failed across New Orleans, unleashing flood torrents across the city.

The Category 3 hurricane and the ensuing breached levees and floodwalls caused more than 1,300 deaths – many of them in the Lower Ninth Ward – and around \$200 billion in damages (adjusted for inflation), making it at the time the costliest hurricane ever to hit the U.S. The disaster still claims the third-highest death toll from a hurricane in recorded U.S. history, according to federal estimates.

See KATRINA, Page 9A



Harry Sims, 72, a longtime Lower Ninth Ward resident, helped rescue several people on his skiff during the floods. He built a new home on Flood Street using federal recovery funds, but there are empty lots all around him. “You can’t run from home,” he says. JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

## More inside

WeatherTiger: All clear so far, but Hurricane Katrina shows how bad September can be

Page 2A

100 YEARS

POCKET PROTECT

0% INTEREST FINANCING\*

TRIPLE SALE

50% OFF

ROOF INSTALLATION\*

\$200 LOWES GIFT CARD with Purchase\*

TRUST YOUR HOME TO THE LOCAL EXPERTS.

With over 100,000 projects completed in our 16 years of service, we bring a legacy of excellence and reliability to your home.

\*Offer applies only to Best Choice Roofing's "Ultimate+" Package. Must purchase materials and roofing system from Best Choice Roofing. Financing available with minimum purchase and approved credit. Best Choice Roofing is neither a broker nor a lender. Financing is provided by third-party lenders unaffiliated with Best Choice Roofing, under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and such lender, all subject to credit requirements and satisfactory completion of finance documents. Any finance terms advertised are estimates only. Ask for details. New orders only. Not valid with any other offer, or previous job. Does not include material costs. Offer is not eligible with insurance claims. Only valid at participating locations. For confirmation, please contact Best Choice Roofing at: 844-314-0890 \*\*Triple Sale: 0% Interest Financing Option. Best Choice Roofing is neither a broker nor a lender. Financing is provided by third party lenders unaffiliated with Best Choice Roofing, under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and such lender, all of which are subject to credit requirements and satisfactory completion of finance documents. \*\*\*Triple Sale: \$200 Lowes Gift Card with Purchase. Gift Card Consumer Disclosure Rules: All participants who purchase a complete roofing system will receive a \$200 Lowes gift card. Retail value is \$200. Offer sponsored by Best Choice Roofing (BCR). Limit one per household. This offer is valid for homeowners over 18 years of age. Employees of BCR or affiliated companies or entities and their immediate family members are not eligible for this offer. Promotion may not be extended, transferred, or substituted except that BCR may substitute a gift card of equal or greater value if it deems it necessary. Gift card will be mailed to the participant via first class United States Mail or e-mailed within 30 days of date of finalized purchase. Not valid in conjunction with any other promotion or discount of any kind other than as stated in this promotion. Offer not sponsored or promoted by Lowe's and is subject to change without notice prior to reservation. See https://www.lowes.com/gift-card-faq.html for gift card restrictions. Expires 8/31/2025. \*\*Call During Program - Receive \$50 Gas Card with In-Home Estimate Consumer Disclosure/Award Rules: All participants who attend an estimated 60- to 90-minute in-home product consultation will receive a \$50 gas card. No purchase is necessary. In-home product consultation must take place on or before 8/31/2025. Retail value is \$50. Offer sponsored by Best Choice Roofing (BCR). Limit one per household. BCR procures, sells, and installs roofing systems. This offer is valid for homeowners over 18 years of age. If married or involved with a life partner, both cohabiting persons must attend and complete presentation together. Participants must have a photo ID and be legally able to enter into a contract. The following persons are not eligible for this offer: employees of BCR or affiliated companies or entities, their immediate family members, previous participants in a BCR in-home consultation within the past 12 months, and all current and former BCR customers. Promotion may not be extended, transferred, or substituted except that BCR may substitute a gift card of equal or greater value if it deems it necessary. Gift card will be mailed to the participant via first class United States Mail or e-mailed within 30 days of in-home product consultation. Not valid in conjunction with any other promotion or discount of any kind other than as set forth in this promotion. Offer subject to change without notice prior to reservation of in-home product consultation. See bestchoiceroofing.com/promotional-disclaimers for gift card restrictions.

Schedule Your **FREE** Next Day Roofing Inspection

**850-279-1335**

For a limited time, BCR is also offering a **\$50 GAS CARD** with an In-Home Estimate!

License No.: AL: #31516 | AZ: ROC 358545 | DE: DE-2023-00009333 | FL: CCC1329859, CCC#1330211, CGC#06268 | IN: #86552, #822071 | OR: CCB#247525 | PA: PA-187067 | SC: #126953 | TN: #1651 | VA: #2705196848

