



James E. Shepard, Founder

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**Family Fare Convenience Stores establishes \$25,000 Endowed Entrepreneurship Program Fund at North Carolina Central University**

DURHAM, N.C.— [Family Fare's Shared Purpose Initiative](#) has created and fully endowed an Entrepreneurship Endowment at [North Carolina Central University](#) (NCCU)'s School of Business.

After years of planning and collaborating with NCCU leaders, Dr. Lee Barnes, president of Family Fare, Jeff Mercer, Business Consultant for Family Fare and Jay Harris, owner of Harris Beverages recently presented the gift to Johnson O. Akinleye, Ph.D., chancellor of NCCU and the [NCCU School of Business](#) and Division of Institutional Advancement teams. The gift establishes the Family Fare Endowed Entrepreneurship Program Fund and will be matched with a Title III federal grant for a total impact of \$50,000.

Akinleye expressed his gratitude: "I am thankful that local companies like Family Fare and Harris Beverages give back to the communities in which they serve. With this gift, North Carolina Central University will nurture future entrepreneurs who continue the legacy of our graduates who lead businesses in the Triangle region and across the state of North Carolina."

Anthony Nelson, Ph.D., dean of the NCCU School of Business was equally elated to receive the gift. "We are extremely grateful for the partnership with Family Fare. The School of Business prepares students by emphasizing the key ingredients for success in today's future business leaders. These ingredients include entrepreneurial thinking, and this endowment helps us to further our mission."

Jeff Mercer, a member of NCCU's Board of Visitors, revealed that "North Carolina Central University provided me a foundation that I have utilized in my business endeavors. I want to give back with not only my time on the board, but in a financially recognizable way for helping students understand and appreciate entrepreneurship."

The funding will be used to establish an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub that will serve as a co-working space and training ground for NCCU students interested in launching entrepreneurial ventures.

Family Fare Convenience Stores is headquartered in Durham, N.C., and has over 100 locations throughout North Carolina and Virginia.

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Harris Beverages is the premier distributor of beverages to stores in an eight-county area in central North Carolina and Durham's only locally owned and operated beverage wholesaler.

### **About North Carolina Central University**

*North Carolina Central University prepares students to succeed in the global marketplace. Consistently ranked as a top Historically Black College or University and regional university in the south, NCCU offers flagship programs in the sciences, education, law, business, nursing and the arts. Founded in 1910, NCCU remains committed to diversity in and access to higher education. Our alumni excel in a wide variety of academic and professional fields. NCCU is a constituent institution of the University North Carolina System. The university's Strategic Plan 2019-2024, "Charting a New Landscape for Student-Center Success," has four goals: student access and success; innovation, research and entrepreneurship; collaboration and partnerships; and institutional sustainability. Visit [www.nccu.edu](http://www.nccu.edu).*

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