The National Federation of The Blind Alabama Affiliate

2025 Annual Convention

# “The Power of Collaboration: Together We Soar”

## March 14-16, 2025



Welcome

Hotel Capstone

320 Paul W. Bryant Drive

Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

Phone: 1.800.477.2262

Convention Registration: 35.00

No Event Tickets Available During Convention

National Representative

Pamela Allen, First Vice President

National Federation of the Blind

NFB Louisiana Affiliate President

Louisiana Center for The Blind Director

## NFB Pledge

I pledge to participate actively in the effort of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.

## INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY, AND SOCIAL CONDUCT

We are committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone. Thank you for cultivating an atmosphere in which participants from diverse backgrounds can learn, network, and share with each other in an environment of mutual respect.

We recognize a shared responsibility to create and uphold that atmosphere for the benefit of all.

The following link will take you to the NFB website:

<https://www.nfbal.org/>

## NFB of Alabama Officers and Board of Directors 2024-2025

President: Barbara Manuel

1st Vice President: Tamika Williams

2nd Vice President: Jill Rossiter

Secretary: Grace Anderson

Treasurer: Latresa Berry

Board Seat 1: Ashley Malson

Board Seat 2: Jeffery Wilson

Board Seat 3: Zippora Jones

Board Seat 4: Brenda Houston

Board Seat 5: Tiffany Moore

Board Seat 6: Pazater Turner

Registration Chair: Zippora Jones

Door Prize Chair: Brenda Houston

Scholarship Chair: Grace Anderson

Vendor Fair Chair: Tamika Williams

## **Friday, March 14, 2025**

### 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

University of Alabama Stadium, Bryant-Denny Museum Tour with Lunch

### 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM & 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Registration

Pre-Function Area

### 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Vendor Fair

Governor’s Room & Pre-Function Area

### 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM & 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Hospitality Parlor – Room 314

### 1:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Welcome: Barbara Manuel, President NFB of Alabama

Introduction of Vendor Fair Showcase: Tamika Williams, 1st Vice President

And Tabaris Brown, 1st Vice President, Montgomery Chapter

Convention Announcements: Ronisha Hall, Tuscaloosa Chapter

Murphy Room

### 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

National Federation of the Blind of Alabama Affiliate Board Meeting

President Barbara Manuel Presiding

Murphy Room

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Breakout I: Strengthening Communities Through Partnerships

Lauren Ballard

Community Health Programs Coordinator

the Area Agency on Aging of West Alabama

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Ottia Phillips

Executive Director

Easter Seal West Alabama

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Murphy Room

### 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### Breakout II: From Barriers to Breakthroughs: The Role of Assistive Tech

Adam Suitor, President

Computer & Adaptive Aids Consultant

Emerald Coast Vision Aids, Inc. Veteran Owned Business

Pensacola, Florida

Fitzpatrick Room

### 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

### Breakout I: Allies in Conflict Resolution

Kelley Park

AIDB Chief Human Resources Officer

Talladega, Alabama

Dr. Shametra Miller

Interim Executive Director AIDB-North and Director of Employee Relations and Title IX Coordinator,

Talladega, Alabama

Murphy Room

### 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

### Breakout II: Turning Dreams into Businesses: The Power of Entrepreneurship

Dr. Joshua V. White, Ph.D.,

Program Manager

Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute

The University of Alabama

Tuscaloosa Alabama

Fitzpatrick Room

### 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM - NFB of Alabama Seniors Division

Carol Braithwaite, President

Murphy Room

### 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM - National Association of Blind Merchants

Tracy Watts, President

President Room

### 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM - Dinner Break

### 7:00 PM –11:00 PM – NFB Reception (BBQ Buffet Feast)

### Dress up, dance, & celebrate as we stroll back during our Down Through the Decades party! Got talent? Enter the talent showcase that will also be that night

Felisha Johnson, Presiding

Ballroom C & D

## **Saturday March 15, 2025**

### 7:45 AM – 8:30 AM

Registration

Pre-function Area

"The Power of Collaboration; Together We Soar NFB of Alabama Convention"

General Session

Hotel Capstone Ballroom

### 9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Call to Order:

Barbara Manuel, President

NFB of Alabama

Opening Ceremonies

Welcome: Brenda Houston, President

Tuscaloosa Southwest Chapter

Invocation: Atha Holloway, Minister

All Nation Church of God

NFB Montgomery Chapter

NFB of Alabama Membership Coordinator

NFB Pledge: Wendy McKee

NFB of Alabama At Large Member

Presentation of Colors: UA Army ROTC Color Guard, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa AL

National Anthem: Laramie Long

Birmingham AL.

Proclamation: Latresia Berry, NFB of Alabama Treasurer

### 9:30 AM – 10:10 AM

2025 National Report

Pamela Allen, First Vice President

National Federation of the Blind

NFB Louisiana Affiliate President

Louisiana Center for the Blind Director

Ruston Louisiana

### 10:10 AM – 10:35 AM

Promoting Collaboration and Serving People

Dennis A. Gilliam, Ed.D., President

Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind

Talladega, AL

### 10:35 AM – 11:00 AM

W. Ashley Townsend, MA, CRC

Assistant Commissioner

Blind and Deaf Services

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Montgomery, AL

### 11:00 AM – 11:20 AM

Teachers of Tomorrow; Broadening Blind Children’s Future

Krista Bischoff

NFB Teacher of Tomorrow Participant

Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Special Education Teacher

Boaz City School System

Boaz, Alabama

### 11:20 AM – 11:50 AM

Celebrating Progress Through Collaboration: Highlights of the People’s Movement; National Federation of the Blind of Alabama Affiliate Report

Barbara Manuel, NFB of Alabama President

Mobile, AL

11:50 AM – 12:00 PM

Convention Announcements

Zippora Jones, President

NFB of Alabama Montgomery Chapter

### 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM Lunch Break

### 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

NFB of Alabama Vendor Fair

Governor’s Room

### 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Hospitality Parlor, Room 314

### 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

Breakout I: Navigating Your Future the Structure Discovery Way

Pamela Allen, First Vice President

National Federation of the Blind

NFB Louisiana Affiliate President

Louisiana Center for the Blind Director

Ruston Louisiana

Roland Allen

Orientation & Mobility Travel Instructor

Ruston, Louisiana

Murphy Room

Breakout II: Collaborative Tips to Foster an Enhanced Life

Joshua Whitmire

Outreach Specialist / Peer Specialist

Disability Rights and Resources

Birmingham, Alabama

Gayle Room

Breakout III: Unlocking Success Through Ethical Leadership

Dr. Willie Patterson

Redeem Community Church Pastor

Professor, University of South Alabama

Mobile, Alabama

President’s Room

### 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### Breakout I: Collaborative Relationships: Advancing Vision Rehabilitation Together

Dennis A. Gilliam, Ed.D., President

Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind

Talladega, Alabama

W. Ashley Townsend, MA, CRC

Assistant Commissioner

Blind and Deaf Services

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Montgomery, AL

Murphy Room

Breakout II: “AI Unleashed: Transforming Ideas into Reality"

Jason Martin

Technical Innovation Product Manager

American Printing House for the Blind

Prattville, Alabama

Gayle Room

Breakout III: Tools and techniques to Foster Independence

Gabriella Orton

Assistive Technology Trainer

Alabama Freedom Center for the Blind

Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind

Decatur, AL

President’s Room

### 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Breakout I: The Power of Peer Networking

Roland Allen

Orientation & Mobility Travel Instructor

Ruston, Louisiana

Pamela Allen, First Vice President

National Federation of the Blind

NFB Louisiana Affiliate President

Louisiana Center for the Blind Director

Ruston Louisiana

Murphy Room

Breakout II: From Innovation to Icon: The Smart Phone Journey

Collin Frase,

Assistive Technology Specialist for Blind Services

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Montgomery, AL

Gayle Room

Breakout III: Inspiring Minds; Igniting Possibilities

Dr. Nancy C. Pack

The Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled

Alabama Library Service Director

Montgomery, AL

President’s Room

Adjourn

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Hospitality Parlor Room 314

### 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

2025 Annual Affiliate Banquet

Hotel Capstone Ballroom

Entertainment: Tony Nixon, Tuscaloosa Chapter

Presider: Tamika Williams, NFB of Alabama First Vice President

Invocation: Dr. Bishop Rutledge, Birmingham Chapter

Musical selections

Dinner Served

Introduction of National Representative: Tamika Williams, NFB of Alabama First Vice President

Banquet Address: National Federation of the Blind Representative

Pamela Allen

National Federation of the Blind

NFB of Louisiana Affiliate President

Louisiana Center for the Blind Director

Ruston Louisiana

Scholarship Awards: Grace Anderson, Scholarship Committee Chairperson

Awards Ceremony: Tamika Williams, First Vice President

Barbara Manuel, Affiliate President

Pre-Authorization Contribution (PAC): Zippora Jones

Montgomery Chapter President

Adjourn

### 9:15 PM – 11:00 PM

Pies for a Purpose: Make a Splash for the Cause!"

### Pie for Povinelli?

### Would you like to throw a pie at Povinelli! It’s all in good spirit for the work of the federation, and the best part? You have to be there to take your shot! Get ready for some fun, laughs, and a whole lot of mess!

Zippora Jones, Presiding

Sunday, March 16, 2025

### 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM

Devotion

Governor’s Room

Felisha Johnson, Minister

Tuscaloosa Southwest Chapter

### 10:00 AM

Alabama Affiliate Annual Business Meeting

Call to Order: Barbara Manuel, NFB of Alabama President

Invocation: Pazater Turner, President

Talladega Chapter

Reading of Minutes: Grace Anderson, NFB of Alabama Secretary

Treasurer Report: Latresia Berry, Affiliate Treasurer

Nominating Committee Report: Brenda Houston, Chairperson

Open Positions

Executive Officers

President: Barbara Manuel

First Vice President: Tamika Williams

Second Vice President: Jill Rossiter

Secretary: Grace Anderson

Treasurer: Latresia Berry

Board Position 1 - Ashley Malson

Board Position 3 - Zippora Jones

Board Position 5: Tiffany Moore

Elections

Appointment of 2025 Delegate and Alternate

Affiliate Grants to National

Chapter Highlights

Old Business

New Business

Adjourn



National Federation of the Blind of Alabama

Pamela Allen 2025 National Representative

Originally from Lancaster, New York, Pam was blessed to grow up in a loving and supportive family surrounded by high expectations. Blindness was not viewed as a barrier. The loving example and nurturing environment gave her a solid foundation upon which to build.

When she was a senior at Denison University majoring in psychology with a minor in women’s studies, Pam was awarded a national scholarship by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB). This opportunity would be transformative in ways she could not have imagined. It allowed her to engage with the NFB community, where she served as vice president of the Ohio Association of Blind Students and secretary of the National Association of Blind Students. Additionally, she gained valuable experience working with the Children’s Program at the Louisiana Center for the Blind during her summer breaks in college.

Pam’s commitment to empowering blind individuals ultimately led her to a leadership role as the Executive Director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind, located in Ruston, Louisiana. In this capacity since 2001, she has been instrumental in developing and overseeing programs that equip blind individuals with essential skills for independent living and success. Her dedication extends to her involvement with the NFB at both state and national levels. Pam serves as the president of the National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana, where she advocates for the rights and opportunities of blind individuals across the state and around the country. Her leadership and advocacy efforts have been pivotal in advancing the organization’s mission and initiatives. She serves on the Advisory Council for the Professional Development and Research Institute on Blindness at Louisiana Tech University. She was also appointed by Governor Landry to serve on the Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council.

On a national scale, Pam currently holds the position of First Vice President on the NFB’s board of directors. In this role, she collaborates with fellow leaders to shape policies and programs that promote equality and accessibility for blind individuals nationwide. She also serves as Vice President for the National Association of Blind Rehabilitation Professionals.

Pam and her husband, Roland, a talented cane travel instructor and dedicated leader, live in Ruston and have been married since 2001. In addition to traveling, Pam enjoys reading, baking, rock climbing, and shopping. She and Roland are active members of their community and love giving back. Serving as national rep is a blessing and honor that enables her to learn from and share with her Federation family.

We believe in the capabilities of blind people; we take action to advance the aspirations of the blind; and we create a loving community where we learn to be our most powerful selves. Our faith in the capacity and dignity of blind individuals is at the heart of our mission.

The NFB provides a loving, supportive, and encouraging family that shares in the challenges and triumphs of our blind brothers and sisters. This deeply held faith in one another sustains members during times of challenge and cheers on individual and collective successes. Love is the feeling that permeates our organization and pushes us to expect the best from each other.

The National Federation of the Blind of Alabama, Extends our deepest gratitude to each of you. Your presence, energy, and commitment to advocate for equality and independence is what made this event truly special.

We will continue striving for a future where blind and low-vision individuals have equal opportunities and rights.

Thank you once again for being a part of our mission and for making this convention a success. We look forward to working alongside you to build a brighter future for all."

## NFB One Minute Message

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.