



>> BALDWIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## BCSD seeks public input on the impact of House Bill 581

The Baldwin County Board of Education is seeking community input as it considers opting out of Georgia House Bill 581, a new law set to take effect on Jan. 1, 2025. House Bill 581 introduces a statewide homestead exemption that caps the annual increase in property values for tax purposes, limiting growth based on the previous year's inflation rate.

House Bill 581 addresses property tax assessments for homeowners who have qualified for homestead exemption. This bill affects funding to local municipalities and county governments, including local school districts. While this exemption may reduce tax obligations for homeowners, it could result in decreased revenue for local school districts

and county governments. To offset these funding reductions, governing bodies may need to increase millage rates or other taxes and fees or reduce critical services.

House Bill 581 allows local governments to have a one-time opportunity to opt out. The Baldwin County Board of Education will hold three hearings to discuss the impacts

that it could have on the school district's budget. While the measure provides property tax relief for homeowners, it may significantly impact public school funding, which relies heavily on local property taxes. The Baldwin County Board of Education is concerned that the cap could reduce revenue, making it more challenging to maintain current programs and

resources for students. Examples of potential impacts include limited funding for instructional materials and technology upgrades; budget cuts to programs such as athletics, fine arts, and after school; reduced availability of counseling, mental health programs, and interventions for

MORE HB 581 >> A2

>> GEORGIA COLLEGE



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To the left is an original painting by Flannery O'Connor of the farmhouse at Andalusia with her mother, Regina Cline O'Connor, in the foreground next to the dinner bell. To the right is a photograph of Mary Flannery O'Connor circa 1947.

## Newly discovered art by O'Connor to be unveiled

One of the great American writers, Flannery O'Connor is a world-renowned icon of Southern Gothic fiction, but she was also a visual artist, and a newly discovered collection of her work will soon be unveiled.

Totalling 39 pieces — from oil paintings and a self-portrait to wood-burned illustrations and linoleum-block prints — the collection will be revealed

in March at O'Connor's alma mater of Georgia College & State University (GCSU) in Milledgeville, where she lived most of her life and completed her greatest works.

"Scholars continue to study Flannery, to research her, and to use her as a model in creative writing programs," said Dr. Katie Simon, interim executive director of GCSU's The

Flannery O'Connor Institute for the Humanities and an associate professor of English. "She's taught as an example of literature, but scholars are starting to look at her as a visual artist, as well. These paintings reveal that she never stopped creating visual art until her death."

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>> BALDWIN COUNTY

## Winter storm had little effect on Baldwin County



CONTRIBUTED

A light flurry decorated the roofs and some grassy areas at The Harbors in Milledgeville.

Bailey McCully  
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On Jan. 9, Baldwin County entered a state of emergency in preparation for the winter weather coming over the weekend.

With uncertainty about what to expect, schools in the area shut down and warming shelters at the Milledgeville Fire Department and Fire Station 2 on Dunlap

Road were opened to the public.

Despite the potential of relatively heavy snow, Baldwin County received only a light flurry that led to icy conditions rather than a winter wonderland. According to Emergency Management Director Wayne Johnson, the northern side of the county was the most impacted by icy roads. One wreck reportedly

occurred over the weekend, potentially caused by these icy conditions, in the 800 block of Highway 212. No one was reported injured, and Johnson stated no other accidents or injuries occurred during the duration of the storm.

"Icy roads were confined to the northern ends of the county. Everything else was fine," said Johnson.

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FOSSILS >> PAGE B1

WEATHER

58 HIGH Friday Partly Cloudy 39 LOW

Detailed forecast / B8

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The Baldwin Bulletin

# PAINTING

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O'Connor's first notable visual works were original cartoons she created as an undergraduate student at GCSU (then called Georgia State College for Women). These illustrations were published in the university's student newspaper and literary magazine. O'Connor earned her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology degree in 1945.

Artwork created by O'Connor throughout her life will be debuted at an exhibit called "Flannery the Visual Artist," which will anchor a months-long slate of events at GCSU, celebrating the centennial of O'Connor's birth on March 25, 1925.

Stored for decades by family and close friends, this collection has never been viewed in its entirety by the public. Several of the pieces were gifted to GCSU last month, by the Mary Flannery O'Connor Charitable Trust.

"Georgia College is the epicenter of Flannery O'Connor," said GCSU President Cathy Cox. "From our stewardship of Flannery's home at Andalusia, to our library's special collection of her work, the university attracts O'Connor experts from around the world to explore her roots and cultural impact, and we're excited to share these new dimensions of her artistic legacy with the world."

The exhibit will open to the public at 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 26, in



COURTESY OF GCSU

**Andalusia Farm was the home of Flannery O'Connor and presently serves as a museum archiving O'Connor's work and life on the farm.**

Georgia College & State University's Magnolia Ballroom, and will run all day until a 4 p.m. presentation titled "O'Connor's Other Art" by Dr. Robert Donahoo, professor of English at Sam Houston State University.

On March 27, the art that has been gifted to Georgia College will be relocated to O'Connor's former home, Andalusia Farm, a designated National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, which is owned/operated by GCSU, where it will be paired with additional personal items and artifacts in an exhibit called "Hidden Treasures." That exhibit will run through the summer.

### Flannery and Georgia

Flannery O'Connor is synonymous with Milledgeville and the South, and for good reason.

After growing up in Milledgeville, then

earning her degree from Georgia College, she lived at Andalusia Farm from 1951 until her death in 1964. During that time, she completed 32 short stories and two published novels. These stories often focused on the southern region of the United States and its complicated history.

"If you're in Georgia, you might celebrate Flannery as a really famous local writer; however, her reach goes way beyond the state, and way beyond the South," Simon said of GCSU's most famous alumna.

O'Connor's literature has remained in print continuously since her death. Her anthologized works, "The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor," won the National Book Award in 1972. She is even attracting a new generation of fans through Maya Hawke's portrayal in the Ethan Hawke-directed biopic

"Wildcat," released last summer.

"We believe this art can be best understood and appreciated in relation to the place where it was created, Milledgeville," said Dr. Farrell O'Gorman, co-trustee of the O'Connor Charitable Trust, as well as chair of the English Department at Belmont Abbey College. "We greatly value GCSU's clear commitment to preserving O'Connor's legacy and to sharing her work with visitors from across the country and around the world."

O'Connor also often explored her Roman Catholic faith in her writing, as well as themes of morality and ethics in the post-Civil War world.

"Flannery's struggle was, 'I want to be a good creative writer, and I want to be a good Catholic. And is that possible?' For Flannery O'Connor, it was," said Dr. Bruce Gentry, Flannery O'Connor Institute fellow and professor

emeritus of the GCSU English Department. "There are plenty of writers who are seriously religious, and they can be good writers, too, but it's not a path that is easy to follow. Flannery is unique."

### Flannery at 100

"Flannery is taught as an example of craft to writers, but more recently, we're seeing how she has been a model of craft to musicians and songwriters, too," Simon explained.

Author Irwin H. Streight's 2024 book, "Flannery at the Grammys," cites O'Connor's influence on musicians including Lucinda Williams, Bruce Springsteen, PJ Harvey and Tom Waits, among many others.

In recognition of these impacts, Flannery at 100 will feature a songwriters' workshop led by folk musician Sally Jaye. A concert at Andalusia

Farm by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Shawn Mullins, and a daylong music festival featuring Colin Cutler and Hot Pepper Jam are also on the schedule.

In addition to the music festival and the exhibits of O'Connor's visual art, Flannery at 100 will feature a variety of presentations; a free screening of "Wildcat" with an introduction by the film's producers, Mary Rogers and Joe Goodman; the inaugural Southern Gothic Lecture Series; and several book readings, hosted by the O'Connor Institute for the Humanities. There will also be free tours of Andalusia all day Tuesday, March 25, and Saturday, March 29.

See the full Flannery at 100 calendar of events online. Learn more about Flannery O'Connor and schedule a tour of her former home at Andalusia online or call 478-445-8722.

For more information about the "Flannery at 100" events and exhibits, contact Amanda Respass, GCSU director of public affairs, at amanda.respass@gcsu.edu or 478-445-7828.

Please see attached photos. Image 1: Photograph of Mary Flannery O'Connor circa 1947. Image 2: Original painting by Flannery O'Connor of the farmhouse at Andalusia with her mother, Regina Cline O'Connor, in the foreground next to the dinner bell.

-Courtesy of University Communications

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