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# Reflections of Ray

## Two Years and Counting

By Edwin Buggage  
Photos by Glenn Summers

### Katrina Two Years Later

Two years have passed since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina ripped through the city and the breaching levees as water spilled into the city wreaking havoc on neighborhoods leaving the city resembling a set from a science fiction movie. Presently, some parts of the city still lie like unoccupied ghostowns where the eerie silence of a place that once harbored the vibrant sounds of people are now hollow shells of their former selves; a façade of what was, and uncertain about what it will become.

In the crosshairs in this barrage of criticism about what has been deemed by many as a slow

recovery is New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin who has seen many bouquets and brickbats thrown his way since Hurricane Katrina, but has stood steadfast as the leader of the crescent city in this the city's darkest hour. He says is excited by some of the activity going on in the city but admits that the city still has a long way to go before it is even close to what it was being a full recovery, "It is like a tale of two cities, many aspects of our city have recovered, I'm really encouraged by the number of people who are back being over 300,000 have returned but the recovery could be accelerated if we had the money and the dollars that were supposed to flow from the federal government."

### Slow Road Home

While the federal government has been slow in doling out monies to the city which have slowed down the recovery process, some residents are also incensed by a city and state government that they see as doing a lackluster job handling the recovery. A reality not lost on Mayor Nagin who understands some of the resident's frustration. "I understand their frustration from this standpoint two years after Katrina no one could have told me that we would be sitting here two years later with only 23% of people who were supposed to get road home checks that would actually get them, and then New Orleans would have two billion dollars

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parish wide of infrastructure request that have not been funded by the federal government.” “This has pretty much left us in a position that we have had to stretch every dollar that we could to get the city to the level that it is today, so I do understand why some people are frustrated.”

As the Louisiana Road Home Program seemingly has become a roadblock that have many in the state wondering if they ever will

justice system that they see as a revolving door. Recently, Mayor Nagin came out and criticized the D.A.’s Office and wanted to bring in additional help an office that in his opinion was ineffective in keeping the streets in the city of New Orleans safe for its citizens.

Since that time an agreement was struck between the police and the D.A.’s Office as well as state and federal law enforcement agencies to help combat

largest public healthcare facility Charity Hospital stands as a decaying boarded up building. And as the days pass and those who are returning; the poor and elderly who cannot afford health insurance what are they to do? Can they afford to be sick in this city; where will they go to be cared for? Healthcare is at a crisis in the city and is such a vital part of the recovery of a city to have a healthy population.

fifty million to eight or nine hundred million dollar project.”

### Dedication to Education

As many of the city’s public schools pre-Katrina resembled warehouses for many of the young people of the crescent city, robbing them of the ability to dream, and where high achievement was more the exception than the rule. For some of the young people of

New Orleans the tumultuous waters of Hurricane Katrina may have been a watershed moment, giving the city a golden opportunity to wipe the slate clean and replace a failing school system with something that provides hope, and a chance to thrive for the next generation of young people of New Orleans.

Today many former school buildings still are unoccupied decaying structures located all over the city, today reforms there have been reforms; a

seems we’re going to have a lot of success in the Recovery School District with more qualified teachers, lower teacher to pupil ratio’s and better classrooms for our kids.”

### Race to Power: The “Home Ownership”

The thorny issue of race has reared its ugly head dividing the city among racial lines. Several elections including the race for mayor found Nagin who previously was the poster child for change and ethics in government and a trusted ally in the business and white community. But after Katrina his image was transformed as he became persona non grata, he soon found himself on the receiving end of negative editorials by the mainstream media, and a political and business establishment who backed any number of his white opponents who they felt could provide the leadership the city needed in this crucial time.

As neighborhoods that were once occupied by people of color are hollow fixtures that resemble ancient ruins and other parts of the city are thriving, there are voices that see this as a second reconstruction and a plan by some to reconfigure the racial and economic make-up of the city. Nagin who is no stranger to racial controversy says, “I don’t know

if this idea of a racial land grab is a myth or not, but I do know I have had situations with some segments of the community who were upset when I would not issue a moratorium on rebuilding certain sections of the city and I rejected that because I thought it would hurt homeowners and people who had

inherited thri property and the plan would render their properties almost valueless and allow certain developers to take advantage of them. And since I didn’t do that I think it has helped stabilize those property values and those citizens if they choose to sell now they can sell and get a decent value.”

### Governor Nagin?

With the decision of incumbent Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco deciding to forgo running in the upcoming Gubernatorial Election there had been wide



receive the resources they need to repair their homes Mayor Nagin who has been a vocal critic of the program since its inception but has recently altered his views slightly saying, “There have been improvement from my understanding, the company who is handling the disbursement have seemed to streamline their operation and say they have projected threat they will have 90,000 disbursements by year end. But I fell it still is moving way too slow.”

### 504 Murder Capital

New Orleans has again become the murder capital even with fewer residents. It was assumed that with the closing of many of the local public housing developments and neighborhoods where many of the violent crimes took place are not as densely populated that crime would decrease, but conversely there has been an upsurge of crime and violence. Earlier this year citizens marched on city hall expressing their outrage about a city where they feel crime has run amuck, and where criminals slide through the hands of a criminal

the crime epidemic. Mayor Nagin thinks crime is a serious problem in the city and feels that making the city safer is key to its recovery. “I think that crime is a serious problem and the way we are fighting it we need to improve in several areas. We continue to work on that everyday, but unfortunately the reality is that the criminal justice system was totally shut down after Katrina and we have really had a tough time getting back in stride.” “But I’m seeing some very positive things from the police department, their ranks are growing they have new equipment, we have the National Guard, state troopers and the feds working with us in unprecedented ways.” “We have some good strategies and we have to keep tweaking them until the city gets safer so people will not feel that when they return they will be in harms way.”

### Healthcare at a Crisis

New Orleans pre-Katrina was a city where many people young and old use the public hospitals when they became ill. Today the

Nagin sees this as a serious problem, “Today we don’t have enough beds in the metropolitan area not just New Orleans, the original Charity Hospital building is still shut down, and University Hospital is only up at a fraction of the number of beds it has for patients, so it continues to be a challenge for us, we’re working with the state and the private sector to get a hold of this problem under control.”

Recently, the city has finalized and sealed a deal with the Veterans Hospital who have agreed to place a new facility in New Orleans. This project Nagin says can be the impetus to jumpstart a more diversified economy in the city of New Orleans “I am encouraged by the deal with the VA which is going to be a six hundred



new school superintendent has arrived and a bifurcated school system has been put in place with mixed results. Nagin who has been concerned that their were problems initially says he sees improvements. “I feel fine about the direction it is going in under the new superintendent, but previously it was a concern of mine because it seemed that all the focus was on the schools that were still under the jurisdiction of the New Orleans Parish School Board.” “But now I see more balance and I’m encouraged recently I went to a rally for the teachers, and it



# U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu Hosts Hope and Recovery Summit



Louisiana U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu at Hope and Recovery Summit.

By Benjamin Bates  
Photos by Glenn Summers

Louisiana United States Senator Mary Landrieu recently hosted the "Hope and Recovery Summit" at the University of New Orleans to commemorate the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The summit featured panels that covered a wide range of topics related to New Orleans and its recovery including Coastal Protection, Levees and Infrastructure, Education; Business Recovery, Rebuilding the Criminal Justice System; and Housing Recovery and Sustainable Community Development.

The summit attracted both local and national leaders who were concerned about New Orleans and its recovery including Rev. Al Sharpton and U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters. Also on hand

were Democratic Presidential hopefuls Hillary Rodham Clinton and Senator John Edwards who participated in the summit engaging in a question and answer segment with CNN's Soledad O'Brien where Sen. Clinton reiterated that New Orleans deserves to be rebuilt with the help of the federal

Katrina, we can do better." "We have a moral responsibility to get New Orleans back on its feet and I applaud Sen. Landrieu for organizing this forum and bringing New Orleans the national attention it needs and deserves."

The summit said Federal Coordinator of Gulf Coast Rebuilding



Al Sharpton and U.S. Congressperson Maxine Waters.

government, "Rebuilding this city is not a New Orleans obligation or a Louisiana obligation it is an American obligation."

The former first lady and U.S. Presidential Candidate talked about the need for infrastructure improvements including hospitals and adequate healthcare. Also she spoke of how her mother-in-law had ties to the city as she trained as a nurse at Charity Hospital. Louisiana U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu chimed in saying of those who participated, "It is reassuring that U.S. Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton sharing views with audience, some of the leading candidates are focused on keeping our recovery a national priority."

As the plight of those affected by Hurricane Katrina is no longer part of the daily new reports, Sen. Edwards stated New Orleans should continue to be a priority for the country. "We are not the country of the Superdome after

Donald E. Powell; "It is not about revisiting the past but looking forward to the future and the rebuilding if the city and the region." He also talked about an effort that stressed unity in rebuilding the



U.S. Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton sharing views with audience.

affected areas, "We share a focus on forward looking efforts to assist local leaders as they rebuild the Gulf Coast region and the city of New Orleans in a stronger and safer way. The American taxpayers, especially taxpayers along the Gulf Coast expect and deserve nothing less."

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# Lower 9th Ward Residents Get Assistance From Global Women's Organization

During their recent governance team meeting in New Orleans (LA), over 200 members of The Links, Incorporated, presented hospital and medical supplies and equipment to the Lower 9th Ward Health Clinic. This presentation was made at a back-to-school family health fair at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School on August 11th. Dr. Gwendolyn B. Lee, national president of The Links, Inc., and members of The Links in attendance, donated \$13,000 to help with the health clinic's community outreach.

Robin Barclay, a member of the Greater Wayne County Chapter of The Links, Inc.

donated items were given to children and their families.

Post-Katrina, there was no health care facility in the Ninth Ward. The Methodist Hospital previously served residents in this community, but it has not yet reopened. Patricia Berryhill, RN MFN, and Alice Craft-Kerney, RN BSN, nurses from the community, founded the Lower 9th Ward Health Clinic and operate it from the renovated home that belongs to Ms. Berryhill, who serves as the Clinical Director of the clinic. Ms. Craft-Kerney, executive director of the Lower 9th

Express (Fed-X), Key Bank, Walgreens and Burger King, with assistance from the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office, city officials of New Orleans, and other local sponsors. The Links, Incorporated, who were the lead sponsor for the event,

co-hosted the community service project in conjunction with the city of New Orleans Health Department; the Coalition of 100 Black Women, New Orleans Chapter; and Healthy Start New Orleans. The health fair was open to the public.



Patricia DeBerry, Clinical Director/Nurse & Founder of the Lower 9th Ward Health Clinic; Marcella Jones, president of the Capital City Chapter (DC) of The Links, Inc. and major contributor; Alma Dodd, National Program Coordinator; Dr. Gwendolyn B. Lee, National President; Alice Craft-Kerney, Nurse/Executive Director and Founder of the Lower 9th Ward Clinic; and Robin Barclay, member of The Links, Inc. and contributor of the hospital equipment.

in Detroit, MI, and her family, owners of the United Community Primary Care Clinic in Detroit, closed their hospital and donated equipment valued in excess of \$500,000. "My family and I, including my Link sisters, are proud of the work done in the Lower 9th Ward and we are proud to be of assistance," said Ms. Barclay.

Ward Health Clinic, commented on the donations. She said, "We are eternally grateful for all of the assistance from The Links, Inc. and we look forward to a continued relationship because there is a tremendous need for health care in this community."



Links Visit Lower 9th Ward Clinic

Children attending public schools in the Ninth Ward participated in the health fair, which offered free physical examinations, vision screenings, immunizations, lead poison testing, and blood pressure and glucose level testing. School supplies, childhood nutrition, health insurance information, educational games, and other

The health fair concept for the Lower 9th Ward was presented by The Links, Inc. national program team, led by Alma Dodd, coordinator for national programs of The Links, Inc. Contributing corporate sponsors for the project include Allstate Insurance, Federal



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## Author To 'Fill' Ray Charles Chair At Dillard

Jessica Harris named scholar-in-residence for Fall 2007 semester

(September 4, 2007) – Jessica B. Harris, Ph.D., noted cultural scholar and author of *Beyond Gumbo* as well as a new release, *The Martha's Vineyard Table*, joins the Dillard faculty as the scholar-in-residence for the Ray Charles Endowed Chair in African-American Material Culture.

Dr. Harris will deliver a lecture on "Creole Cousins: Culinary Connections in the Afro-Atlantic World" on Tuesday, October 23, 2007 in Stern Amphitheatre at Dillard.

Dr. Harris is an English professor at Queens College, C.U.N.Y. in Flushing, New York. She is the author of *On the Side*, *Beyond Gumbo: Creole Fusion Food from the Atlantic Rim*, *The Africa Cookbook: Tastes of a Continent*, *The Welcome Table: African-American Heritage Cooking* and a host of other books on cuisine and culture. Dr. Harris received a B.A. from Bryn Mawr, Licence ès Lettres from Université de Nancy (Nancy, France), an M.A. from Queens College, and a Ph.D. from New York University.

The endowment will allow Dillard to research, teach and publish about the historical and cultural contributions offered in the preparation and creation of authentic food of the African Diaspora. Dr. Harris will develop educational programs that will enrich the public's knowledge about African-American southern cooking and, in turn, preserve the culture's rich traditions.

The Ray Charles estate awarded \$1 million to establish the chair in October, 2006. The legendary singer and pianist, who never attended college, received an honorary degree from Dillard in 2003. Charles died in June 2004.

Dillard University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), has been a cornerstone of educational excellence and a critical part of the New Orleans community since 1869. Dillard offers a quality, four-year, comprehensive undergraduate program to students that represent 29 states and several foreign countries.

## Isaac Delgado Fine Arts Gallery Presents "Uncertain Territory: Losing Louisiana"

New Orleans, La. – Isaac Delgado Fine Arts Gallery, located on the third floor of Building One on Delgado City Park Campus at 615 City Park Ave., welcomes the public to enjoy the invitational exhibition "Uncertain Territory: Losing Louisiana" Oct. 4 – Nov. 27, 2007. There will be an opening reception, free and open to the public, at the gallery on Thursday, Oct. 4, 6 – 8 p.m.

"Uncertain Territory: Losing Louisiana" is a group retrospective of select work from past participants in the Grant Isle Annual Juried Exhibitions. Over the last five years, the Grand Isle Community Development Team Art Committee has invited established New Orleans artists to jury The Grand Isle Annual Juried Exhibitions, which have explored coastal erosion in Louisiana through contemporary art. Grand Isle is Louisiana's only inhabited barrier island, and the future of the island and

its surrounding wetlands is uncertain as the Louisiana coastline disappears, leaving no protection from hurricanes.

"Uncertain Territory: Losing Louisiana" was curated by the five prominent New Orleans artists who served as Grand Isle Annual Exhibition jurors: Allison Stewart, Adrian Deckbar, Jacqueline Bishop, Bradley Sabin and Raine Bedsole. The 15 artists included in the exhibition are: Darlene Bigus-Doheny, Sallie Ann Glassman, Jeremy Jernegan, Mary Jane Parker, Cynthia Scott and Carlos Luis Zervigon (New Orleans, La.); Karin Eberhardt (Pascagoula, Ms.); Claire Waguespach Fenton (Houma, La.); Yvonne James (Folsom, La.); Delaina LeBlanc (Thibodaux, La.); Dede Lusk and Ed Smith (Baton Rouge, La.); Wanda Sullivan (Mobile, Ala.); Janice C. Cartier and Melissa Turner Drumm (Dallas, Texas).

"Uncertain Territory:

Losing Louisiana' addresses the serious landscape issues facing Louisiana," said renowned New Orleans artists Jacqueline Bishop. "However, this issue is not limited to our immediate environment, but bleeds across state boundaries and beyond. It is globally connected. There's no question that culture comes from the land. Sadly, much of our natural world is infected, deformed and quietly disappearing because of lack of leadership or understanding about it. When all else fails, perhaps an aesthetic approach to communicating coastal wetlands loss is necessary. This exhibition is meant to do just that."

For further information about the exhibition, please contact Robin Pellegrin, Delgado Fine Arts Gallery director, at (504) 671-6363; Sue Galliano at (504) 915-0382 / [suegalliano@mobiletel.com](mailto:suegalliano@mobiletel.com); or Sidney Wilder at (504) 452-5299 / [swild@bellsouth.net](mailto:swild@bellsouth.net).

## DA's Office Rids Court Docket of 80 Percent of Pre-Katrina Cases

New Orleans, LA—Today, Orleans Parish District Attorney Eddie J. Jordan, Jr. releases findings of a 10-month long case recovery project. The Final Report, which was compiled by the Case Recovery Management Team (CRMT), highlights a significant reduction in the office's pre-Katrina caseload and provides fact-based accountability for evacuated prisoners who were awaiting trial at the time of the storm.

According to the CRMT report, 80 percent of the pre-Katrina cases awaiting trial in Criminal District Court have been resolved. The report also notes the following significant results:

- There are currently 420 pre-Katrina open cases awaiting trial in the twelve sections of Criminal District Court as opposed to the 2,020 pre-Katrina open cases reported in November 2006 when CRMT began its project.
- There are currently 2,520 open cases in Criminal District Court; pre-Katrina cases account for 17 percent of these cases. In November 2006, pre-Katrina cases accounted for 62 percent of the 3,290 cases awaiting trial in Criminal District Court.
- CRMT also found that there were 441 prisoners awaiting trial at the time of the storm. Of these, 337 were returned to New Orleans and

made appearances in Criminal District Court with an attorney after being evacuated to in-state correctional facilities due to Katrina related flooding; 82 were released on bond; and only 22, contrary to media reports, had not been brought before a judge since the storm.

Ultimately, all 22 prisoners were located and procedures were immediately implemented to have them brought to court.

"Two years after Hurricane Katrina, my office, with the assistance of the Case Recovery Management Team, has worked and continues to work incessantly to reduce the number of pre-Katrina cases in Criminal District Court. Pre-Katrina cases have been disposed of in an orderly way, following a careful analysis of the availability of physical evidence and witnesses. CRMT's findings point to significant productivity on behalf of my staff under unusually difficult working conditions," says Orleans Parish District Attorney Eddie Jordan.

CRMT was a four-member team of prosecutors led by former federal prosecutor Linda Bizzarro. The team recently completed a ten-month grant funded case recovery assignment at the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office.

## ABCT Fall Semester Starts Soon

The Anthony Bean Community Theater & Acting School is now registering for its fall semester, classes will be taught on all levels, with strong emphasis on

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For Class Registration or more information call (504) 862-7529



# The Stars Came Out to Celebrate Data's 41st

Photos by Mike Jones



Ty Green Our Local Color Commentator



Jazz Violinist Michael Ward



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Eldridge Randolph, Allison Randolph and Vaughn Randolph dancing



Data News Weekly publisher Terry Jones enjoys the evening with a guest



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Kim Brown, President of the JMJ Continuing Education Fund with 2007 JMJ Scholarship recipients, and Dr. Laura Rouzan of Dillard University.

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Keith Hitchens of AT&T accepts sponsors award from Terry Jones



Melanie L. Campbell, Executive Director of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation accepts the Distinguished Community Service Award from Terry Jones



# Free the Jena Six

By. Marian Wright Edelman  
NNPA Columnist

## Child Watch® Column

The recent conviction of Black high school student Mychal Bell in the small rural town of Jena, Louisiana, demonstrates why the struggle for civil rights and equal justice must continue with renewed vigor.

In a vindictive miscarriage of justice, LaSalle Parish District Attorney J. Reed Walters brought the full weight of his office as a prosecutor down on Bell, 17, who may face a 15-year prison term for aggravated second-degree battery for participating in a school fight.

Five other Black students are at risk of similar convictions. These young men, known as the Jena Six, are victims of a double standard too common throughout America where the scales of justice are weighed against African-Americans and other people of color. It is also a disturbing reminder of the increasing criminalization of Black youths and trying them as adults.

The chain of events leading up to the Jena Six arrests began with an old oak known as the "white tree" in the middle of the Jena High School campus. According to news accounts, by twisted tradition, the shade of the tree's spreading branches was reserved for White students only. In September 2006, a Black freshman asked if Black students could sit under the tree. The administrators said that Black students could sit where they liked.

Shortly after the query, several Black students gathered under the tree. The following day, three hangman's nooses were looped over one of its boughs. There's no mistaking the symbolism of this act. It recalls warnings of impending violence by the Ku Klux Klan and other vicious White terrorist groups permitted to flourish in the South for more than a century.

Despite the seriousness of their act, the three White students responsible were merely suspended for three days and given a verbal reprimand. The principal's recommendation of expulsion was overruled by the superintendent of schools who thought that was too harsh a punishment for an adolescent "prank."

Tensions escalated in the town of about 3,000 where the number of African-Americans is around 350. Black students tempered their outrage at the nooses and the school superintendent's lenient treatment of the offending students by staging a peaceful protest at the tree.

Somehow, District Attorney Walters perceived a danger to the public, not in the nooses, but in the protests against them. Instead of attempting to bring the parties together and calming the agitated atmosphere, he made things worse by calling a school assembly accompanied by local law enforcement officials. Directing an ominous threat toward the Black students, he said, "I can be your best friend or worst enemy. I can take away your lives with a stroke of a pen."

Walters didn't help matters by winking at White violence like the beating of a Black stu-

dent attempting to attend a White Friday night party in December 2006 — the incident was very much related to the school events. The next day a White Jena graduate confronted a group of Black youths at a convenience store with a shotgun. Fortunately, they wrestled the weapon away from him without injury but were arrested for assault and stealing the gun. The gun owner was not charged with a crime.

The racial tension in the town came to a head on Monday, December 4, when Justin Barker, a White student who was vocally supportive of the noose hangers and called Black students "niggers," was beaten by some Black students. Barker went to the hospital was released the same day and attended a ring ceremony that evening. The six Black youths involved in the incident were arrested and initially charged with attempted murder. None of the Jena Six has a prior police record.

In a July trial that turned justice on its head, Mychal Bell was convicted as an adult of aggravated second-degree battery and conspiracy. He was found guilty by an all-White jury in a trial presided over by a White judge. District Attorney Walters argued that Bell's tennis shoes were deadly weapons because they were used to kick Barker.

On September 4, Judge J.P. Mauffray threw out the conspiracy conviction against Bell. He also granted a defense motion that trying Bell as an adult was improper and agreed that he should have been tried as a juvenile. But the judge let stand the conviction on aggravated second-degree battery, which means Bell may be condemned to a prison term of up to 15 years at his sentencing hearing on September 20.

Regrettably, what is happening in Jena reminds me of the racial injustices I witnessed as a civil rights attorney in the Deep South during the 1960s. We cannot go back to those times.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. used to say that the arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice. I believe that. However, those of us who love justice must take a hand in bending the arc faster. We can start by taking action today and calling LaSalle Parish District Attorney J. Reed Walters at (318) 992-8282 and demand justice for the Jena Six.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

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## Health

# Prostate Cancer Awareness



Larry Lucas  
Data Columnist

By Larry Lucas

It's that time of year again – time to get our children and grandchildren ready for school with annual health check-ups and vaccinations. But when it comes to our own adult health, many of us would rather stay on a permanent summer vacation. As a nine-year survivor of prostate cancer, I'm here to tell you that when it comes to the health of your prostate, avoiding your annual health check-ups can be life threatening.

In fact, it's that annual physical that saved my life. I had no symptoms and was enjoying activities like golf with no problem. Through the prostate screening and blood tests that are a part of my regular physicals, I was fortunate enough to catch the cancer in its early stages, before it had spread to my lymph nodes or other vital organs.

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness month and, according to the National Cancer Institute, prostate cancer is the second most common type of cancer among men in this country. Only skin cancer is more common. Out of every three men who are diagnosed with cancer each year, one is diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Prostate health is particularly important for African American men. Death rates for this cancer are nearly two-and-a-half times higher in African-American men than white men, according to the National Institutes of Health, making this

disease the most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in African American men.

Yet, in a recent University of Chicago study, 55 percent of African-American men gauged their risk of prostate cancer to be zero percent, but a full 70 percent turned out to have prostate cancer. This may partially explain why the American Cancer Society says men in our community are more likely to be diagnosed later, with more advanced cancer, which is harder to treat and is often more lethal. It is so important to get tested regularly – through regular visits to your doctor. These screening tests can find cancer early, when it's most treatable.

Because approximately 90 percent of all prostate cancers are detected in the early stages, the cure rate is very high – nearly 100 percent of men diagnosed at this stage will be disease-free after five years, according to the Prostate Cancer Foundation. Still, you have to work to maintain your health by eating right and exercising. According to the NIH, more than half of African-American adults are overweight or obese. And, a new study from the medical journal BJU International found that obese men have an increased risk of prostate cancer recurrence and death after they have completed radiation therapy.

More than ever before, medicines offer hope to those battling prostate cancer. A new PhRMA report shows that today there are 50 medicines in development to treat prostate cancer. Several vaccines that attempt to get the body's own immune system to fight the cancer are currently being studied. One potential vaccine in clinical trials has tripled the survival rate of men with advanced prostate cancer.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation reports that one new case of prostate cancer occurs every 2.5 minutes; a man dies from it every 19 minutes. Help ensure you don't become a statistic by knowing the status of your prostate health. Consider it your assignment for a healthy school year.

Larry Lucas is the vice president for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

## In The Spirit

Where were you two years ago?

# Remembering Katrina



Dr. Aaron E. Harold  
Data Columnist

By: Dr. Aaron E. Harold

My brothers and sisters it has been two years after Hurricane Katrina devastated thousands of lives and the whole Gulf Coast Region. August 29th, 2005 is a day where many of us cry, as we reflect back on families that were once joined by living loved ones, precious belongings that were passed down from generation to generation, and hard work and sacrifice of homes that were built from blood, sweat and tears. Many of us, including myself, still stop and daydream about where we were two years ago. For me, it was enjoying the most simplest thing as a cup of coffee or listening to the birds sing. For others, it was enjoying a good nights rest in your bed in the comfort of your own home.

As President Bush spoke two years ago of high hopes of government help to aid the city of New Orleans, many of us are still in despair and disbelief of the staggering amount of time it is taking to get funding so that people can start piecing their lives back together. Everyday when we get up in the morning, we need to thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for a brand new day. However, many of us are still facing some difficult challenges and changes in our lives. Some of us have started the rebuilding process while others are still stuck in limbo wondering what to do. In spite of the slow moving progress of receiving Road Home Funds

and other government monies, we see the citizens of this great city pull together with love, hope, and faith to encourage one another that things are getting better.

King David went through much difficulty with the lost of some of his children and other personal issues, but he found joy in God. In Psalms Chapter 16 verse 11, Jesus and his disciples got away from time to time from ministry work to go fishing, and to enjoy each other. Folks, learn to get with people that are positive and that will encourage you. Take more time to meditate on the goodness of God, and not what you lost during Katrina two years ago. Many of us can still remember that eerie feeling when meteorologists Carl Arredondo and Bob Breck alerted us that this was going to be the "Big One."

Many of us two years ago were caught of guard and unprepared when Katrina hit. A lesson hard learned is "You should have at least three days supply of food and water per person on hand." However, lots of us had everything washed away, including the three day supply of food and water, but others just were not properly prepared. Can you imagine life again without electricity, ATM's don't work, gasoline pumps don't work, credit card machines don't work, no a/c, no food, no communications with your loved ones? This is why we need to always take time to meditate on the goodness of God, because he cared enough for you and me to bring us back to the place we call home (John 3:16).

Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries. To contact him with your comments or suggested topics he can be reached at rharold1@cox.net or (504) 813-5767

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# The Learning Curve of Rebuilding New Orleans

*Part 3 in a 3-part series about the progress of rebuilding New Orleans' Public Schools*

## Where We Have Been And Where We Are Going

By **Eddie Francis**

The 2006-2007 school year began with both excitement and anxiety. As the year progressed the Recovery School District (RSD) came to serve as the center of controversy. At the same time the bold experiment of charter schools came into focus with supporters and opponents speaking loudly. In the midst of the difficulties have come a couple of voices that are cleaning their sunglasses in preparation for a bright future.

### **Cold lunches, cold personnel, cold environment**

There were not many who felt pessimistic about the 2006-2007 school year. Excitement filled the toxic New Orleans air as school administrators, teachers and staff prepared to receive their students. What New Orleans, its educators, students and community received was a far less-than-perfect year.

Working with a skeleton crew, RSD, faced the daunting task of opening mostly damaged schools all over the city with only weeks to go. The state organization succeeded in opening a great many of those schools but educators and students, alike, seemed to pay the price. Complaints poured into local and national media outlets documenting schools with lists of problems.

It all seemed to start with space and food. Many teachers wound up teaching classes in environments that were more challenging than the infamous pre-Katrina environments. The most consistent complaint was the lack of classroom space, forcing teachers to teach classes often in gyms. That would not be so bad had there not been other classes in gyms with the teachers. Over the course of frustrating days students at many schools had to deal with unhealthy cold lunches.

A lack of basic technology and other necessities also came into focus. Many offices and classrooms operated with little or no computer equipment only to find out that boxes of new computers had not even been opened

all year long. At the same time New Orleanians were appalled to find out that some schools had not even been renovated properly with basics such as doors on restroom stalls missing.

Another area of huge concern was school security. The real point of contention for all New Orleanians came when problems at John McDonogh High School (John Mac) drew attention to poor school security. Citizens were shocked to find out that security personnel at John Mac were young, inexperienced, unorganized, unmotivated and often immature. A visitor did not have to wait long at any number of schools to catch security guards unapologetically playing in hallways, often with students.

### **They've got the FYRE**

Despite school personnel issues and bevy of additional school issues, something encouraging happened. A group of high school students, mostly John Mac students, formed to speak out about the conditions of schools. The FYRE Youth Squad came into existence out of the concerns of students from all over New Orleans. Not only did the group consist of public school students but at least one private school student joined the ranks of the student activist group.

The group opened the eyes of both the New Orleans adult community and others around the nation when they protested on the steps of John Mac. On an October 2006 morning, the group gathered on the steps of the troubled Mid-City high school to demand basic tools for academic success. Their lengthy list consisted of things such as: working water fountains, books for every class, hot food, full-time school nurses, bathroom breaks, kitchen supplies, after-school activities, maximum class sizes set at 30 students, better pay and working conditions for teachers, etc.

What the group seemed to get was a pat on the head for their efforts. Ironically one of FYRE's biggest supporters was Donald Jackson, the principal of John Mac. Jackson publicly spoke of his support of the students and allowed them to meet at the

school. At the same time local mainstream media outlets gave the group little exposure in their efforts.

Others have been watching, however. In January Bill Cosby came to New Orleans on the invitation of the FYRE Youth Squad, and addressed students at Sarah T. Reed High School. It was during that time that the group also won support from the non-profit Downtown Neighborhood Improvement Association. Cosby also supported the group in their demands for better preparation for the LEAP Test in the "Look Before You LEAP" march. FYRE has even been featured in the Washington Post.

### **Unsung heroes**

There have been those adults who have taken steps in the right direction. Buried in the doomsday talk about charter schools have been those groups that have taken steps in the right direction. One such group is Friends of King, the organization responsible for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology.

After their original building in the Ninth Ward had been demolished, the King faculty, staff and student body wandered from school to school, it seemed, like a lost tribe. It started as a short trip across the Industrial Canal and up St. Claude Avenue to the campus of Charles J. Colton Middle School set for a September, 2006 opening only to experience a construction delay. King's charismatic principal, Doris Hicks, motivated her students and parents on the would-be first day of school bellowing into a bullhorn, "We want to show the world that we love you, that we want to get you in school as soon as possible!"

The delay turned out to be more than RSD bargained for so the King community had to deal with a change of plans and location. Not able to meet their deadline of September 11, 2006 to have students in school, RSD arranged for King to be moved to the old campus of Edgar P. Harney Elementary School. Hicks and her staff simply rolled with the punches and enjoyed a successful year. On June

11th also enjoyed the re-dedication of King's original Ninth Ward site.

Not to outdone is Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) who runs Sophie B. Wright Charter School. Chartered on July 1, 2005 SUNO has made tremendous strides with the once-troubled school, even winning the compliments of BESE Board vice-president, Leslie Jacobs. Only two out of 24 fourth graders failed the 2006-2007 LEAP Test and 70% of eighth graders passed.

One of the most interesting groups is the Tremé Charter School Association (TCSA) who is now running McDonogh No. 42 in the Sixth Ward. TCSA is an energetic group that was supposed to have received a charter for two schools in 2006. The group ran into road blocks and never got the chance to show what they could do. After re-applying under the tenacious leadership of veteran educator, Roslyn Smith, TCSA got an RSD charter this year.

Don't tell Smith that charter schools are an experiment, however. She rejects the label because "you perform experiments in a lab." She continues, "We're more like pioneers than scientists. This school is our journey to a better place." Smith contends that those who insist on labeling New Orleans' charter schools an experiment are "disrespectful and are people who don't have kids in school."

TCSA plans to focus on culture education. The group, like others, is primarily concerned with improving the school's academic performance. Because of its location, however, the school will also place an emphasis on providing its students with an education on the arts indigenous to New Orleans. Smith relishes the opportunity to engage McDonogh No. 42's surrounding community in the education rebuilding process. The group is in the process of planning a community engagement forum designed to keep parents informed and educated about education. Says Smith, "We see ourselves as redeveloping this civilization called New Orleans."



continued from page 3.

speculation that Mayor Nagin was considering a run for the state's highest office. He says that it was more media hype than actual fact, "It got started because the media was kind of bored with the governor's race and they kept asking me why was I raising money after being a term limit mayor, and I told them I would keep my options open and I never said what I would or what I wouldn't do, and they built up this hype."

Nagin says that he will remain in his present seat, "I am going to stay put in New Orleans, I don't think I want to move to a different role than the role of being mayor of the city and stay focused on the recovery, and not take my family through another big race, and I think the city needs stability right now in its leadership." As the election is right around the corner with gubernatorial candidate Bobby Jindal as the front runner who Nagin supported him in the last election says that he will not be supporting him this time. "Actually in the last election Bobby Jindal was my second choice, Randy Ewing was my first choice

I really like what they've done over the past couple of years." "They've put a winning team together and the fans responded, and now they have a long waiting list for people trying to get tickets, and it helped us last year because it was a release for us and a psychological boost and gave us a sense of normalcy for us to see the saints play on the weekend during last football season." He is optimistic about the prospect of them having another stellar year, "I think it's going to be the same this year, and I believe they are going to have a real successful season."

### Two Years and Counting

Mayor Nagin has been at the helm since this unfortunate fate befell the city. It has changed the city's cultural landscape possibly forever. Nagin has seen his popularity go up and down and in the shell game that is politics where shifting alliances and fair-weather friends are many, he has been the symbolic leader for America and the world to see making decisions about what direction the city should be headed.



he was the former president of the state senate, but then I looked at the match ups and chose Jindal." "But since then I've looked at his track record, not what he's saying but what he's doing and it causes me a lot of concern when I look at his voting record."

### Saints and the City

The Superdome was the sight of some of the most horrendous images in modern American history, as people were left suffering during the disastrous days during Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. Today the Louisiana Superdome has again become home to the New Orleans Saints who were the Cinderella story of last years NFL season nearly making the Superbowl.

Nagin undoubtedly is a huge fan, "I am a big fan from way back,

The question of how history will judge him right now one knows, but for better or worse he is the captain of this ship, and the decisions he make may affect how the city will look in the future. What is to come is uncertain as the city tries to regain its footing, the city has fallen down and may be on its knees, but is fighting to get up and be the great again. And while those faces ebony and ivory and everything in between who've been affected by Hurricane Katrina are as in the words of the Roi Anthony song "A Long Way From Home" hopefully in the coming they will eventually find their way back to the land where their can recapture the memories of days gone by and be reunited with family and friends, and be in city that is vibrant, vital and thriving, but as it stands two years later it is a question that only time can answer.





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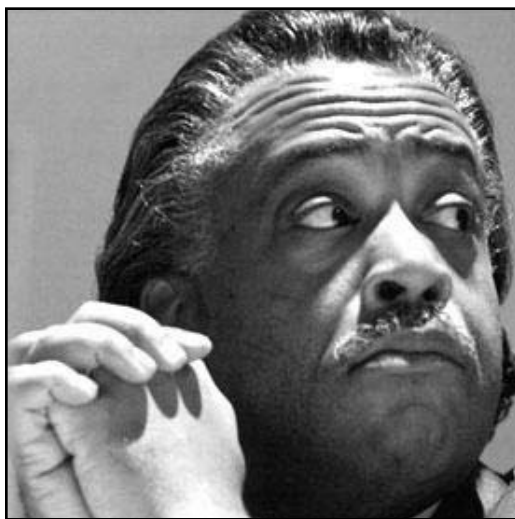
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## Sharpton to Lead March on Jena, Ask for Prosecutorial Misconduct Charge

By. Hazel Trice Edney  
Hazel Trice Edney  
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The Rev. Al Sharpton, preparing to lead a march in Jena, La., on behalf of the Jena Six Sept. 20, says the case of the six Black high school students hits home across



the nation and the issues are no longer contained to the small Louisiana town.

"It gives a real focus on the fact that all over this country, young Blacks, particularly young Black males, are being overcharged by a criminal justice system and prosecutors who have gone wild. It is also important because of the double standards of justice being used against young Blacks," says Sharpton.

The march is set to start at 9 a.m. at the Court House in Jena. Sharpton will be accompanied by Martin Luther King III, author and radio talk show host Michael Baisden, as well as other national leaders.

The march was to coincide with the sentencing of Mychal Bell, who could face up to 15 years on an aggravated second-degree battery conviction.

The ruckus started a year ago after three White Jena High School students hang nooses in a tree at the school, known as the

"White Tree". The three students were suspended for the nooses, which were in response to a Black student having sat under the tree one day earlier.

In a December fight at the school, directly related to noose controversy, six Black male students, now called the "Jena Six" were arrested for beating up a

White student, whose wounds were so minor that he attended a school function later that day.

Five initially were charged as adults with attempted second-degree murder. Following the national protests and publicity surrounding the story, charges against three of the students were reduced from attempted second-degree murder to aggravated second-degree battery. A

sixth student is being charged in juvenile court.

Sharpton says a double standard exists because the prosecutor failed to file criminal charges against the students who hanged the nooses, viewed as a life-threatening gesture, or against a young White man said to have pulled a shotgun on three Black students at a local store amidst the controversy. Instead, three Black teens were arrested and accused of aggravated battery and theft after they took the gun from him.

Sharpton says he plans to request a state investigation in the case and to file misconduct charges against District Attorney Reed Walters, the prosecutor in the cases.

He says, "If they can put the prosecutor at Duke in jail, certainly they can deal with this prosecutor that Whites committed against the Blacks in Jena and then overcharged these young Black students."

## Former D. C. First Lady Effi Barry Remembered as Servant Leader

By. James Wright

Special to the NNPA from The Afro-American Newspapers

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Former District first lady Effi Barry died Sept. 6 from complications of leukemia at Anne Arundel Medical Center at the age of 63.

Barry was married to now D.C. City Councilman Marion Barry (D-Ward 8) during his first, second and third terms as mayor. She played a high profile role as the city's first lady, arranging activities ranging from helping the poor to representing the city when luminaries such as a pope and various world leaders visited the city.

Barry was also a study in dignity during her husband's drug trial in 1990, sitting quietly in the court room knitting while it was revealed that then Marion Barry had sex with model Rasheeda Moore and smoked crack cocaine. Marion Barry was sentenced to prison while Effi Barry stayed in the city to raise her son, Christopher.

After Marion Barry served his time, the couple divorced. She and Christopher moved to Hampton, Va., where she accepted a position as an instructor at Hampton University in its physical and health education department.

Marion Barry, in a statement, said his ex-wife was a wonderful, caring person.

"Effi was my cherished friend, a wonderful mother to my only son, Christopher, and a beautiful human being," the statement said. "Effi was born to serve and help others, but long after her service to this city was done, as first lady, she continued to give even more of herself in an effort to help those who could not help themselves. Chief among her many accomplishments was her successful effort to secure city funding for HIV and AIDS awareness programs for the poor.

"She was a genuinely caring person with a huge heart. I feel fortunate to have had her as a part of my life for so many years.

It is as if a part of me has left this world today as well."

Calling her "a model for all women," Marion Barry said that the city is better off because of her.

"Effi was D.C.; we will all miss her," he said. "She will never be forgotten. Her place in the history of this great city is already etched in stone."

Barry moved back to the District and became an employee of the D.C. Department of Health. The department mourned her death.

"Ms. Barry faced the end of her life with a grace and elegance that were not only the hallmarks of her tenure as D.C.'s first lady, but characteristic of her contributions at the (Health Department)," the director of the Health Department, Dr. Gregg Pane, said.

It was noted that she managed a grant project, initiated by then D.C. City Councilman Vincent Gray, to expand HIV service among community-based organizations and churches in Wards 7 and 8. She continued to work to improve the city's health infrastructure in communities east of the Anacostia River after than project.

D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty (D) said that Barry was a great public servant.

"She was truly a great woman who devoted her life to public service for this city and who was beloved by its people," Fenty said. "She will be remembered for her work on public health issues for our residents and as an incredible example of poise and grace."

Fenty ordered that District of Columbia flags be flown at half-staffed till the end of her funeral.

D.C. City Councilman Harry Thomas (D-Ward 5) said that Barry was an inspiration to him and his family.

"This is a great loss for the city," he said. "She was the most

elegant first lady we ever had. She was a friend to my family and nurtured me in politics. "She truly loved D.C."

D. C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton recalled that the former first lady was a servant leader even in her illness.

"It was characteristic of Effi, who was a dedicated educator, to use her battle against leukemia to encourage African-Americans to donate urgently needed bone



marrow and join the registry for bone marrow transplants, needed for life-threatening diseases like leukemia," Norton said.

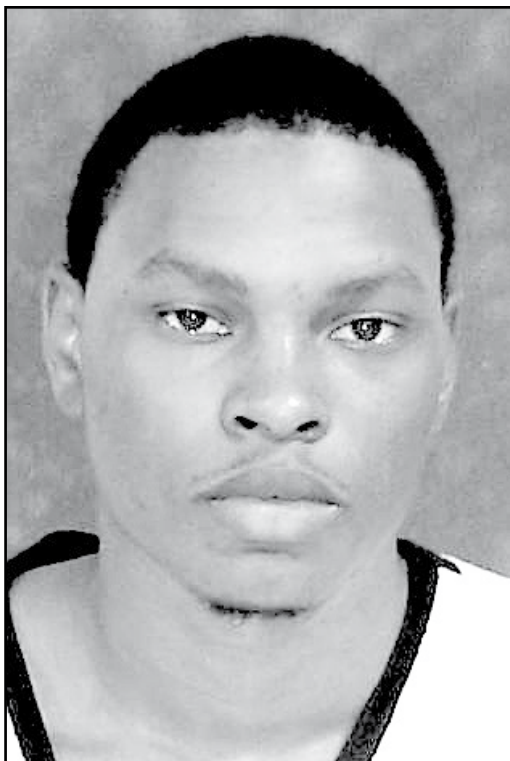
Barry was born in 1944 to Polly Harris, and, it was later revealed, a White man in Toledo, Ohio. She attended Hampton and received a bachelor's degree in home economics and got a master's degree in public health from City College of New York. She had a previous marriage to a musician Stanley Cowell that ended in divorce in 1975.

She married Marion Barry in 1978 before he was elected mayor. They met in 1976 at a celebration of the country's bicentennial.

In later years, she helped her husband win the Ward 8 council seat in 2004 and became a spokesperson for Blacks to contribute to the bone marrow transplant project.



# Dumas Impresses at Adidas Basketball Experience



By Ed Cassiere

NEW ORLEANS. – Harold Ellis, the Atlanta Hawks' minor league coordinator and scout, wanted to give proper credit. "Let's give Shaun Dumas a hand," Ellis told a group of players in early August at the conclusion of the adidas Basketball Experience. "Let's give him a hand for coming out here from a small school and working hard and doing a good job." Ellis could relate. Like Dumas, Ellis played at a non-NCAA Division I institution and an HBCU (Historically Black College and University). Ellis competed at Atlanta's Morehouse College and never was drafted by an NBA team, but he played three NBA seasons in the '90s and scored 29 points in a game against the Boston Celtics.

Dumas – a 5-foot-11 junior guard on the men's team at Xavier University of Louisiana, an NAIA Division I and HBCU institution – was a late roster addition to the adidas Basketball Experience August 3-7 in suburban Westwego, La. The event showcased male amateur U.S. and foreign players in a series of games at the Alario Center. U.S. players included UCLA junior guard Darren Collison and freshman forward Kevin Love, the Gatorade Male High School Athlete of the Year in 2006-07; Kansas junior guard Mario Chalmers, the Big 12 Conference leader in steals this past season; and Texas sophomore guard D.J. Augustin, a former standout at New Orleans' Brother Martin High School who led the Big 12

in assists. Collison and Love were teammates of Dumas in all six games he played. In short, Dumas was in heady company. "I wasn't expecting it," Dumas said of Ellis' comments and the ensuing applause from his peers. "It made me feel good. I thanked God for having the opportunity."

Two other observers said Dumas, a New Orleanian and a 2004 graduate of St. Augustine High School, made the most of his opportunity. "Shaun represented himself and Xavier well," said Randy Livingston, a native New Orleanian and former national prep player of the year who has spent 11 years in the NBA and coached Dumas during the adidas event. "He did everything I asked him to do. He proved himself against some of the best guys in the country. He played all 94 feet and got his teammates involved."

Aggrey Sam, a writer for slamonline.com, called Dumas one of the 10 players who impressed him most. "The quickest player on the court, an intense full-court defender and a supreme set-up man, don't be surprised if you hear more about him in the near future," Sam wrote.

Dumas has been building his basketball résumé since his arrival at Xavier. He was the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year in 2004-05, averaged 6.7 points per game and led NAIA Division I with 106 steals. Xavier did not compete in athletics in 2005-06 because of the effects of Hurricane Katrina, but Dumas showed no adverse affects from the layoff. He averaged 13.2 points this past season and ranked among the national top five in assists and steals. His 2006-07 honors included third-team NAIA All-American and Louisiana Small College Player of the Year.

"If he gets into the right situation, he could play professionally," Livingston said. "It only takes one coach to like you." Dumas called the event a great and valuable experience. "I gained a lot more confidence," Dumas said, "but I also learned I have to work a lot harder than I have been."

His goal for 2007-08 is to become a most consistent jump-shooter – he shot 43 percent from the floor and 39 percent (29 of 74) from 3-point range this past season – and use what he learned in August to the benefit of the Gold Rush. "I learned how to set up players better, how to change pace and how to use the ball screen better," Dumas said. "I learned a lot of things that will make me a better player."

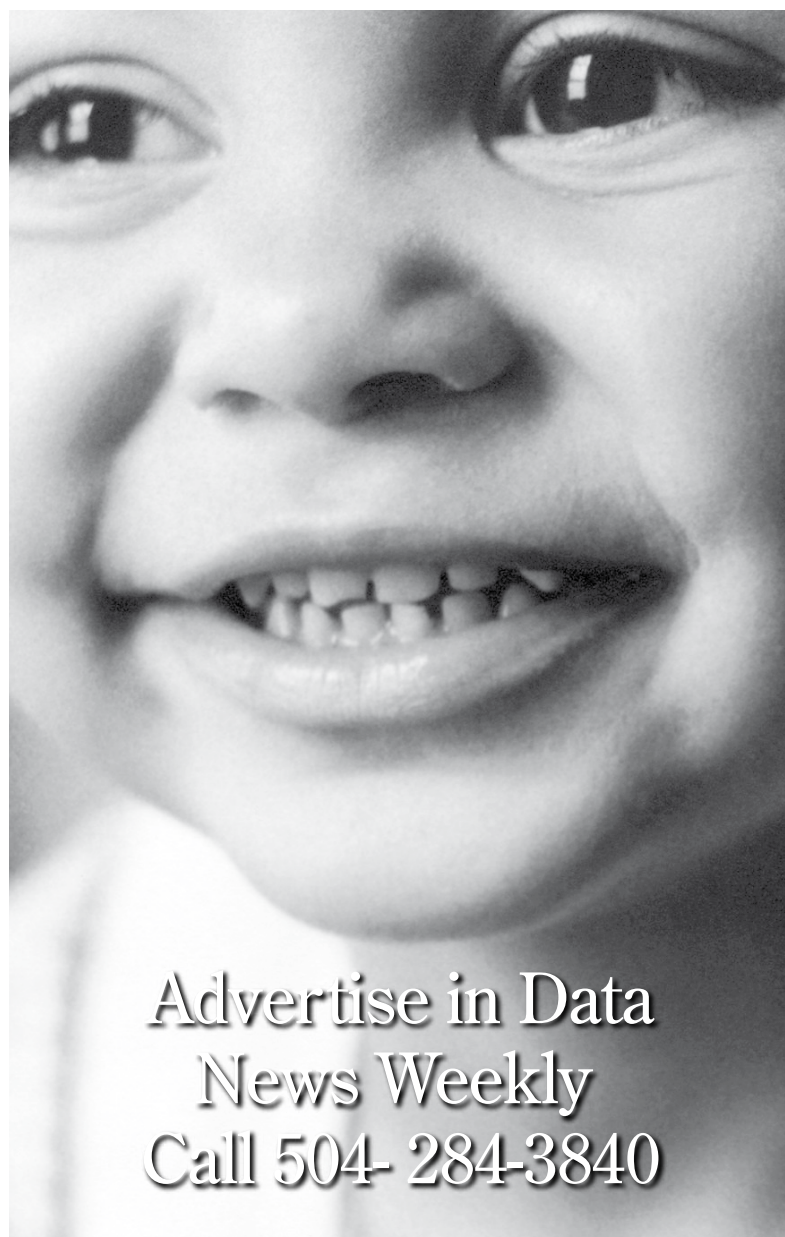
Dumas will need those skills Nov. 2, when he matches up against Augustin and the Longhorns in an exhibition game at Texas.

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**LCTCS Construction Center  
of Excellence  
Louisiana Technical College-  
Region 1**

1.800.497.0959 • [www.dcc.edu](http://www.dcc.edu)

**Delgado**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**Louisiana Technical College**

*This project was funded by a grant awarded under the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative, as implemented by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.*

## **BUILD A CAREER** *while rebuilding Louisiana*

With the rebuilding efforts of the Gulf Coast, skilled construction workers are in higher demand than ever. All you need is training and the Louisiana Reconstruction Team needs you.

- NO COST to participants
- Flexible class schedules
- Earn a great salary with advancement opportunities and great benefits
- Specialized classroom instruction and practical shop experience in basic safety, construction math, the use of hand tools and power tools, blueprint reading, basic rigging, basic communication skills, and basic employability skills.

### *Enroll Today!*

**Mandatory Requirements:**

1. Pre-employment drug testing may be required
2. If male, must be registered with Selective Service
3. Driver's license or official identification card and Social Security card



**Louisiana Community &  
Technical College System**  
*Changing Lives, Creating Futures*

With support from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Labor (LDOL) have launched the Pathways to Construction Employment Initiative to promote the economic recovery of Louisiana in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.