

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone

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Festival
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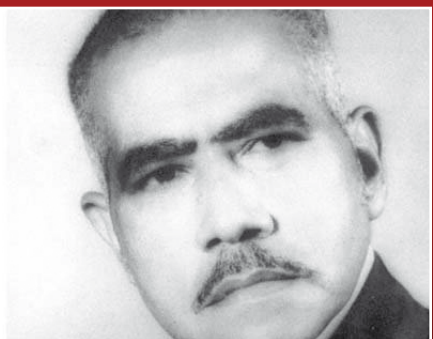
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Right Wing Attacks on Michelle Obama Hit New Low



Michelle Obama wife of Democratic Presidential Nominee Sen. Barack Obama address a gathering of supporters. Mrs. Obama, a lawyer, has been the subject of racial slurred attacks recently on the Fox News Channel.



Michelle Obama (center) shares a "fist bump" with Elisabeth Hasselbeck as she co-hosted the ABC program "The View" last week. Fox News network characterized the Obama's sharing a similar "fist bump" as a "terrorist fist jab" on the eve of his winning the nomination. Mrs. Obama referred to it as the "new hi-five".

By. Ashahed M. Muhammad

CHICAGO (NNPA) - The wives of U.S. presidents are referred to as "First Ladies" and historically even the wives of candidates running for the nation's highest office are afforded a certain level of respect. This, however, has not been the case with Michelle Obama who has been insulted and maligned at ev-

ery turn by right wing conservative radio and television talk show hosts.

Despite the vicious and seemingly ubiquitous critical comments, the 44-year-old Princeton University and Harvard Law School-educated executive has carried herself with dignity and class throughout the entire campaign gaining the admiration of many.

"In today's world, a woman of this caliber who is

the mate of one who is a nominee for president of the United States deserves all of the recognition, admiration and respect that she has so well earned," said Dr. Dorothy I. Height, chair and president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women. "When I follow many of the stories and comments, I realize that we have come a long way, but there is a long way to go," added Dr. Height who has known every first

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lady of the United States since Eleanor Roosevelt.

Dr. Height referred to the wife of Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) as “a woman of considerable accomplishments.”

Already a veteran campaigner who withstood the “kitchen sink” strategy of vanquished Democrat-

out the status of wife or girlfriend. Malkin has previously referred to the media as “Obamedia,” implying favoritism toward the Obama campaign, and referred to Mrs. Obama as Sen. Obama’s “bitter half.” She immediately posted comments on her website absolving herself of any responsibility

ter referring to the widely publicized June 3 celebratory fist pound between Michelle Obama and her husband as a “terrorist fist jab.” Hill later apologized for the comment. “I



Sen. and Mrs. Obama share a moment of mutual respect during a recent primary in Virginia.

ic presidential rival, Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. Obama seems to have realized that in the age of the internet and 24-hour news cycles, nothing is sacred.

According to the Obama campaign, there is a deliberate misinformation and disinformation campaign of smears being waged by the Republicans.

In May following a political advertisement sponsored by the Republican Party of Tennessee using comments made by Michelle Obama taken out of context, Sen. Obama insisted that political rivals and the media “lay off” his wife.

Despite Sen. Obama’s request, the tenor and tone of the criticism has increased, and the insults—specifically directed at his wife—appear to have no end.

A rumor has circulated about a videotape of Mrs. Obama railing against “whitey” in a vitriolic diatribe at Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ. The rumor—repeated by conservative talk show hosts such as Rush Limbaugh—implies this “October Surprise” could torpedo Sen. Barack Obama’s historic quest for the presidency of the United States.

Sen. Obama was even asked about the mythical tape by a mainstream reporter aboard his airplane.

During an June 11 appearance by conservative minion Michelle Malkin on the Fox News Channel a graphic element was used on the lower third of the TV screen referring to Mrs. Obama as “Obama’s baby mama,” which is a slang term widely understood as a pejorative reference to a female who is the mother of a man’s child but with-

for the graphic miscue.

“I did not write the caption and I was not aware of it when it ran (the Baltimore studio doesn’t have a monitor). I don’t know if the caption writer was making a lame attempt to be hip, clueless about the original etymology of the phrase, or both,” wrote Mrs. Malkin.

Others reject the characterization of Michelle Obama as bitter, describing her as an “asset” for Sen. Obama and his presidential campaign. They say Sen. Obama and his wife have been examples of grace, dignity and class under difficult circumstances.

“There is nothing bitter about her, but there is a lot of honesty about her and I appreciate her for being the woman that she is,” said Dr. Wynetta Frazier, president of the National Hook Up of Black Women, Inc. “She is in touch with the people and to say something negative about her is an affront to Black women period.”

Just after crossing the delegate threshold June 3 to lay claim to the Democratic presidential nomination Sen. Obama said, “What you won’t hear from this campaign or this party is the kind of politics that uses religion as a wedge, and patriotism as a bludgeon—that sees our opponents not as competitors to challenge but enemies to demonize.”

Sen. Obama’s opponents, however, have repeatedly failed to live up to those lofty ethical standards.

In another recent verbal gaffe, E.D. Hill, was removed from her position as anchor of Fox News Channel’s “America’s Pulse” af-

his wife,” she said.

Still fresh in the minds of many are analyst Liz Trotta’s May 25 comments—also on Fox News

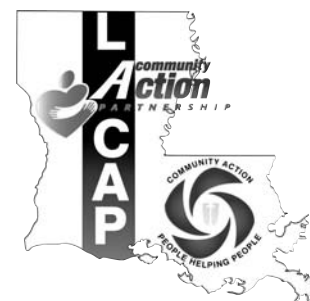
certainly didn’t mean to associate the word terrorist in any way with Senator Obama and

Channel—joking about Sen. Obama’s assassination and Fox talk show host Bill O’Reilly’s snide comment and apology for using “lynching party” in February remarks about Mrs. Obama.

Incessant rumors forced the Obama campaign to set up a website www.fightthesmears.com specifically to counter lies, rumors and half-truths. In addition to point by point denials of many

of the most pervasive rumors, a copy of Sen. Obama’s birth certificate and a photo of him being sworn in using a Bible are posted.

Mrs. Obama appeared on the popular female-oriented daytime show “The View” on June 18 in an attempt get beyond the smears and sound bites of this year’s presidential campaign.



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First African American Louisiana Justice Dies

New Orleans and the nation join together in remembering Justice Revius Ortique. Justice Ortique's life in the legal profession had been a succession of firsts. He was the first black member of the Louisiana State Bar Association's policymaking organization, the House of Delegates, and was not only the first African-American Civil District Court judge but also the first black chief judge of that court. In his crowning achievement, Justice Ortique was the first African-American to win an election to the state Supreme Court.

Elected in 1992, he had to step down in June 1994 when he turned 70, the mandatory judicial retirement age. His public career wasn't over. Sixteen days later, Mayor Marc Morial appointed him to the New Orleans Aviation Board. He became its chairman two months later and held that post for eight years. In addition to his local activities, Justice Ortique was president of the National Bar Association, an organization of Af-

rican-American lawyers, and five presidents appointed him to commissions and councils, including one panel that investigated the killings at Kent State University and Jackson State College, now Jackson State University, in 1970.

In everything he did, Justice Ortique was "a hard-working man, very disciplined, very focused on the task at hand," said Ronald Burns, a protégé and long-time friend.

Ortique is known for his work as a civil rights lawyer in the 1950s and '60s. During a career that spanned four decades, Ortique served as the first black judge on the Civil District Court of New Orleans, was elected president of the National Bar Association, and was crucial to the nomination of Thurgood Marshall as the first black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Ortique served as an official at Marshall's funeral in 1993. He served three terms as president of the Community Relations Council, in New Orleans. He lobbied President Lyndon John-

son to name black judges in the Supreme Court.

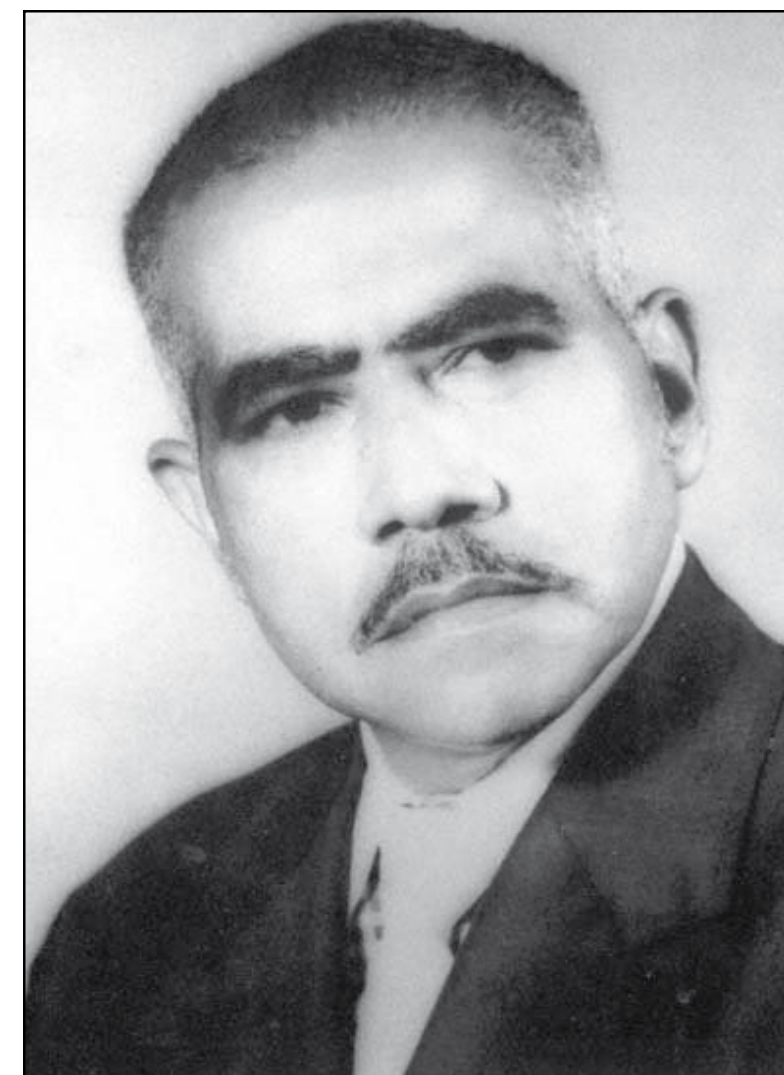
As an attorney, he helped integrate state labor unions and sued to get equal pay for black workers. He earned a bachelor's degree at Dillard University and went on to earn a master's degree in criminology from Indiana University. He earned his law degree in 1956 at Southern University.

In 1978, the state's highest court appointed him to a seat on the Civil District bench to complete the term of Adrian Duplantier, whom President Carter had appointed to a federal district judgeship. That lasted six months. In 1979, he was elected to fill out the term of Oliver Carriere, who was retiring. He was re-elected, without opposition, in 1984, and he was elected chief judge two years later.

At this point in his career, Judge Ortique began to receive awards. Six colleges gave him honorary doctorates. The Louisiana State Bar Association, the National Bar Association and the American Bar Association saluted him,

and the Black Law Students Association named him a "Civil Rights Pioneer." In 1992, he was elected to the

state Supreme Court, becoming its first African-American justice. He stepped down two years later on his 70th birthday. He wasn't inactive long because Marc Morial appointed



Justice Revius Ortique, Jr. Circa 1977, Courtesy Amastad Research Center, Tulane University

him to the New Orleans Aviation Board.

He left the board in 2004, when his term expired. During his tenure, which included eight years as board chairman, five more airlines set up shop at New Orleans International Airport, and an \$850 million rebuilding, renovation and expansion program was begun. "I am humbled and forever appreciative of your sacrifice, hard work and high standards of integrity," Morial wrote to Justice Ortique when he left the Aviation Board

in 2004.

Ortique died Sunday in Baton Rouge from complications of a stroke suffered on June 14 and lapsed into a coma from which he never recovered, he was 84. Justice Ortique had been a lifelong New Orleanian until he and his wife, Miriam Marie Victorienne Ortique, moved to Baton Rouge after Hurricane Katrina ruined their home. They had planned to return when repairs were complete, said Ira Middleberg, a lawyer and longtime friend.

Phase II Application Period Begins for Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program

BATON ROUGE, La - Community-based financing intermediary organizations across south Louisiana are accepting applications for Phase II of the Louisiana Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program through Friday, July 18, 2008. The program is designed to support small businesses in 20 parishes recovering from the after-effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. State officials have made \$80 million available in combination grants and zero-interest loans for recovering businesses in this phase.

Informational sessions about the program will continue throughout the application period. Business owners are urged to attend informational sessions to ensure their applications are accurate and complete before scheduling an intermediary interview to submit the application. It makes no difference when a complete application is received during the application period.

For more information on the program, interested businesses can visit www.LouisianaForward.com/BRGL, or call the program's 24-hour, toll-free helpline at 1.877.610.3533.

LED and LRA officials developed Phase II of the program with extensive input from local business groups, related state agencies and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funds remaining from the first phase of the program were added to monies allocated by the Legislature last year to total the \$80 million available for Phase II.



New Orleans Delegation Concludes Trade Mission to South Africa

On Sunday, Mayor C. Ray Nagin, Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell and other members of the New Orleans delegation concluded a weeklong trade mission trip to three cities in South Africa—Durban, Johan-

The South African Ambassador to the U.S. has visited Mayor Nagin in New Orleans in the past, and the country's standing as the economic engine of the African continent means it has much to share.

(IDC), and the State-owned trade and development Deputy Counsel General and staff. Just as in previous cities, the meetings centered on economic development and

trade, but particularly local government and private industry's role in development financing for emerging sectors, entrepreneurs and small, minority-owned busi-

nesses. The meetings ended with a roundtable discussion hosted by the city of Johannesburg.

Continued on page 13.



Mayor C. Ray Nagin, (left of center) and Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell (right of center) and other members of the New Orleans delegation concluded a weeklong trade mission trip to three cities in South Africa—Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

nesburg and Cape Town. "I am always overwhelmed by the international community's continuing goodwill toward the recovery of our city. My focus has long been on ensuring that this city is ready to receive the opportunities that are bound to come when the Panama Canal expands in 2014," said Mayor Nagin. "As I have reinforced in China and South Africa, New Orleans is a gateway to the world. It is important that we continue to tell the story of our recovery around the world as we work to increase visitors and businesses and develop international partnerships."

The trade mission began in Durban with a ceremonial resigning of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two sister-cities in parliamentary offices with Mayor Obed Mlaba, Mayor Nagin and Durban's Executive Committee. Following the MOU signing, Mayor Nagin delivered a public address about the city's recovery and emergency preparedness before Durban's government officials, public safety staff and local residents. A question and answer session followed.

While in Durban, the delegation also met with Port officials and discussed ways the two cities might work together once the Panama Canal is expanded. These discussions will continue during a follow-up meeting by Durban's Port staff to New Orleans this summer.

"Our vision is to create a meaningful relationship between the City of New Orleans and the people of South Africa that will be mutually beneficial for many years to come," said Tyrone Gunnie, First Secretary of Socio-Economic Affairs. In Cape Town – the second leg of the trip – the delegation met with Tasneem Essop, the Minister of Environmental Planning and Economic Development; Angelo Manzoni CEO of WESGRO, the State's Trade and Economic Development corporation; and Minister of Health, Piere Uys. The group also toured a local, model health clinic.

"This mission provided a wonderful opportunity to learn more about HIV care in South Africa while exchanging information about what some of our challenges and successes in delivering care are in New Orleans," said Fran Lawless from the City of New Orleans' Office of Health Policy and AIDS. "I'm confident that the relationship we established with our South African counterparts will pave the way for future information exchange." Cape Town's State Economic Development and Trade departments hosted in-depth meetings about the regions growth in manufacturing, port activities, film and culture and tourism.

In Johannesburg, on the last leg of the trade mission trip, the delegation met with the International Development Corporation

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Workforce Bill Clears Legislature, Heads to Governor for Signature

BATON ROUGE — Gov. Jindal's centerpiece bill to reform Louisiana's workforce development system won final Legislative approval today and now heads to the governor for his signature.

The bill, HB 1104, requires the Louisiana Department of Labor to integrate workforce development programs from across state agencies into a single, demand-driven system that meets the needs of businesses and job seekers into the future.

"I would like to thank Gov. Jindal and his staff, labor and industry representatives and every member of the legislature for their commitment to solving Louisiana's workforce issues," Louisiana Department of Labor Secretary Tim Barfield said. "The passage of this legislation sends a strong signal that everyone involved in workforce development in Louisiana is ready for change. The integration called for in the bill, which we have already begun to implement, will allow us

to more readily meet the needs of employers and job seekers."

Under the bill, the Department of Labor will become the Louisiana Workforce Commission and Barfield's title will become executive director. He will remain a member of the governor's cabinet. The commission will continue to carry out existing Dept. of Labor functions, such as administering the unemployment insurance and workers' compensation systems, in addition to taking on the expanded role in workforce development.

The workforce bill is one of a package of bills that make up Gov. Jindal's priority for this legislative session. The companion measures strengthen the role of community and technical colleges in workforce development, address funding for worker training in high-demand sectors and improve the state's ability to quickly respond to urgent economic development opportunities and challenges.

"By working closely with our partner agencies and other stakeholders, we can do a much better job of aligning the supply of trained workers with job vacancies and ramp up our efforts to fill the nearly 100,000 jobs that businesses can't fill today," Barfield said. "By building the system envisioned in Gov. Jindal's workforce development legislative package, we can provide a workforce that is ready to meet any economic development opportunity or challenge."

Business and industry will have an expanded role in making the new workforce development system more demand driven. The agency will begin its business outreach and engagement as the Louisiana Workforce Commission in September.

Urban League of Greater New Orleans will celebrate 70 years of service

The Urban League of Greater New Orleans will celebrate 70 years of service to the Greater New Orleans community at its Annual Gala. The cosmopolitan event will take place at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside in the Grand Ballroom on Saturday, July 12, 2008 at 8 p.m. Proceeds from the Gala provide support for the Urban League's services and programs to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights for African Americans and other underserved communities in the following key areas: education & youth development, economic & workforce development and public policy & advocacy. Since 1938, the Urban League's programs have served over 500,000 individuals and families in the greater New Orleans area.

"This year's gala marks a very special milestone in our history. The Urban League was created in 1938 to advocate for opportunities that would improve economic and social conditions for African Americans in the New Orleans community. 70 years following our founding, we remain steadfast in our mission to narrow the many equality gaps that continue to impact African Americans in the areas of education, employment, housing, public safety and access to capital," said Nolan V. Rollins, President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans.

Along with celebrating the Urban League's 70th anniversary, the gala will pay tribute to a man whose actions mirror the mission of the Urban League, Mr. Don C.

Hubbard. "We are extremely delighted to acknowledge the many contributions Mr. Hubbard has made to this community. His life demonstrates how one person can so positively affect so many lives in so many different sectors. We are also excited to announce Gala Chairpersons, Mr. Ashton J. Ryan, Jr., President and CEO of First NBC Bank and Mr. Karl J. Connor, Government Affairs Director of BP America, Inc.," said Rollins.

Headlining the entertainment for the evening is the Ka-Nec-tion Band with The New Orleans Horns. Special musical guest, jazz vocalist and educator Leah Chase, will also take the stage. Back by popular demand are the much anticipated Grey Goose and Bombay Sapphire Martini Bars. Individual Annual Gala tickets are \$150 for Friend Level and \$200 for Patron Level. Tables may be purchased at the following levels: \$1,500, \$2,500, \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$25,000. Tickets and tables are available for purchase online by visiting the Urban League's website, www.urbanleagueneuorleans.org.

The Urban League is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian, community-based organization and a participating agency of the United Way.

For more information on the Annual Gala or to make a reservation, please contact Cherie Williams at 504-620-2332.

Congressman's sister pleads guilty in scheme

(Reuters) - The sister of Democratic Rep. William Jefferson pleaded guilty to concealing a crime on Wednesday, the fourth relative to become entangled in the family's legal troubles.

Brenda Jefferson, 52, helped defraud several nonprofit organizations by concealing and failing to report the activities of two of her siblings, Betty Jefferson and Mose Jefferson, and her niece, Angela Coleman, according to court documents.

Federal prosecutors in New Orleans recently charged the three other relatives with conspiring to steal more than \$600,000 from organizations they set up to help at-risk and disadvantaged youth.

Brenda Jefferson, also known as Brenda Foster, performed clerical work for the nonprofits run by her relatives.

According to prosecutors, she has admitted to receiving \$90,000 in payments from the organizations.

Brenda Foster faces up to three years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, according to prosecutors.

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An interfaith, multicultural commemoration of prayer and art to heal and honor the global legacy of The Middle Passage, Saturday, July 5, 2008.

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JULY 5TH

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MAAFA:
The Middle Passage Memorial

trailblazer

Rodrina Rouege

Inspirational Dance



Photo by Ramone Jones

By Edwin Buggage

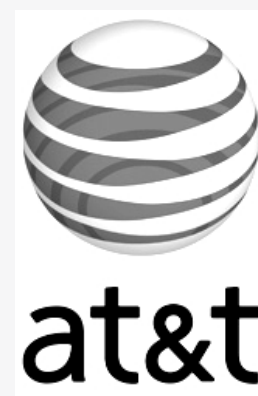
She is an artist, mother and teacher who have over the years selflessly given her time and talent to the youth of New Orleans. Rodrina Rouege, a native of New Orleans, Louisiana began her journey going down a very different road; pursing and receiving

a B.A in Accounting from Southern University of New Orleans in 2001. While being able to take her degree and go the corporate route Rodrina re-discovered her passion for dance and it was a moment which changed the course and direction of her life. "I was always interested in dance, but when I thought of something I wanted to

study I felt African dance was a great fit because it is not just beautiful it also has substance and meaning." She then began intense study under the late great Abdoulaye "Papa" Camara to whom she pays tribute for her exposure to traditional West African dance. "Through studying African Dance it helped me connect the dots between who

Continued on page 15.

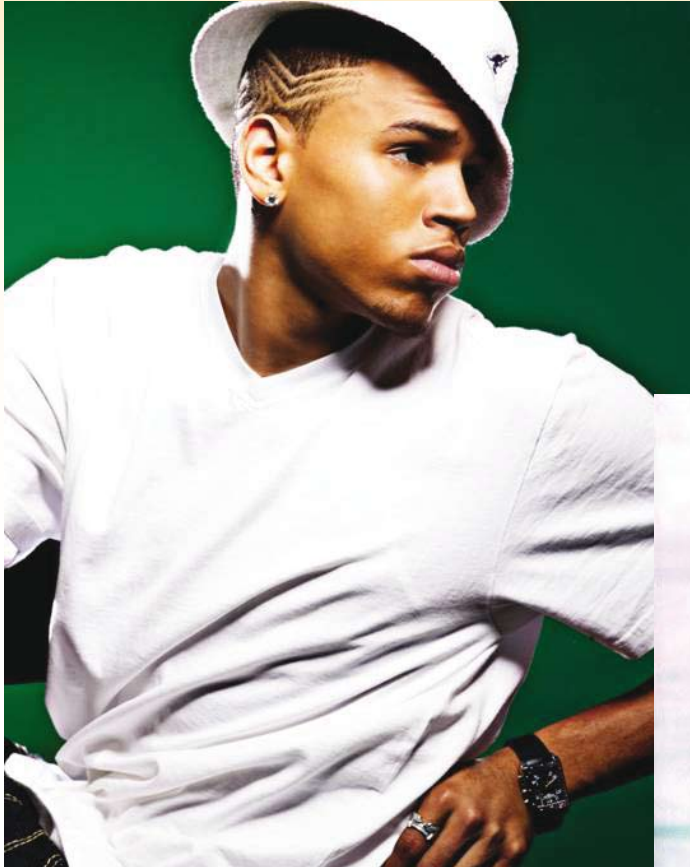
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Essence Music Festival 2008

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Go to www.essencemusicfestival.com for more information and purchase tickets to the music events at ticketmaster.com.



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2008 Essence Music Festival Lineup

Superdome Artists

Friday, July 4th

Featuring Kanye West, Chris Brown and Rihanna

Saturday, July 5th

Featuring Musiq, LL Cool J, Jill Scott, Patti Labelle Reunion With Sarah Dash & Nona Hendryx, Plus Angie Stone, Ledisi, Chrisette Michele, Irma Thomas, Ruby Amanfu

Sunday, July 6th

Featuring Morris Day And The Time, Keyshia Cole, Chris Rock, Mary J. Blige, Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly

*Performance times and schedules are subject to change without notice.

Superlounge Artists

Friday, July 4th

Big Sam's Funky Nation
Featuring New Orleans Funk and Soul Explosion
Terence Blanchard
Peabo Bryson
Grandmaster Flash
Mint Condition
Rebirth Brass Band
Christian Scott

Saturday, July 5th

Irvin Mayfield Jazz Orchestra
Lyfe Jennings
Kermit Ruffins Band
Solange Knowles
Ledisi
Cupid

Sunday, July 6th

Raheem DeVaughn
Chrisette Michele
Nicolas Payton
Preservation Jazz Hall Band's Gospel Revival
Irma Thomas
Gil Scott-Heron

*Performance times and schedules are subject to change without notice.



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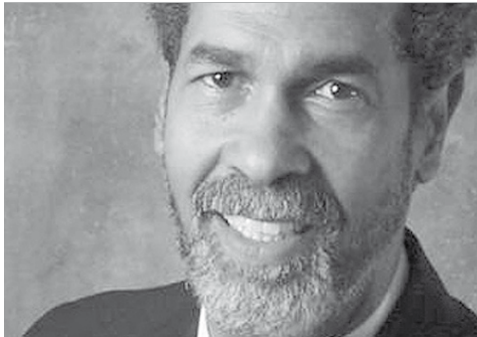
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Opinion

The New Media - Moving From Protests to Progress



The Love Dr.
Data Columnist

Some of my very good friends are going to read this piece and say to themselves, "I was wondering why LD stopped showing up at the protests and meetings." I prefer to think that way, but I am wise enough to know that there are at least one or two who choose to believe that I (and others like me) have gone soft in terms of social justice. I did much protesting in the sixties and early seventies, and even since Katrina. Times have changed, however, and they have changed in a way that seems to waste much of the time, energy and resources that are invested in non violent protesting.

Since Ronald Reagan allowed the consolidation of media power into the hands of a few beginning in 1976, non violent protest have gotten less and less coverage in the media, as the wealthy interest that now own almost all media in America have no self interest in publicizing the protest of those who want to change the rules that now serve them and not the interest of working and struggling citizens. The minds of American citizens have been on lock down for the last thirty years.

The great and very effective non violent protest movement of the fifties and sixties came about at a time when the brand new television broadcast industry didn't really understand its ability to influence change with news coverage, and ownership of this brand new media was by adventure-some and forward thinking people. The networks were all centralized and located in the northeast corner of America. They were willing to show the video of marches and play the voices of legally disenfranchised human beings. Fire hoses and police dogs, and Klan infiltrated police forces provided the violence and drama for viewing America, which had just fought WWII and ended Germany's racial oppression. Here, on their television sets with all the drama of black and white, were people turning attack dogs loose on unarmed men, women and children. The coverage gave America the political will to change

discrimination laws, as did the coverage of anti war protest stimulate the end of the war. (Seen any anti Iraq war demonstrations covered lately?)

I'd like to bring in another thought at this time, and that is that my ego is large enough to require that I make sure that I do not live in vain, that my existence has influence on the future, that my life will have made a difference when it's done. I personally believe that is why God gave men such large egos, so that while our women raise and nourish the future of the world, we men would be about improving the infrastructure of life, its institutions and policies and the availability of resources, driven to "make our mark" as they say.

With the understanding of that last paragraph, how can I expend time and effort to help organize and pull off a public protest, not see it make the news, and then feel good about the investment? When I could have invested the same time and energy doing something that would have made a difference. Its interesting that often cameras will show up, perhaps in case of some violence or other drama, but the footage doesn't make the broadcast. Who's interested? After all where are the attack dogs and fire hoses?

So, yes, I and I assume some others who want to "make a difference" with their lives choose now, during a virtual blackout of media coverage of non violent protest, to invest in working with and on behalf of children, an almost sure shot at changing the future, and have changed our methods of influencing social justice. I have become media. This column, originally dedicated solely to relationship and family issues came from a frustration of seeing people caught in cyclical poverty because men in women headed family cultures did not develop the capacity to or habit of supporting their children in or out of marriages. So not feeling effective as a protester for human rights and dignity, I turned to teaching, by writing and speaking and moderating discussions relating the lessons learned from how my Boo and I thrive on married life.

To witness progress is fulfilling. As one who lived the sixties and "participated", I have a sense of having been part of a movement that changed how the legal system dealt with race, gender, age or people with physical challenges. I was in it. When African Americans hit the street and caused the election of the first round of African American officials, I was in it. I got out of it shortly thereafter, not having the stomach for the ugly cutthroat side of politics and what some we elected did after that historical effort.

Then as media morphed into the voice of neo-conservatives with no interest in publicizing the ongoing and legitimate

Continued page 13.

In The Spirit

So Sad and Lonely



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Relationships

One of the biggest and brightest voices in the music business today is Keyshia Cole. In one of her songs she sings about being sad and lonely. She expresses herself by being in love with this particular man, but her relationship has fallen apart. Now she is sad, heartbroken, and lonely. Maybe Keyshia was referring to her own personal relationships, or she was trying to relate to her fans and society.

I believe that everyone can relate to what Keyshia is singing about, who have been in a relationship with someone. Now, the relationship is over, and you are heartbroken, but like Keyshia said she too has been sad and lonely and she admits that deep down inside she is still in love with that person. Folks, there are many people who were in relationships like this, but they decided to move on. When you have tried your best to make a relationship work, and it is still not working, then you need to move on and be happy again.

There are people who are waiting for their life to be worked out, before they make a decision to be happy. Before you move right into another relationship, take your time. Learn to be happy with yourself first. However folks, that's a choice to be happy, or to be sad and lonely. Being happy does not depend on your present situation, but it depends on your choice to be happy again. I know some people go through some difficult times, but yet you would never know they were having some dark and hard times.

Folks they were still able to smile, and hold a positive conversation with others. Now, they are others that have been in a relationship, in some cases that were far less severe and troublesome, but they insist on having a pity party. Look folks, I'm just trying to tell you that you must take control of yourself. Don't let a negative or a past relationship dictate to you. I know that you may have been hurt, deceived, and not appreciated, but that's why you deserve to be happy again.

Hey, dry those beautiful eyes, put on a happy face, and live and be happy again. Your life is not over, it's just starting again just for you. Come on people, relax yourself and go with the flow. Folks, you need to believe without a shadow of a doubt that God, the Creator is in control of your broken heartedness, so stop worrying yourself sick. Look I'm about to send you a text message, here it is; "everyday life is full of surprises and troubles, and there are no relationships that are perfect or going to be perfect."

Folks, don't let your past relationships that didn't go the way you would have liked for it to go stop you from moving on and being happy. You can't control others and change them and you shouldn't let people control or change you, but you can make a decision not to be sad and lonely. You need to know that life is too short, but yet so beautiful to be stressed out, because your relationship didn't work out. Look, stop being so sad. Too much sadness and stress can shorten your life and cause you to have bad health.

Don't let anyone shorten your life and cause you to have bad health, because God is the giver of life. Listen, you are beautiful, bright, and unique, there is no other like you. Hey just because you were in a bad relationship, don't you stop caring and loving, but learn from your broken heartedness and past relationships so that the next one will be a better and brighter one. Be happy, live and love again. Remember that love is better the second time around. God Bless.

Dr. Aaron Harold is a pastor and relationship counselor for comments or suggested topics he can be reached @ 504.813.5767



Letter to the Editor

Initially, I was going to title this letter "Lee and Me" in honor of the hit spot WWL reporter Lee Zurik filed on our 311 system. Though I enjoyed educating Lee on the facts of how the system functions and disabusing Lee of the many misstatements and mischaracterizations he made in that report, it was unfortunate that it happened only after the severely flawed report had been played repeatedly for the viewing public. But the latest shot by Gordon Russell reminded me of my father's admonition that it is very difficult to defend yourself against people who buy ink by the barrel. With that being said, I will take an approach different from the natural inclination to become defensive and say "you just don't understand". We all owe the reading public a higher level of discussion.

We who serve the public are taught to have a thick skin and I can take my shots with the best. However, the manner which certain reporters seek to entertain with their stories has reached a new low. I would have hoped that these reporters would look in the mirror and ask themselves, "Am I providing information useful news and information, or just comedic satire parading as the former? How is this story helping this massive recovery effort? Am I really meeting my duty to be fair and balanced?" Unlike the system of checks and balances inherent in our form of government, members of the media (and I truly believe that most approach their roles and responsibilities with a very sober mind) have relatively unfettered and unchecked access to the public who depend on you to keep us informed and updated on current events. For example, the Times Picayune, Gordon Russell's employer, boasts a Sunday circulations of approximately 200,000 readers. WWL consistently touts its position as the most watched station in this market, and a radio reach across a huge section of the gulf coast (including Mississippi and Baton Rouge), not to mention its impact via the internet. Given your great level of influence, the public is owed more than tabloid styled sensationalism that unnecessarily and unfairly erodes public confidence at a time when

faith in our ability to secure recovery resources is sorely needed. We need you to be fair in your representation of contracts that, by law, cannot exceed the amounts appropriated by the city council; not to misstate and over state those contracts by 600 percent.

If you are going to talk about our advocacy efforts, we need you to talk more about our ability to keep the city out of bankruptcy; about our success in both republican and democratically controlled congresses in securing billions of dollars for levee and flood protection, and in helping homeowners and businesses to rebuild (making sure those dollars don't get stuck in needless bureaucracy); about our ability to secure 300 million dollars to jumpstart FEMA eligible work to critical city and sewerage and water board infrastructure; and please talk about the millions of dollars secured for police, fire and emergency management service recovery needs. Please do not treat us as though we exist in a vacuum and are engaged in some strange practice from another planet. Please be clear about the fact that I have done nothing illegal or unethical in advocating for the needs of the city that I love. Please discontinue the practice of coloring the facts in a way that leaves an impression that this administration has been less than honest with the public fisc, and providing fodder for divisiveness from both sides of our community in chat rooms, on blogs and on talk radio. We must elevate the dialogue, even when we disagree, if we are to rebuild better and stronger. We must remember Dr King's admonition that we must "learn to live together as brothers [and sisters] or perish together as fools". But we cannot do that without our friends in the media remembering your part in our recovery. Your loved ones live, work and play here, or long to, just as mine do.

I am sure these reporters learned somewhere in their schooling that you should not just throw rocks (especially if you live in a glass house). If you think you have identified a problem, offer a solution. These "gotcha" games are unfair to the public and you owe more than that.

Continued page 13.

Fox News Channel has Crossed the Racist Line

By. Harry C. Alford
NNPA Columnist

Beyond the Rhetoric

The famed comedian D.J. Hughley has stated that whenever he accidentally rests his television dial on the Fox News station it will automatically start tilting to the right.

That's funny, but it also illustrates the dogma and mantra that comes from this station that claims to be "fair and balanced".

That claim is indeed untrue. In fact, there has never been a cable channel so devoted to one area of political debate. Fox News is not extremely committed to the right wing dogma of the political debate it is pro ultra conservative awash with neo conservative views which are not compatible with traditional or progressive Black views.

Anti-democratic, anti-liberal but also anti-Black and this is what sickens me and should cause great concern for the free nation known as America.

The Obama run for the presidency has turned this station into a bastion for hate, propaganda and sick satire. Mahatma Gandhi once stated that when you start a movement "they will first ignore you; then they will laugh at you; then they will fight you; finally you will win".

Fox News is engrossed in the third stage with Senator Obama and the entire Black race in general. It appears to them that the Senator and the entire Black race are one and the same and must be stopped at all costs. The level of hate and racism from the Rupert Murdoch station is turning up to a very serious level.

It has decided to demonize the entire Black church. Since the tape and follow up of Rev. Wright, Senator Obama's former minister, the television station has repeatedly blamed this on typical Black church rhetoric coming out every Sunday from typical Black churches and their ministers throughout the land.

They have even brought on their dependable colored buffoons who claim, "This is what's wrong with Black people. They have stupid, hate mongering preachers telling them what to do."

Someone needs to tell this medium that it is the Black church that has gotten our race through the Jim Crow apartheid era of the United States and that it is the Black church that has spawned great leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who have led us to victory in the great Civil Rights Struggle.

I guess that's it. They despise the Black church for what it has done – delivering us from oppression through faith and courage. Apparently, this station hates what the Black church stands for and is.

It was not funny at all when one of the paid pundits on Fox News made a Freudian slip by saying, "it would be nice to stop Al Qaeda and kill Obama", when checked by another pundit she continued, "Osama/Obama, let's knock off both of them".

This is intolerable! They tried to cover themselves with a mild jovial apology the next day. This was nothing to joke about and based on the history of this nation it was clearly a threat that should not be taken lightly. How can a "news show" carry on in such a dangerous and sick manner? If the Ku Klux Klan has an endorsed television channel, this is it.

Racists can clearly be illustrated with the hatred of the Black female. Their fear of the Black male causes them to hate the one who loves him – the Black female. The personal mean spirited attacks against the Honorable Michelle Obama are terribly sad. Another Fox News pundit referred to her as "Obama's baby mama". This is reducing the most celebrated Black family today to an unholy affair replete with illegitimate children. This is more than mean; this is pure hate. You have to be pretty sick to think this stuff up.

It gets worse. Bill O'Reilly has stated on his nightly show on Fox News that he wants to organize a "lynching party to go after Michelle Obama". This is 2008 and we are on the verge of breaking a long cycle of exclusivity. However, there is a news medium that is hell bent on preventing that. Issuing a statement like this is truly indicative that something very wrong is still amiss amongst us. We need to call it out.

I gave up watching Fox News long ago. I just could no longer stomach the mess that was being presented before me. No African-American or any human being with racial tolerance can watch this program on a consistent basis. Bad taste is one thing but racial animus becomes something more sinister.

It is time for us to start officially complaining to the Federal Communications Commission about the antics this channel is perpetrating. Let's stop this monster.

Alford is the co-founder, president/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Website: www.nationalbcc.org.

Michelle Obama: Ain't She a Woman?

By Gary L. Flowers

Sororal treatment has linked Sojourner Truth and Michelle Obama in history.

In 1843, a domestic servant in up-state New York whose given name was Isabella Van Wagenen changed her birth name to one that would reflect her mission in life - Sojourner Truth.

Her life's journey would lead her to be revered for her stature, intellect, and fearlessness. Like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth was one the first Black fem-

inists to publicly assert that Black women should be viewed as total human beings.

In other words, within the Black community there are women; and within the feminist movement, there are Black women.

As an abolitionist and an itinerant Pentecostal preacher, Ms. Truth was invited to the 1851 Women's Conference in Akron, Ohio. According to Frances Gage, a White abolitionist and president of the conference, as Sojourner Truth rose to approach the stage,

White women whispered, "For God's sake, Mrs. Gage, don't let her speak."

Despite the whispers, she was reported to have famously said, "I have borne children and seen most of them sold into slavery, and when cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?"

One hundred and sixty-five years after Sojourner Truth assumed the national stage comes Michelle Robinson Obama. Like Truth, Mrs. Obama stands 5' 11"

tall and possesses a commanding, yet feminine presence. Raised by parents who instilled in young Michelle and her brother, Craig, a thirst to succeed despite racial oppression in the world, the potential First Lady of the White House is gifted and grounded.

Ivy-League educated at Princeton and Harvard, the

wife, mother, lawyer, and woman is worthy of respect. Yet, like Mrs. Truth, Mrs. Obama has had to succeed amidst the whispering campaigns of negativity.

She is said to be "angry" and "the baby mama of Obama". Maureen Dowd suggested that many Americans believe Michelle Obama to be "emasculating" to her candidate husband. Likewise, the blogosphere is rife with the modern version of whispered insults and innuendo.

For example, a recent posting on the Daily Kos revealed an image of a wrist-bound Michelle Obama about to be burned on the back by Ku Klux Klansmen, with the title "Our New Hi Tech Southern Strategy" sponsored by the David Duke Fan Club.

Whether 1851 or 2008, fear-mongers and the ignorant that use race as a dividing wedge are not surprising. What is alarming is the lack of defense for Mrs. Obama that is afforded to others. If Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton who once was First Lady in the White House deserved - as she did - defending by leading White feminists from stereotypically sexist attacks on the campaign trail such as hecklers yelling "Hillary: Iron my shirt", than surely Mrs. Obama as a potential First Lady in the White House deserves the

same. One set of defense rules. The only leading voice I have heard has been National Organization for Women president Kim Gandy who is "watching" for sexist attacks on Michelle Obama. And this is a good start.

But where are the famous names in feminism now that Mrs. Obama is under attack? Metaphorically, the cultural chasm between Helen Reddy's "I am Woman" (1972) and Chaka Khan's "I am Every Woman" (1992) must be closed to open a new paradigm of equal defense for equal offense.

Appearing on the television show, "The View", last week, Mrs. Obama was poised and personal; elegant and electric. As she fielded questions, Michelle Obama did so with a sense of genuine openness, which seemingly connected with the viewers of "The View".

But why did she have to appear in the first place? Sojourner Truth's words still instruct us:

"If the first woman God ever made [Eve] was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right-side up again." Together, we are one.

Gary Flowers is executive director and CEO of the Black Leadership Forum.



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Mission, Continued from page 5.

"It has been very beneficial to engage officials at the state and city levels as well as the private industry in South Africa on best practices in the areas of port and economic development. We have seen from an international perspective how we can help our small and minority owned businesses have a greater impact and role in our city's economy," said Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell.

In Durban and Johannesburg, the Mayor also held forums on emergency preparedness and the initial recovery steps following Hurricanes Katrina and the failed levees.

Johannesburg's first responders are planning a visit to New Orleans where they will participate in emergency drills as part of their preparation for the FIFA Soccer World Cup in 2010.

Love Doctor, Continued from page 10.

struggle for social justice I became frustrated in the non violent protest as a method for changing the conditions of struggling people, but since I abhor violence as a solution to anything other than self protection, I had to find ways to have an impact rather than just make a noble effort. There is a difference, one makes a difference the other is justified and feels righteous, as I have enjoyed the experience of both.

So I still attend meetings, but now the meetings tend to be about creating or improving something and organizing to make it happen. I still work in the struggling part of our community but now it is about helping children to personally break the cycle of poverty that the public refuses to support with their political will (perhaps due to a lack of media exposure).

As the expression suggest and the ancient Chinese text Art of War teaches and I agree, "You have to pick your fights", but I applaud the courage of all that fight.

Letter to the Editor (cont.)

Continued from page 11.

You owe fairness and balance. There are tens and hundreds of thousands of displaced residents, former residents and potential residents who depend on you for fair and honest reporting upon which they can make intelligent decisions about rebuilding. Lets spend more time on the truly important issues of this recovery (hint- coastal, levee and flood protection, public safety, healthcare and education, to name a few) and less on gossip spin columns about how less than .00001% of the city's budget was spent advocating for our needs. If you really think we should use a different standard for choosing the venue where we share critical recovery information with business, community and political stakeholders, let's have that discussion. But, let's have it in a productive manner that sets the stage for building a greater society together. I stand ready to do that. What about you?

Sincerely yours,

Kenya J.H. Smith
Director of Intergovernmental Relations
City of New Orleans

Please send your Letter to the Editor to:
datanewseditor@bellsouth.net,

or mail it to:
Data News Weekly,
3501 Napoleon Avenue,
New Orleans, LA 70125.
Please make it 350 words or less.

CBC Asks Bush to Restore Urban Youth Program, Summer Jobs Also Scarce

By. Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – The Congressional Black Caucus has appealed to President George W. Bush on behalf of the National Urban League's Urban Youth Empowerment Program set to be slashed from the budget of the Department of Labor next week.

"It is our understanding that the funding, which enables the program to provide much-needed services to young people to reduce recidivism, to complete their high school education and to find jobs is to be terminated on June 30, 2008. We urge you not to end this vital program," states a letter to Bush, signed by 37 members of the CBC and released exclusively to the NNPA News Service. "Now is not the time for the Department of Labor to turn its back on young people who are trying to turn their lives around. These young people will be kicked out of the program unless you intervene."

The letter asks that the federal government at least allocate \$4 million to allow 800 youth enrollees to complete the training that they have already begun through 2008.

"At a time when incarceration rates are at an all-time high in the nation, and unemployment among

young people is steadily increasing, the program serves as a valuable resource to underserved communities around the country," the letter states. "The program has a demonstrated record of effectiveness in assisting at-risk youth in educational opportunities, job training and placement, and the support needed to make a successful transition into the workplace."

As of Monday morning, the Caucus had not yet gotten a White House response to the letter.

NUL President/CEO Marc Morial also laments that the cutting of the Urban Youth Empowerment Program comes at a time when no substantial federal funding exists for general summer jobs for youth across the nation.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for Black teens ages 16-19 is 32.3 percent, twice the rate of the 16.4 percent of White teens in the same age group; and nearly twice the rate of Latino teens, 17.5 percent.

"You have a lot of idle teenagers who are out of school and who want to work, who want opportuni-

ties, careers, and a chance to earn a living," says Morial. "It's a tragedy that Congress has not moved on summer jobs because the teen unemployment rate is as high as it's been in 50 years."

The cutting of the UYEP will only exacerbate the occupational void where it is needed most, the CBC letter states. It lists at least 27 high crime cities where the program has been highly effective, including Baltimore, Birmingham, Charlotte, Columbus, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Louisville, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

"The program represents the best that our communities have to offer by providing educational and training assistance to at-risk youth in ways that encourage partnerships with local businesses, faith organizations and employers," the letter states. "These collaborative partnerships and intense support for at-risk youth ultimately achieve improved outcomes for individual participants, healthier communities and a better-equipped workforce."

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Tavis Smiley Softens Position on Obama, Says Blacks Must Defend Presumptive Nominee Against Attacks

By Bonnie V. Winston

RICHMOND, Va. (NNPA) - Political commentator and national talk show host Tavis Smiley seemingly has softened his position on Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama.

In an exclusive interview with the Richmond Free Press, Smiley lauded the Illinois senator for his historic achievement in becoming the first African-American to run for president under a major party banner.

He also denied that his departure from the hugely popular Tom Joyner Morning Show was linked to his stance on Sen. Obama.

"I don't allow people to run me away from anywhere," he said in a phone interview from his Los Angeles home. "I start and leave

on my terms."

Smiley, who was set to speak in Richmond June 14, became the subject of much speculation in April when it was announced he would be quitting Joyner's radio show after 12 years of offering twice weekly commentaries on politics and a range of other subjects.

It was rumored that he is leaving because of his tough posture on Sen. Obama, particularly among throngs of listeners who fervently supported the senator's historic nomination quest.

Joyner said at the time that Smiley quit because he couldn't handle the criticism from listeners upset because "he's always busting Barack Obama's chops."

But, Smiley denies it.

In the past, the 43-year-old Smiley has criticized Obama for not attending the State of the Black Union for the past two years. Smiley has convened the event - a national conversation on issues pertinent to the Black community - for eight years. In February 2007, when the televised convocation drew 10,000 people to Hampton University, Obama was announcing his historic bid for president from the statehouse in Illinois that very weekend.

Smiley explained during the interview, as he has in a commentary, that his contract is up with Joyner's show. He said he is fatigued with rising at 3 a.m. everyday to meet the show's 6 a.m. start on the East Coast. He said there are other things he wants

to do.

His last commentaries on the show will come at the end of June.

"You mentioned empowerment. Well, I want to move on and do other things," he said.

While Smiley said that Obama - and all elected officials - must be held accountable to the people who put them in office, he noted that Sen. Obama's history-making nomination "releases progressive possibilities and portends for us - people of color and for women - the opportunity to do things that we heretofore have not had a chance to do."

But, he cautioned, the general election campaign against Republican John McCain will be a bruiser.

"We have to brace ourselves for the ugliest, nastiest racist, most expensive campaign ever in this country," he said. "I don't think people have really grasped yet how ugly, nasty, racist and divisive this race is going to become."

Smiley called on people to prepare to defend Sen. Obama "against any and all White supremacist attacks" that are certain to be launched.

"We have to stay informed. We have to stay awake. We have to stay alert. We have to stay aware," Smiley said. "And we have the obvious call to be involved - in controlling our destiny in every step that we can. So we have to get involved. Whether people support Obama or McCain, you have to be involved in the process."

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NNPA Editor-in-Chief, 'Debaters' Film Producer, Millionaire Philanthropist and Courier Express Editor Named 2008 Role Models at Baptist Congress

LOUISVILLE (NNPA) - Proclaiming 'Hope is in the Air', the president of the 7.5-million member National Baptist Congress of Christian Education, an auxiliary of the the Natioal Baptist Convention, has given four executives the organization's 2008 Role Model Award.

The four honorees following the annual message of President R. B. Holmes Jr. at the June 19 event were: Hazel Trice Edney of Washington, D.C., editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association's News Service; Valerie Scoon Bowers of Tallahassee, Fla., film director and producer with credits for the movie "The Great Debaters" and



Baptist Congress President Dr. R. B. Holmes, Jr. and Baptist Convention President Dr. William J. Shaw present 2008 role models: Mizelle Stewart, editor; Valerie Scoon Bowers, film producer; Hazel Trice Edney, editor-in-chief; Dr. Willie Wilson, businessman and philanthropist.

The Oprah Winfrey Show; Dr. Willie Wilson of Chicago, philan-

thropist and president and CEO of the multi-million dollar Omar Medical Supplies; and Mizelle Stewart of Evansville, Ill., editor of the Courier Express and Christian Educator.

More than 30,000 delegates packed Louisville Convention Center's Freedom Hall for the annual message as well as classes, seminars and workshops.

The role model honorees were presented as symbols of hope after a message, preached by Holmes that drew the massive audience to their feet with shouts and applause.

The honorees were chosen for their professional accomplishments as well as their national

impact, public service and inspiration to youth, according to program organizers.

"Our history is a story of a people who knew the power of hope; the source of hope and how invaluable it is to have a heart of hope," Holmes preached.

Citing the poetry of Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise", Richard Wright's classic novel, "Native Son", Denzel Washington's movie, "Great Debaters", James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing", and Sen. Barack Obama's autobiography, "The Audacity of Hope," Holmes proclaimed, "Hope is in the air; but we need hope to be in our hearts!"

Trailblazer, Continued from page 5.

we are in New Orleans and how we are so far but yet so close to our African heritage in this city." Today, Rodrina continues to expand her knowledge by attending weekly African dance classes and various national dance conferences and workshops.

Rodrina has used all she has learned inspiring young people working at Young Audience, an arts enrichment program that takes place at various schools throughout New Orleans, where she educates young people about West African culture through traditional song and dance. "I enjoy giving something to the children that they might not get in school, something where they can learn something positive about their identity, history and culture." In addition to teaching them about African culture through dance, Rodrina hopes that her lessons in dance can enhance her students' confidence and prepare them for life and help make them more well rounded individuals.

Currently, Rodrina is a dance instructor at Fisher Elementary and in 2007 her students were selected to perform at The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. For her community work she has received an achievement award from Habans Elementary and Harriet Tubman Elementary for her commitment to teaching Traditional West African Dance in 2008. "I am glad that I am able

to give back to young people, and I appreciate being recognized for my contributions, but it is really not about that it is about the spirit of giving and hopefully inspiring the future leaders of our community."

While Rodrina has given her time to children around the New Orleans area her source of pride, joy and purpose are her three children; one daughter Haraji, and two sons Harambe and Jamie Jr. "They are what makes my life worth living," says Rouege. "You get to be so many things, protector, provider, guiding them while providing them comfort and giving them the tools to succeed in life," says Rouege. "It is an amazing thing to see them grow, and through them sometimes you can get to be a child again." "They are my life and even when things sometimes get tough they can always put a smile on my face and remind me of my reason for living."

Throughout her career in dance she has made people feel good with her gift of dance all over the crescent city. She has danced with several companies including "Allabatu" headed by "Papa" Camara and currently "N' Fungola Sibo" in addition to doing her own workshops. She plans to continue providing the community with rich West African culture through traditional song and dance performances. "It is important that

we continue to expose people to the rich culture of West Africa because by in the spirit of Sankofa to know where we are going we must know where we have been, and today that is really important for us who are from New Orleans as so many of us after Hurricane Katrina embark on this new journey down the road of life."

Rouege is a die hard New Orleansian who loves her city and wants it to come back better than ever, and reclaim its place as a special magnificent place at the mouth of the Mississippi. "New Orleans is home and will always have a special place in my heart; there is no place like it with the culture, the food, music, the people, and most importantly it is a place that is very family oriented."

She feels that people should venture to come back to make the city a better place, "Today we need people who have positive vibes and good energy to come back into the city to combat the negative things that are going on in the city, and give back so we can begin moving the city in the right direction." Rodrina Rouege is a mother, artist, teacher who is giving the gift of dance to young people; she is an inspiration and an example for many to follow. For her continuous hard work and dedication Rodrina Rouege is the recipient of the New Orleans Data News Weekly June 2008 Trailblazer Award.



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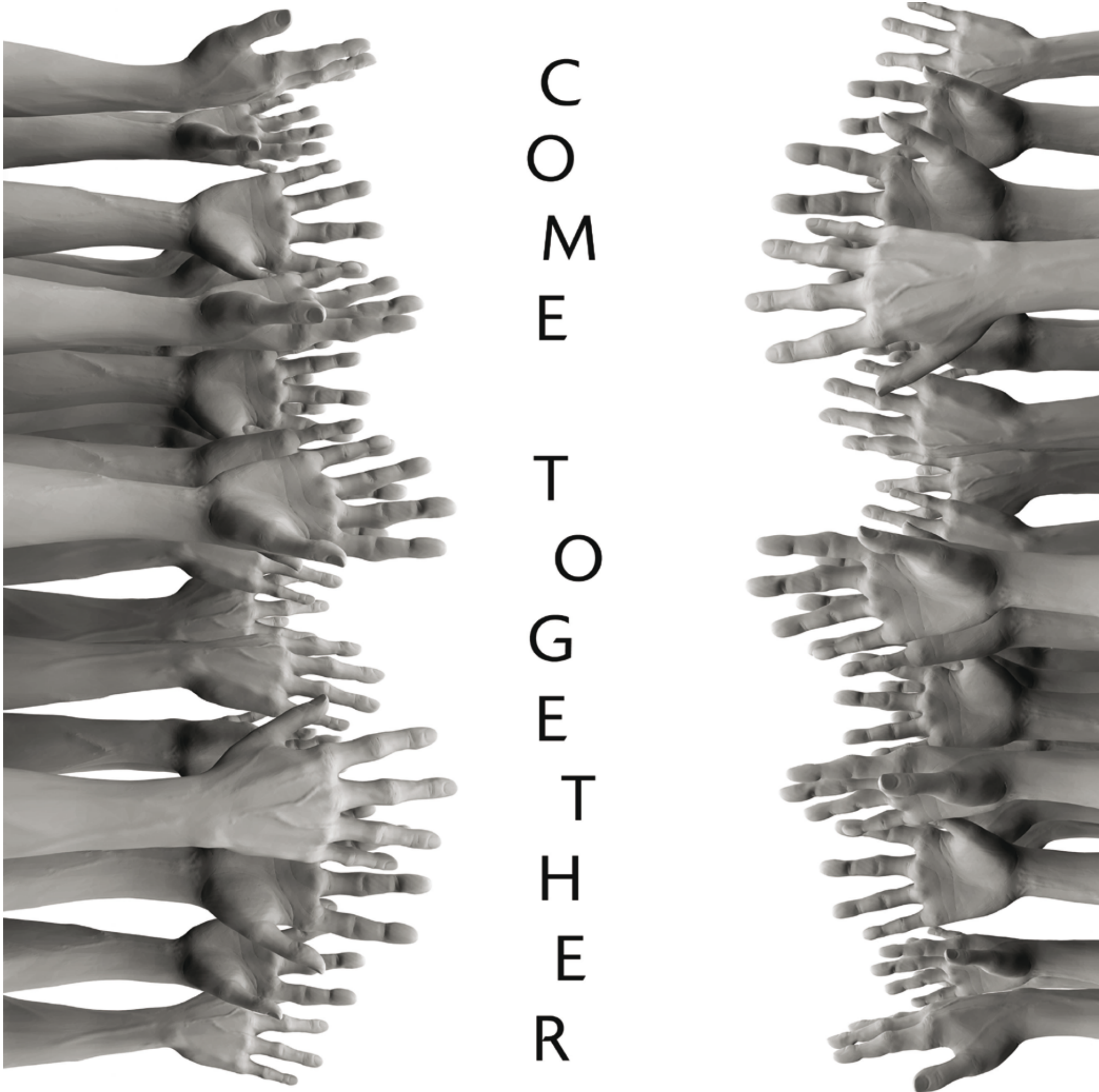
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