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New Orleans

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News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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President Obama, Race and the Future of America



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Barack's America



by Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

As Barack Obama has ascended to the nation's highest office, there has been a whirlwind of controversy surrounding his presidency. While the nation and the world celebrates this historic first, there has been a backlash that may be fanning the flames of racial resentment. President Obama in his short tenure in office is moving along with a sweeping agenda that is addressing issues as far reaching as the economy, education, healthcare, the war on terror and many other problems that is presently ailing the U.S.

While Obama has received much support in his agenda, as is the case with any issues, there is opposition. But in this case there are people and organizations that have sprouted up challenging the legitimacy

of his presidency where xenophobia, jingoistic rhetoric, and in some instances downright racist attitudes and statements have come to the foreground. This is beyond the usual distrust of government that is usually the main talking points that fuels right wing radio and television talk shows.

This is a segment of the American population where death threats, open contempt, and even displaying of firearms at events where the president is appearing is allowed. It is a time where under the guise of patriotism some feel the U.S. is on the demise and it is because of President Obama. Some have even linked him to the Anti-Christ and not even an American citizen. At no time in American history has someone's legitimacy as president been questioned so heavily, even the last

U.S. President George W. Bush who lost the popular vote amidst controversy that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. After the dust settled the American people rallied behind President Bush and even got behind him in what many would call one of the biggest political blunders in recent times going to war in the Middle East.

Conversely, President Obama easily landed into office by a vote of the people. During the election his opposition tried to paint him as a terrorist, socialist and hater of America and the white race. None of these tactics used in past elections worked and Barack Obama easily won against his opponent John McCain. Obama's presidency has been like no other the world has ever seen. Throngs of people from around the

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

616 Barrone Street, Suite 584, New Orleans, LA 70113

Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622

editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Terry B. Jones

CEO/Publisher

Glenn Jones

VP Advertising

& Marketing

Edwin Buggage

Editor-in-Chief

Shaniece Bickham

Managing Editor

June Hazeur

Accounting

Contributors

Dionne Character

NNPA

Art Direction & Production

MainorMedia.com

Editorial Submissions

datanewseditor@bellsouth.net

Advertising Inquiries

datanewsad@bellsouth.net

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President Barack Obama speaks to a joint session of Congress on health care at the U.S. Capitol Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009. Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson



President Barack Obama speaks to a joint session of Congress on health care at the U.S. Capitol Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009. Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson

world witness history in the making. People across the globe celebrated in November and January as he was sworn into office. Obama's presidency has changed the way people see and perceive America. Other ideas have also been challenged. The age old American dialog surrounding race and its meaning is paramount. His rise has opened question to what significance does the century old questions of race and nation have in the 21st century?

The End of Whiteness

Earlier this year the Atlantic ran a cover story entitled the End of Whiteness. While the cover garnered much attention the story only glazed over and oversimplified something much more complex. It failed to note how over centuries a socially constructed practice without any root in biology as proven by the human genome studies could and would dictate people's life's chances. It would determine who was given access to resources, and over time have a psychological impact on how people perceptions of themselves and others based on race.

Whites had come to believe based on this false premise that something was inherently superior about being the idea of whiteness. And that everything that was other than that was inferior. In all walks of life others were relegated to menial positions, or made to feel they didn't have the same rights and privileges as whites and were in some instances enforced by laws or customs. In every aspect of life in the U.S. blacks were relegated to second class status.

Today after hundreds of years of struggle and protest Barack Obama stands on the shoulders of many courageous people both black and white that came before him to make a way that he could have a chance to compete as an equal. And now that he sits in the nation's highest office the question of black inferiority has been forever altered. But there are those who want to hold on to these old ideas surrounding race that may no longer be relevant in the 21st century.

In 21st century America the young people of today are more informed and marching to a different beat via technology and demographic shifts that will see people of color as the new majority in the U.S. Young people across the globe are armed with tools that combat the ignorance that have kept people of previous generations in the dark. The people both young and old who hold onto these of what will soon

be archaic definitions of race are fossils of an age that is on the verge of collapse. But of course this does not mean that race and racism will disappear, but the significance will dissipate to microscopic levels and not be as relevant.

America in Decline?

There are those who say that the U.S. is on the decline because of President Barack Obama. They feel that the country is not as secure. Gun sales are up, as are secessionist movements. What does this say about where this country is, and is that an accurate assessment of this nation?

In truth the U.S. global influence is waning but it does not have anything to do with the current commander-in-chief. Decades of changes across the globe have made as columnist and author Thomas Friedman book so aptly states, the world is flat. Today the world is a level playing field where a Cold War idea of one global superpower is now obsolete.

The landscape of the world has changed and President Obama is a metaphor for an emerging world. One that is much more diverse and where diplomacy is more important than military might. It



President Barack Obama talks with Justice Sonia Sotomayor prior to her investiture ceremony at the Supreme Court September 8, 2009. Official White House Photo by Pete Souza

is a world that is interconnected, and where transnational ideas trump the unilateral ideas and initiatives of the past centuries.

The U.S. is poised for the emerging world with Obama at the helm. In actuality it is less about a country that is in decline and more about a nation adjusting to the changing world around it. A nation

where healthcare should be a right. A nation where quality education for all should be available to all children, and also be a nation that can cooperate with other nations to deal with the issues that affects us all. The days of John Wayne diplomacy for the U.S. have rode into the sunset, for today is a new day. Either the U.S. will join the rest of the world or perhaps suffer the fate of many great empires of the past suffering a decline, decay, and eventual destruction.

The Future of America

The U.S. has grown from a country of pioneers. Of people who have come from far and distant lands whether it was on ships, planes, or in chains. Today they are in the same boat trying to stay afloat. The U.S. stands as a great nation in transition. It stands with a charismatic commander-in-chief, but will it be enough to bring the U.S. out of the many problems that nation has to grapple with, in truth probably not.

America's future is in the hands of its citizens, of people who can civilly engage and without becoming enraged. Or in some instances outraged to the point where they want to secede from the nation or openly feel they now they will disrespect the office of the president of the U.S. because he does not look like them.

This country was built on the principles of freedom, justice, and liberty. Today this nation is closer to that than at any time in its history. It is not time for intelligent people to give credence to the words of those with small minds who seek an audience. Who are stuck in the mode of thinking that time has expired. It is time for sober minded people to push the mute button on idiocy and nonsense. It is time for dialog and citizens can agree to disagree, but ultimately how does the country

move forward in respect to healthcare, education, how to deal with our international partners and a host of other issues. In essence Obama's plan are just that, and while policies and laws may or may not be passed. The future of America will be shaped and molded by our hands.

Buzz Begins as New Orleans' Campaign Season Kicks Off

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.
Managing Editor

Many have kept mum about their plans to run for New Orleans' most coveted seats next year, but the silence was broken by a few during the Labor Day holiday as politicians and political hopefuls began announcing their plans to have their names on the election ballots.

One of the most important elections of 2010 is the mayoral race. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin will have served his two terms making way for a race without an incumbent. State Sen. Edwin Murray and State Rep. Austin Badon are interested in the job and kicked off their campaigns at the annual AFL-CIO Labor Day picnic. In addition to Murray and Badon, James Perry, executive di-



State Rep. Austin Badon



State Sen. Edwin Murray



Attorney James Perry

rector Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, has also made his plans to run for mayor official.

There are rumors that others

are planning to run, though they have not officially said it. These include State Rep. Karen Carter-Peterson, John Georges, who has previously run for governor,

Councilmember Arnie Fielkow, and attorney Rob Couhig.

The potential mayoral candidates were not the only ones making announcements this past

week. City Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis announced her plans to run for the councilmember-at-large seat next year. State Rep. Cedric Richmond also announced that he will try his hand at running for Congress in the seat currently held by Congressman Joseph Cao. Richmond also ran during the last election for the seat, which had been held by former Congressman William Jefferson.

The weeks and months ahead will prove to be interesting as more potential candidates reveal their plans for the future. More candidates may throw their names in the hat as the qualifying deadline approaches. Only the voters can decide when they go to the polls to cast their ballots next year.

Opinion

How Do You Define Success?

Shaniece B. Bickham, Ph.D.
Managing Editor

A very popular hip-hop song that receives heavy rotation on radio stations chants of material-

istic desires and equates fulfilling those desires with being successful. The artists brag about wanting money, cars, and clothes and then conclude that they just want

to be successful.

This song and so many others say that the accumulation of materialistic things and money is more important than the accumulation of knowledge. These voices are becoming louder and stronger. And the more people hear this message, the more prone they are to believe in it. While everyone has his or her own level of desire for materialistic things, it becomes a problem when this level of desire becomes the very thing that is valued most above everything else in life. It becomes a problem when people consider themselves failures because they don't drive a particular car, live in a certain subdivision, or interact in certain social circles.

But are those the ways that we define success for African-Americans in the 21st century? A lot of times it is. There is a tendency in today's society to upstage flashy cars, name brand clothing, big diamonds, and fast money and downplay working hard, getting an education, and establishing a rewarding career. The constant bombardment of what society has defined as

"successful" has overshadowed traditional definitions of the term.

So, what is considered successful? If you are a medical doctor, but people don't know who you are the way they may know a musical artist; does that mean you are not successful? If you have earned advanced degrees, but your financial status has not catapulted you into a different social class; does that mean you are not successful? Plain and simple; if you are not rich, does this mean you are not successful?

I would hope not. But have society tell it, you are not. And if this is what most believe, what does that say for our youth as they grow into adults? What will they value and what will be their definition of success?

Just as I have heard the song, so have our youth. But we can't blame the music or the media. Parents are responsible for what their children listen to and for instilling in them the values necessary to succeed in life. Our children need to understand that while music and sports careers are wonderful, they are not failures if they choose to be doctors, lawyers, teachers, or nurses.

President Barack Obama delivered a speech for school-aged children on Tuesday, Sept. 8 that encouraged America's youth to aim for success, learn from their failures, and value their education. In the speech, the President acknowledged the role of parents, teachers, and schools in children's success, but he also urged students to take responsibility for their own education. There may be good teachers, caring parents and excellent schools, but the main responsibility belongs to the children, he emphasized.

I am with President Obama. I want our children to understand that their future is in their hands. No one controls their destiny but them, and what they put into life; they will get out of life. It is necessary that our youth of today understand that they must grasp and hold on to their dreams and aspirations and work as hard as they possibly can to achieve them. They should not give up on them in a mad dash for money, cars, and clothes. Reaching their goals will sustain them much longer.

New Orleans City Council Request for Qualifications

Electric and Natural Gas Regulatory Services

The New Orleans City Council is soliciting Statements of Qualifications for Professional Electric and Natural Gas Regulatory Consultants Firms to provide consulting services and advice to the City Council and its Utility Committee regarding matters associated with Entergy New Orleans, Inc. (ENO) and Entergy Louisiana, LLC (ELL) in the provision of electric and natural gas services in Orleans Parish and to address a broad range of utility issues as they arise. Both ENO and ELL are wholly owned subsidiaries of Entergy Corporation (Entergy), a multi-state holding company. A complete copy of the Request for Qualifications is available at the City Council's website at www.nolacitycouncil.com. Complete statements of qualifications must be received by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 1, 2009.

For further information and the Request for Qualifications packet please contact:

Council Chief of Staff
1300 Perdido Street - Room 1E06
New Orleans, LA 70112
E-mail: rjpursell@cityofno.com

Langston Hughes Academy Charter School Cuts Ribbon

New Orleans Officials and students of the Langston Hughes Academy Charter School celebrated the opening of the first newly built, state-of-the-art school since Hurricane Katrina. The new school is one of several construction projects planned by the Recovery School District over the next five years. Mayor C. Ray Nagin joined federal and state officials, including U.S. Representative Joseph Cao, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education Tony Miller, State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek, Superintendent of the Recovery School District Paul Vallas, and Orleans Parish School Board Superintendent Darryl Kilbert to welcome the staff and students into their new facility located in a Gentilly neighborhood.



Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com



Photo Credit: www.cityofno.com

The two keys to the future? Technology, and the people who'll be using it.

It strengthens communities. And transforms lives. That's why AT&T is so committed to improving education, especially through the greater use and understanding of technology. In fact, more than half of our contribution dollars and volunteer hours benefit education in some way. Because who knows, the student we help today could be the scientist, doctor or business leader who helps someone else tomorrow.

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Data News Weekly Celebrates 43rd Anniversary

Robert "Kool Black" Horton Named Trailblazer of the Year



Dionne Character, Author
Data News Weekly Columnist

The night was as vibrant as the wind blowing my hair from the balcony of the Juneau penthouse at the top of the Ritz Carlton. The air was filled with ambition and drive, togetherness and purpose, as Data News Weekly celebrated another successful year of publishing and servicing.

The elevator doors opened, eclectic art beckoned your attention, down the hall a lavish restroom and a home theatre, where die-hard Saints fans watched the game. One could feel the spirit of New Orleans lurking around the grand piano to the sound of caged parrots in the background.

This event was not just a celebration for

Data News Weekly, but a night to honor those who have shaped, molded and significantly helped restore The City of New Orleans as "Trailblazers".

The evening was hosted by the lovely Ericka Dourousseau and Glenn Jones. Singer Sharon Martin, in a "divine" red dress, performed with her band, along with Michael Ward and Kermit Ruffins, "live" on the roof, beneath the beautiful skyline of the Crescent City.

Data News Weekly honored Trailblazer of the Year, Community Activist, Robert "Kool Black" Horton, who was taken by quite a surprise. He celebrated with his



family who came to support the man who has become the voice for the voiceless.

Through all the music, fun, food, drinks, and people who hadn't seen people since Katrina, this Red Carpet Event was a success!



Data News Weekly honors unsung heroes and celebrates 43 years of publishing.



Songstress Sharon Martin delivers perfect notes as one of the featured performers of the night. Photo Credit: Larry Panna, Jr.



Publisher Terry Jones thanks AT&T sponsor.



Editor-in-Chief Edwin Buggage and April Schenck



Attorney Ralph Bickham and Data News Managing Editor Shaniece B. Bickham

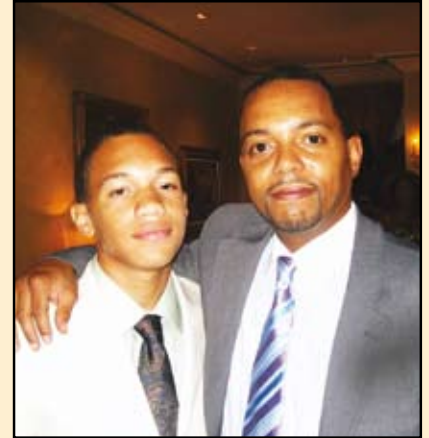
Shoot Ya Best Shot!



Data Publisher Terry Jones and the 2008-2009 Trailblazers.



Robert Horton, Edwin Buggage, and Charles Dickerson. Photo Credit: Larry Panna, Jr.



Hiram and Glenn Jones, grandson and son of Data News Weekly's Publisher Terry Jones.



Trailblazer of the Year Robert Horton and his family.



Publisher Terry Jones and representative from Entergy, one of the sponsors.



Glenn Jones and Erica Durosseau, hosts for the evening.



Everyone had a good time at the party including Gayle Gray of Whitney Bank.



Trailblazer Shayla De La Rose (left) poses for a snapshot with Carlyn Goodwin with the City of New Orleans.



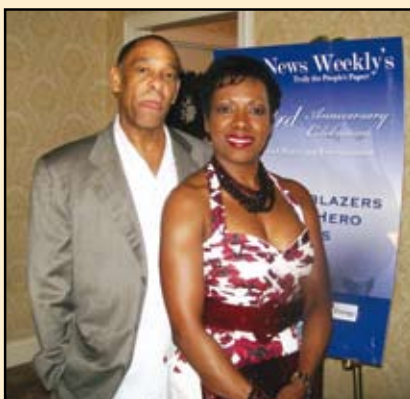
Trailblazer Nolan Rollins enjoying the festivities.



Erica & Raghan Durosseau



Michael Ward and Kermit Ruffin were featured entertainers for the event.



Dr. Robert Spears and Lana Turner Ancar



June Hazeur of Data News Weekly poses with Dr. Fritz Fidele.



Gayle Gray of Whitney Bank, one of the sponsors for the evening and Publisher Terry Jones.



Dionne Character sits down with Arthur and Shawnette Humphrey, owners of the world famous N'awlins Cafe.

Crazy Called You, He Wants to Kill Health Care Reform



Cheryl Mainor
Data New Weekly Columnist

Its time to stop the madness! Somebody has to say it, stand up and call a spade a spade and put a stop to this offensive debacle, which is just the latest development in the "2009 Take Back Our Country" movement that threatens to destroy the very soul of this nation.

Why are people so upset? It is to the point where I expect to turn on the television and see them tearing out their hair, renting their clothes and publicly flogging themselves. Sounds crazy, but what have we been witnessing except crazy? Nothing like this has been seen in recent history, and in many cases it is at unprecedented levels. To what end, and when does it stop? When does somebody on the Right stand

up and say ENOUGH? Who in America doesn't need good health insurance? And why would any average citizen be against it? When will all of this stop and we have a real discussion on fixing healthcare without the Republicans pulling out all of the stops and riding on the crazy bus?

The answer is never, because the goal is to obstruct the healthcare debate, and kill the bill, plain and simple. Everything is on the table, and anything goes. Putting the nail in the coffin of President Obama is the goal, and they will not stop. He is a big man, he can handle himself, but you on the other hand need to be doing something about it, because if they succeed, it is you, and your family who will again pay the cost.

them think that their worst nightmare will come true if health care reform passes with a "public option." It is gamesmanship at it's worse, and as the President said in his speech, it is "quite simply a lie."

Wilson hurled his accusation at the President while he was debunking the "myth" that HR 3200 (the healthcare bill draft) will allow illegal aliens to take part in the program for free. Not only is this notion, wrong, it is not in the bill, anywhere. What is in the bill, is what the President said:

H.R. 3200: Sec 246 NO FEDERAL PAYMENT FOR UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS Nothing in this subtitle shall allow Federal payments for affordability credits on behalf of individuals who are not lawfully present in the United States.

This is not difficult to understand. It states NO FEDERAL PAYMENT FOR UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS. That means NO, saying illegal aliens will be eligible for the plan, is not true, but, since it's right there, visible for anyone to read, I have to suspect that Cong. Wilson either can't read and doesn't know it's there, or doesn't care. That he, and the many (many, many) others who are furious about aspects of the proposed health care legislation, and or anything Pres. Obama may advocate for or stand for, and simply want to use any emotion, misinformation, slander, or lie to prevent its passage.

That's a shame, but the greater shame would be for them to be successful, and you and I end up with no affordable healthcare coverage. We in New Orleans can least afford this type of demagoguery. We have enough struggles and we need some relief. As difficult as it is to find good quality healthcare here nowadays, we need all the help we can get and every bit of relief goes a very long way here!

It's time to write, email or call your Representatives, and Senators and tell them that you will not stand for this. Tell them that you cannot afford for health care to be out of reach for another 16 years and that you need it today!

You have to make your voice as heard as the town hall, birther, deather, tea baggers and make the difference. Every voice counts. It's your life, your health, your future, remember, they already have great insurance!

Senator Mary Landrieu
Hale Boggs Federal Building
500 Poydras Street
Room 1005
New Orleans, LA 70130
Voice: (504) 589-2427
Fax: (504) 589-4023
<http://landrieu.senate.gov>

Rep. Anh "Joseph" Cao
2nd District
United States House of Representatives
2113 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Voice: (202) 225-6636
Fax: (202) 225-1988
<http://www.house.gov/cao>



CONGRATULATIONS
TO
DATA NEWS WEEKLY
ON 43 YEARS
OF PUBLISHING
AND THE
TRAILBLAZER
PROGRAM

The President's speech was eloquently prepared, brilliantly executed, and at the same time, was delivered in a way that even a 6th grader could understand. That should have been admired, but instead, a member of Congress subjected us to the first public outburst in any history that anyone living can remember. When Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC) interrupted the President by yelling out "You Lie" he not only was in violation of House Rule section 370 of the House rules manual which states, members may not:

- Call the President a "liar."
- Call the President a "hypocrite."
- Describe the President's veto of a bill as "cowardly."
- Charge that the President has been "intellectually dishonest."
- Refer to the President as "giving aid and comfort to the enemy."
- Refer to alleged "sexual misconduct on the President's part."

He was also lying! That is the bigger story, the one that gets lost in all of the ruckus and after the show pundits. His lie, however, and the way he did it, is the story. It goes to the obstruction and smoke and mirrors game being played to keep the radical right wing base engaged, and influence the feeble minded and fearful. The idea is to whip them into frenzy, scare them, and make

Entergy New Orleans Proposes "Energy Smart" Plan to Lower Bills

Citywide incentive-based energy efficiency plan can help lower usage

New Orleans, La. – Entergy New Orleans, Inc. recently presented its "Energy Smart" Plan to the City Council's Utility Committee and are waiting to find out whether the committee will approve the company's energy efficiency program proposal that could annually make up to 7,300 homes and businesses more energy efficient and save customers money. The proposal was generated at the direction of the New Orleans City Council as an addition to Entergy New Orleans rate case agreement in principle in which the company successfully



lowered electric rates by \$35 million.

"The Energy Smart proposal is based upon best practices from programs around the nation and

significant input from the community. It provides substantial benefits to residential and business customers using measurable, cost-effective programs," said Tracie Boutte, vice president of regulatory affairs, Entergy New Orleans, Inc. "With the Council's approval we can lower energy usage in the community by providing residential and business solutions, create a greener environment, and train and develop a green workforce."

With annual funding of \$3.1 million, Entergy New Orleans is projecting that up to 7,300 participants will benefit from Energy Smart within the first year. For example, the proposed Residential Solutions program would provide cash incentives to New Orleans customers who make energy efficient improvements such as insulation, duct sealing and weatherization through a qualified contractor to help defray the improvement costs while also benefiting from lower electric bill. Small and large businesses and government buildings will also

benefit.

The plan also includes incentives for the installation of solar water heaters. And over the next year, proposes to study the effectiveness of solar power for residences and businesses specific to the New Orleans climate.

The Energy Smart programs will be reviewed and approved by the Council on an annual basis. All residential and non-residential electric customers are eligible to participate in the program.

Data News Weekly

Salutes the
Fallen Heroes
of 9/11.

Your memories
live on.

Tamborine & Fan Urges City to Take Action for Sake of Youth

Listen, New Orleans, Please listen. WE NEED YOUR HELP!

On the playgrounds of New Orleans, football will be the dominant activity for about 8 to 12 weeks; bring fun times for many of New Orleans' youth. This is good, but there are still questions that must be answered. Why is it that many of these boys will be given helmets when they won't be able to spell helmet at the end of the season or read the vocabulary associated with the game of football.



WE NEED YOUR HELP!



This is very depressing, but it will get worse if education is not made a top priority off and on the sports field. Even if our youth have an opportunity to make it to the "Pros," they must still get past college first. The youth of today must understand that they must first score touchdowns with their books.

Historically, this indifference to Education has compromised the opportunity that is afforded to athletes. In light of all that has been said, the following is suggested:

- City mandates that all sports participants apply for library cards.
- That education is infused into playground activities with strategies akin to Books + Balls.

Action must be taken now! Seasons should not be started unless an educational component is integrated. To do less would be a lynching of the youth of tomorrow.

—Tamborine and Fan

President Obama Urges Students to Take their Education Seriously

President Barack Obama delivered a speech to America's school children on Sept. 8, 2009. His message was one of motivation, education, and success and he encouraged students to begin taking responsibility for their education. While many schools aired the speech live as the President delivered it and incorporated it into their curriculum, there are others that decided to record the speech and show it at another time. Data News Weekly has decided to publish the speech for those who may not have saw it and for parents who may want to share the message with their children.

The President: Hello everyone – how's everybody doing today? I'm here with students at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia. And we've got students tuning in from all across America, kindergarten through twelfth grade. I'm glad you all could join us today.

I know that for many of you, today is the first day of school. And for those of you in kindergarten, or starting middle or high school, it's your first day in a new school, so it's understandable if you're a little nervous. I imagine there are some seniors out there who are feeling pretty good right now, with just one more year to go. And no matter what grade you're in, some of you are probably wishing it were still summer, and you could've stayed in bed just a little longer this morning.

I know that feeling. When I was young, my family lived in Indonesia for a few years, and my mother didn't have the money to send me where all the American kids went to school. So she decided to teach me extra lessons herself, Monday through Friday – at 4:30 in the morning.

Now I wasn't too happy about getting up that early. A lot of times, I'd fall asleep right there at the kitchen table. But whenever I'd complain, my mother would just give me one of those looks and say, "This is no picnic for me either, buster."

So I know some of you are still adjusting to being back at school. But I'm here today because I have something important to discuss with you. I'm here because I want to talk with you about your education and what's expected of all of



President Obama and Secretary Duncan in a discussion with 9th graders at Wakefield High School. White House Photo, Pete Souza

you in this new school year.

Now I've given a lot of speeches about education. And I've talked a lot about responsibility.

I've talked about your teachers' responsibility for inspiring you, and pushing you to learn.

I've talked about your parents' responsibility for making sure you stay on track, and get your homework done, and don't spend every waking hour in front of the TV or with that Xbox.

I've talked a lot about your government's responsibility for setting high standards, supporting teachers and principals, and turning around schools that aren't working where students aren't getting the opportunities they deserve.

But at the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, and the best schools in the world – and none of it will matter unless all of you fulfill your responsibilities. Unless you show up to those schools; pay attention to those teachers; listen to your parents, grandparents and other adults; and put in the hard work it takes to succeed.

And that's what I want to focus on today: the responsibility each of you has for your education. I want to start with the responsibility you have to yourself.

Every single one of you has something you're good at. Every single one of you has something to offer. And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is. That's the opportunity an education can provide.

Maybe you could be a good writer – maybe even good enough to write a book or articles in a newspaper – but you might not know it until you write a paper for your

English class. Maybe you could be an innovator or an inventor – maybe even good enough to come up with the next iPhone or a new medicine or vaccine – but you might not know it until you do a project for your science class. Maybe you could be a mayor or a Senator or a Supreme Court Justice, but you might not know that until you join student government or the debate team.

And no matter what you want to do with your life – I guarantee that you'll need an education to do it. You want to be a doctor, or a teacher, or a police officer? You want to be a nurse or an architect, a lawyer or a member of our military? You're going to need a good education for every single one of those careers. You can't drop out of school and just drop into a good job. You've got to work for it and train for it and learn for it.

And this isn't just important for your own life and your own future. What you make of your education will decide nothing less than the future of this country. What you're learning in school today will determine whether we as a nation can meet our greatest challenges in the future.

You'll need the knowledge and problem-solving skills you learn in science and math to cure diseases like cancer and AIDS, and to develop new energy technologies and protect our environment. You'll need the insights and critical thinking skills you gain in history and social studies to fight poverty and homelessness, crime and discrimination, and make our nation more fair and more free. You'll need the creativity and ingenuity you develop in all your classes to build new

companies that will create new jobs and boost our economy.

We need every single one of you to develop your talents, skills and intellect so you can help solve our most difficult problems. If you don't do that – if you quit on school – you're not just quitting on yourself, you're quitting on your country.

Now I know it's not always easy to do well in school. I know a lot of you have challenges in your lives right now that can make it hard to focus on your schoolwork.

I get it. I know what that's like. My father left my family when I was two years old, and I was raised by a single mother who struggled at times to pay the bills and wasn't always able to give us things the other kids had. There were times when I missed having a father in my life. There were times when I was lonely and felt like I didn't fit in.

So I wasn't always as focused as I should have been. I did some things I'm not proud of, and got in more trouble than I should have. And my life could have easily taken a turn for the worse.

But I was fortunate. I got a lot of second chances and had the opportunity to go to college, and law school, and follow my dreams. My wife, our First Lady Michelle Obama, has a similar story. Neither of her parents had gone to college, and they didn't have much. But they worked hard, and she worked hard, so that she could go to the best schools in this country.

Some of you might not have those advantages. Maybe you don't have adults in your life who give you the support that you need. Maybe someone in your family has lost their job, and there's not enough money to go around. Maybe you live in a neighborhood where you don't feel safe, or have friends who are pressuring you to do things you know aren't right.

But at the end of the day, the circumstances of your life – what you look like, where you come from, how much money you have, what you've got going on at home – that's no excuse for neglecting your homework or having a bad attitude. That's no excuse for talking back to your teacher, or cutting class, or dropping out of school. That's no excuse for not trying.

Where you are right now doesn't have to determine where you'll end up. No one's written your destiny

for you. Here in America, you write your own destiny. You make your own future.

That's what young people like you are doing every day, all across America.

Young people like Jazmin Perez, from Roma, Texas. Jazmin didn't speak English when she first started school. Hardly anyone in her hometown went to college, and neither of her parents had gone either. But she worked hard, earned good grades, got a scholarship to Brown University, and is now in graduate school, studying public health, on her way to being Dr. Jazmin Perez.

I'm thinking about Andoni Schultz, from Los Altos, California, who's fought brain cancer since he was three. He's endured all sorts of treatments and surgeries, one of which affected his memory, so it took him much longer – hundreds of extra hours – to do his schoolwork. But he never fell behind, and he's headed to college this fall.

And then there's Shantell Steve, from my hometown of Chicago, Illinois. Even when bouncing from foster home to foster home in the toughest neighborhoods, she managed to get a job at a local health center; start a program to keep young people out of gangs; and she's on track to graduate high school with honors and go on to college.

Jazmin, Andoni and Shantell aren't any different from any of you. They faced challenges in their lives just like you do. But they refused to give up. They chose to take responsibility for their education and set goals for themselves. And I expect all of you to do the same.

That's why today, I'm calling on each of you to set your own goals for your education – and to do everything you can to meet them. Your goal can be something as simple as doing all your homework, paying attention in class, or spending time each day reading a book. Maybe you'll decide to get involved in an extracurricular activity, or volunteer in your community. Maybe you'll decide to stand up for kids who are being teased or bullied because of who they are or how they look, because you believe, like I do, that all kids deserve a safe environment to study and learn. Maybe you'll decide to take better care of yourself so you can

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Justice Department Lawsuit Charges Atlanta Condominium With Discrimination Against Families With Children

The Justice Department filed a lawsuit last week against an Atlanta condominium association, as well as the owner of a unit and the real estate agent who sold it, for violating the Fair Housing Act by discriminating against families with children.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, charges that the Georgian Manor Condominium Association maintained policies discouraging families with children from living in the Georgian Manor complex, located at 3648 Peachtree Road in Atlanta. It also charges that the owner of a unit in the complex refused to sell to families with children and that the real estate agents hired to sell the

unit, Jennifer Sherrouse and Harry Norman Realtors, publicized the restriction.

"Housing discrimination against families with children has been illegal for more than 20 years, but remains a persistent problem across the country," said Loretta King, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "We will continue to prosecute discrimination against families with children."

This lawsuit arose as a result of a complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by a fair housing group. The group encountered language in a real-estate listing for Georgian Manor stating "No pets or

children." After an investigation of the complaint, HUD issued a charge of discrimination and the defendants elected to have the case heard in federal court.

"Real estate advertising stating 'No children' is prohibited by federal protections for families with children. Together, HUD and the Justice Department will vigorously enforce the law," stated John Trasvina, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity. "This lawsuit serves to educate the real estate professionals and landlords about the rights and responsibilities under the federal Fair Housing Act."

The lawsuit seeks a court order prohibiting future discrimination by the defendants,

monetary damages for the complainants and a civil penalty. It also seeks monetary damages for other persons harmed by the defendants' actions.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt>. Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line at 1-800-896-7743, e-mail the Justice Department at fairhousing@usdoj.gov or contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777.

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be more ready to learn. And along those lines, I hope you'll all wash your hands a lot, and stay home from school when you don't feel well, so we can keep people from getting the flu this fall and winter.

Whatever you resolve to do, I want you to commit to it. I want you to really work at it.

I know that sometimes, you get the sense from TV that you can be rich and successful without any hard work – that your ticket to success is through rapping or basketball or being a reality TV star, when chances are, you're not going to be any of those things.

But the truth is, being successful is hard. You won't love every subject you study. You won't click with every teacher. Not every homework assignment will seem completely relevant to your life right this minute. And you won't necessarily succeed at everything the first time you try.

That's OK. Some of the most successful people in the world are the ones who have had the most failures. JK Rowling's first Harry Potter book was rejected twelve times before it was finally published. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team, and he lost hundreds of games and missed thousands of shots during his career. But he once said, "I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

These people succeeded because they understand that you can't let your failures define you – you have to let them teach you. You have to let them show you what to do differently next time. If you get in trouble, that doesn't mean you're a troublemaker, it means you need to try harder to

behave. If you get a bad grade, that doesn't mean you're stupid, it just means you need to spend more time studying.

No one's born being good at things, you become good at things through hard work. You're not a varsity athlete the first time you play a new sport. You don't hit every note the first time you sing a song. You've got to practice. It's the same with your schoolwork. You might have to do a math problem a few times before you get it right, or read something a few times before you understand it, or do a few drafts of a paper before it's good enough to hand in.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength. It shows you have the courage to admit when you don't know something, and to learn something new. So find an adult you trust – a parent, grandparent or teacher; a coach or counselor – and ask them to help you stay on track to meet your goals.

And even when you're struggling, even when you're discouraged, and you feel like other people have given up on you – don't ever give up on yourself. Because when you give up on yourself, you give up on your country.

The story of America isn't about people who quit when things got tough. It's about people who kept going, who tried harder, who loved their country too much to do anything less than their best.

It's the story of students who sat where you sit 250 years ago, and went on to wage a revolution and found this nation. Students who sat where you sit 75 years

ago who overcame a Depression and won a world war; who fought for civil rights and put a man on the moon. Students who sat where you sit 20 years ago who founded Google, Twitter and Facebook and changed the way we communicate with each other.

So today, I want to ask you, what's your contribution going to be? What problems are you going to solve? What discoveries will you

make? What will a president who comes here in twenty or fifty or one hundred years say about what all of you did for this country?

Your families, your teachers, and I are doing everything we can to make sure you have the education you need to answer these questions. I'm working hard to fix up your classrooms and get you the books, equipment and computers you need to learn. But you've

got to do your part too. So I expect you to get serious this year. I expect you to put your best effort into everything you do. I expect great things from each of you. So don't let us down – don't let your family or your country or yourself down. Make us all proud. I know you can do it.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

KMP, LLC OPENS NEW HALL "THE REGENCY" IN N.O. EAST – GRAND OPENING SATURDAY SEPT 19TH FROM 4 P.M.—7 P.M.

It's official, KMP, LLC, has now opened up in New Orleans East in the old "Prestige" Reception Hall location on Downman and Morrison. The Regency, the new name, is now available for bookings and viewings by appointment.

A Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is being planned for Saturday, September 19, 2009 led by Councilwoman, Cynthia Hedge-Morrell and Representative Cedric L. Richmond, District 101. Special invited guest include the Mayor, members of the City Council, Officers of all of the New Orleans East Homeowners Associations and the Board of Directors of the Regency Park Townhome Owners Ass.

There will be a fashion show provided by Gwen's Bridal's with models provided by Chic Nouvelle Model Management, and various party related businesses showing off their products and services such as MAXINE'S Magnificent Weddings and Special Events. There will be fun for the whole family so kids are welcome as well. A Space Walk, food, Drinks and Music will also be provided.

Owner Kurte Pellerin says "we are delighted to be able to bring back to life a building that so many have had such fond memories in. We hope to make their new memories just as good if not better."

The event is scheduled from 4-7 pm. For More information you may call "The Regency" at 504-245-2323.

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