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February 11 - February 17, 2012 46th Year Volume 37 www.ladatanews.com

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Experience New Orleans Black History



New Orleans African-American Museum

Written and Edited by Edwin Buggage

New Orleans: A Cultural Jewel

New Orleans is a City with a rich cultural heritage. At Data News Weekly for over 45 years we continue to chronicle the living history of this amazing City. In the month of February we not only want you to encourage you to observe and celebrate Black History Month, we want you to go out and experience some of the wonderful things there are to do in New Orleans that are culturally

enriching. So we have compiled a list of places we would like to suggest as we encourage you to be a tourist in your own City. Experience this cultural jewel we call New Orleans. A City that is truly the most African influenced City in America.

New Orleans African-American Museum

Located in the heart of Treme, the oldest surviving Black community in the United States, the New Orleans African-American Museum is dedicated to protecting, preserving, and promoting through education the history, art, and communities of African-Americans in New Orleans and the African

Diaspora. The Museum is housed in the beautiful Treme Villa, considered by some to be one of the finest examples of a Creole Villa in the City. Built in 1828-29, the home retains many of its original decorative details. The grounds also house five restored buildings to visit. A centerpiece of the exhibits at the African-American Museum is the Louisiana-Congo: The Bertrand Donation, a collection of exquisite African beadwork, costumes, masks, textiles, musical instruments and divination objects is a major part of the museum's permanent collection. This 70-piece assortment of original African artwork from the Democratic Republic of Congo

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

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illuminates parallels between everyday life in the Congo and Louisiana folk culture.

Backstreet Museum

Also located in Tremé, is the Backstreet Cultural Museum which is where visitors find an amazing assortment of memorabilia indigenous to Mardi Gras, jazz funerals and other traditions found only in New Orleans. The Backstreet Museum, once the home of the Blandin Funeral Home, houses the City's largest collection of Mardi Gras Indian costumes. These brilliantly colored and elaborately designed costumes are hand-made by local artists who belong to the various Mardi Gras Indian groups and are part of the continuation of this amazing tradition. Each costume boasts thousands of beads, shells, rhinestones, sequins and feathers and takes a year to make. These costumes are artistic treasures. Over several generations, the Mardi Gras Indians have been an integral part of Mardi Gras history. The Mardi Gras Indians tradition or "Masking Indian" is a paying of homage to the Native American from a bond beginning shared in the 18th and 19th Centuries, when runaway slaves sought safety among the various tribes living in the area. Today more than 20 tribes are found in Louisiana—White Cloud Hunters, Wild Apache, Flaming Arrows and Yellow Pocahontas, and the Wild Magnolias to name a few. These tribes design and create elaborately beaded and feathered costumes worn only on Mardi Gras day and the Sunday preceding or following St. Joseph's Day. These costumes can be worn only in the year in which they are created.

Congo Square

Considered the heartbeat of the African-American culture and cradles that gave birth to Black life in New Orleans, located in the southern corner of Armstrong Park is Congo Square, an open space where slaves and free Blacks and some Whites gathered throughout the 19th Century meetings, open markets consisting of food, and other items for sale accompanied by African dance and drumming celebrations. This is arguably the beginning of the second-line tradition and it also played a substantial role in the development of jazz. For some Congo Square continues to be a spiritual base and people use the Square for rituals and events including religious ceremonies,



The George & Leah McKenna Museum of African-American Art

marriage ceremonies and a host of other events. Today it is still a place that is significant to the cultural contribution of African-Americans to New Orleans.

Ashé Cultural Center

Ashé Cultural Center has been at the forefront of a revival on Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard formerly Dryades Street. Once a center of African-American commerce, today there space is a multi-purpose facility used to present the work of emerging artist in

also features storytelling, poetry, music, dance and photography. Other events have included plays about racism, film screenings of African-American documentaries and weekly samba, drumming and wellness clinics.

McKenna Museum

The George & Leah McKenna Museum of African-American Art is an institution that collects, interprets and preserves the visual aesthetic of people of African descent in North America and



Backstreet Cultural Museum

seum presents works by local and internationally-renowned artists such as Henry Ossawa Tanner, William Edouard Scott, Clementine Hunter, Ernie Barnes and Ulrich Jean Pierre. Located in New Orleans, the McKenna Museum is committed to the preservation of the distinct culture found within the African-American community of Louisiana. The McKenna's also have another museum dedicated to free people of color and their contributions to America called Le Musée de f.p.c.

leans, welcoming both free and slave as worshippers. It continues today as a beacon of humanity and spirituality, both a history lesson and an example of 21st Century Christianity in action.

Amistad Research Center

The Amistad Research Center is the nation's oldest, largest and most comprehensive independent archive specializing in the History of African-Americans and other Ethnic Minorities. The Center is housed in Tulane Univer-



St. Augustine Catholic Church of New Orleans

addition to being used as a space for community meetings and events. Ashé comes from a Yoruban word that closely translates to "amen." Ashé not only attracts and inspires artists but activates the artistic, creative and entrepreneurial possibilities available in the community. From children to seniors, the organization works to involve the entire community and

beyond. Through innovative programs and exhibits that engage versatile audiences, the McKenna Museum seeks to make African Diasporan Fine Art accessible to visitors of all ages. The institution also actively identifies and presents emerging artists alongside well-established fine arts masters. Featuring the private collection of Dr. Dwight McKenna, the Mu-



Congo Square

St. Augustine Catholic Church of New Orleans

St Augustine Catholic Church is the Oldest African-American Catholic Church in the U.S. dating back into the antebellum period. Located in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana, and since its dedication in 1842, St. Augustine started as a church of the Black citizens of New Or-

city's Tilton Memorial Hall. From its beginnings as the first archives documenting the modern Civil Rights Movement, the Amistad Research Center has experienced considerable expansion and its mission continues to evolve. The history of slavery, race relations,

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Local Business Leader Selected as a “Champion of Change” As Part of President Obama’s Winning the Future Initiative

Justin T. Augustine, III, Vice President of Veolia Transportation Services and General Manager of the Regional Transit Authority in New Orleans has been selected by President Barack Obama’s Administration as a “Champion of Change”, which is part of the President’s Winning the Future initiative. On February 15th, the White House will be featuring leaders who are innovators in infrastructure. Augustine was nominated for his work and leadership of the New Orleans Streetcar Recovery and Reinvestment Act Project.

Each week, the White House features a group of Americans, businesses or organizations who embody ‘Innovate, Educate, and Build’. Different groups are high-

lighted each week ranging from educators to entrepreneurs to community activists. The Office of Public Engagement will host an event at the White House to honor Augustine for “Winning the Future” and further empowering and inspiring other members of the community.

“I am truly honored that the work I have done in New Orleans is being recognized by President Obama’s Administration,” commented Mr. Augustine. “I have dedicated much of my professional life to building a better transportation system for this country and I am especially grateful that the work I have done to assist in the revitalization of my hometown is having a positive impact on the future of one of America’s great

est cities. This award inspires me to continue to innovate, improve, and impact positive change for the community,” concluded Augustine.

As a part of the Champions of Change events, Mr. Augustine will meet with fellow innovators and participate in a discussion with other Champions and White House representatives to discuss the work they are doing. In addition to the events and meetings, Augustine’s story and biography will be featured on the White House website at www.whitehouse.gov/champions.



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St. Mary's Academy Students Participate In Exhibition At New Orleans Museum Of Art

Ten student artworks from St. Mary's Academy were chosen to be exhibited in a city-wide art show at the New Orleans Museum of Art on Friday, February 3rd presented by Artfully Aware. Artfully AWARE (AfA) is an international not-for-profit organization that connects communities, collaborates with local partners and generates positive change in people's lives through advocacy events and innovative community development projects. The organization endeavors to inspire people to recognize their power as individuals to promote change, whether advocating for human rights, facilitating educational workshops or teaching income generating skills in rural communities.

The following artists were chosen to participate: Kayla Wright, Alexis Brown, Torian Brown, Zenobia Johnson, Daphne Bindom, Deja Davis, Jasmine Johnson, Taylor Odom, Zhane' Farbe, and Sydney Williams. MA Art Instructor and noted Artist Christine Bagneris' artwork was also featured as part of the exhibit.

According to Art Instructor Christine Bagneris, the environment was the source of inspiration for the works.

"We live with man-made treasures which we cherish and at the end of their life cycle, they get discarded," said Bagneris. "We enter the picture at that point, and as young artists, we recycle the scrap, the used 'trash' and give it a new meaning and life. We trans-

form newspaper covered cardboard into new canvases which convey a fresh composition and present an aesthetic challenge for the viewer."

To conceive the work, students tore scrap newspaper and glued it onto cardboard, which served as the raw material for their creations. Their objective was to transform these elements, and



to elevate the "trash" into a new aesthetic entity.

"The message of our work literally and figuratively is that our environment can be enhanced and saved from decay and destitution through different efforts - one of which is using the artist's creativity (as an example of recycling) to transform the discards into a new form of aesthetic values," said Bagneris.

The event also included performances by the Mardi Gras Indian tribe, the Guardians of the Flame and the New Orleans Dance Collective. Additionally featured was Michael Watson, the Musical Director of Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse who performed with a four-piece band.

FEMA Grant Helps Restore New Orleans' Katrina-Damaged Archives

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced today approximately \$1.7 million in public assistance funding to restore New Orleans Notarial Archives' book volumes and historical records damaged during Hurricane Katrina.

As a governmental agency under the jurisdiction of the Clerk of Civil District Court of Orleans Parish, NONA is responsible for filing, maintaining and preserving historical documents, land records and other related contracts for Orleans Parish. Pre-Katrina, NONA's volumes were housed in the court building's basement, located at 421 Loyola Avenue. During the storm, the basement incurred floodwaters, resulting in

both water and mold damage to many of the archives.

"The Katrina-affected materials contain the original evidence of transactions involving land transfers, business agreements, mortgages, estates, agency rulings and other agreements relating to Orleans Parish properties. The volumes, which date from approximately 1965 to 2005, are critical for use in title examinations and serve as a rich supply of primary source materials for historical research on their period," said Clerk of Civil District Court, Hon. Dale N. Atkins. "I would like to thank FEMA and the team who worked on this project to obtain its funding."

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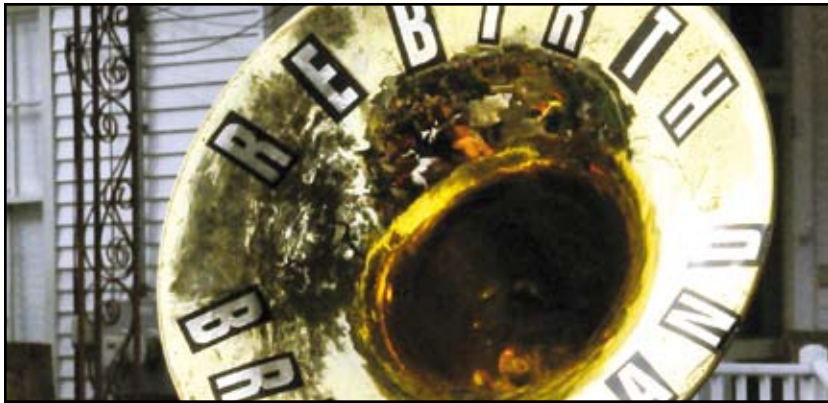
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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Treme Sidewalk Steppers 2012 Second-Line

The Treme Sidewalk Steppers held their 2012 Second-line last weekend, with a large crowd joining in the traditional celebration and Data was there!
Photos by Kishea S. Burt C2012



Congo Square Drumming Circle

Sunday afternoon Drumming Circle led by members of the Congo Square Preservation Society which seeks to preserve and foster respect for New Orleans indigenous traditions and historic places through cultural and educational programming.

Photos by Kishea S. Burt C2012



Shoot Ya Best Shot!

XU Holds Discussions on "Race, Class and Employment in Film and Reality."

Recently, Xavier University held a series of panel discussions on "Race, Class and Employment in Film and Reality." The topics discussed were the controversial book and film "The Help" and a screening of "Yes Ma'am, a documentary about Black domestics in New Orleans.



Xavier students attending the event



Panelists Xavier University's Dr. Kim Vaz, Associate Dean College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Kimberly Chandler, XU Assistant Professor of Communications and Dr. Brenda Edgerton-Webster, XU Assistant Professor of Communications.



Data News Editor and moderator Edwin Buggage, Xavier University Quality Enhancement Plan Director, Dr. Jason Todd and Xavier University Director of Human Resources Larry Calvin.



HIS EFFORTS CONTINUE TO MOVE US FORWARD TODAY.

He was the first African American to earn a Doctor of Medical Science degree. Yet Dr. Charles Richard Drew's true legacy is his pioneering work in blood transfusion and storage. His innovations have helped to save millions of lives, including thousands of soldiers during World War II. Regions salutes Dr. Drew and all African Americans whose past efforts continue to move us forward today.

In honor of Black History Month, Regions is proud to offer the Regions Riding Forward Scholarship Essay Contest.*

Twenty-five \$5,000 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors in Regions' banking areas who will attend college this year. To enter, write a 500-word essay about an African American, past or present, who has inspired you. For more details and to enter, visit regions.com/ridingforward.



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Don Cornelius

A Man Who Lived Spreading Love, Peace and Soul



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

During the month of February since 1926 we have honored those who have contributed to our rich history. The brainchild of noted Historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, it was first called Negro History Week. A half a century later as the country celebrated its bicentennial in 1976 it was extended through the entire month of February. As we observe this time

annually many times names come up such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Booker T. Washington, Malcolm X, Sojourner Truth and many other great activists, inventors, entertainers and others who fought to break down social barriers, so that all Americans can dine at the table of freedom and live a life of liberty and dignity.

Today I would like to write about a man who gave the world so much throughout his 75 years of life. Recently, the world lost Don Cornelius, and as opposed to rehashing the details of his death I would like to spend this time reflecting and celebrating the life of a man who broke down racial barriers in ways unimaginable with his television show Soul Train and his impact on my life.

During its 35 year run Soul Train gave the viewers a window

into the world of Black America. It showcased and celebrated Black culture in a way never seen on television. I remember this time vividly during my childhood before there was 24 hours of television; there was no BET, MTV, TV-ONE, Centric, or YouTube. I remember every Saturday morning after watching cartoons we would gather around the television to catch the "Hippest Trip in America." In its many years on the air I can remember seeing many of the great performers who were part of the soundtrack of my childhood that I still listen to today this list includes: Al Green, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield, The Jackson 5, James Brown and so many others whose music inspired a generation.

And of course, I remember the man who was the host with the



Don Cornelius

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most that always seemed as cool as his guest and when he interviewed them he never pandered to them and always came across as self-assured. This was a time when there were few Blacks on television. He along with Ed Bradley of the CBS newsmagazine 60 Minutes who I had the opportunity to meet briefly at Jazz Fest in 2006 months before his death were two of the people I was inspired by when I chose to pursue a career in media. In which over the years I have been a journalist, television host and music performer. Throughout the years I have been influenced and have incorporated what both men embodied in their public personas. For both men personified class, dignity, intelligence and style.

Soul Train was where we learned the latest dances and styles of dress. During its heyday it was must see TV. It was a place where we celebrated us for the world to see. It was a modern link to our history and a continuing of our lineage as Africans living in the diaspora. The "Soul Train Line" for example is in the tradition of the ring shout/dance

handed down from our fore parents in the motherland.

Today as I have traveled and met people from many places across the globe, I've discovered American soul music has been the soundtrack of so many lives and this transcends race and geography. It seems true the maxim that says music is a universal language. And Mr. Cornelius' program was something that broke down many barriers and helped to create bridges of understanding and cultural appreciation of African-Americans in a time of social change.

And it is ironic and funny now that as I look at today and see so many Black faces on television and even an African-American President. It seems we have taken a step backwards in regards to some of the images of African-Americans in media and entertainment. We are in an age where crass having replaced class and serious-minded soul music has been replaced with odes to hedonism accompanied by a beat. And

Don Cornelius,
Continued on page 10.

Letter To the Editor

NAACP and the Community Celebrates Civil Rights Victories

In the Civil Rights struggle, victories are few and far between. That is why it is so important for us to celebrate those victories when they are achieved. Recently, the New Orleans Branch NAACP ("New Orleans NAACP") and other community organizations and individuals achieved two Civil Rights victories. The first victory was the appointment of the NAACP President to the recently formed Community Service Provider Action Team of the Mayor's Strategic Command to Reduce Murders ("Action Team"). The second victory was the decision made by the New Orleans Superintendent of Police to stop publicizing the criminal records of murder victims.

These two victories were

achieved through the sacrifice, hard work and persistence of the New Orleans NAACP and other community organizations and individuals. Countless organizations and individuals met, made phone calls to the City administration and other elected officials, sent e-mails, picketed and took other actions to attain these victories. Particularly noteworthy are the efforts of: WBOK 1230 AM radio, its Program Manager, Gerod Stevens, and its listeners; Community United for Change and its President, W.C. Johnson; Safe Streets Strong Communities and its President, Robert Goodman; New Orleans Chapter National Action Network and its President, Rev. Raymond Brown; Nedra "Captain Black" Enzi; Malcolm

Suber; Edward Parker; Ernest Charles; Norbert Rome; Parnell Herbert; Diane French Cole, and Tracie Washington. Although we claim victory for the appointment of the NAACP President to the Action Team, that appointment will not be accepted until the NAACP and the community are assured that the Action Team is a genuine effort to include the community in a real effort to reduce murders and not merely another prop to be used for photo opportunities to deflect criticism away from elected officials.

That assurance must include the following from the Action Team:

1. a commitment to demand the immediate hiring of a new Superintendent of police- the cur-

rent Superintendent has not been effective- the murder rate continues to increase - the rank and file of the police department have lost faith in the current Superintendent and that loss of faith is resulting in decreased morale which in turn has resulted in a decreased effectiveness - the community has lost faith in the current Superintendent, that loss of faith prevents effective community policing;

2. to assure the Action Team is a true community effort, the following must be appointed as members: Gerod Stevens, W.C. Johnson, Robert Goodman, Nedra Enzi, Malcolm Suber, Edward Parker, Ernest Charles, Norbert Rome, Minister Willie Muhammad, Parnell Herbert,

Rev. Raymond Brown, Diane French Cole and Tracie Washington;

3. a clear, written description of the powers, duties, functions and roles of the Action Team members must be published to the community.

As we celebrate our victories, we acknowledge that the war is not over, there are still battles to be fought. Although victories are few and far between, when they do come, they encourage us to continue the fight.

Danatus N. King
President
New Orleans Branch NAACP
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City Councilmember Jon Johnson Supports Opening of New 7th District Police Station in New Orleans East

District "E" Councilmember Jon D. Johnson, Mayor Mitch Landrieu, NOPD Superintendent Ronal Serpas and City officials officially opened a new 7th District Police Station in New Orleans East. The former facility was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina. At 1:30 p.m. this afternoon

there was a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new \$6.2 million Police Station, located at 10101 Dwyer Road in New Orleans East.

District "E" Councilmember Johnson said, "It is satisfying to be a part of the accomplishment of another milestone in the development of New Orleans East. The

ribbon cutting celebrating the opening of the 7th District Police Station is yet another example of progress in District "E". I will continue to work with the administration to make life better for those who reside in the community and look forward to many more such events in the future."

Don Cornelius/ Continued from page 8.

many of the presenters on music television shows are bawdy, unrefined and vapid. Long gone are the days of the urbane swagger

of Don Cornelius.

It is in this time in our great history for us to think of "Sankofa" which in the Akan Language

of Ghana means taking what is good from the past to bring it forward. And this is what we must do in the memory and legacy left not just by Don Cornelius, but all who have come before us. Today we stand on the shoulders of so many giants in our history who had the courage, fortitude and vision that is lacking in our community. So today let's make a pledge to be better and work hard to contribute to making history not simply being victims of it. Let us in the tradition of those we celebrate in the month of February not just vow to make a difference this month but make it a yearlong commitment to make the world a better place. Let us learn to respect and uplift one another again. And as I sign off I wish you all in the words of the great Don Cornelius, "Love, Peace and Soul."

Last Chance to Commission a YAYA Ladder

This week is your last chance to commission a 2012 YAYA Mardi Gras ladder in time for Mardi Gras weekend. You can view the new 2012 YAYA designs here, <http://www.yayainc.com/2011-mardi-gras-ladders/> or visit Pippen Lane at 2929 Magazine to get a glimpse of one in person.

Time is limited, so please commission your ladder no later than Friday February 10 online or call (504) 529-3306.

Also this season, the Artists of YAYA are once again partnering with the Krewe of Orpheus, as well as families around New Orleans, to bring a YAYA flair to the Carnival scene. Watch for YAYA Artists riding on the Orpheus title float; for YAYA-designed krewe cups thrown during the Lundi Gras parade; and for YAYA-created Mardi Gras ladders along every parade route!

Cover Story/ Continued from page 3.

African-American community development and the Civil Rights Movement has received new and thought-provoking interpretations as the result of scholarly research using Amistad's resources. The holdings include the papers of artists, educators, authors, business leaders, clergy, lawyers, factory workers, farmers and musicians. The collection contains approximately 250,000 photographs dating from 1859. Literary manuscript holdings contain letters and original manuscripts from prominent Harlem Renaissance writers and poets. The Center holds more than 400 works of African and African-American art, including works by several internationally renowned 19th and 20th Century African-American Masters.

Black New Orleans: A Journey Through History

In a City that is in transition, it is important that the cultural fabric of what keeps it the marvelous jewel is its remains. The history of Black New Orleans, its people and places have given the City its main ingredient in its unique gumbo. The African influence has been and continues to be its "secret ingredient." So today it is important that not only people from other places, but us the local people understand how important we are to the City and its evolution, development and history. So we at Data News Weekly, say go out and become a tourist in your own City. Go and experience the rich culture that is Black New Orleans.

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Remembering the Legendary and Visionary 'Soul Train' Creator, Host and Producer Don Cornelius

**Danny J. Bakewell, Jr.
& Brandon I. Brooks**
Special to the NNPA from the
Los Angeles Sentinel

Don Cornelius launched the world famous "Soul Train" television series in the early 70's after working as a Journalist during the Civil Rights Movement. The movement inspired him to create an avenue for Black artists to display their talents to America and ultimately the world.

"There was not programming that targeted any particular ethnicity," Cornelius said in a 2006 interview. "I'm trying to use euphemisms here; trying to avoid saying there was no television for Black folks, which they knew was for them."

"Soul Train" would go on to become one of the most successful television series in history as the show was syndicated for over 35 years. Cornelius would serve as the show's host and Executive Producer for over 20 years until stepping down as host in the 90's and just focusing on producing and building the brand.

The franchise still boasts being the "longest-running, first-run, nationally syndicated program in television history." During that period of time, tons of artists and dancers have graced the stage and influenced millions around the world with what Cornelius has coined as the "Soul of America."

Who could forget the world famous "'Soul Train' Line" which has become a party staple at not only Black events around the world but in almost every culture around the globe?

Cornelius has been a king-maker for decades opening the doors for some of the greatest musicians in music history. "Soul Train," exposed Black artist to a worldwide audience and catapulted the careers of some of the greatest entertainers music has ever witnessed.

The "Soul Train" era has seen the likes of great entertainers such as Michael Jackson, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Al Green, Marvin Gaye, Tina Turner, Chaka Khan, George Clinton, Curtis Mayfield and in recent years Destiny's Child, Beyonce, Luther Vandross and just about any and every Black musician you can think of that had relevance in the last 40 years of popular music. "Soul Train" was made the unoffi-



Don Cornelius

cial, official stamp of the industry. You had to go on "Soul Train" if you wanted to make it in the business.

Upon learning of his passing thousands of prayers for him and his family immediately took to the airwaves of social media as well comments from many of his friends poured into the Sentinel remembering the legendary businessman, civil rights leader and music icon.

Berry Gordy – Founder of Motown

"Don was a pioneer, the first to present Soul music to the masses via television. His "Soul Train" show was an important and timely vehicle that showcased Black talent and their new releases to the public. From his unique "Soul Train" dances to his brilliant commentary, there are not enough adjectives to describe how important his role was to our society.

Quincy Jones

"I am shocked and deeply saddened at the sudden passing of my friend, colleague, and business partner Don Cornelius," said Quincy Jones. "Don was a visionary pioneer and a giant in our business. Before MTV there was 'Soul Train,' that will be the great legacy of Don Cornelius. His contributions to television, music and our culture as a whole will never be matched. My heart goes out to

Don's family and loved ones."

Clarence Avant – Music Executive

"Let me put it like this. Don Cornelius was my friend — a real, real, friend. I've known him since the inception of "Soul Train". But without "Soul Train", we wouldn't be where we are today in this music business.

There are two people that made a tremendous impact on African-Americans – Berry Gordy with Motown and Don Cornelius with "Soul Train".

"Soul Train" dedicated itself 99.9 percent to Afro-American artists and without that, there's a whole lot of artists that have gone on before Don, that are still here, and their careers would not have been the same without "Soul Train". He made a tremendous impact on these artists".

You only had the three networks back then and certainly the South wouldn't carry him. But then, he finally got syndicated and the rest is history.

But his impact, in terms of the media, he had more impact on African-American artists than anybody in this industry period, bar none".

Danny J. Bakewell, Sr. Publisher of the Los Angeles Sentinel had this to say. "Words cannot express how shocked and deeply saddened my family and I are, at

the passing of our dear friend, brother and colleague Don Cornelius."

Earvin "Magic" Johnson who purchased the "Soul Train" Brand several years ago posted on his Twitter "Don Cornelius was a pioneer & a trailblazer. He was the first African-American to create, produce, host & more importantly OWN his own show". "Don's contribution to us all is immeasurable. My condolences to his son & my good friend Tony Cornelius & the entire Cornelius family."

Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr.

We are all saddened by the passing of my friend and Brother Beloved, Don Cornelius. At this moment, "Precious Memories" flood my soul as I remember all that this great man contributed to the popular culture—and all that he gave to me personally.

I first met Don in 1964 when he was a Reporter with the iconic WVON Radio Station.

Then, and throughout the course of his lifetime, Don was driven by a singular determination to tell the story of the African-American experience. Indeed, his coverage of Dr. King's charge for open housing in the City of Chicago gave voice to the legitimate hopes and aspirations of a community pinned under the historical weight of disadvantage.

We are beneficiaries of his special kind of genius. Let us all wish him, "Love! Peace! And, Soul!"

The Rev. Al Sharpton said he was shocked and grief-stricken.

"I have known him since I was 19-years-old and James Brown had me speak on "Soul Train", Sharpton said in a statement from New York. "He brought soul music and dance to the world in a way that it had never been shown and he was a cultural game changer on a global level."

Don Cornelius will forever be part of American music history and a vital part of Black history to the world. He fought during the Civil Rights Movement and helped to lead four generations out of the streets and onto the dance floor. His influence and impact on the music world will be felt for decades to come.

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