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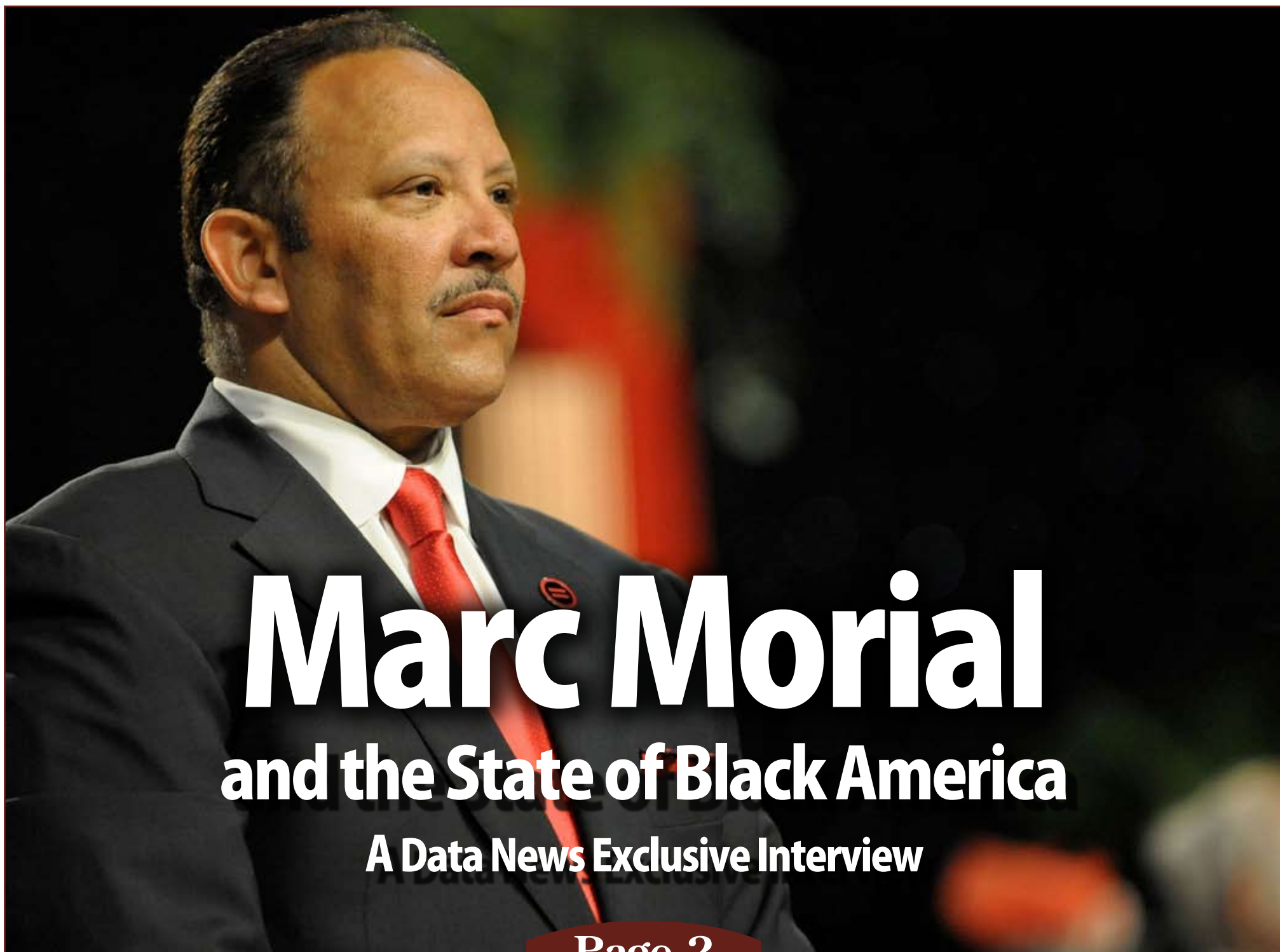
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March 3 - March 9, 2012 46th Year Volume 40 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)



# Marc Morial

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# Marc Morial and the State of Black America

*Data News Exclusive Interview*

By: Edwin Buggage

*Marc Morial is presently the National President of the Urban League, one of the oldest Civil Rights organizations in the country. He is from a long line of people dedicated to the fight for equality in America, as the son of Civil Rights Pioneer and icon Ernest "Dutch" Morial. He like his father served as Mayor of the City of New Orleans and now he is a nationally recognized leader and prominent voice of social uplift in America. Data News Weekly caught up with Mr. Morial to talk about a host of issues in regards to the State of Black America, the presidential race, the future of Civil Rights and his love for his native City.*

## Black America in the 21st Century

The State of Black America is a thorny issue for some, where questions arise how does one look at a community where today there is an African-American President occupying the White House. And African-Americans are in leadership positions in many sectors of American life seeing expanded opportunities like never before. For today the Black community is not monolithic, these are in some regard the best of times for some while others struggle to stay afloat. Morial says of the State of Black America, "Black America has been disproportionately affected by the Great Recession. The Black unemployment rate remains nearly twice as high as for the general population, and educational disparities are a key factor."

Continuing he also speaks of this growing divide and how those who have less access are affected, "Unemployment remains a major problem, especially for young people. Educational opportunity continues to elude many communities." Continuing he says, "But in the last 18 months this is a major issue not only for minorities but also young people and senior citizens." Of issues surrounding access to the ballot Morial says, "There is a nation-wide effort to deny citizens their right to vote. Restrictive voting laws are pending or have passed in 27 states that will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable citizens."



National Urban League President & CEO Marc H. Morial

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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.  
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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

**Race and Politics**

In this an election year the country is sharply divided because of a faltering economy that is affecting many American citizens, but because of this the equally divisive issue of race has reared its ugly head. "Those on the front lines of the economic crisis see the need for national action to create jobs and economic opportunity, and the role of our

the organization and its mission today and how people can get involved, "Through our 98 affiliates in 36 states and the District of Columbia, the Urban League Movement has served as first responders during the most recent economic crisis. As more families face job losses, reduced hours, diminished health services and the threat of foreclosure, many of our affiliates are providing critical as-

to New Orleans, Morial recently returned to the City of his birth to ride in the Zulu Mardi Gras Parade as an Honorary Grand Marshal. Saying of his recent visit, "As a true son of New Orleans, Mardi Gras is dear to my heart, and to celebrate with such an esteemed and storied krewe as the Zulus was truly an honor." Continuing he says of his City and NUL conference, "It's very much due to the spirit of the City - expressed so exuberantly by the Zulus on Mardi Gras - that I'm very excited to be bringing the National Urban League Annual Conference to my hometown."

New Orleans is without denial an interesting and unique City. It is a City that holds so much mystery and magic. It has a scent and pace of life that makes it a special cultural jewel. This spirit is embodied in the song of the great entertainer and another groundbreaking son of New Orleans Louis Armstrong in his timeless ode to the City, "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans?" Morial who has been living in New York since

2003 has his feelings on the City of his birth, "Naturally, I miss the amazing food. I miss my friends and family, but the spirit of the people of New Orleans is like no other City on earth. It's a determination and an optimism that allowed the City to rebuild and revitalize itself after Hurricane Katrina. It's my home and always will be."

**Continuing A Legacy Dedicated To Service**

Morial is a man who's dedicated his life to giving back and serving his community. This is something that was rooted in him from a very early age seeing his family being at the forefront of struggle and progressive politics in New Orleans. These early experiences are something that impacted his life, planting the seeds of a life, dedicated to service. "My parents were my greatest inspiration. My father, Ernest "Dutch" Morial, was a trailblazer and achieved a series of "firsts" for an African-American - first to receive a law degree from Louisiana State University, first State Legislator in Louisiana since

Reconstruction, first to hold a number of judicial positions, and, of course, the first African-American Mayor of New Orleans. He fought segregation and discrimination his entire life. My mother, Sybil Haydel Morial continues to be an inspiration as an educator, activist and community leader. She's dedicated her life to creating opportunity and protecting the rights of all citizens. I'm very grateful to have their example to follow."

Morial is a true son of the City who has spread his wings and now is a national leader representing the best of the City of New Orleans. And he continues to inspire in the legacy of so many who came before him. As the former Mayor of the City, and now as the President of one of the oldest Civil Rights organizations in the U.S. he brings their annual conference to New Orleans in the summer of 2012. He gives the recipe for continuing to move the struggle for equality and access forward by saying, "The theme for our Annual Conference is "Education and Employment Empower the Nation."

"I miss my friends and family, but the spirit of the people of New Orleans is like no other City on earth. It's a determination and an optimism that allowed the City to rebuild and revitalize itself after Hurricane Katrina. It's my home and always will be."

elected officials are important. It's no accident that the rollback on voting rights coincides with an effort to eliminate educational and economic development initiatives," remarks Morial.

As we get closer to the fall Presidential election we see in the GOP Primaries with racially loaded language and code speak that harkens back to the era of Jim Crow when America when separate and unequal was the law of the land. This is something that is the signaling of a troubling trend for Morial, "We've seen an unfortunate escalation of divisive racial rhetoric, particularly in the political realm. I spoke out against both Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich when they used outdated and misleading stereotypes and I intend to stand firm against any public figure who tries to use race as a tool of division and hatred."

**National Urban League Leading the Fight For Civil Rights**

For over a century the National Urban League has led the charge in the fight for equality. They have had many great leaders since their inception with their first President George Edmund Haynes and later such great leaders as Whitney Young, Vernon Jordan and now Marc Morial who has held the organization's top post since 2003. He says of

sistance to these families in our urban communities. In 2010, the Urban League Movement served 2.6 million people, representing a 25% increase from the previous year. We invite every American to join our online community at [www.iamempowered.com](http://www.iamempowered.com)."

This year the organization's national convention will be held in New Orleans from July 25-28. Speaking about this year's conference and agenda he says, "I'm very excited to be bringing the National Urban League Annual Conference to my hometown of New Orleans. The Conference is scheduled for July 25th through the 28th at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center - it is a special honor to be holding the convention in a venue named after my father." Of the events that will be taking place he says, "The Expo Hall, Career Fair and Project Ready College Fair are free and open to the public. I'm expecting thousands of my fellow New Orleanians to come down to the Convention Center and participate in the community events. Our goals of economic empowerment and social equality are at the heart of New Orleans' strength and endurance."

**Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans?**

In addition to bringing the National Urban League Convention

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## Judge Bernadette D'Souza to take the Bench March 1st as First Family Court Judge in Orleans Parish

Judge Bernadette D'Souza, who was elected Orleans Parish's first Family Court Judge when her opponents withdrew before the March 24 election day, took the Bench on March 1 at Civil District Court for Domestic Section 1.

Sworn in by Civil District Court Chief Judge Piper Griffin earlier this week, Judge D'Souza will handle the first judgeship in New Orleans permanently dedicated to handle family law issues—divorce, custody, paternity, child and spousal support and visitation.

Judge D'Souza has already hired her court staff. "I'm ready to get to work and preside over a full docket," she said. "I have spent my entire legal career pre-

paring for this work, and I am eager to begin."

Judge D'Souza received her Juris Doctor degree from Tulane University School of Law in 1992. Upon graduation she dedicated herself to public interest law representing indigent clients in family law, housing, and domestic violence cases. She spent many years as Managing Attorney of the Family Law Unit at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (formerly New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation).

She served as adjunct professor at Tulane Law School, teaching a course on domestic violence laws and instructing students through a clinical externship program.

Judge D'Souza is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Associa-



Judge Bernadette D'Souza

tion, serving on the Access to Justice Committee; the New Orleans Bar Association, having served as past chair of the Family Law Committee; the American Bar Association where she is a member of the ABA - Family Law Section Domestic Violence Executive Committee; the A.P. Tureaud Inn of Court; and the Association for Women Attorneys.

She is a Fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation where she served as chair of the Judicial Liaison Committee and is currently the chair of the Development Committee. Recently, Judge D'Souza was appointed by the Supreme Court to the Self-Represented Litigants Task Force and the Committee on Bar Admissions.

## Anheuser-Busch Employees And Wholesalers Partner With American Red Cross To Assemble Emergency Care Kits

*Brewer is donating \$25,000 to support the volunteer effort in New Orleans*

More than 150 Anheuser-Busch employees and wholesalers from across the country are partnering with the American Red Cross Southeast Louisiana Chapter to assemble emergency care kits, which are gift bags filled with travel-size personal care items to be distributed to families in need when disaster strikes.

Anheuser-Busch employees and its wholesalers traveled to New Orleans for the company's annual sales convention Feb. 27-29. Volunteerism has become a tradition at the national meetings, as the team believes in the importance of making a difference in the communities where its people live and work.

The Anheuser-Busch Foundation also is donating \$25,000 to help fund the effort to package shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant and other necessities into kits

that would sustain an individual or family for several days in case of a house fire or weather-related event.

"When families are in need, the American Red Cross is a stabilizing force providing a variety of emergency services and Anheuser-Busch is proud to continue supporting the efforts to help New Orleans residents," said Margarita Flores, Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Anheuser-Busch. "Our employees and wholesalers are committed to answering the call and helping serve communities across the country."

In addition to the New Orleans initiative, Anheuser-Busch is the founding sponsor of the American Red Cross Ready Rating Program through a \$2.1 million grant. The program helps schools and businesses with their emergency planning and preparedness ef-

forts to help them face a number of emergencies that could disrupt their operations, ranging from natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods to outbreaks of illness, such as the flu.

For years, Anheuser-Busch has also partnered with the American Red Cross to distribute emergency canned drinking water following natural and other disasters. The water is packaged at the company's Cartersville, Ga. brewery, and since 1988 more than 71 million cans have been donated to victims and rescue personnel in a time of need. In addition, the company also supports the American Red Cross through hosting several blood drives annually, recognizing that it provides half of the nation's blood supply.

"We are thrilled to partner with Anheuser-Busch employees and wholesalers, who are providing valuable financial support,

and are also taking action to help us better support our communities," said Kay Wilkins, CEO American Red Cross Southeast Louisiana Chapter. "Our organization would not exist without volunteers and the financial support of donors like Anheuser-Busch. Each person's contribution makes a lasting impact for families in New Orleans."

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization - not a government agency - and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission.

The American Red Cross Southeast Louisiana Chapter

serves more than 1.6 million people throughout Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John, Assumption, Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington Parishes. For more information, visit <http://www.arcno.org/>.

For more than 100 years, Anheuser-Busch and the Anheuser-Busch Foundation have reached out to groups in need, contributing to community organizations across the country and touching countless individual lives. Since 1997, the company and its foundation have donated nearly \$475 million to charitable organizations, including those that support education, the environment, economic development, disaster preparedness/relief and support of those who serve our country. For more information, visit [www.anheuser-busch.com](http://www.anheuser-busch.com).



# \$25 Billion Mortgage Settlement Seen as One Step Towards Fairness

*Negotiations Continue with Other Lenders*

**By Charlene Crowell**

The recent mortgage agreement reached with the nation's five largest mortgage services brings the first major consumer victory after a nearly year-long effort. State Attorneys general, working with the Departments of Justice and HUD together announced a \$25 billion settlement for consumers in 49 states. Participating banks are Ally Financial, Bank of America, Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase and Wells Fargo.

The largest share of the settlement – more than \$20 billion — will be dedicated to financial relief for consumers. These funds will be used to assist homeowners with mortgages that are in distress or foreclosure or underwater, now owing more than the home is actually worth. Today, nearly 11 million families with mortgages now owe more than their home is worth.

Additionally, mortgage servicers will pay state and federal governments \$5 billion in cash. Among these funds, \$3.5 billion will be used to repay public funds spent on the investigation and to fund housing counselors and legal aid. This funding for housing counseling and legal aid is critical to ensuring that homeowners obtain the loan modifications and refinances promised in the settlement. In addition, because the settlement does not affect individual lawsuits, the legal aid funding will help homeowners defend themselves against improper foreclosure actions involving mortgage

fraud, servicer misconduct or other legal violations.

The remaining \$1.5 billion will establish a Borrower Payment Fund to provide cash payments to eligible borrowers whose homes were sold or taken in foreclosure between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011. This specific initiative is in addition to restitution already administered by federal banking regulators.

The value of the settlement also will increase if negotiations with nine other lenders reach a successful agreement.

Commenting on the agreement second in size only to the 1998 tobacco settlement, President Obama said, "No action, no matter how meaningful, is going to entirely heal the housing market. But this settlement is a start."

Mike Calhoun, President of the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) agreed, adding, "Despite its limitations, the settlement requires real reforms in the mortgage servicing industry to stop sloppy business practices and out-and-out fraud. It will also help stabilize housing markets and property values by giving more homeowners a chance to restructure or refinance out of unaffordable loans that are underwater."

For consumers and communities seeking financial relief and fairness, the settlement offers three key takeaways:

**Bank accountability:** The settlement preserves the right to pursue claims of criminal violations. State Attorneys General can also

initiate cases related to fair lending abuses and securities fraud.

**A stop to robo-signing and other mortgage servicing abuses:** Banks are required to review foreclosure documents individually. Before a foreclosure can lawfully proceed, other options must be exhausted. Settlement payments for each family affected by robo-signing could receive \$2,000. Even if a payment is accepted, homeowners who have already lost their homes to foreclosure could still sue the bank for damages.

**Strong enforcement:** An independent monitor will regularly assess bank performance against a series of measures related to loan

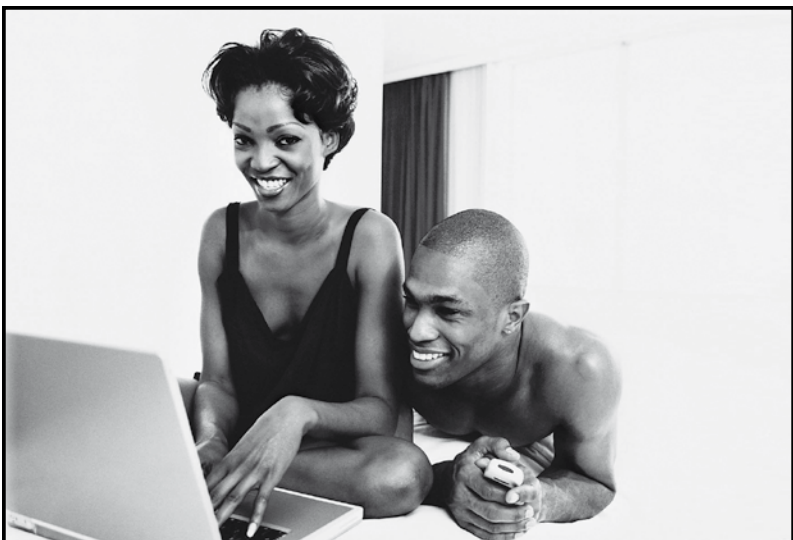
modifications and foreclosure. Any violations found will trigger penalties up to \$1 million per violation or up to \$5 million for certain repeat violations. Joseph A. Smith, most recently the North Carolina Commissioner of Banks, will oversee implementation of the new servicing standards.

In June 2010, CRL research found that African-American and Latino homeowners with mortgages lost \$350 billion of family wealth through foreclosures. A 2011 foreclosure update by CRL again found that these communities of color continued to suffer disproportionate losses. Even when African-American and La-

tino consumers had high credit scores of 660 or more, they were still three times more likely than similar White consumers to receive a high-cost loan with risky features.

Wade Henderson, President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights said of the settlement, "You cannot put a dollar value on the suffering of these families but we can seek progress. And today's settlement is a step in the right direction."

Charlene Crowell is a Communications Manager with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at: [Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org](mailto:Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org).



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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Redd Linen Night at Ashe'

*Photos by Peter Nakhid*



Artist Rukiya, describes her doll art called "Up Rooted, Look Up, Hold On."



Artists Louise Mouton-Johnson, Charlie Johnson and MaPó Kinnord-Payton share a moment in front of the camera. Their artistic contributions were part of the Redd Linen Night exhibition.



Mtumishi St. Julien gets the evening started by reading the "Sifa" which was written by St. Julien and illustrated by Douglas Redd, as attendees look on.



Leah Chase and Delfeayo Marsalis pay tribute to Jeffrey Cook's sculpture "Storyteller." Rev. Samson Alexander and Frederick "Hollywood" Delahoussaye observe.

If you have photos of parties or events you would like to run in DATA, please send to [datanewsad@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewsad@bellsouth.net) for inclusion.

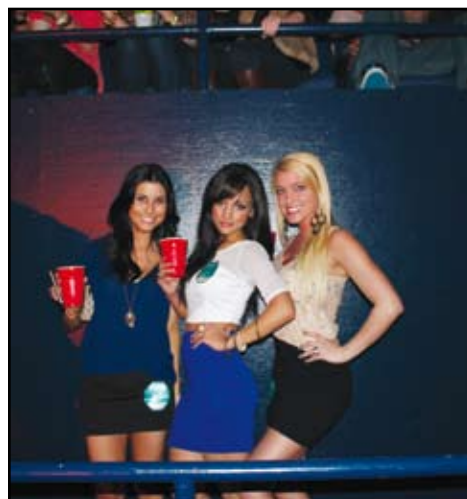


# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Drake Sets New Orleans on Fire

*Photos by: Von Paul Reeves*

In his short music career Drake has taken the industry by storm as a top-selling artist gaining legions of fans. Recently, this pop phenomenon touched down in New Orleans giving an amazing show and Data News Weekly was there.



If you have photos of parties or events you would like to run in DATA, please send to [datanewsad@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewsad@bellsouth.net) for inclusion.



# State of Black America Town Hall – March 7th



**Marc Morial**  
President and CEO  
National Urban League

## To Be Equal

"To demonstrate that this Congress is both morally and fiscally responsible, the time to act on job creation is now." – Members of the Congressional Black Caucus

Mark your calendars. Wednesday, March 7th is the date for one of the most important pre-election events of the year – the release of the National Urban League's 2012 State of Black America Report. We

are urging everyone who can to join us at 7 pm EST on March 7th for our State of Black America free town hall at Howard University in Washington, DC. If you can't be there in person, you can view the LIVE WEBCAST at [www.iamempowered.com](http://www.iamempowered.com). You can also be a part of the national conversation on Facebook and Twitter (#SOBA12, #OccupyTheVote).

This year's State of Black America report and town hall will launch a year-long campaign, "Occupy the Vote to Educate, Employ & Empower." The National Urban League is encouraged by steadily declining unemployment numbers and the passage last week of an extension of the payroll tax cut and jobless benefits. But, the economic recovery is still lagging far behind in urban America. While, overall unemployment has fallen to 8.3 percent, the January

unemployment rate for African-Americans is still unacceptably high at 13.6 percent. The rate for Hispanics, also at double-digits, now stands at 10.7 percent. Clearly, more must be done to ensure that our economy's rising tide lifts all boats.

That is why we are issuing a call for immediate national action around the education and job-training steps necessary to bring jobs back to communities most in need. Any serious discussion of job creation and economic opportunity must offer solutions for the obvious shortcomings of our current national approach to education, from early childhood education to adulthood and beyond. A broken national system of education and job training will continue to yield a broken economy.

The National Urban League's 8-point plan to tackle this prob-

lem is designed to spark serious discussion, while also serving as a policy playbook ready for action today. Our plan includes:

1. Fair and equitable school funding for all
2. Robust early childhood education for each child
3. Strengthen high schools and re-engage students to prevent dropouts
4. Robust STEM focused curriculum and programs
5. Qualified, effective and diverse teachers
6. Strategic workforce development: targeting Americans most in need
7. New job training models coupled with job placement
8. Improving and integrating current data systems

In addition to a fuller discussion of our "Occupy the Vote" campaign, this year's State of Black

America report and town hall will include a discussion of the Equality Index — a statistical analysis of the status of Blacks, Hispanics and Whites. The report will also contain essays by a host of political, business, and community leaders including Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Singer John Legend, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, Entrepreneur and Author Steve Stouts, and others with prescriptions for the empowerment and education crisis facing the nation. With new voter ID laws and voting rights under attack, this year's report is also a clarion call for everyone to "Occupy the Vote" in this important election year. We hope to see you in person, 7 pm, March 7th, at Howard University or online at [www.iamempowered.com](http://www.iamempowered.com). The time to act is now!

Marc H. Morial is the President and CEO of the National Urban League

# Global Salute to Nelson Mandela



**Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.**  
NNPA Columnist

All of humanity continues to be irreversibly uplifted by the indefatigable leadership and irrepressible spirit of Nelson Mandela. South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC), as well as all people throughout the world should pause with the greatest of respect while "Madiba" is still alive to express the highest tribute to him for a lifetime of achievement and commitment to worldwide freedom, justice, equality, empowerment and human dignity.

African-Americans and all African people in particular are so inspired by the perseverance and bold courageous example of Nelson Mandela who not only

helped to lead the dismantlement of apartheid in South Africa, but also he continues today to stand at the age of 93 as a global role model and force for progressive change, moral integrity and equal justice for all. In short, Mandela represents the best wisdom-consciousness for the affirmation of the oneness of humanity. Even after spending 27 years imprisoned unjustly by a brutally vicious apartheid regime, Mandela came out of prison with the strength and insight to lead South Africa non-violently into a multiracial democracy and a growing emerging world economy.

While we live in a world where millions of people on each continent are crying out louder and louder by the hour for an end to poverty, injustice and inequality, the Mandela-leadership example of social transformation that transcends race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, and political ideology needs to be highlighted and better understood. In fact the ANC continues to have a long tradition and legacy of leadership icons that first and foremost strive to repre-

sent the interests of the masses of African people who struggle for a better quality of life. It is so sad today that in many other places in the international community some rulers use violence and war to suppress the cries of the masses of the people for freedom, democracy and justice.

The recent news that Mandela was hospitalized should engender our prayers of support and concern for his health, as well as our meditation and reflections on his outstanding legacy of leadership. We are pleased that Mandela was just released from the hospital and is now recovering at home from hernia surgery. South African President Zuma reported that Mandela was stable and resting. Again our prayers are with him and his family.

Here in the United States, the 2012 national elections season appears to be focused on who has the most money in politics over against the best leadership to offer the nation and global community progress on the critical issues. Of course America is not South Africa. That is not the point. The

point is that while billions of dollars are being spent to hijack the democratic process in the United States, we should learn valuable lessons from how Mandela and the ANC were guided successfully by principles of inclusive, participatory democracy verses the voter suppressive moves and exclusivist views of those want a backwardly divided and regressive future America.

Those of us in Occupy the Dream embrace both the dream of Martin Luther King Jr. and the democratic wisdom of Nelson Mandela. We will soon be in the south to recognize the anniversary of the voting rights struggle in Selma, Alabama with the annual retracing of the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma for the March to Montgomery, Alabama that witnessed the horrible consequence of those who would go to any extent to deny the voting rights of Blacks and others. We have come a long ways since the original Selma voting rights march back in 1965. But we must renew our vigor and commitment to achieve more progress toward

making our democracy more equal and just. Income inequality is increasing the ranks of those in poverty. We need a Constitutional Amendment to get money out of politics in America.

We should work to build a global movement for economic justice and equality.

Thank God for Mandela. When we last had the opportunity to meet with him in person in Maputo several years ago, Mandela encouraged us to help increase worldwide awareness that Africa needs empowerment through education, training, employment and economic development. We salute Nelson Mandela for all that he continues to do to make Africa and the world a better place. Let's also work harder now in America to further transform our society and to make our democracy representative of all of the people.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. is President of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network and Education Online Services Corporation, as well as serving as the National Director of Occupy the Dream and can be reached at [drbenjamin.chavis@gmail.com](mailto:drbenjamin.chavis@gmail.com).



# Whitney Houston and the Greatest Love of All



Edwin Buggage  
Editor-in-Chief

It was something that shocked the world, the untimely death of Whitney Houston. People from around the world mourned the passing of this talented songstress who touched so many people's lives with her enormous talent. And as I mentioned in my piece celebrating the life of the great Don Cornelius I do not want to delve into the details and circumstances of her death, but I would like to talk about how she impacted people's thoughts about how they deal with and cope with struggles in life, and to perhaps use her life and death as a teachable moment and for us to reflect.

When one thinks of Whitney Houston, a woman blessed with talent, beauty and fame it is easy to imagine she had it all, and why would someone like her get involved in such risky behavior that would damage her career and may have contributed to her untimely and tragic death. But many times when it comes to celebrities we only look at the surface and not look at the person behind the image and that is of a woman who is just simply a human being like all of us "perfectly flawed." And that she is a woman who had to deal with the same things we all face in life.

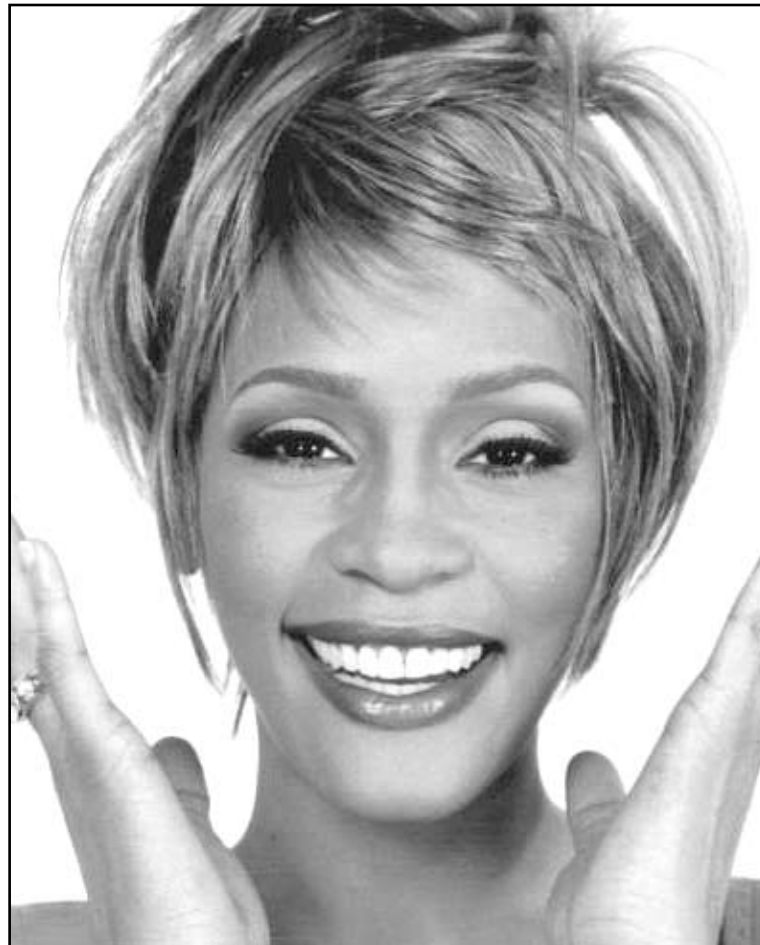
In this journey we all are searching for simple things such as love, meaning and purpose. In this quest it is less about the things we possess or that is external or can be acquired in the marketplace. For many of these things are temporary fixes for what we truly desire. In our society I feel we have become flawed in our thinking in believing that if we can acquire money, fame and fortune that all our problems will cease to exist. I feel this is a great illusion and fallacy that keeps people striving to better them-

selves on the outside, and failing to concentrate on where true and sustainable peace lies and that is on the inside. For a moment let's put ourselves in the shoes of Ms. Houston or any person who's obtained her level of success. What if you can buy whatever you want, live where you want, drive whatever you want, you are outwardly beautiful or handsome and people adore you for your talent. But in spite of all that you are still unhappy, and you are still struggling to find the key to unlock the door of true happiness in your life.

And it is interesting in my life as a journalist and during the hundreds perhaps thousands of people I've interviewed over the years, I always find a way to ask the question what is it that gives their lives meaning and purpose? I ask this not so much as to publish it all the time but to get people to think about these things as serious questions they should ask themselves. When I answer this question myself of my purpose and meaning, I would say I have lived most of my life trying to give back to my community and serve humanity in whatever endeavor I have taken on. My philosophy has been "A rich life is an enriched life, and that giving to others takes nothing away from me in fact it enhances me."

But like all of us I have faced many struggles in life some of which I still deal with today. And like so many I have sometimes succumbed to moments of weakness and done things I am not proud of. Admittedly, I have sometimes given up when I should have stayed in and fought some of the battles that have come my way. I have, like so many wallowed in self-pity and felt defeated at times. And yes some of the decisions I've made I have hurt and disappointed people I've loved. These are moments we all have in our lives. But it is not about wallowing in a pit of despair, it is about picking yourself up and knowing that down does not mean out and that minor setbacks can be the beginning of a major comebacks. And that the road to recovery is right around the corner.

I say all this because regardless of your station in life whether you are Whitney Houston or anybody else, we all have our crosses



Whitney Houston

to bear. That we all have obstacles and hurdles in life and if we are to overcome these things we must be rooted in something real. And that something is to know and love yourself and if you have this, being assured in this knowledge and state of being then no weapon formed against you shall prosper. And also you will be armed with the wherewithal and the inner-strength to deal with any adverse situation that comes your way. And know that yes, in life we fall down, but we get up because we believe. Looking at Whitney Houston, whose angelic voice was so inspirational spanning generations, in her short life she spread so much joy and perhaps unknowingly gave us the best advice for coping with life in her rendition of "The Greatest Love of All." Where she sings, "I found the greatest love of all inside of me, the greatest love of all, is easy to achieve, learning to love yourself it is the greatest love of all." Ms. Houston may you rest in peace and thank you for touching so many lives and inspiring us all.

Lighting The Road To The Future



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# GMc+Company Advertising Receives Top Honors

*Also the Gold Award for Elements of Advertising, Animation or Special Effects (Internet)*

GMc+Company Advertising Inc. Founder and President Glenda McKinley English was named Top Executive of the Year by the New Orleans Ad Club at the 2011-12 ADDY® Award Show this past weekend. The award is the local club's highest individual honor and comes just weeks after GMc+Company marked twenty-five years in business.

"I can't think of anyone more deserving of this recognition than Glenda, particularly this year," said Mark Mayer, President of Peter Mayer Advertising. "It's not easy to break into this business, to build an agency from scratch and to be successful for as long as GMc has. What a great way to kick off their



twenty-fifth anniversary."

GMc+Company also took home a Gold Award and a Silver Award for work done on behalf

of its clients. The Gold Award for Elements of Advertising, Animation or Special Effects (Internet) was awarded for animation on

Treme2012.com, a website for the bi-centennial of the Tremé neighborhood, created for the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network.

The Silver Award for Public Service, Out of Home was awarded for outdoor billboards for the City of New Orleans' new "Don't Trash Dat" anti-litter campaign.

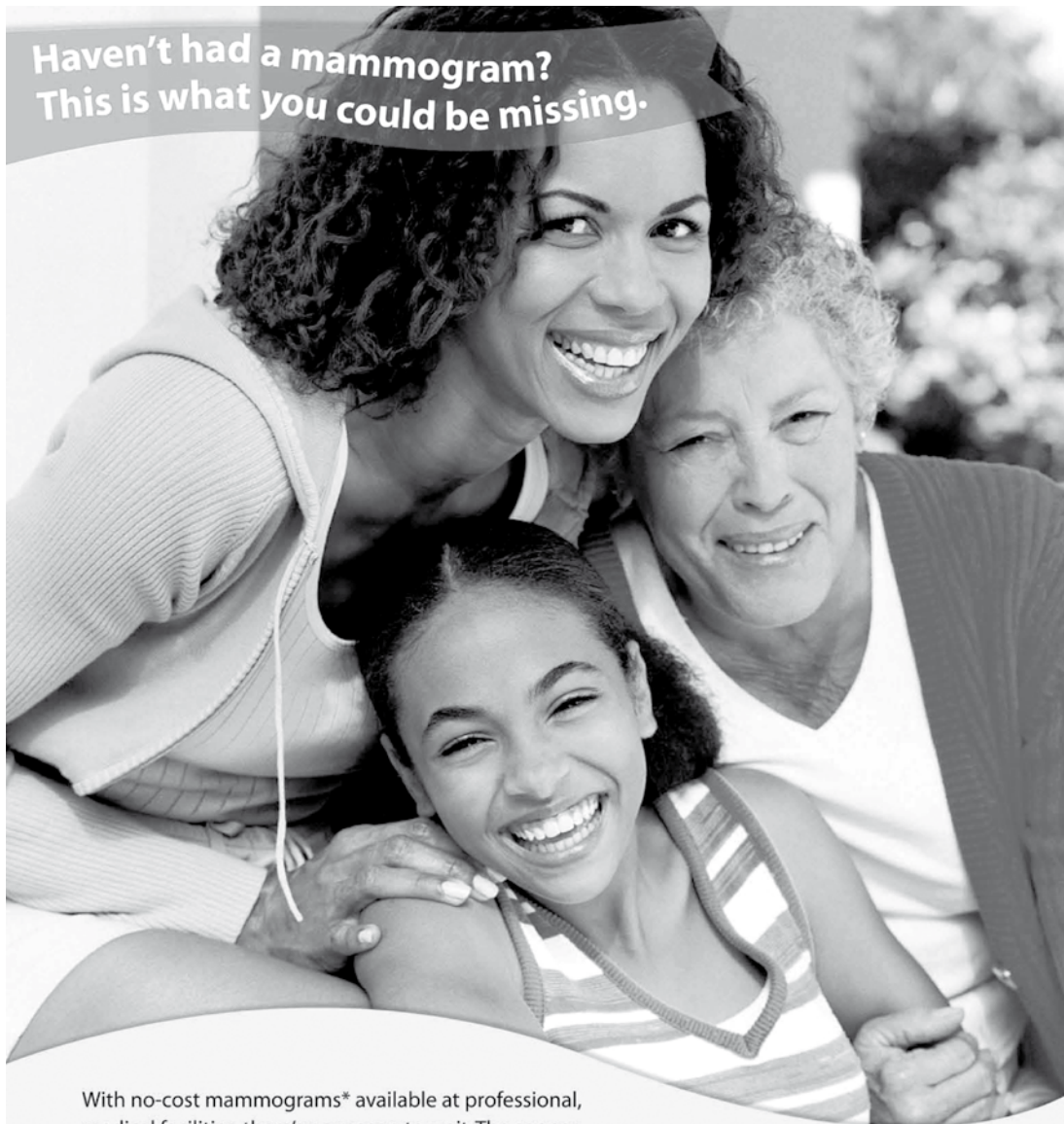
"GMc continues to knock it out of the park for us," said Toni Rice, President of the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network. "2012 is a big year for NOMTN as we coordinate the Tremé bi-centennial, and the web presence the agency created for us reflects beautifully the significance of this milestone."

"I'm humbled by the individ-

ual recognition I received from my peers in the industry," said English. "But every award we receive is really a testament to our clients. They're the reason we're here, why we've grown and why we continue to push our work and capabilities."

Founded in 1987, GMc+Company Advertising Inc. offers strategic integration and execution of innovative general-market, multicultural and digital media programs for diverse business categories. From its offices in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, the agency represents local, regional and national clients including the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network,

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## City To Host Community Engagement Meeting On Future Usage Of Six Flags Site

The City of New Orleans and District E Councilmember Jon Johnson will host a community engagement meeting regarding the future redevelopment of the former Six Flags/Jazzland Theme Park site in New Orleans East (RFP 2132-01177). A potential developer for the site will give a presentation. All members of the public are invited to attend the meeting and provide feedback and comments to City leaders and the potential developer. On the Tuesday following the meeting, the RFP selection committee will convene to make a decision on the future usage of the site.

**WHO:** City officials. District E Councilmember Jon Johnson  
**WHAT:** Community Engagement Meeting Regarding Six Flags Redevelopment  
**WHEN:** Monday, March 5, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Household of Faith Church,  
 9300 I-10 Service Road,  
 New Orleans, LA 70127

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# Controversial Conservative Blogger Andrew Breitbart Dies Suddenly

By Cheryl Mainor

Andrew Breitbart, the conservative blogger and journalist, died suddenly on Thursday morning, according to his website Big Journalism. He was 43.

Perhaps best known to African-American audiences for his role in perpetuating the myth which brought down the community service organization ACORN and even more known for his questionably edited a video tape of a speech by the former Agriculture Department employee Shirley Sherrod, in which she was made to appear to make racist statements.

Based on a two-minute video excerpt of Shirley Sherrod's speech at an NAACP dinner last year, he accused her of practicing racism as a federal employee. He neglected to mention that in the excerpt, she was clearly talking about events in a different job 20 years ago. And when the rest of the video turned up, it proved that her story was about transcending her old racial resentment.

In a taped interview aired on CNN at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Breitbart told CNN's John King that he had received the full video of the speech. He revised his position as follows:

This tape is about the NAACP. ... When Shirley Sherrod is talking there in which she expresses a discriminatory attitude towards White people, the audience responds with applaud—with applause ... This is asserting that the NAACP condoned racism and was caught on video. And the more video that we've seen that we haven't even offered, there's even more racism on these tapes. ... What you see on the video are people in the audience, at an organization whose sole job is to fight against discrimination, and they're applauding her overt racism that she's representing.

Two hours later, in a Fox News interview with Sean Hannity, Breitbart added:

What this video shows ... is not



Andrew Breitbart



Shirley Sherrod

just that Shirley Sherrod, what she said was wrong, but that the audience was laughing and applauding as she described how she maltreated the White farmer. ... The point is that the NAACP, at a dinner honoring this person, is cheering on a person describing—describing a White person as the other.

The site said that Breitbart died of "natural causes" shortly after midnight on Thursday. ABC News confirmed that Breitbart had passed away. Breitbart's attorney also confirmed the news to CNN.

Shirley Sherrod, the USDA who was fired from her job after Breitbart's tape was released

said of his passing, "The news of Mr. Breitbart's death came as a surprise to me when I was informed of it this morning," she said. "My prayers go out to Mr. Breitbart's family as they cope through this very difficult time."

Breitbart's father-in-law told the Associated Press that Breitbart was walking near his house when he collapsed. Someone saw him fall and called 911. Breitbart was taken to UCLA Medical Center, but could not be revived.

"We have lost a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a dear friend, a patriot and a happy warrior," the post said. "Andrew lived boldly, so that we more timid souls would dare to live freely and fully, and fight for the fragile liberty he showed us how to love."

Breitbart came to be well-known for his work with the Drudge Report (he also played an early role with The Huffington Post), and would go on to found the Big Journalism, Big Hollywood and Breitbart.com websites. He was also an author, columnist and ubiquitous commentator in the media.

Groups from all sides of the political spectrum paid tribute to Breitbart. Republican gay rights group GOProud, of which Breitbart was a board member until recently, released a statement saying it was "stunned and saddened," and calling him an "amazing friend and ally."

Liberal media watchdog Media Matters also issued a statement. "We've disagreed more than we've found common ground, but there was never any question of Andrew's passion for and commitment to what he believed," the group said.

No statements were available at press time from African-American leaders on his passing.

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