A Question of Justice?
Governor Jindal Appeals Federal Ruling

LA Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson
Bernette Johnson
A Question of Justice

By Edwin Buggage

Louisiana has in its history the reputation of being state known for fanning the flames of racial division. The state where the controversial Plessy v. Ferguson decision was handed down in 1892 before going to the U.S. Supreme court in 1896; making separate but equal legal and Jim Crow segregation not only the law, but a way of life in the southern states of the United States. Today, Louisiana again is in the headlines with another racially polarizing issue. This time it concerns the appointment of Bernette Johnson; a woman with an impeccable record, who also happens to be the first African-American to serve as Chief Justice of the state’s highest court.

There has been an ongoing power struggle amongst her and her colleagues on the court relating to her appointment. As the senior member on the court, a fact that is rooted in the text of the State Constitution, Johnson by law is in line to become the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court after the upcoming retirement of present Chief Justice Catherine “Kitty” Kimball. One of the Justices Jeffrey Victory, who began serving on the court one year after Johnson and presumably would occupy the seat challenged, her seniority and was later joined by the other justices who are all white, stating their lack of support for Johnson is because her first six years was in an appointed capacity when the court expanded created a seventh seat. It was under the cloud of race which brought Johnson to the bench in 1994. She was initially appointed to the Supreme Court, not elected, as part of a state settlement with the federal government over racial discrimination which expanded the court to seven justices from six.

In response to this recent decision, Louisiana’s Republican Governor Bobby Jindal is challenging the ruling that would allow Johnson to become the next Chief Justice. The position taken by the Governor has the civil rights community in an uproar. “I am baffled by Governor Jindal’s ongoing efforts to deny Justice Johnson her rightful position as Chief Justice,” Marc Morial, President of the National Urban League and former New Orleans Mayor told Data News Weekly.

Matters concerning race have increasingly become wedge issues dividing Americans. Some of the harsh rhetoric and actions taken by many current elected leaders are all too familiar for veterans of the Civil Rights Movement. Rev. Samson “Skip” Alexander, a New Orleans Civil

Cover Story, Continued on next page.
The dispute over whether Johnson should be the first Black Chief Justice to head the Louisiana Supreme Court highlights the long-standing racial tensions within the state government. Gov. Bobby Jindal, who worked with former Gov. Mike Foster, has a spotty and for many, a suspect record in the area of race. Gov. Jindal's mentor is the man who infamously paid $150,000 for a mailing list to former KKK Leader and Louisiana State Representative David Duke. Foster's grandfather Murphy Foster, was representative David Duke. Foster's grandfather Murphy Foster, was a white supremacist, disenfranchised blacks and stripped away their newly gained freedom of full citizenship granted by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. But these rights were soon emptied void, and according to Rev. Alexander it is time for a community to take notice and fight against injustice; “Here is a woman who is competent and qualified for the seat and you have a Governor who, if we were back in 1954, would have a lot in common with the staunch segregationists of that period.”

The question still remains for a city, what are we to do? The minority population awaits the decision on the soul of America with great leaps in the area of Civil Rights is at a crossroads. While making great leaps in the area of Civil Rights is at a crossroads. And what can be done to quell the issue where so that the nation can mature into a land where all can share in power? The minority populations which now make up the majority population awaits the decision on the soul of America with a collective inhaled breath. In the balance, one of two paths; will we revert back to a time where liberty and justice was only in the hands of a few, or will this finally be a land where all are free and equal. After many long hard battles fought, with more seemingly on the horizon, this is an issue where so that the nation can mature into a land where all can share in power? The minority populations which now make up the majority population awaits the decision on the soul of America with a collective inhaled breath. In the balance, one of two paths; will we revert back to a time where liberty and justice was only in the hands of a few, or will this finally be a land where all are free and equal. After many long hard battles fought, with more seemingly on the horizon, the question still remains for a city, and state and nation, what are we to do?

In published reports, a lawyer for Johnson called Jindal’s position a throwback to the days when Southern states used the principle of “states’ rights” as a smokescreen for racism. “That’s what the proponents of slavery said during the Civil War. It’s an age-old excuse,” said attorney James Williams. This descent into race based politics is a growing trend that is troubles Marc Morial, speaking to Data News weekly he said, “The consent decree that placed Justice Johnson on the court was clear, and I am very concerned that the Governor would want to align himself with a campaign to defy federal law and the Voting Rights Act.”

While this issue still remains unresolved, it shows that a country while making great leaps in the area of Civil Rights is at a crossroads. And what can be done to quell the issue where so that the nation can mature into a land where all can share in power? The minority populations which now make up the majority population awaits the decision on the soul of America with a collective inhaled breath. In the balance, one of two paths; will we revert back to a time where liberty and justice was only in the hands of a few, or will this finally be a land where all are free and equal. After many long hard battles fought, with more seemingly on the horizon, the question still remains for a city, and state and nation, what are we to do?
Grandma’s Hands’ Honored by Living Now Book Awards

While most people quietly cherish time with their grandparents, their wisdom is rarely publicly honored to the extent it deserves. Dr. Calvin Mackie’s new book Grandma’s Hands: Cherished Moments of Faith and Wisdom (Acanthus Publishing, 2012) inspires readers to rediscover the wise words of past generations, offering respect and recognition for grandmothers around the world. Fittingly, just days before National Grandparents Day on September 9th, Grandma’s Hands received a silver medal in the prestigious Living Now Book Awards.

With a foreword by Pastor Fred Luter Jr., the first African American elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Grandma’s Hands couples thought-provoking and timeless proverbs with beautiful photographs of mothers and grandmothers expressing their unique cultural identity. Having lived through traumatic events such as Hurricane Katrina, hardships in the racially-segregated South, as well as his own personal struggles, Dr. Calvin Mackie draws on his own experiences as well as the inspirational people in his life to create a collection of Biblical passages, proverbs, and life lessons that come together in a moving and emotional book.

“It’s a tremendous tribute to all grandparents for this book to have earned a silver medal,” says Dr. Mackie. “The passages in this book brought out the best in me and will give readers the power to live their lives to the fullest, no matter what struggles they face. Without pride in ourselves, lessons from our elders, and strength from God, we could never reach the full potential of the greatness impregnated within us all.”

After months of careful consideration, the judges granted Grandma’s Hands a silver medal in the Gift/Specialty/Keepsake category of the Living Now Book Awards. The overall contest features a total of 29 categories and annually receives nearly 500 entries of books vying for the bronze, silver and gold medals. From recipes to relationships to personal growth, there is a wide variety of book topics, all of which focus on improving quality of life.

“Dr. Mackie has masterfully uncovered and conveyed so many timeless truths,” says publisher Paige Stover Hague. “It will fill readers’ hearts with joy and encouragement when they see that principles and virtues that worked centuries ago are even more relevant today. I am so delighted to publish this book; the wisdom it contains has the power to strengthen the world.”

A gathering of well wishers converged last week for the Grand Re-Opening of Spice Bar & Grill located at 2005 North Broad Street. “We will keep trying until we get it right. I think we might have it right this time.” Says Troy, Spice’s owner. Good food, drink and fun were available as the patrons enjoyed themselves during the party. Of course, where there’s a celebration, Data will be there!

Photos by Terry Jones

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Spice’s Grand Re-Opening

Photos by Terry Jones
15 Memorable Quotes from the Democratic National Convention

#10- Massachusetts Senatorial Candidate Elizabeth Warren: “After all, Mitt Romney’s the guy who said corporations are people. No, Governor Romney, corporations are not people. People have hearts, they have kids, they get jobs, they get sick, they cry, they dance. They live, they love, and they die. And that matters. That matters because we don’t run this country for corporations, we run it for people.”

#11 – Former Florida Republican Governor Charlie Christ: “Half a century ago, Ronald Reagan, the man whose relentless optimism inspired me to enter politics, famously said that he didn’t leave the Democratic Party; the party left him. I can certainly relate. I didn’t leave the Republican Party; it left me. Then again, as my friend Jeb Bush recently noted, Reagan himself would have been too moderate and too reasonable for today’s GOP.”

#12 – Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick: “Mitt Romney talks a lot about all the things he’s fixed. I can tell you that Massachusetts wasn’t one of them. He’s a fine fellow and a great salesman, but as governor he was more interested in having the job than doing it.”

#13 – Newark Mayor Cory Booker: “When your country is in a costly war with our soldiers sacrificing abroad and our nation is facing a debt crisis at home, being asked to pay your fair share isn’t class warfare. It’s patriotism.”

#14 – Rep. Barney Frank (Mass.): “Congress is unable to do the work of the American people because too many politicians believe that compromise means capitulation. That cause too many politicians believe that work of the American people be—

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George C. Curry
NNPA Columnist

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Jennifer Granholm: “Mitt Romney loves our lakes and our trees. He loves our cars so much, they even have their own elevator. But the people who design and build and sell those cars? Well, in Romney’s world, the cars get the elevator, and the workers get the shaft!”

#1- Ted Strickland, former Ohio governor: “If Mitt was Santa Claus, he’d fire the reindeer and outsource the elves.”

#3- The late Senator Ted Kennedy (clip from 1994 debate with Mitt Romney): “I have supported Roe v. Wade. I am pro-choice. My opponent is multiple-choice.”

#2 – Former Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm: “Mitt Romney loves our lakes and our trees. He loves our cars so much, they even have their own elevator. But the people who design and build and sell those cars? Well, in Romney’s world, the cars get the elevator, and the workers get the shaft!”

#6- Musician James Taylor: “It’s an empty chair, it makes you nervous, don’t worry — I’m going to sit on it. I’m not going to talk to it.”

#7 – Rep. Luis Gutierrez (Ill.): “President Obama is protecting immigrants. Mitt Romney wants to send them back. This election will determine whether high school valedictorians, football team captains, and student council presidents will be treated with respect – or treated like suspects.”

#8- HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius: “What’s missing from the Romney-Ryan plan for Medicare is Medicare. Instead of the Medicare guarantee, Republicans would give seniors a voucher that limits what is covered….”

#12- Massachusetts Senatorial Candidate Elizabeth Warren: “After all, Mitt Romney’s the guy who said corporations are people. No, Governor Romney, corporations are not people. People have hearts, they have kids, they get jobs, they get sick, they cry, they dance. They live, they love, and they die. And that matters. That matters because we don’t run this country for corporations, we run it for people.”

#9 – First Lady Michelle Obama: “Barack knows the American Dream because he’s lived it…and he wants everyone in this country to have that same opportunity, no matter who we are, or where we’re from, or what we look like, or who we love. And he believes that when you’ve worked hard, and done well, and walked through that doorway of opportunity…you do not slam it shut behind you…you reach back, and you give other folks the same chances that helped you succeed.”

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#5 – Former President Bill Clinton: “In Tampa, the Republican argument against the president’s re-election was actually pretty simple — pretty snappy. It went something like this: ‘We left him a total mess. He hasn’t cleaned it up fast enough. So fire him and put us back in.’”

#4- Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley: “Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan now say they want to take America back. And so we ask: Back to what? Back to the failed policies that drove us into a deep recession? Back to the days of record job losses? Back to the days when insurance companies called being a woman a ‘pre-existing condition? No, thank you. I don’t want to go back.”

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By MG Calla Victoria
Data News Columnist

Hurricane Isaac came and went, thank God for that. But Isaac was a very slow moving storm limping along at only 6 miles per hour at a width of over three-hundred miles, consequently we sustained much more damage than you would suspect from a Category 1 Hurricane. Isaac came in from the east and that was very evident in my garden and home. The carpet in my foyer was damaged because the high winds blew rain under the front door sill, as my home faces the east.

Immediately after the storm passed I went out to survey the damage and collect any debris, also to check on my neighbors. My huge Angel’s Trumpet tree (Brugmansia), which sits on the right side of my garden was uprooted as well. My drift of purple/black elephant ears (Colocasia esculenta ‘Diamond Head’) are all bending to the west as they were blown from the east. I just had to prop them up and discard the few broken stems and they are doing fine. As I raked up, picked up, and loaded trash cans all I could smell was bar-b-q, oh yes with no power or refrigeration and they are doing fine. As I raked the area around all of your plant material. It is also a good time to access the problem areas in your garden, low lying areas that allow water to collect should be filled in with top soil to correct the disturbance from the storm. Also check the area around all of your large shrubs and trees and put an additional layer of topsoil around them. They may not have been uprooted but perhaps dislodged a bit.

Of course the obvious things to do after a storm is to clean up all of the debris in your garden, trim off tattered leaves and dangling branches from your plant material. It is also a good time to access the problem areas in your garden, low lying areas that allow water to collect should be filled in with top soil to correct the problem. Another layer of mulch is definitely a good idea because of the disturbance from the storm. Also check the area around all of your large shrubs and trees and put an additional layer of topsoil around them.

Yes your garden is under stress right now, but sometimes a little stress on plants is a good thing. A few of my rose bushes which had never bloomed in a year are now blooming, also my Angel’s Trumpet that took such a beating is almost nacked because most of the leaves were blown off, is full of blooms today.

Thank goodness we got power on Sunday or I would not have been able to write this article. Thank you Entergy and all of the power companies that came from across the country to help, and thank you President Obama for caring about New Orleanians!

Remember, never be too busy to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!
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