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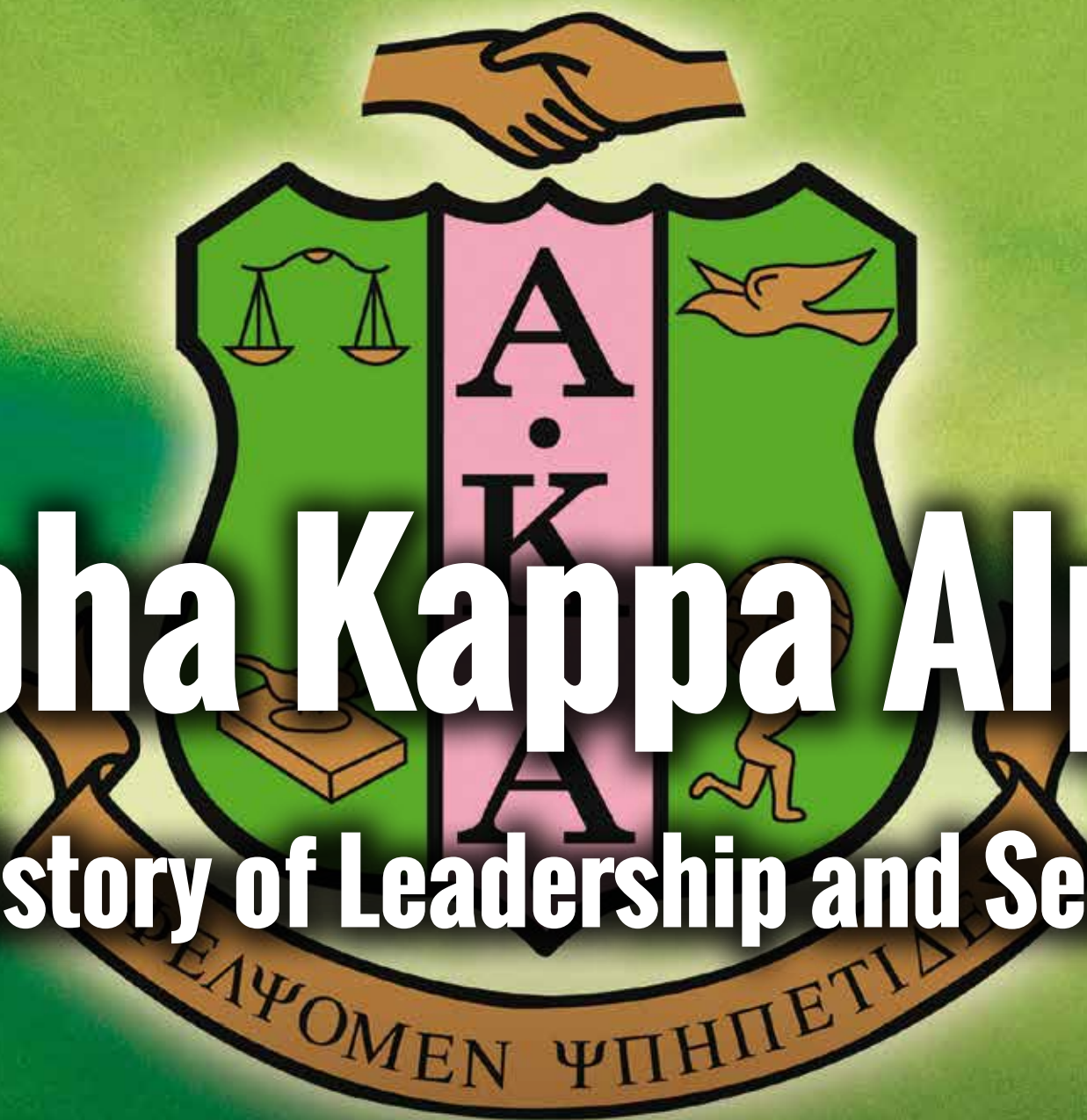
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March 23 - March 29, 2013 47th Year Volume 45 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

# Alpha Kappa Alpha

## A History of Leadership and Service



*The Soul of New Orleans*

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# Alpha Kappa Alpha

## A History of Leadership and Service



By Skye Saintly

The month of March is a time characterized by the changing of the seasons, where the flowers began to bloom and the beauty of nature is on full display. This beauty is the essence of what femininity is about young women blossoming into women of courage, valor, strength, resiliency and a spirit to give and serve humanity.

In this month of March which is Women's History Month where we celebrate many who truly epitomize the title of the Maya Angelou poem "Phenomenal Woman".

Alpha Kappa Alpha Incorporated is an international service organization that was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington D.C. in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African-American college educated women. Since its inception it has grown to have graduate and undergraduate chapters throughout the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Caribbean, Canada, Japan, Germany, Korea and the Continent of Africa. Its membership is comprised of distinguished women who boast excellent academic records, proven leadership skills and are involved in the global community through advocacy service.

From March 21-24 many of the ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha with their unmistakable signature pink and green will converge in the Crescent City for its South Central Annual Conference. Native New Orleanian Christy Lagarde, is an example of the spirit of giving back that is one of the core qualities of AKA's who along with

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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.



Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



AKA Member Kristin Dickerson

her older sister Michele Lagarde is also a member. "Leadership without service is nothing," states Lagarde. Speaking of her family lineage to the AKA's she says, "We were introduced to the organization by an older cousin who we looked up to and admired and saw all the great things that she was doing and during our college years we both pledged while we were students at Xavier University.

Kristin Dickerson is an AKA that lives in Houston Texas, the same city she pledged in while a student at the University of Houston. She echoes a similar story of of being introduced to the sorority through members of her family. "My mom is an AKA, my aunt and my cousin as well and just watching my mom go to all the meetings and seeing how she was interacting with all her sorority sisters and being active it made me want to be a part of it and help the community, our youth and girls and it motivated me to be a part of the bond they had as a sisterhood."

Malika Saoud is an AKA living in California; she joined while enrolled as an undergraduate at UCLA. On her reasons for pledging she says, "It was great to be a part of a group of intelligent and well-spoken women with high academic standards and excellence, and it also afforded me the lifelong value of sisterhood and camaraderie."

Community service is a big part of what the AKA's pride themselves on and helping young girls become productive successful women in society. Christy Lagarde and her sister Michele have taken their AKA experience of giving back and incorporated it into their business model. As owners of Centre Stage School of Dance they have an ace according to

Christy that is a family environment and a safe place for young girls. She says their inspiration to start the business came when they were young girls attending the Benjamin School of Dance whose owners were AKA's and who helped them in the early stages of forming their business. She also talks about how individual efforts are rewarded, "My sister and I wanted to create something where we could mentor and empower girls, and what we do is not simply about them doing some of the steps perfectly, but about them striving for excellence and encouraging them to be their best."

For some girls in the African-American community they are being raised in an environment where there is lack of hope and role models. This is an issue that the AKA's work hard to address and eradicate, "A lot of young girls are under peer pressure and trying to get along with others." Continuing she says, "some young women start life at a disadvantage when they don't have people there for them. And what we try to do as AKA's is to keep them motivated and help them understand that they have a purpose and to never give up and stay focused and everything will work out" says Kristin Dickerson.

"Alpha Kappa Alpha has a history and legacy of building women of exemplary character," Christy Lagarde says of one of the organization's founding principles, something that hasn't changed. "Throughout our history we have been about giving young girls what they need to become leaders in the community and I am proud to be part of an organization that is helping women not just strive for greatness in their own lives but also to serve others."



AKA ladies of the local Alpha Beta Omega chapter at the MLK March in New Orleans.

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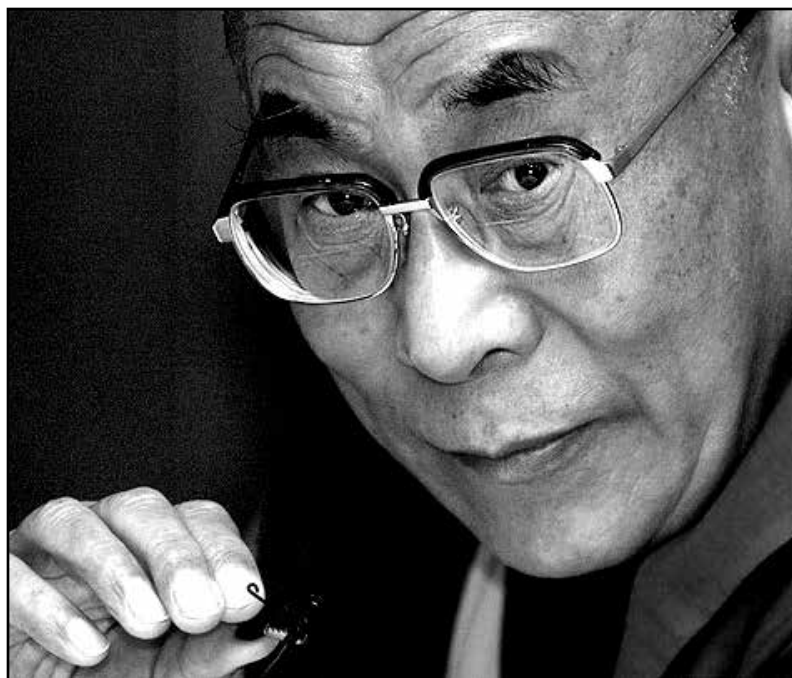
# His Holiness The Dalai Lama To Speak In New Orleans May 2013

## Conference and Talks Presented by Tulane School of Social Work

New Orleans, La.- The Tulane University School of Social Work is presenting the conference "Resilience: Strength Through Compassion and Connection," where His Holiness the Dalai Lama will speak. Registration is open for the conference and other public events at [www.dalailamanola.com](http://www.dalailamanola.com).

The conference will be held May 16 - 18, 2013 at the Morial Convention Center. World-renowned author and speaker Margaret Wheatley and famed Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry Dr. Richard J. Davidson will also speak at the conference.

Social Workers, Louisiana Professional Counselors and Louisiana psychologists can receive 8.25 Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) for attending the conference. Other



His Holiness The Dalai Lama

tending the conference. Other CEUs are being applied for.

"After the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, we learned

a lot about the deep trauma that occurred among the city's population and the extraordinary resilience of the people of the Gulf

Coast," said Dr. Ronald Marks, Dean of the Tulane University School of Social Work. "We feel that His Holiness' visit to New Orleans will contribute enormously to furthering the healing of our city's residents."

In addition to the conference, His Holiness will speak at two events that anyone can attend with the purchase of a ticket. The first talk, titled "Strength Through Compassion," will be held at the Morial Convention Center on Friday, May 17. The second talk, titled "Strength Through Connection," will be held the following day, Saturday, May 18 at the University of New Orleans Lakefront Arena.

To commemorate the historic visit, Drepung Loseling monks will visit New Orleans. The monks are known for their multiphonic chanting, known as zokkay. They will perform at the beginning of each of His Holiness' talks.

The monks will also create an elaborate sand mandala at the Morial Convention Center beginning Tuesday, May 14. The public is welcome to view the ancient tradition in progress free of charge between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. A closing ceremony will be held on Friday, May 17 at 5:30 p.m. when the monks will lead a procession to the Mississippi River and disperse the sand into the flowing water.

The public is also invited to a Tibetan Bazaar where authentic goods will be sold.

Revenue generated from ticket sales will be used to underwrite the events. Any remaining funds will be donated to a nonprofit organization that will be selected with the Office of Tibet and publicly announced at a later date.

Schedule and Conference Descriptions at [www.DalaiLamaNo-la.com](http://www.DalaiLamaNo-la.com).

## Orleans Parish School Board Arts Showcase 2013

Translating New Orleans' revered cultural arts traditions into experiences which are meaningful to urban school children is no easy task, but Orleans Parish School Board has established an annual "Arts Showcase" event in an innovative attempt to do just that. We invite you to listen, observe, enjoy and most important be a support for our students. The annual "OPSB Arts Showcase 2013" will introduce to the community our newly created visual arts collection for the 2012-13 school year, with captivating music and theatre performances by OPSB students.

OPSB is committed to supporting the Arts, to creating model education programs of artistic excellence and expanding audiences for the arts com-

munity of our city. Through the arts curriculum, we hope to enliven Louisiana culture and bring a unique human perspective that make up our cultural heritage. It is important that our youth be exposed to the arts that transcends our cultural heritage. The purpose of this program is to focus upon an awareness of arts education and its role in the enrichment of the human spirit. This event represents an opportunity for OPSB to take pride in our many accomplishments and continued growth.

Orleans Parish School Board Arts Showcase will take place at: Dillard University

Professional Schools Building Georges Auditorium on Friday, March 22, 2013 from 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm.

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# More GCAC Honors For Xavier's Kyle Montrel, Devinn Rolland

Xavier University of Louisiana's Kyle Montrel and Devinn Rolland were repeat winners Monday of Gulf Coast Athletic Confer-



Devinn Rolland



Kyle Montrel

ence Player/Athlete of the Week awards. Montrel won the men's tennis award for the second time this season, and Rolland was the GCAC women's field winner for the third consecutive week and

the women's track winner for the second consecutive week.

The awards covered March 11-17. Montrel, a freshman from Atlanta, a graduate of Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy and a former New Orleans resident, won in singles and doubles in the only Gold Rush dual match of the week, a 5-4 victory Friday against NCAA Division I's Alcorn State. Montrel and Loic Didavi de-

feated Ernesto Santillan and Ivan Umnikov 8-6, then Montrel beat Garry Amor 6-1, 6-4. Montrel is 9-2 in doubles and 9-2 in singles this season. Against NCAA Division I opponents, Montrel is 3-0 in doubles and 3-0 in singles.

Montrel is the first Gold Rush player to win the award twice this season.

Rolland, a sophomore from Harvey, La., and a graduate of

Cabrini High School in New Orleans, exceeded the NAIA's A-qualifying standard in the 200-meter dash by nearly a half-second Friday in the Louisiana Classics meet at Lafayette. She finished in 24.52 seconds and placed second out of 52 runners. It was the first time this season that she competed in the 200.

On Saturday, Rolland scored

her first victory of the season, long-jumping 5.69 meters (18 feet, 8 inches) to meet the NAIA's A-standard for the third time in as many outdoor meets this season.

Xavier's men's and women's tennis teams will visit the University of New Orleans for 3 p.m. duals Wednesday. Xavier's women's and men's track teams will compete Friday and Saturday in the LSU Relays at Baton Rouge, La.

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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Jammin' Old School Style

Photos by Glenn Summers

Data News Weekly caught up with DJ Captain Charles at the Tuesday Night Old School Seafood Jam at Ceasar's Place.





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# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Xavier University Annual Pharmacy Ball

Photos by Glenn Summers

When Xavier University held it's Annual Pharmacy Ball, Data News Weekly's Pipeline to the People writer Corey Anderson (pictured with his proud mother Cynthia Shilow Anderson top row right) was crowned Mr. P-3 and Data News Weekly was there for this marvelous event. Congratulations Corey!



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# A Southern Governor Breaks with the Past



George C. Curry  
NNPA

There are some painful things from my childhood in segregated Tuscaloosa, AL., that I will never forget. At the top of the list is Gov. George C. Wallace's June 11, 1963 "Stand in the School House Door" at the University of Alabama. I had just completed my sophomore year at Druid High School when Wallace came to my hometown to prevent two African Americans – Vivian Malone and James Hood – from registering for classes at

Foster Auditorium.

In his inaugural address as governor, Wallace had promised, "segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever." In an attempt to maintain segregation, Wallace showboated at the university with a state's rights speech in which he had the gall to mention that the federal government was formed on the premise that "individuals are endowed with the rights of life, liberty, and

property..." Of course, he was referring to White individuals, not people who looked like me.

Deputy U.S. Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach asked Wallace to step aside and allow Malone and Hood to register. After Wallace refused, Katzenbach left and placed a call to President John F. Kennedy. The president federalized the Alabama National Guard and Katzenbach returned later in the day with Gen. Henry Graham, who was now under federal command.

Graham told Wallace, "Sir, it is my sad duty to ask you to step aside under the orders of the president of the United States." After a few more comments, Wallace stepped aside and Vivian Malone and James Hood registered as students.

That was a joyous day on the west side of town, where most Blacks lived.

A year earlier, riots erupted in the state immediately west of us when James Meredith desegregated the University of Mississippi at Oxford. Another segregationist governor, Ross Barnett, led the opposition to Meredith's enrollment. U.S. Marshals and Army military police were called in to restore order. Two people were killed during the riots – a French journalist on assignment and a jukebox repairman. Meredith graduated with a political science degree on August 18, 1963, about two months after Wallace's Stand in the School House Door in neighboring Alabama.

In 1966, Meredith returned to Mississippi to embark on what he called the "March Against Fear," an effort to encourage Blacks in Mississippi to vote. Thirty miles into his 220-mile march from Memphis to Jackson, he was shot several times by a White sniper. Meredith survived the bullet wounds.

On the east side of Alabama, Lester Maddox was elected governor of Georgia in 1966, largely on his reputation as a staunch segregationist. When Blacks tried to integrate his restaurant in 1964, Maddox confronted them with an ax handle. He sold his restaurant rather than comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue broke with that racist past when she made the bold decision to pardon the Wilmington

Ten just before completing her term. Upon issuing the pardons – the only ones she signed in office – Perdue said, "I believe the Wilmington Ten were victims of the times, and victims of a deep-seeded prejudice and racism that circumvented any kind of likelihood that their trial was fair."

A federal appeals court reached the same conclusion in 1980 when it overturned their conviction on arson and conspiracy charges in connection with the firebombing of a White-owned grocery store. Although an earlier governor had commuted the sentences of the Wilmington Ten, only Perdue would issue pardons of innocence, which had the same effect of their never having been convicted of a crime.

At a luncheon last week sponsored by the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, Perdue has honored for her courage.

For all the talk of a New South, nothing symbolized a changed region more than Perdue sharing a stage with Ben Chavis, the leader of the Wilmington Ten, and Mary Alice Thatch, whose activist father preceded her as publisher of the Wilmington Journal.

Mary Alice Thatch said, "I don't know if you remember Michelle Obama saying, 'For once in my life, I'm proud of my country.' I want to say to Gov. Perdue, for once in my life, I am proud of North Carolina. Thank you so much."

Perdue said she was only doing what was right.

As we have seen, doing the right thing has not always been the hallmark of White governors in the South.

The sight of the former governor standing beside Chavis and Thatch was another memory I will always cherish. I'll never forget George Wallace, Ross Barnett or Lester Maddox. Nor will I ever forget Beverly Perdue, a Southern governor who had the strength and courage to make sure justice was finally served.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA.) He is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. Curry can be reached through his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com). You can also follow him at [www.twitter.com/currygeorge](http://www.twitter.com/currygeorge)

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# Never Alone



Dr. Eric Griggs, MD  
Data News Columnist

## Hospice

"I've always had a huge fear of dying or becoming ill. The thing I'm most afraid of, though, is being alone, which I think a lot of performers fear. It's why we seek the limelight - so we're not alone, we're adored. We're loved, so people want to be around us. The fear of being alone drives my life."

— Jennifer Lopez

J Lo's story is the same for many of us. We humans are social by nature. We gather for school; for church; for celebrations; in good times and bad. We feel strengthened by the company of others. We take comfort in the feeling of family. It is this bond with others that allows us to feel loved, that we matter. For this reason, we have evolved into a death-denying society. Thoughts of death and dying evoke images of solace and fear. So much so, that oftentimes, healthcare options such as hospice for the terminally ill are ignored and underutilized. What is hospice?

Hospice is end-of-life care that provides comfort, palliative services, respite and support for patients and their families. All of which is guided by a plan of care implemented by an interdisciplinary team of

doctors, nurses, social workers, clergy, aides and volunteers that advocate for the patient. Hospice allows the patient and family to be in control of the care provided while maintaining dignity and choice until the final moment. Hospice covers medications, medical supplies and medical equipment related to the terminal illness.

So what does all of this mean? Simply put, it means no one should die alone. Hospice services are available to anyone with a terminal illness and their families. Hospice care is no more costly and frequently less expensive than conventional care during the last six months of life. Less high-cost technology is used, and family, friends and volunteers provide the bulk of the day-to-day patient care in the home. Hospice services are

covered by most private insurers and patients eligible for Medicare or Medicaid pay very little to no out-of-pocket expenses related to hospice care expenses. Hospice allows for families to experience the dying process together, in a nurturing environment, while being allowed to focus on the comfort and care for their loved one. This service helps allay and reduce the fear and dread of dealing with the mortality of their loved ones. Most importantly, hospice ensures that patients and families can remain together, in comfortable surroundings during the last six months of life, with full medical support. This allows for families to focus on what is ultimately important - celebrating life and focusing on one another.

For more information about

hospice, go to: [www.divinecare-hospice.com](http://www.divinecare-hospice.com)

"We enter the world alone, and we leave it alone. And everything that happens in between? We owe it to ourselves to find a little company. We need help, we need support, and otherwise we are in it by ourselves. Strangers, cut off from each other, and we forget, just how connected we all are. So instead, we choose love, we choose life, and, for a moment, we feel just a little bit less alone."

- Meredith Grey- 'All By Myself' -"Grey's Anatomy" (ABC) Season 5 Episode 10

## Prescription for the Week:

Spend some time with family this week. Let people know that they are not alone. In the end, you'll be glad you did. Get checked. Get fit. Get moving!

## National Abortion Rates Highest Among African-American Teens and Twice the National Average

### Special to the NNPA from the Atlanta Daily World

A new study conducted by the Guttmacher Institute shows that African American teen abortion rates are more than twice as high as the national average.

According to the study, the national average is 18 abortions per 1,000 women among 15-19-year olds. The African-American abortion rate is 41 per 1,000 women among that age group, which is four times higher than non-Hispanic whites abortion rate at 10 per 1,000 and twice as high for Hispanics at 20 per 1,000.

The Guttmacher Institute revealed in a recent study that black

women account for 30 percent of all abortions and African Americans make up only 13 percent of the total U.S. population.

In a state-by-state study in states with high abortion rates, African American teen pregnancy had the highest probability of ending in an abortion of any other race.

In New York 67 percent of the time pregnancies among black teens—excluding miscarriages—ended in an abortion. The study determined New York has the highest teen abortion rate in the country.

So far there has not been a study that has found the direct cause for the high abortion rate

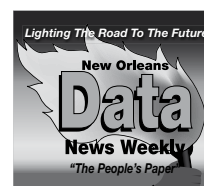
among black teenagers.

"There's no definitive research that's actually been able to answer that question. We just do know that African-American women, including African-American teenagers, just have more pregnancies," said Rachel Jones, a senior research associate at the Guttmacher Institute.

Jones did mention that poverty and lack of attention put teenagers at a high risk for teen pregnancy and could very well be the reason for such high abortion rates among African American teens.

The Guttmacher Institute figures are from 2008 and are the most recent data available.

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# Credit Check can be a Barrier to a Job or Promotion

By Charlene Crowell  
NNPA Columnist

As Black America continues to struggle with high unemployment rates, a new research report by Demos, a public policy organization titled, *Discredited: How employment credit checks keep qualified workers out of a job*, unveils how the use of credit history in employment decisions is often leaving people of color in the unemployment lines.

Among employers with fiduciary responsibilities, it is a long-standing practice to include credit reviews in hiring decisions. Banks, credit unions and similar employers should be careful in handling others' money and deposits. But the Demos report found that employment credit checks now are becoming standard operating procedures for many employees without such responsibilities. In these instances, disproportionately screening people of color out of jobs can lead to discriminatory hiring.

With higher rates of unemployment and the additional burden of wealth disparities, many African-American and Latino households have a greater need to borrow for emergencies and are also at a greater risk for foreclosure or loan default.

Surveying nearly 1,000 low- and middle-income households with credit card debt, Demos found that people of color are disproportionately likely to report worse credit than Whites. Even for employed persons seeking a promotion at work, credit scores can be a factor in deciding which employee will get the better job.

Consumers surveyed shared that much of the debt going to collections agencies was for unexpected medical costs rather than for retail credit card usage. Households without health coverage were more than twice as likely to report that their credit score had declined in the past three years.

"It makes little sense to say that someone is not a good candidate for a job because they are still coping with the expense of a costly family medical emergency several years ago," the report said. "Yet this may be exactly the type of situation that a blemished credit history indicates: having unpaid medical bills or medical debt is cited as one of the leading causes of bad credit among survey respondents."

Amy Traub, the report's author and a senior policy analyst at Demos, was even more frank. "This practice continues because it financially benefits the companies that market and sell this information to employers with little concern for the negative impact to the economic security of those with most at stake – low and middle-income Americans struggling to find work in a tough job market."

This specific finding on medical debt mirrors another by the Federal Reserve Board. According to the Fed, 52 percent of all accounts reported by collection agencies consisted of medical debt.

These consistent findings on medical debt are also reflected in America's disproportionate unemployment data. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to show that Black unem-

ployment doubles that of Whites. From December 2012 through February 2013, White unemployment averaged 7 percent. By contrast, Black unemployment stood at 14 percent.

So what is a debt-burdened, unemployed consumer to do?

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) allows employers to request credit reports on job applicants and existing employees. The statute also lays out specific steps under which these credit checks must occur. By law, employers must:

1. First obtain written permission from the affected consumer before a credit review;
2. Notify individuals before any adverse action is taken as a result of the credit review;
3. Offer the employee or applicant a copy of the credit report, along with a written summary of his/her consumer rights; and
4. Provide job applicants with a brief period of time to dispute any errors in their report.

Additionally, eight states have laws against employment discrimination involving applicants' credit history: California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Oregon, Washington, and Vermont.

Currently three other states are now considering similar legislation: Colorado, Massachusetts and New York.

If your state lacks laws against this type of discrimination, contact your local legislator about passing such legislation.

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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# Longue Vue House and Gardens' Deep Roots in the African-American Community



**By MG Calla Victoria**  
Data News Weekly Columnist

I spent a wonderfully relaxing Saturday at the stunning Longue Vue House and Gardens, which is a rare jewel in New Orleans' crown and a national landmark. I volunteered there last Saturday as the Master Gardener on-duty during their Easter Egg hunt and plant sale. While there I met Principle A. Lee of First Line Schools who was there on a retreat.

Being an avid gardener, of course I was in heaven in such lavish surroundings especially as the gardens were designed by legendary landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman, my inspiration as a Master Gardener. Known for her formal gardens and lush planting style, Shipman was hailed as the Dean of American Women Landscape Ar-

chitects and was the first female Landscape Architect in America. During her 35 year career (1912-1947) Shipman designed over 600 gardens across the country. In 1934, the founders of Longue Vue House and Gardens, Edgar and Edith Stern commissioned Ellen Biddle Shipman to design their entire multi-garden landscape. Aside from her landscaping accolades Shipman was a pioneer for women's rights as she hired only female workers back when no one would hire women.

Being an African-American, it was amazing to be in a place that was so integral to New Orleans' Black community. It was the philanthropy of Edith and Edgar Stern that founded Dillard University in 1930, the private historically Black liberal arts college. The Sterns also founded Flint-Goodridge Teaching Hospital for African-Americans

erected in 1931. Flint-Goodridge was the only private hospital in New Orleans that admitted Blacks under the care of their own physicians, and the only hospital that granted Black physicians staff privileges. Flint-Goodridge no longer exist however the building that housed the then largest African-American owned business in the State of Louisiana still towers majestically in uptown New Orleans on Louisiana Avenue between Freret and LaSalle.

The prestigious African-American subdivision Pontchartrain Park was developed in large part by Longue Vue's founders Edith and Edgar Stern. Pontchartrain Park represented the Stern's commitment to civil rights, equity, and quality in the built environment. Pontchartrain Park became the pre-eminent planned community for middle-class and professional African-Americans.

The Sterns also founded Gentilly Woods which was then a White sub-division but now predominately Black. Longue Vue has maintained its relationship with both neighborhoods now forming Pontilly Neighborhood Association and initiating Rainwater harvesting programs there.

So if you just want to contemplate nature in an elegant space, study the landscape designs of a legend, or volunteer your time giving back to an organization that has given so much to us, look no further than Longue Vue House and Gardens. [www.longuevue.com](http://www.longuevue.com)

Check out my website [www.thegardeningdiva.com](http://www.thegardeningdiva.com) for weekly gardening tips.

Remember never get too busy to stop and smell the beautiful flowers!

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