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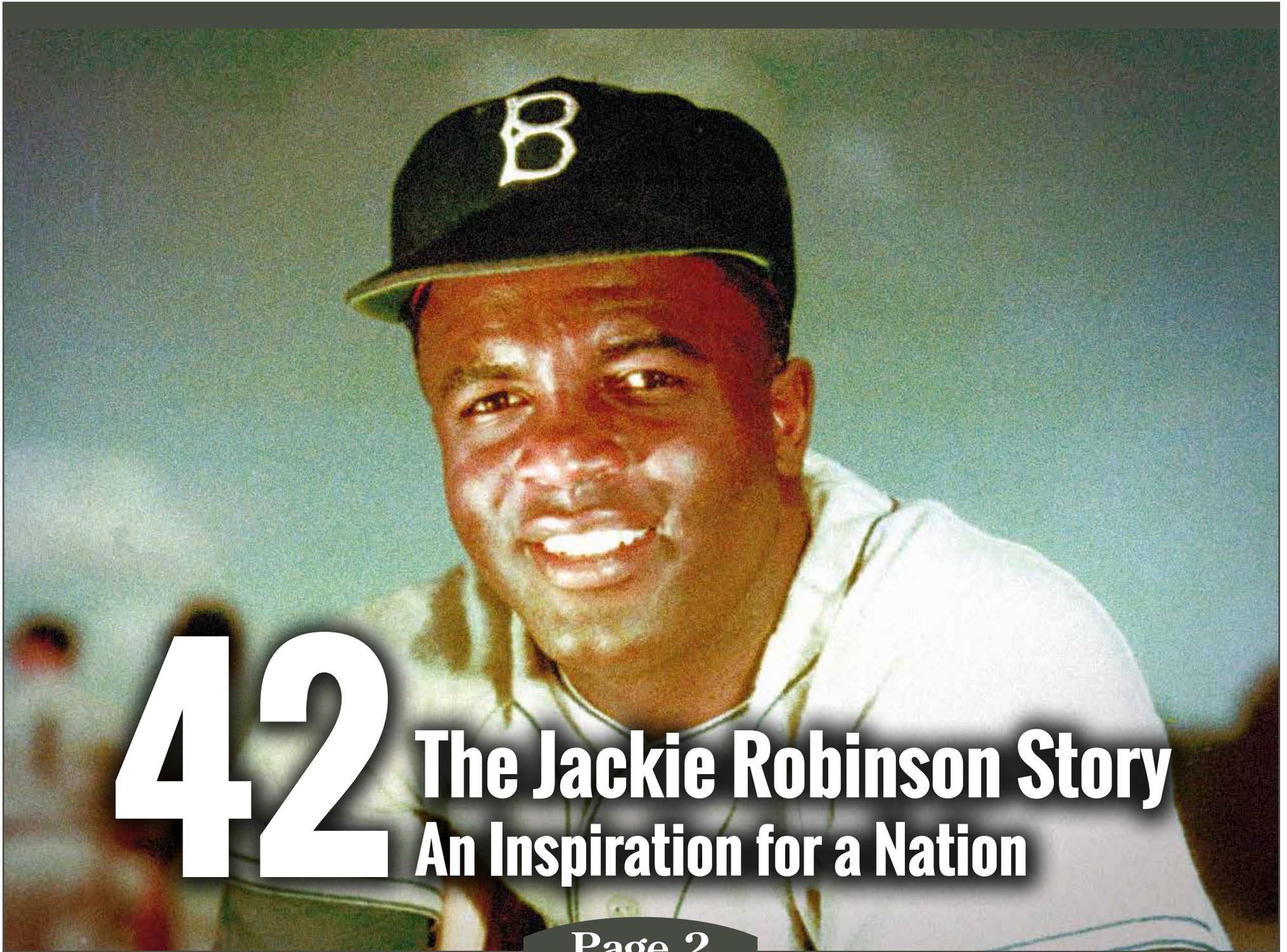


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42 The Jackie Robinson Story

An Inspiration for a Nation

by Edwin Buggage

Winning the Game Against Racism

This week we will see the release of the heavily promoted epic film "42" that chronicles the story of Jackie Robinson and Brooklyn Dodgers General Manager Branch Rickey and their struggles to integrate major league baseball in 1947. While today we may take for granted that names like Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, LeBron James, Derek Jeter, Venus and Serena Williams, Tiger Woods and countless other sports stars that have become household names, but when we turn back the clock and look at history there was a time when African-Americans were barred from competing in organized sports against Whites and when many of them began it was with much scrutiny and controversy that played into the problematic racial climate of the times.

This film being released at this time is important for America as it grapples with another Jackie Robinson like moment with the re-election of Barack Obama, the first African-American President of the United States. And in these times like those faced by Robinson, we see the seeds of ignorance and intolerance rearing its ugly head, as racial prejudice clouds the judgment of many of our fellow Americans. It is troubling that we are still grappling with this issue "the color line" that W.E.B. Dubois talked about at the beginning of the 20th Century. And yes times have changed in this country and as people watch this amazing movie they will celebrate the triumph of Jackie Robinson in this film and it will warm our hearts to see this brave, courageous man one that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. would say "He was a sit-inner before sit-ins, a freedom rider before freedom rides." But will expose some of the ugly truths that our nation still struggles with towards our journey to becoming a society where one can be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin.



Jackie Robinson pictured above in his famous Brooklyn Dodgers is the subject of the new movie "42" which opens in theaters this weekend nationwide.

Jackie Robinson: A Great American

Like the great renaissance man of the Harlem Renaissance Paul Robeson, Jackie Robinson was a superior athlete and student. Robinson was an All-American in football; an NCAA long-jump champion in track; and the PAC-10 scoring leader in basketball. In tennis, he reached the semi-finals in the Negro National Tournament. As a 15-year-old in Pasadena, Calif., he won the city's Ping-Pong championship. Later, as an ROTC student at UCLA, Robinson was so accurate on the

rifle range they wanted him on the university's team. After becoming the Bruins' first four-sport letterman, he would go on to play professional football, basketball and baseball. Although known for his Hall of Fame baseball career, baseball was in fact his worst sport. And he was not considered the best athlete in his family where he was the youngest of five children, his older brother Matthew "Mack" Robinson won a gold medal in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin in the 200 meters finishing second behind Jesse Owens.

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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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After college, Robinson joined the U.S. Army. He was eventually commissioned a second lieutenant and transferred to Fort Hood, in Texas, where he joined, ironically, the 761st "Black Panthers" Tank Battalion. During his enlistment he was arrested and faced a court martial in 1944 in connection with an incident where he refused to sit in the back of a segregated bus. Eventually, he was acquitted by a panel of White

to stay in separate hotels from his teammates which he did from 1946 through his first season with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.

Although the film does not go into detail about it, African-American Newspapers were an important part of giving voice to the aspirations of a people. During this time of social change following World War II Robinson was a favorite topic for legendary Sports Editor Sam Lacy of the Baltimore Afro-American. A

While there were many great players in the Negro Leagues who could have easily integrated baseball, such as home run king Josh Gibson, it was a special kind of person that was needed and while Jackie Robinson was the first to take the field in a major league uniform there were other players who were chosen alongside him such as Don Newcombe, and Roy Campanella, who were to become his teammates and they would eventually go on to win the 1955 World

Series, the only one the Dodgers won while in Brooklyn.

Many others risked their careers and lives to integrate baseball. Those brave individuals both Black and White who had to endure, but persevered such as Larry Doby, who played with the Cleveland Indians and was the first African-American player in the American League, entering the league soon after Jackie Robinson, or the team's owner Bill Veeck who was as important as Branch Rickey. In July of that year

he signed Larry Doby, the first Black player to play in the American League. Doby's first game was on July 5 the day after the nation celebrates its independence and before the game, Doby was introduced to his teammates by Player-Manager Lou Boudreau. Doby recalled in a published article in a New York Times interview, "One by one, Lou introduced me to each player, 'This is

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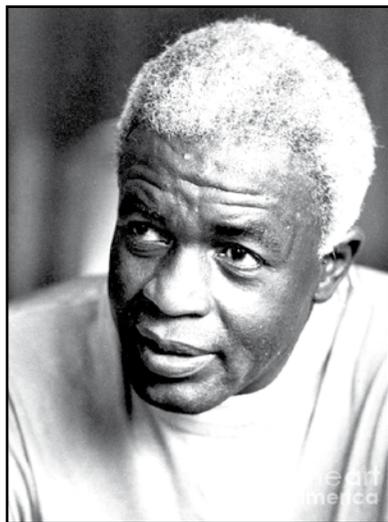
Jackie Robinson is photographed in his U.S. Army uniform, as he signs his contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 and becomes the first Black player in Major League Baseball since 1889, when baseball became segregated (Photo courtesy of Wikipedia)

officers and a few months later honorably discharged.

Before being called up to the major league he was a member of the Kansas City Monarchs playing shortstop in the Negro Leagues, teammates credit him in opening up restrooms, restaurants and hotels. At Fort Riley, Kansas, it was Robinson whose leadership increased seating for Blacks in the PX. This former All-American football player refused to play on his post football team when asked to sit out a game because of racial policies.

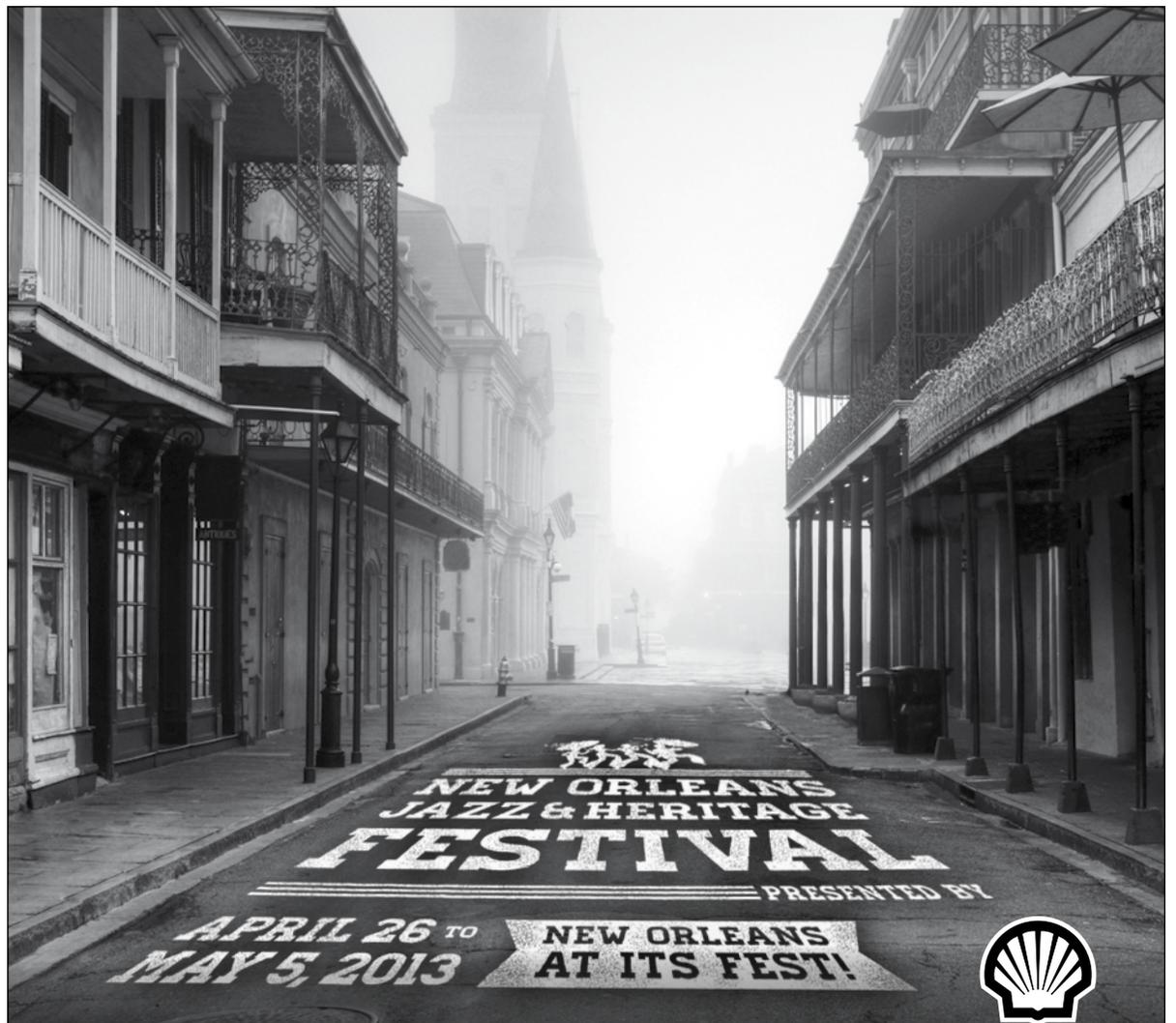
Jackie Robinson and Other Pioneers In Search of Justice

Usually in films and in the media one man or woman is made iconic and the symbol of a movement, but it is a well-known fact that no one person can move a mountain. And in Robinson's case it is no different, many African-Americans help fuel the flame that became the push to integrate baseball. Wendell Smith, then a Journalist with the Pittsburgh Courier is often credited with recommending Jackie Robinson to Brooklyn Dodgers General Manager Branch Rickey who was looking for an individual with strong character to execute the integration of baseball. The Courier also offered to pay for Smith to travel with Robinson, who had



Jackie Robinson (1919-1972). John Roosevelt Robinson, known as Jackie, photographed in retirement at his home in Stamford, Connecticut, 27 June 1971. (photo credit Granger)

staunch supporter of the Negro Leagues, Lacy urged other sports writers to focus on the league and the players. He agitated on behalf of Robinson and pointed out the wrongs of segregated sports. Lacy felt Robinson would be an excellent candidate to integrate baseball and he made those feelings known to Rickey when they served on a committee together that dealt with bringing Blacks into the league. And later Robinson would have his own forays into media writing a column for several African-American Newspapers and hosting his own radio program.



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2013 Freret Street Festival

Photos by Terry Jones

The Freret Street festival is the Kick-off to the Annual Festival Season here in New Orleans and with over 200 local vendors and around 23,500 attendees this Festival season this year looks like it's going to be a great one!



The Honorable Michael G. Bagneris Fundraiser Extravaganza

Photos by Terry Jones

The Friends to Re-Elect The Honorable Michael G. Bagneris hosted a Fundraiser Extravaganza. The event was a "Pre-Jazz Fest Jam" featuring the dynamic talents of Sharon Martin & First Take and other special guests at the Allegro Bistro on Monday evening. The event was to raise funds for Judge Bagneris' re-election and Data was there!



Pipeline to the People OPP Video Outrage, is it Justified?

By Corey Anderson

The people of New Orleans this week are abuzz about a series of shocking videos that appeared to show inmates in the Orleans Parish Prison using drugs, drinking beer and showing off a loaded pistol, escaping and hanging out on Bourbon Street and even speaking with officers of the NOPD. The videos, which lawyers for the Sheriff's Department said were filmed four years ago and had recently been found in a safe, were shown as part of a hearing to determine whether a federal consent decree is warranted to reform the City jail.

These controversial videos are only a part of what has become a power struggle between Sheriff Marlin Gusman and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu over the jail's budget and who should control the flow of dollars going into our jail. Gusman contends that the jail is underfunded, understaffed and he has

made a series of reforms since taking office including closing down the House of Detention which appears in one of the videos. And the Mayor believes the jail is being run in an inefficient manner and that the City should not be on the financial hook to continue to give money to a jail that in his mind is not working.

Gusman recently testified in the consent decree hearings, speaking on many of the issues surrounding the jail including the controversial videos. There will be a hearing in May to discuss financial issues even if the consent decree is approved. There are many issues that surround the jail that will be explored in the days, weeks and months to come and we at Data News went out to get some of your thoughts on this issue. Go to our Facebook or twitter page to join the discussion.

Data asked the question:

What do you think about the inmate video in the House of Detention?



Allan Aguillard

"I think it's a horrendous reality of the crumbling justice system in New Orleans and adds a spotlight to the failing Orleans Public School District along with lack of positive parental guidance. Carter G. Woodson said it best, "if you control a man's mind you do not have to worry about his actions, they will follow." Ultimately it is the end result of the over glamorized hip hop culture."



ShaRhonda Watkins

"I was pretty disturbed when I watched the video. I can't believe that these types of activities occur behind bars. I can only imagine what types of diseases they are introducing to their bodies with those needles."



Lisa Kieffer

"What is there to comment on? It's ridiculous, our tax money at work. So instead of the inmates on the street doing drugs, their confined in a jail cell. What was the point of arresting them? So the party just moved to another more secure environment. If they over dose, then maybe they can get help quicker."

Unemployment Numbers



Benjamin Todd Jealous
President & CEO, NAACP

Coming the day after the 45th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the new unemployment numbers show that unemployment is still high - and remains much higher for African Americans.

One thing hasn't changed in the last half century: if you're a person of color, you're more likely to be unemployed. Even though the black

unemployment rate fell by .05% this month, it still sits at nearly 13.3%, nearly double the overall rate.

This gap in employment has led to an economic divide between the richest and the poorest in America that is about as bad as in the divide in Rwanda and Serbia. The top 20% of Americans earn 50.2% of income, while the bottom 20% earns just 3.3%. Yet Congress continues to do nothing to directly address unemployment.

This is a dangerous trend. Recent studies - including one by the International Monetary Fund - show that countries with higher levels of economic inequality have slower growth rates, and that "economic inclusion corresponds with robust economic growth". Urban economies affect the pros-

perity of the entire surrounding region, and ultimately the country as a whole.

As our country grows more diverse, we must also acknowledge that economic inequality is closely tied to race, due to decades of past and ongoing discrimination. And this inequality undermines the racial progress that we have achieved.

As Dr. King asked in 1968, "What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

In the last year of Dr. King's life, he was organizing the Poor People's Campaign. He endorsed the Freedom Budget, a document that called for massive investments in public works and

infrastructure, job training and education programs, and a higher minimum wage. The Budget insisted that smart investments in our most vulnerable citizens will spur economic growth.

Unfortunately, this plan never moved forward. But its message proved prophetic, and Dr. King's economic agenda is still relevant today. A strong and sustainable economic recovery requires an economic climate in which all Americans - regardless of race or class - can expect hard work to be rewarded with a steady job. This is not a partisan issue - it is an American issue. And Congress needs to act now.

Earlier this year the National Black Leaders Coalition came up with solutions for fixing the current unemployment crisis. They included implementing important parts of the

American Jobs Act to revitalize urban areas; funding the Urban Jobs Act to create youth jobs programs; and increasing the minimum wage. These policies echoed King's recommendations 45 years earlier.

In 1962 Dr. King said, "There are three major social evils in our world today: the evil of war, the evil of economic justice, and the evil of racial injustice."

Fifty years later, need to recognize that inaction is not a policy option; it has been tried; and it hasn't worked. Let's try something new. Let's recommit ourselves to Dr. King's economic principles and advance an economic agenda that bridges our nation's divides and fosters an economic recovery in which all can benefit.

Benjamin Todd Jealous is President and CEO of the NAACP

Integrated Inequality

A Tale of Two Americas, Part 1



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

In 1963, more than a quarter-million people gathered in Washington, D.C. for the historic Great March for Jobs and Freedom. This was a watershed moment in American history, giving unprecedented voice to the hardships facing Blacks as they sought a fair shot at an elusive dream. In 2013, America witnessed the second inauguration of our first Black president. Much has changed in 50 years.

We now see a fair number of successful Blacks hailed as examples of the progress and possibilities that define American democracy. Most of the legal impediments preventing African Americans from learning, earning and living where they want have been removed. Unfortunately, these apparent in-

dicators of improvement cannot lead us to conclude that Blacks in America have overcome. A veneer of progress cannot remove the stains of inequality that still exist in our country. As we simultaneously commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, we are still on the march for economic and social equality.

The battlefield may look different, but the most pressing demands of today mirror the ones faced by those gathered in Washington, D.C. on that August afternoon in 1963: economic equality, educational opportunity and parity, and civil rights. However, instead of fighting against employment discrimination or a \$2 minimum wage, we now fight for job training and wage equity. Instead of calling for school segregation to end, we now demand an end to disparities in educational investment. Instead of calling for meaningful civil rights legislation, we now fight to preserve voting rights and affirmative action — those very rights for which our ancestors fought and died.

This week, the National Urban League will release the 37th edi-

tion of the State of Black America report, which takes a 50-year retrospective look at economic and educational equality in America. I have seen the findings and studied them, and I am more convinced than ever that there remains much for us to do.

As I pointed out in a recent appearance on CNN, the so-called housing "recovery" clearly demonstrates that we are in "a tale of two Americas" — one where the rich are surging ahead while the average American is getting squeezed out — again. Further Blacks and Hispanics are faring even worse. The findings from the 2013 State of Black America, Redeem the Dream: Jobs Rebuild America make that painfully clear.

America is at a critical juncture. If we are to continue on the road to full economic recovery, every American needs access to jobs with a living wage and good benefits. Every child deserves access to the best schools, the best teachers and the best education in the world. Without that commitment, we will continue to see America, as the 1967 Kerner Commission put it, "moving towards two societies...separate and unequal."

“Our nation is moving towards two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal.”
– 1967 Kerner Commission

But persistent problems require sustainable solutions. This week, we will begin to move that conversation forward.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League

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White House Honors New Orleans Geologist Patrick Barnes as "Champion of Change"

By Marion Hercyl

On Thursday, April 11th, the White House gave honor to twelve citizens, businesses, and community leaders who are Champions of Change for working to prepare their communities for the consequences of climate change. These individuals are leaders and innovators working tirelessly to build community resilience by preparing for increasingly extreme weather and other costly climate-related impacts.

New Orleanian Patrick Barnes was one of those honored as a Champion of Change. Barnes, a professional Geologist is President/CEO of BFA Environmental; based in Orlando, Florida. BFA Environmental is the largest African-American owned multi-discipline environmental engi-



Patrick Barnes

neering and scientific consulting firm in the Southeast. He is also the founder of Limitless Vistas, Inc, an environmental jobs training program for at-risk young adults based in New Orleans. As a professional geologist, entrepreneur, and community activist,

he has worked hard for 27 years to ensure that those most at risk of environmental disasters have a voice in restoring their community and ecosystem. Patrick strongly believes that the environmental problems faced by urban communities can be effectively addressed through outreach, education, and job training. Since Hurricane Katrina, his New Orleans-based job training program has provided entry-level job skills and certifications to over 300 at-risk young adults who are now qualified to work as environmental technicians – many of whom work to build community resilience in the places most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

"As we take action to reduce carbon pollution and speed the transition to more sustainable sources of energy, we must

also take action to prepare for the impacts of climate change we are already seeing, including more frequent and severe extreme weather," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "This week, we welcomed Champions of Change who are doing smart, innovative work to protect the health, safety and prosperity of their communities in the face of climate change."

The Champions of Change program was created as a part of President Obama's Winning the Future initiative. Each week, the White House features a group of Americans – individuals, businesses and organizations – who are doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

Joe Gordon,' and Gordon put his hand out, 'This is Bob Lemon,' and Lemon put his hand out, 'This is Jim Hegan,' and Hegan put his hand out. All the guys put their hand out, all but three. As soon as he could, Bill Veeck got rid of those three," Doby said. The following year later Veeck signed Satchel Paige to a contract, making the legendary Negro League Player the oldest rookie in major league history at the age of 42. Then in 1948 the Indians were victorious in the World Series and after the end of their careers both Paige and Doby were inducted into the Hall of Fame.

21 Century America: How Far Have We Come?

And it is all these pioneers and many others that today's super-stars shoulders they stand. Where they can participate in sports with full dignity, recognition and compensation; this is not just in sports but many other fields of endeavor. African-Americans today are part of the landscape of everywhere in the U.S.A. and although racial animus have not ceased completely there are many more opportunities for African-Americans to compete at the highest level and be successful. When his number was retired Jackie Robinson spoke of a day where he hoped that there would be Black managers in baseball. Today there are Blacks achieving at the highest levels and Robinson would be proud to see that many African-Americans are living the American Dream.

Today we are a nation at a crossroads, where we are competing on a global stage and we must put our best players on the field. And today the identity of our nation is changing where the U.S. is no longer just considered a White nation. In the 21st Century it is truly becoming a place where its best and brightest is no longer reserved for Whites only. And hopefully the film "42" will remind us how far we've come and maybe we can examine some of the actions of those to President 44, but still realize we are trekking in the right direction down the road to freedom, equality and liberty.

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