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The Essence of the Essence Festival is Pure New Orleans



By **Corey Anderson**
Staff Writer

Last week, we gave you a taste of what was approaching from this week’s Essence Music Festival. Essence Magazine found a home

in New Orleans and has brought its festival to New Orleans since the summer of 1995. However, Essence has been around since its groundbreaking establishment in 1970. The festival was created as a one-time deal to celebrate the magazine’s 25th Anniversary and

the success of the black woman, including the strides and rough patches overcome by black women, especially right after the degrading and dehumanizing era in the United States’ history known as Segregation. It was such a hit with the magazine and the city of New

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Orleans that it became an annual festival. Since then, a countless number of residents, commuters, and tourists have visited New Orleans, not only for the beignets, culture, art, or Saints games, but for the summertime fun known as "Essence Fest."

"Yes, I have been to Essence. I've also worked with artist relations," says Karen Hentz. It is obvious that Essence has become more than just a magazine, but an employer as well. "My favorite memory was seeing 'Mary Mary' [the Gospel artists] on the main stage." Anisha Williams has a similar attitude towards the event. "As far as my experience at the concerts, my most memorable would be Beyoncé performing in 2009. I loved every moment of her show and can't wait to see her again this year." With Janelle Monáe, who was recently added to the musical line-up, heavyweight group TGT (Tyrese, Ginuwine, and Tank), Maxwell, Trey Songz, Jill Scott, Keyshia Cole, and "Uncle" Charlie Wilson, as he is more recently known, plan to set the Essence stage ablaze. Big Daddy Kane and LL Cool J will represent the hip-hop aspect over the weekend's festivities.

Musical artists haven't been the only entertainment. In 2007, a then-Senator Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton made an appearance at Essence Fest. This was all after the festival took a different approach to keep tradition alive in Houston after the indelible events of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath. The tradition was kept alive and the festival continued, but, with no disrespect to the city of Houston, the same "essence" (pun intended) was not present for those who have experienced it in previous years. Annette Evans states, "I have been to Essence twice! Both times were great experiences. People come from all over to experience great urban music. Essence impacts New Orleans in a positive way because the city is filled with music lovers."

> And even if you can't pay for the concert or are just not a concert-goer, one may visit the Convention Center. "Celebrities come to the convention center. You can meet and take pictures with your favorite celebrities as well as attend an informative seminar or meet your favorite author, and it costs nothing! In my opinion,

that's the best experience," according to local Romula Rhodes.

On the other hand, the musical aspect is just a small portion of what Essence Fest has to offer. It is about the empowerment, uplifting, and guidance of not just African-American women, but African-American people. Ms. Rhodes continues to say, "The convention center presents our favorite products and companies using the latest technology, it does more than entertain us, it informs us of the latest ways to information to the masses."

When the subject of money is brought up, the general consensus is that Essence brings nothing but good to the metro area and central business district. "It has a tremendous impact by bringing much-needed money, boosting tourism, and making people look at New Orleans as the recent success it has reached," explains Ms. Hentz. As we are still somewhat in the wakes of Hurricane Katrina, which struck the city almost eight years ago, Essence seems to bring a jolt of energy to the local businesses. A positive shock, if you will, is necessary for those when business isn't exactly booming year-round. Ms. Rhodes further explains, "traditionally, it is a slow time in New Orleans, especially in the French Quarter. Essence brings a big economic impact, even to 'mom and pop' businesses, which need all the help they can get. Really, people are now spending and that's always a good thing."

Due to its transparent impact since its conception, one can clearly see companies and businesses, alongside the city, get ready for the rush of those attracted to the once-a-year event. Party-goers have already started to flock to the melting pot we call "home," but July 5 through July 7 will test New Orleans once again like it does each year. From the corner stores to the Hyatt Hotel, we will have a makeover for those ready for enlightenment, entertainment, and empowerment, relating to the "Fierce, fun, and fabulous" slogan that was developed decades ago. As the old saying goes, "black don't crack." And The Essence Music Festival in New Orleans, doesn't seem like its going to start cracking anytime soon.



Annette Evans



Anisha Williams

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XU's Franklin named HBCU Female Athlete of the Year

Xavier University of Louisiana's SiMon Franklin was named HBCU Female Athlete of the Year for 2012-13 on Friday evening.

Franklin, from Baton Rouge, La., and a graduate of Xavier and St. Joseph's Academy, received the honor during the HBCU Awards banquet at the Jackson State University Student Center. The banquet is part of the inaugural National HBCU Media Week, which will conclude Saturday.

Franklin was a standout for Xavier in basketball and track and field. In basketball, Franklin was a four-year starter at guard who earned honorable mention as a senior on the NAIA Division I All-America Team. She was All-Gulf Coast Athletic Conference for the second consecutive season after leading the Gold Nuggets with 10.7 points, 2.4 steals and 24.9 minutes per game in 2012-13. The



SiMon Franklin

MVP of the 2012 GCAC Tournament, Franklin is one of nine Gold Nuggets to reach 1,000 points, 300 rebounds and 200 steals in a career. Franklin had 1,136 points, 331 rebounds, 208 assists, 220 steals in 128 career games at Xavier and helped the Gold Nuggets win three GCAC regular-season championships, two GCAC Tournament championships and qualify for the NAIA Division I National Championship three times.

In track and field, Franklin was the 2013 GCAC outdoor champion in the 400-meter dash, and her time of 56.74 seconds at that meet qualified her automatically for the NAIA National Championships. She ran the anchor leg of the 400 relay team which finished second in the GCAC and also qualified for nationals.

"I am extremely honored," Franklin said. "I thought I was

done with athletics and receiving awards after track season ended, but then this happened. To be honored nationwide, that is amazing. I never thought anything like that is possible."

Franklin recently began her first full-time job, in the mortgage department of Iberia Bank in downtown New Orleans.

"Monee is first-class person, a wonderful choice for this award and a great representative of Xavier University," said her basketball coach, Bo Browder. "She is the type of student-athlete we continue to recruit for Xavier."

Runners-up to Franklin were Dillard's Jazzmin Smith and Albany State's April Thomas, both basketball players.

Xavier is one of 38 U.S. colleges listed as a "Best Buy School" in the 2013 edition of the Fiske Guide to Colleges.



NOLA CITY COUNCIL

Dear Essence Music Festival Visitors,

It is our pleasure to warmly welcome the 2013 Essence Music Festival to the City of New Orleans. We extend our appreciation to Essence for making New Orleans your permanent home and for returning annually to our City. Essence is to be commended for its commitment and contributions to the City and to African-Americans across the United States.

To the many visitors arriving, some for the first time and many of whom are repeat visitors, we open our arms and hearts to you. We encourage you to experience our interesting City. But, we also urge you to enjoy all that the Essence Music Festival provides from seminars and educational programs to entertainment.

Enjoy your stay in New Orleans and be sure to enjoy Essence - the party with a purpose.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson

Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson
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Stacy Head
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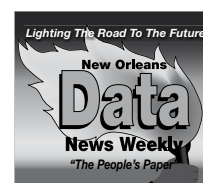
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Special Effects Seminar Offers Inside Track to Film Industries for Locals

The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, in partnership with the New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC), announced Ready, Set, Film: Practical Effects, a free five-day seminar in special effects for locals interested in getting a foot in the growing film industry in Southeast Louisiana. NOVAC is partnering with Film New Orleans in the Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, Film Jefferson, the UNO Foundation and Spectrum FX to offer the seminar from July 29 to August 2, 2013.

Twenty locals will get the chance to work with veteran effects coordinator Matt Kutcher and his team at Spectrum FX (Beautiful Creatures, Dawn of the Planet of the Apes, Bonnie & Clyde) to learn the basics of creating the incredible effects in front of the camera that make mov-



ies come to life. Participants will learn on-set safety, atmospherics, introductory pyrotechnics, model creation and more during the seminar, which will be held at Spectrum FX in Harahan. NOVAC will then work with the candidates to place them in jobs in art and effects departments on feature film productions throughout the region.

NOVAC's Ready, Set, Film! Industry Workforce Training program has been delivering high-quality technical training in industry skills since 2007, training hundreds of local residents to enter the film industry, including 2012's PA Bootcamp and 2013's Intro to Grip & Electric.

The ideal candidate for this program will have experience in skilled building trades, and demonstrate a long-term commitment to working in the film industry. Interested participants with proof of residency in Orleans or Jefferson Parishes are encouraged to read more and complete an application at www.novacvideo.org/readyssetfilm. Applications are due July 13, 2013 and questions about the process can be directed to Abigail Levner at abigail@novacvideo.org.

St. Bernard Project Receives \$25,000 Grant from BP to Rebuild Home Devastated by Katrina



Pictured are the St. Bernard Projects which stood empty after Hurricane Katrina.

BP will present a \$25,000 grant to St. Bernard Project to assist in the long-awaited rebuilding of a New Orleans home damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Along with funds from the City of New Orleans and Ameriprise, the home of Ms. Grace L. will finally be reconstructed. Ms. Grace L. is one of more than 100 people on St. Bernard Project's waiting list of

homeowners who haven't been able to rebuild on their own. This BP donation to St. Bernard Project marks the company's third, for a total investment of \$75,000.

"Ms. Grace has been waiting almost eight years to come home," said Zack Rosenberg, co-founder and CEO of St. Bernard Project. "Support from companies like BP is absolutely crucial as we continue to rebuild New Orleans and bring these hardworking families back to our city."

"The effort to get Ms. Grace and other New Orleans residents home after such a long time is one that we are proud to be a part of," said Crystal E. Ashby, Executive Vice President of Government and Public Affairs for BP America. "We are committed to supporting individuals like Ms. Grace that make up the fabric of America."

Free Summer Camp for Kids

Data News Weekly Staff Report

The Liberty City CDC/Israelite Baptist Church, located in Central City area will for the 14th year, host a free summer camp, allowing 40 young people to continue their growth through available educational and recreational ministries.

The camp is a free camp that will host 40 inner city kids that come from low income homes, usually headed by a single parent. The cost of operating the camp for an eight week term is \$25,000.00. The kids are fed breakfast, (hot) lunch and an evening snack, and they are only required to pay a \$25.00 regis-

tration fee, all other funds come from grants, if available and private donations.

The church is asking that those citizens who are able consider assisting them with the development and security of the young people by agreeing to make a donation to the Liberty City Community Development Summer Camp you can find us online at www.israelitecamp.com.

All donations are tax deductible, and checks should be made payable to: Liberty City Community Development Corporation Summer Camp, 2100 Martin L. King Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70113. You may contact the church at (504) 523-3591 with any questions.

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New Orleans Zetas Celebrate 75th Anniversary

Photos by Veronica Farve

Alpha Gamma Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. celebrated its 75th anniversary of serving the New Orleans area with a gala event on June 15th at the Xavier University Ballroom.



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2013 ESSENCE Festival Lineup

You can expect incredible performances when music's biggest and brightest stars perform at the 2013 ESSENCE Festival in New Orleans July 4-7. Check out who's slated to rock the house of the Mercedes Benz Superdome! Don't miss this event, tickets are still available, visit <http://www.essence.com/festival/buy-tickets>.

Who's Going to be there? Here are just a few of the artists included in the lineup coming to New Orleans, and ready to let the good times roll.

Beyonce

Beyonce is returning to the same venue where she rocked the Super Bowl halftime show to give EMF-goers another headlining performance!

TGT (Tyrese, Genuine and Tank)

These sexy soul men will have the ladies moving and the hearts racing with their set. TGT is scheduled to grace the mainstage on Sunday, July 7.

Jill Scott

Expect Jill Scott to bring "The Real Thing" and "Golden" to NOLA.

Maxwell

Maxwell is set to make all the ladies swoon in the 504!

Keyshia Cole

With a new album on the charts, Keyshia Cole is ready for her return to the ESSENCE Festival for the second year in a row.

LL Cool J.

LL Cool J will rock the house with all of his hits from the '80s to the present. And you know that the Ladies Love Cool James!

Steve Harvey

Last year, Steve Harvey spoke at the ESSENCE Empowerment seminars, and this year he's coming back to share laughs and knowledge at the ESSENCE Empowerment Experience.

Mint Condition

The beloved R&B group will return to NOLA to perform at the Essence Fest Superlounge.

Faith Evans

Expect Faith Evans to rock the Super Lounge stage with songs like "You Used to Love Me" and "Love Like This."

Janelle Monae

The May Essence cover star will grace the mainstage just before Beyoncé on Sunday, July 7.

Charlie Wilson

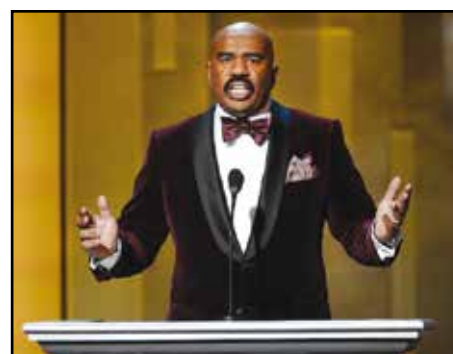
ESSENCE Festival fan-favorite Charlie Wilson will be getting the party started yet again. He's the "Life of the Party" Try not to sing too loudly while he's performing!

Kim Burrell

Expect gospel singer Kim Burrell to bring words of advice and inspiration to the ESSENCE Empowerment Experience.

Kurt Carr

With 25 years in the music industry under his belt, gospel singer Kurt Carr has plenty of knowledge to share with festival-goers at the ESSENCE Empowerment Experience.



On Race, Supreme Court is out of Touch



By Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr
Founder & President, Rainbow
PUSH Coalition

In its decision last Monday on affirmative action, the Supreme Court punted. It reviewed the University of Texas' affirmative action program — in which race is admittedly “a factor of a factor” in admission, one of many factors used with a university committed to the educational benefits of a diverse student body — and said the lower court had to give it even stricter scrutiny. Or, in essence, take another, harsher

look and come back next year.

In making the decision, the court once more revealed how out of touch it is with reality. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution was passed to provide equal protection of the laws to African Americans emerging from slavery. But 150 years of slavery was followed by 100 years of apartheid, as the courts and the Congress perverted the purpose of the Reconstruction Amendments (13-15).

Finally, under Chief Justice Earl Warren, the court, driven in part by the Civil Rights Movement and in part by Cold War concerns that legalized discrimination might discredit the U.S. in the nations emerging from colonialism, ruled that segregation was unconstitutional and accepted affirmative action to bring equality of opportunity to all Americans. And that revolution in

civil rights for Blacks led directly to the women's movement, the gay liberation movement, and the Latino movement.

Now, conservatives on the court want to distort the Constitution once more, and rule that affirmative action that considers race is unconstitutional, even when it is undertaken to provide opportunity to those who were locked out. In essence, the court is saying that equal opportunity has been achieved, and that considering race as a factor is thus inherently discriminatory.

But African Americans still make far less than Whites. African-American unemployment is twice as high. The wealth gap has widened, not closed. African-American children still enter a world stacked against them. Too many are born to poverty, raised on mean streets. They go to crowded and under-equipped schools,

starved by the “savage inequality” of funding. They are targeted by banks for higher interest rates, and the most exotic mortgages. They are more likely to be arrested for nonviolent crimes such as those involving drugs, more likely to be jailed if arrested, more likely to serve time if tried. In red states across the country, conservatives pushed various measures to limit their right to vote. The pattern of continuing discrimination is pervasive and inescapable for all who care to look.

That's why Justice Ruth Ginsberg dissented from the opinion, arguing that more scrutiny is not needed. After a yearlong review, the university, she writes, reached a “reasonable, good faith judgment that supposedly race-neutral initiatives were insufficient to achieve the educational benefits of student-body diversity.” The purpose is constitutional;

the means appropriate. Nothing else should be required.

In this case, in the Voting Rights case likely to be announced this week and in future cases, the court faces a choice. It can ignore the reality of race in this country, enforce an ideological position and trample the basic constitutional mandate of equal rights under the law. Or it can take a clear look at reality and sustain the original intent and clear mandate of the Constitution, particularly its 14th and 15th Amendments. The rights of African Americans — but also the rights of women, of the GLBT movement, of Latinos — will depend to no small degree on how the court rules.

Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. is founder and president of the Chicago-based Rainbow PUSH Coalition. You can keep up with his work at www.rainbowpush.org.

Dark Girls See the Light

Documentary Sparks Conversation about Colorism, Beauty and the Essence of Womanhood



By Edwin Buggage
Editor, Data News Weekly

A recent broadcast of *Dark Girls*, a documentary film on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), exploring the deep-seated biases and attitudes about skin color particularly dark skinned women, outside of and within the Black American culture has caused controversy and a conversation about skin color in the African-American community.

In an age where so many African-Americans are present all over the landscape of the culture of the

U.S. one would think this would be an absurd conversation in the 21st Century. Also, I would think we have evolved as a nation that this kind of discourse would no longer be relevant as the lanes of opportunity for African-Americans have widened. And since 2008 the U.S. elected its first African-American President in Barack Obama and his brown skinned wife First Lady Michelle Obama has become beloved and a role model for women across the globe.

It is my contention that while colorism is still an issue; it is not the primary issue or way that African-American women gauge their self-regard or self-worth. The film, although it tries to present its broader implications by encompassing various societies' problems with colorism, its oversimplified approach sometimes does not deliver. But overall I found the film to be a good introduction to colorism to out-

side communities, but to African-Americans and other people of color no new ground was broken as far as having a greater understanding of colorism, its effects and solutions.

When viewing history and the perceived aesthetic beauty of lighter skin, we must note at one point in our history it was tied to other things like upward economic mobility and access to education and acceptance into the mainstream of America. Therefore, it was a social asset that had an advantageous economic outcome. But as a sole predictor of one's life chances this is no longer the case. And I would go further, that in the 21st Century as the shift of global power changes from western to eastern nations that are emerging; that Western Europeans or the U.S. having a monopoly on what is defined as feminine beauty or beauty period is no longer the case.

Furthermore, I feel how women regardless of their race are targeted by marketers and conditioned in societies that assign higher social value to physical beauty that put women in a precarious position to subscribe to standards of beauty that sometimes are unrealistic and unreachable.

Most women do not look like the teenage girls that are in magazine that are playing dress up to look like adults. Real women cannot Photoshop and airbrush themselves into images of physical perfection. And while real women do enhance their physical beauty with makeup, hair styles, eyelashes, nails, and clothes that expose their figures. Some may even use hair extensions or get plastic surgery for a desired result.

But I think that most women that are mature evolved women do not attach much of who they

are to their appearance alone. And today as more women are attending college than men in both the Black and White population. According the 2010 Census 25% more women than men are graduating from college. Today women are not solely counting on their looks or the gazes of men to determine how they feel about themselves or their destiny. Today's women are not simply damsels in distress or helpless objects who need the approval of men to feel worthy as a human being.

Women today when they get dressed to feel sexy, it is about them empowering themselves. While yet they can be traditionally feminine, but still be self-determined and showcase their beauty where it really counts. And that is on the inside, with programs such as *Dark Girls*, while well inten-

Dark Girl,

Continued on page 11.

Voting Rights Advocates Face Uphill Battle

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

In the aftermath of the Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*, striking down section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, civil rights organizations and voting rights advocates are preparing to battle against an expected avalanche of new voting laws that threaten to wipe out the incredible gains ushered in the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The ruling effectively ended voting rights protections under section 5, forcing Congress to update the coverage formula that required nine states and the counties and jurisdictions in six other states to pre-clear any changes to state and local voting laws with the Justice Department or a federal court.

Writing the majority opinion for the Supreme Court's decision, Justice Anthony Kennedy acknowledged that "voting discrimination still exists," but challenged the relevancy of the section 4 coverage formula originally crafted nearly 50 years ago. However, Congress has extended the law for times, saying it is still needed.

Hours after the Supreme Court decision, state officials in Texas and South Carolina announced that they were moving forward with new voting regulations that civil rights groups say will disproportionately disenfranchise Black, Latino and poor voters.

"All the states and jurisdictions that were covered by section 5 utilizing the section 4 formula have now been released, said Hilary Shelton Washington, D.C. bureau chief of the NAACP. "So [those states] can go ahead and make all those changes that the Justice Department has blocked over the years."

In a June 2013 study released a few weeks before the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, a Brennan Center for Justice report stated, "In the most recent legislative session and as of April 29, 2013, 28 restrictive voting bills⁶⁵ were introduced in the states that are covered, wholly or in part, by Section 5. Two have already passed, and 17 are still pending as of June 10, 2013. The bills introduced include, for example, a strict photo

identification requirement in Virginia, restrictions on early voting and same-day registration in North Carolina, and a South Carolina bill requiring documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote."

Kimberlé Crenshaw, co-founder of the African American Policy Forum, a civil rights think tank that works to advance racial justice in the United States and

abroad, said that the Supreme Court's decision wasn't about facts, or even about proof of ongoing voter discrimination in the once-covered states. Crenshaw said that the Supreme Court decision was about one thing – ideology.

"It's like building a dam to keep the lowlands from flooding and for 40 years the lowlands don't flood and then deciding that you

don't need the dam anymore," said Crenshaw.

Civil rights and voting rights advocates want all voters to be prepared and vigilant when it comes to restrictive bills that pop up across the country, such as voter ID laws, proof of citizenship requirements, bans on Sunday voting, attempts to purge naturalized citizens from the rolls, the elimination of same-day registra-

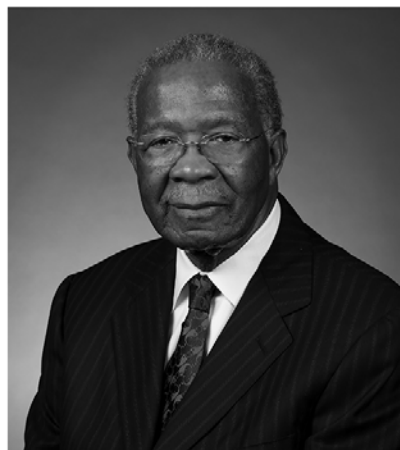
tion and cuts to early voting periods.

"All these policies are aimed at making it harder to vote for people of color," said Judith Browne Dianis, co-director of the Advancement Project.

Voting rights advocates now will also lean heavily on section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, but most

Voting Rights, Continued
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Deen's Accuser: 'This has never been about the N-word'

By Melissa Gray
CNN Newsource

(CNN) – The woman who filed a harassment lawsuit against Paula Deen said Monday her suit “has never been about the N-word,” addressing the slur that has tarnished the celebrity chef’s image and cost her endorsements, a book deal and her TV show.

The statement from Lisa Jackson was the first since the scandal began last month, when Deen’s deposition in Jackson’s suit was made public.

In the deposition, Deen acknowledges using the racial slur more than once “a very long time” ago.

“This lawsuit has never been about the N-word,” Jackson says



Paula Deen

in the statement, provided to CNN’s Don Lemon by her lawyer, Matthew Billips. “It is to address Ms. Deen’s patterns of disrespect and degradation of people that she deems to be inferior.

“I may be a white woman, but I could no longer tolerate her abuse of power as a business owner, nor her condonation of Mr. Hier’s despicable behavior on a day-to-day basis. I am what I am, and I am a human being that cares about all races, and that is why I feel it is important to be the voice for those who are too afraid to use theirs.”

Jackson is a former manager at Deen’s restaurants in Savannah, Georgia. She is suing Deen and her brother, Bubba Hier, alleging they committed numerous acts of

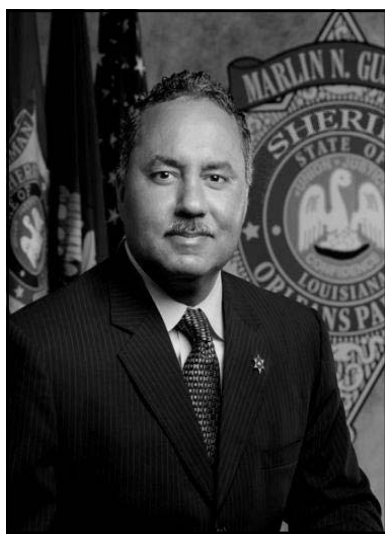
violence, discrimination and racism that resulted in the end of her five-year employment at Deen’s Lady & Sons and Bubba’s Seafood and Oyster House eateries in Savannah.

Deen’s lawyer has called the allegations false, and Deen has said she does not tolerate prejudice.

The chef, famous for her smiling demeanor and love of butter, has made tearful apologies that have failed to suppress the controversy. Since the scandal began, she has lost at least nine endorsements, her Food Network cooking show, and publication of her eagerly anticipated cookbook has been canceled.

CNN’s Don Lemon contributed to this report.

Sheriff Marlin N. Gusman Welcomes The Essence Festival



Sheriff Marlin N. Gusman



Eastbank Office

819 South Broad Street
New Orleans, LA 70119
Phone: (504) 822-8000

“Sheriff Marlin Gusman and the sheriff’s office welcomes the Essence Festival Visitors to New Orleans. We appreciate your attendance and continued support as the festival has become an historically great event for our City. We look forward to your having an informative, entertaining and safe stay in New Orleans.

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Voting Rights/Continued from page 9.

admit that many laws will go into effect and lawsuits may not come fast enough.

“In essence this decision says that ‘discrimination is still real and must still be challenged,’ but rather than address the issue on the front end as preclearance allows. [The Supreme Court] says, ‘Let it happen. Let’s allow elections to go forward knowing that discrimination exists,’ said Rev. William J. Barber, president of the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP.

When Congress extended the Voting Rights Act in 2006, it passed the House on a vote of 390-3 and the Senate 98-0. But given the current bickering, many worry whether repairing the damage created by the recent decision is possible.

“The Supreme Court has vacated its authority and handed it over to a Congress that has been dysfunctional and unable to take decisive actions on the key moral issues of our time,” said Gihan Perera, executive director of the Florida New Majority, a grassroots civil rights organization.

The Department of Justice has also pledged to step up its efforts to protect voters.

In a statement shortly after Shelby decision was released, the Attorney General Eric Holder said that even though our country has changed for the better since

1965, we still haven’t reached the destination that we seek.

“We will not hesitate to take swift enforcement action using every legal tool that remains to us against any jurisdiction that seeks to take advantage of Supreme Court’s ruling by hindering eligible citizens full and free exercise of the franchise,” said Holder. “Although today’s decision represents a serious and unnecessary setback, the Justice Department remains committed to moving forward in manner that is consistent with the arc of American history which has always been a story of increasing equality inclusion and access to the franchise. This is what makes America truly exceptional and this is what we will zealously guard.”

For some civil rights groups, restoring section 4 of the VRA, won’t solve the myriad problems in a system that allows “13,000 voting jurisdictions in this country that run elections 13,000 different ways.”

“Under this confusing, patchwork system, the freedom to vote is left to mercy of state officials. It doesn’t make sense to have a system where every jurisdiction can make up its own rules,” said Rashad Robinson, executive director for ColorOfChange.org, an organization that advocates for social and political change in the

Black community. “It only serves to make it easier for politicians to manipulate the system for political gain.”

The movement for access to the ballot must continue, said Crenshaw, the law professor at UCLA.

“The movement has to go beyond just restoring the status quo,” said Crenshaw. “It has to go, not just go to broadening political participation, but to the well-being of segments of our community who have taken a tremendous hit during [The Great Recession].”

Crenshaw added that with civil rights groups and voting rights advocates can utilize the tools of the day to gain unique and direct access to a broad majority of a diverse electorate through pop culture and hip hop music.

“When they saw people like Marlon Brando and Harry Belafonte and Muhammad Ali jump behind the Civil Rights Movement, that brought millions of people on board it gave them the sense of what was right and wrong about their current condition,” said Crenshaw. “It was responsible and just and cool to be involved in social justice.”

Crenshaw continued: “How much more can we hear about getting paid? What about getting real and getting involved for this generation and the next?”

Essence of Plants

By MG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

When you are splashing on your favorite perfume or cologne do you ever stop to think that the scent you are enjoying came from plants? Everything from soaps, aromatherapy products, perfumes, colognes, detergents, most of the teas you drink, and flavoring for many of the foods we eat come from plants; and their essences or essential oils are what gives your shampoos, lotions, cosmetics and face creams their fragrance. All perfumes consist of three notes, the top/head not, middle/heart notes, and base notes; and all of the note combinations come from the plant world in the form of oil. Oil is essential in the sense that it carries a distinctive scent or essence, of a plant for use in numerous applications. The more concentrated the scent the more expensive the product. Pure perfumes are distributed in small quantities and are very expensive because they carry the pure essential oils of plant materials. Colognes are cheaper because the essential oils have been watered down so you get more products for less cash. So, of course when you get down to items like mouthwash and toothpaste and food flavoring the price becomes nominal.

The essence of flowers and leaves are extracted using vari-



ous methods including distillation and pressing to harvest the oils. Tea Tree oil comes from the tea tree, (*Melaleuca alternifolia*), ylang ylang comes from the ylang ylang bush (*Cananga odorata*), and vanilla flavor comes from the vanilla bean which grows on

the vanilla orchid vine (*Vanilla planifolia*). Frankincense comes from the frankincense tree (*Boswellia sacra*), and myrrh comes from the myrrh tree (*Commiphora myrrha*). And the citronella candles and oils that we burn to repel mesquites come from the

citronella plant (*Pelargonium graveolens Citrosa*), also called the mosquito plant.

Many plant essences are used for medicinal purposes. Echinacea which is recommended during cold season comes from the Echinacea flower. The Eucalyptus leaf is used for infections, fever, to help loosen coughs, and is one of the main ingredients in Vicks Vapor Rub. And if you are not down with the pink stuff, Ginger Ale has always been a mainstay for upset stomachs. Vernors Ginger Ale, made in Detroit and America's first soft drink, and Canada Dry Ginger Ale are of course made from the root of the ginger plant.

So the next time that you are enjoying a shower or bath with fragrant body wash, pampering yourself with an aromatherapy massage, enjoying the fresh scent come from plug-ins in your home, chilling out in a room filled with intoxicating incense, brushing your teeth, using mouthwash, luxuriating in your favorite perfume, splashing on aftershave, or drinking a fruity drink; think of plants because their essences are all around us.

Check out my website at www.thegardeningdiva.com and send me your gardening questions at sowing@thegardeningdiva.com

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Dark Girls/Continued from page 8.

tioned take a small piece of truth and magnify it, giving it more validity than it deserves. Colorism, White supremacy, colonization and all these things have impacted societies, but societies are always in a state of flux where the tides of change make old ideas, thoughts and practices obsolete.

This is where we are in the question of Dark Skin sisters and them being maligned by society. In the 21st Century across the globe women's issues and their changing status is what will define this new age of what it means to be a woman. And at its core and essence is that all women are beautiful when they have a love of themselves and are self-determined can reach their full potential. And it is not about superficial things like physical appearance like some have placed emphasis on. Today as Girls are training, preparing and in some cases running the world. It is time for all the beautiful women that have been in the dark to come out of the shadows for all the world to see them as their best selves and let their lights shine.

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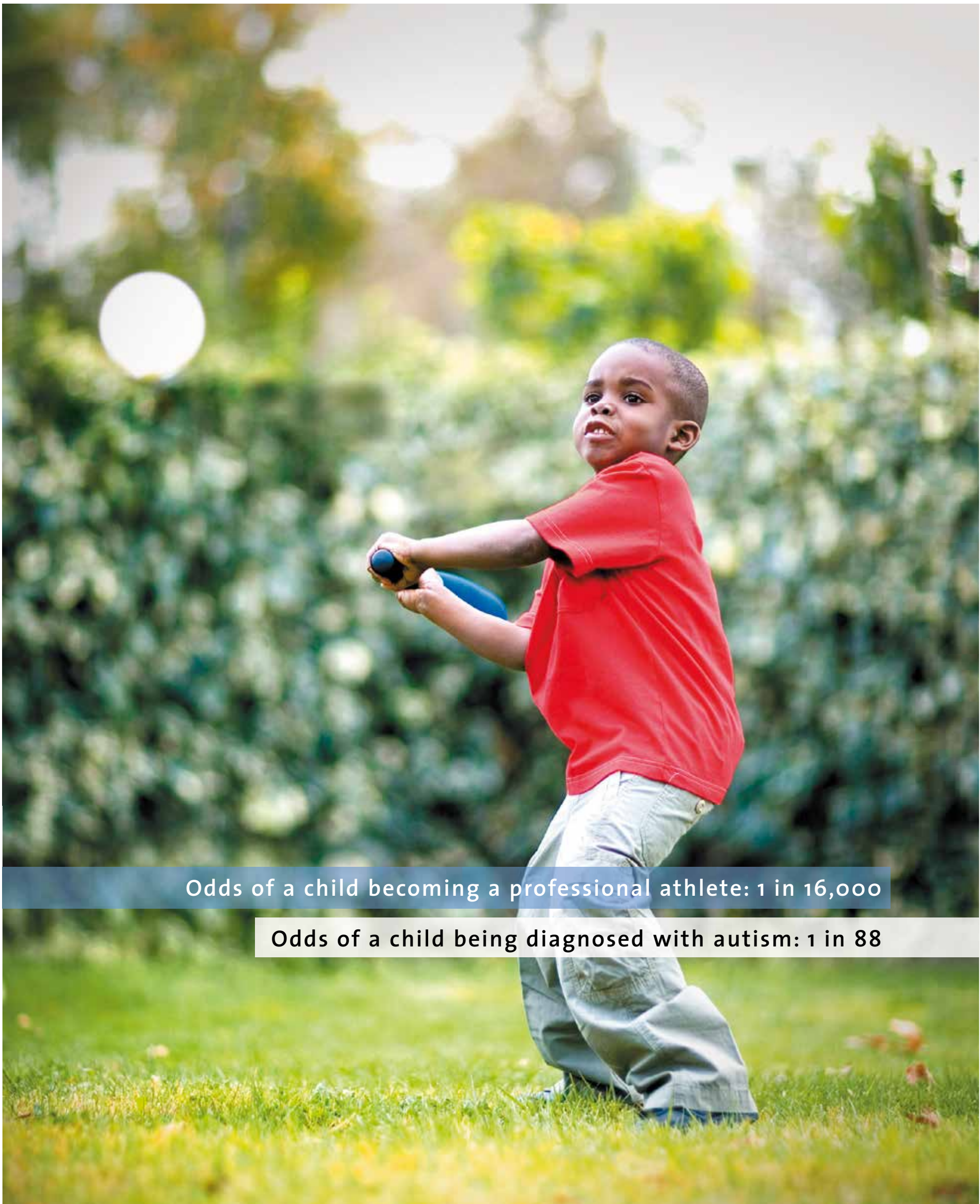
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