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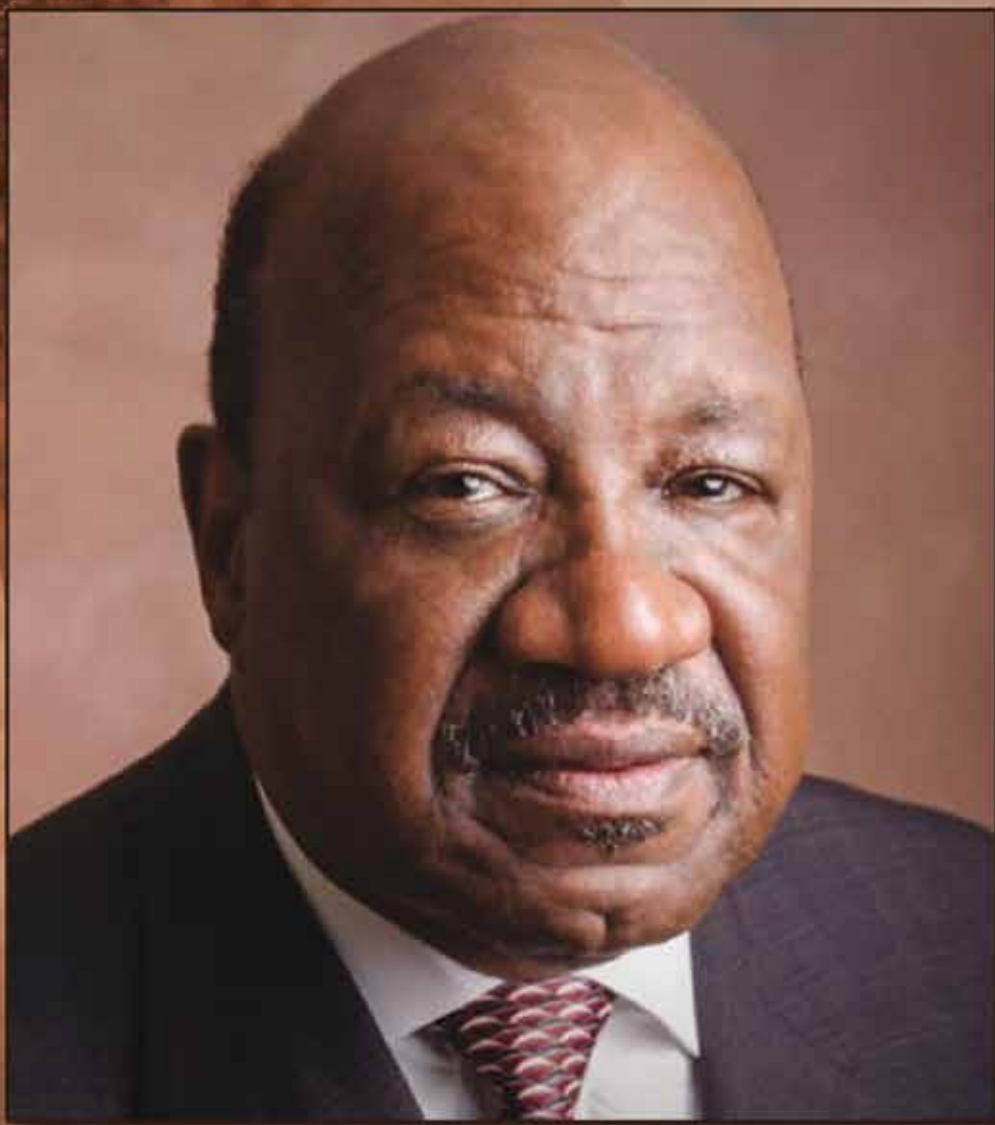
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The Best Man Holiday

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive



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Harry Cantrell Makes History as New Orleans First African-American Elected as Magistrate Judge



Newly elected Magistrate Judge Harry Cantrell celebrates with his family on the eve of his historical win. Cantrell has become the first African-American to be elected to the seat in New Orleans.

Story & Photos by Edwin Buggage

On Saturday November 16, 2013 voters went to the polls to vote to decide who would occupy the bench for the Office of Magistrate Judge and when all the votes were counted Orleans Parish voters elected Criminal District Court Veteran Harry

Cantrell to fill the seat previously held by longtime Magistrate Judge Gerard Hanson. Cantrell, prior to being elected served as Magistrate Commissioner for 14 years won in a run-off election over Mark Vicknair, a former public defender receiving 57 percent of the vote with his opponent receiving 43 percent. On election night he was surrounded by

family, friends, supporters and well-wishers.

"I would like to thank all the people who supported my campaign, it was a cross-section of different people from, elected officials, criminal justice leaders, members of the clergy, the school board, organized labor, political groups like LIFE and BOLD who has longstanding ties in the com-

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(left to right) N.O. Councilmember Latoya Cantrell, Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones and Harry Cantrell.

munity, I would also like to thank Data News Weekly and of course those who went to the polls that made this victory possible," says Cantrell about the coalition he put together to win the election.

In his fourteen years as a Magistrate Commissioner, Cantrell was known as someone who was tough when setting bonds, but also one who exercised compassion. The magistrate judge's primary function is to set bonds for criminal defendants, although the judge and four appointed commissioners are also frequently called upon to review and sign police warrants. Cantrell plans to continue to be tough in his fight to keep citizens safe, but feels other issues that sometimes cause people to delve into a criminal lifestyle needs to be addressed.

"In the position as Magistrate I feel that our number one priority is to protect our citizens from dangerous criminals, but I think it is important that we expand services for those who have other types of problems that can lead them into criminal activity, such as problems with substance abuse or mental health issues. Also those who face education and economic challenges can be contributing factors, so I will be partnering with the AFL-CIO to help non-violent first time offenders get into apprentice programs where they can receive skills and this can help them to better take care of themselves and their families without resorting to crime," says Cantrell of one of the many initiatives he is working on to help curb the trend that has become the revolving door of people in the Criminal Justice System.

With his election victory, Cantrell is the first African-American elected to hold the post as Magistrate Judge. Something he feels very proud of, and feels strongly about serving the entire

community is important, but says that outreach into the African-American community is a high on his agenda.

"I will serve the entire community, because that is what this office entails, I was elected by a cross section of people in the City and I feel that serving with honor and integrity and making sure our office is doing everything to serve all people equally regardless of their background is very important. But I realize that some of the things our office can do is to expand outreach efforts to mentor young people and give them a direction and different paths, so we will have targeted outreach into the African-American community to help save young people and try to keep them out of getting in trouble with the law," says Cantrell who is an advocate of preventive measures taken to help young people before they get involved in lives of crime.

Some know Judge Cantrell as less of a judge and more of a scholar. He is the Founder of the Criminal Justice Program at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO). Since 1982 he has been a professor and professional mentor for many who have become leaders in many fields of endeavor.

"We have helped create a solid foundation for many people who have come through our program, that's moved on and become criminal justice professionals and productive citizens. It has been amazing to touch so many students lives and to see them become leaders in their chosen fields," says Cantrell, beaming with pride and on his election night some of his former students including Wesley Bishop, whose become a Louisiana State Representative and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at SUNO's were



Harry Cantrell (center right) and supporters

on hand to congratulate him on his victory.

As a scholar and judge, Cantrell is someone who is troubled by the number of young men he sees down at Criminal District Court, and feels it is up to the entire community to get involved in saving the lives of the City's youth.

"It is important that we all realize that we can do something to

help better the lives of our young people, we have to get back to understanding that education is important and helps give you the tools to be successful in society. And when you are fortunate to have an opportunity to better your condition it is your responsibility to give back and help someone else," says Cantrell.

As his name is now etched in

history and he prepares for the job ahead, Cantrell says he looks forward to serving the community to help address the crime problem and make the City safer for the City's citizens and says that is not just the judiciary or the police but that we are all part of the chain to help make our City safer and that everyone can contribute to being part of the solution.



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Second Harvest Community Kitchen Prepares 1,750 Thanksgiving Meals for Seniors

Peoples Health Supports Seniors with Thanksgiving Meals at ten local Christopher Homes Facilities

Peoples Health and Second Harvest Food Bank have partnered once again this year to provide and deliver 1,750 heart healthy Thanksgiving meals for seniors residing at ten New Orleans area Christopher Homes facilities. During the month of November, Peoples Health focuses on senior health with hot, nutritious meals made prepared with fresh ingredients for seniors. Employees from Peoples Health will be volunteering in the Com-

munity Kitchen to assist with plating the Thanksgiving meals Tuesday morning and will be on hand to distribute the meals to the residents at St. John Berchman's Manor at lunch. Some of the ingredients used to prepare the meals were collected during the Supermarket Sweep event sponsored by Peoples Health at Breaux Mart earlier this month.

According to research commissioned by Feeding America, 1 in 12 seniors above the age of 60 is at risk for hunger and the risk is notably higher among seniors residing in the south. Louisiana ranks among the top 10 states with the highest rates of food insecurity among 60-plus, at 8.32 percent. One-third of food inse-

cure seniors are disabled and food insecurity is higher in households with a grandchild present. Nearly one in five seniors living with grandchildren is food insecure. Each year, Second Harvest Food Bank provides emergency food assistance to approximately 40,000 seniors across 23 south Louisiana parishes.

The menu will include roasted turkey, gravy, corn bread dressing, collard greens, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, salad with baby carrots and tomatoes, dressing and pumpkin pie for dessert.

PLEASE NOTE: The recipients of the Peoples Health Thanksgiving Meals for Seniors have been predetermined and distribution has been prescheduled.

Sheriff Gusman Invites New Orleans Community to Thanksgiving Dinner

Sheriff Marlin N. Gusman invites the New Orleans community to join him for the 39th annual Sheriff's Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration on Nov. 28, 2013, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event, held at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in Hall I-2, will bring the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office and local volunteers together for the holiday celebration.

Scheduled to include a performance by Grammy Award winning artist Irma Thomas, the Thanksgiving Dinner will feature additional local music.

"We invite people from Orleans and the surrounding parishes to celebrate this family holiday tradition with us," said Sheriff Marlin N. Gusman, Orleans Parish Sheriff. "We look forward to coming together as a community to give thanks for the blessings we've received during the past year, all while enjoying a great meal and entertainment."



Sheriff Marlin Gusman

Volunteers are asked to pre-register online here and report on Thanksgiving Day between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m. They will receive four hours of community service for the event. Citizens and volunteers in need of a ride to the event can call the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office at (504) 827-8504.

Free parking is available across from Hall I.

Non-Profit Organization Champions Diversity and Inclusion Across Louisiana

A diversity champion has come to Louisiana.

The Louisiana Diversity Council (LADC), a non-profit initiative of the National Diversity Council, is committed to fostering an inclusive work environment for organizations and individuals to grow and leverage diversity as a competitive advantage. Through annual events and monthly chapter meetings, the LADC provides access to diversity best practices, leadership training, and networking opportunities.

"The Louisiana Diversity Council provides an abundance of resources for individuals and organizations looking to grow in their knowledge of diversity and inclusion," said Dennis Kennedy, founder and CEO of the National Diversity Council. "We are committed to transforming Louisiana's workplaces into environments where people are valued for their uniqueness and where their contributions matter."

The LADC has a number of initiatives focusing on diverse groups such as women, youth, veterans, LGBT, and people with disabilities. "We offer



Pictured left to right, Rod Teamer - Director of Diversity Development, Blue Cross Blue Shield - Shannon Brice, Glenn Jones - VP of Marketing Data News, Rachel Lopez - Coordinator, National Diversity Council, Nyra Canales - PHR, VP, WGP Companies, Jacob Evan - Marketing Planner of Diversity Development, Blue Cross Blue Shield.

events that range from diversity training sessions and boot camps to statewide conferences and summits," Kennedy said. Two of the largest annual events include the Louisiana Women's Conference and the Louisiana Diversity and Leadership Conference, he added. The LADC also hosts monthly chapter meetings for local professionals at the Jones Walker offices. These meetings provide networking opportunities with individuals from a variety

of fields and industries as well as a 45-minute education session dedicated to diversity and inclusion.

The Louisiana Diversity Council is currently partnered with Jones Walker, Entergy, Richard's Disposal, Strategic Restaurant Acquisition Company, Cleco and Morgan Stanley. For more information on the council and the various ways to get involved, please email Rachel Lopez at rachel.lopez@nationaldiversitycouncil.org.

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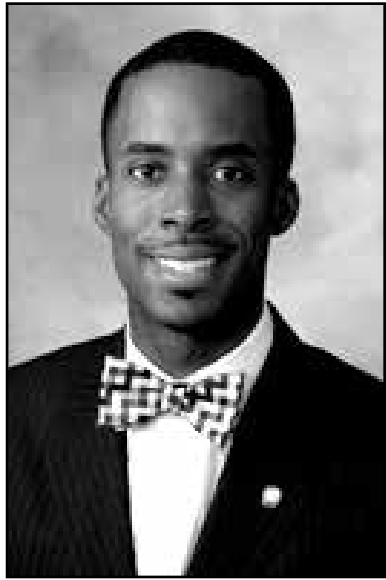
Tulane Alumnus Mario Garner Named CEO of New Orleans East Hospital

For Mario Garner, a Tulane University alumnus and the new CEO of New Orleans East Hospital, work ahead includes building a reputation for quality health care for the city's residents.

Since 2005, those living in Eastern New Orleans have been without a full-service hospital. Now, residents can see light at the end of the tunnel in the form of a \$130 million renovation set for completion in spring 2014.

"I have a unique opportunity to reestablish a hospital that was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina," says Garner, who earned his master's degree in healthcare administration from the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and a doctorate in administration and supervision from the University of Houston. "I'm committed to assuring a top-performing community hospital that provides quality health care to anyone who needs it."

Upon the announcement of



Mario Garner

Garner's hiring, city health commissioner Dr. Karen DeSalvo said that Garner is a strong executive, which is critical to a successful hospital.

"The board had its pick among several excellent choices, and we're thrilled that Mario has joined our team," said De-

Salvo, who received her medical degree and a master of public health degree from Tulane University. "We look forward to working together to restore critical health services that the New Orleans East community needs and deserves."

Garner, a native of Lake Charles, La., says he is thrilled to be back in Louisiana. Past positions he has held include the role of chief operating officer at Fairview Park Hospital in Dublin, Ga.; COO at the Regional Medical Center of Acadiana in Lafayette, La.; associate administrator at West Houston Medical Center in Houston and administrative resident at Tulane University Hospital.

Photo Caption

Tulane alumnus Mario Garner and new CEO of New Orleans East Hospital is prepared to lead. The \$130 million renovation of the hospital will be complete in spring 2014. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

RTA and Veolia will Stuff that Bus with Food Donations for Second Harvesters

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in New Orleans and Veolia Transportation will stuff a bus with food donations for delivery to Second Harvesters to support the organization in its efforts to stock its food warehouse in time for the Thanksgiving Holiday. The event will take place Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at 9 AM at RTA Headquarters, 2817 Canal St.

Employees, vendors of the agency, and board members collectively donated enough food

items to fill a full sized RTA bus with non-perishable items.

The Warren Easton High School Band will be present to provide entertainment while employees and volunteers load donated items on to the bus. RTA executives and board members will officially present the "stuffed" bus to Second Harvesters representatives. The "stuffed" bus will depart from RTA headed for Second Harvesters warehouse at approximately 10 AM.

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New Orleans in your inbox



Dillard University to Host "Mind, Body and Soul Health Experience"

The Dillard University Office of Community Relations African-American Men's Health Outreach Initiative is hosting

"Mind, Body and Soul Health Experience" on Saturday, December 14, 2013. The event will be held in the Lower 9th Ward at All Souls' Episcopal Church & Community Center, 5500 St. Claude Avenue in New Orleans.

The purpose of this health outreach event is to bring awareness to African-American Men on the importance of annual medical check-ups to identify potential health risk and the prevention of chronic illnesses. The Mind, Body and Soul Health Experience addresses the total body and will provide educational informa-

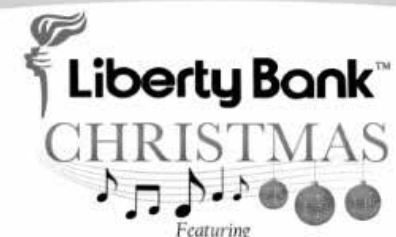
tion and create discussions on the importance of conducting assessment of family medical history to determine key areas of probable health risk. The event will provide attendees with available resources to assist in making sound health related decisions. Finally attendees will be provided with information on mental wellness, fitness, and disease prevention services which are steps in creating a wholistic approach to African American Males wellbeing.

Exhibitors will focus on medical problems effecting AA-Men, and provide medical units and screenings;

- Diabetes Testing
- Dental screening

- High Blood Pressure Examinations
- Prostrate educational information
- Obesity Educational Information
- Mental Health outreach services
- Health Challenge Workshops
- Farmer's Market and Healthy Cooking Demonstrations
- HIV-AID Screening and educational information
- Employment Opportunities
- Tobacco Use Challenges

If you are interested in exhibiting please call Nick Harris at 504-816-4704 or email nharris@dillard.edu for a registration form. Medical Mobile Units are welcome.



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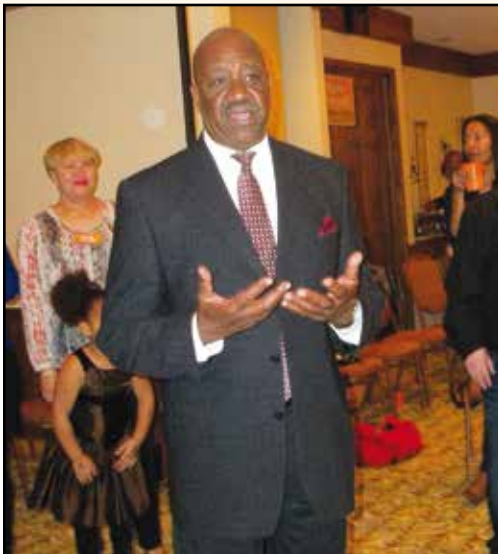


Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Magistrate Harry Cantrell's Victory Celebration

Photos by Edwin Buggage

Data News Weekly was there as the newly elected Magistrate Judge, Harry Cantrell celebrated his historic victory with his supporters. Congratulations to Judge Cantrell.



Steven Jupiter Elected New Traffic Court Judge

Photos by Edwin Buggage

Attorney Steven Jupiter, who was successful in his bid for Traffic Court Judge celebrated his victory with family, friends, supporters. Of course, Data was there. Congratulations to Judge Jupiter!



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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The Best Man Holiday

Showing Hollywood that Black Films Help Studios Stay in the Black

By Edwin Buggage

Smart, sexy, funny and relevant are the words that describe The Best Man Holiday. The film reunites the cast from the 1999 hit: Nia Long, Melissa De Sousa, Sanaa Lathan, Regina Hall, Monica Calhoun, Morris Chestnut, Taye Diggs, Terrence Howard, and Harold Perrineau and is a must see holiday film. In its first week at the box office the film raked in 30.6 million dollars stealing the headlines over the weekend from the Blockbuster Thor: The Dark World. Malcolm D. Lee film who wrote and directed this dramedy is the sequel to the Black classic The Best Man. In one weekend at the box office it made nearly as much as the \$34m domestic total of the original film made back in 1999. As we've seen more recently with Tyler Perry movies and others have shown that films with all or a majority African-American cast can strike gold at the box office.

Today we see the commercial viability of African-American films which is most evidenced with ascendance of the Tyler Perry at the forefront and along the way building a multimedia empire. In recent years other films have received critical and commercial acclaim including Django Unchained, Precious, The Help, 42, The Butler, 12 Years A Slave, Obsessed Fruitvale Station, Red Tails and Think Like A Man and The Best Man Holiday is joining that number and will be a must watch for years even after it leaves the theater.

The film has a stellar cast as the ensemble of amazing actors took the audience on a journey that making them laugh, cry and celebrate. It is refreshing to see a film with intelligent African-Americans in a contemporary setting being successful, comfortably middle-class and with a



complex story line that draws at the funny bone and heart strings in equal parts which is a recipe for a great film.

While all the actors did a magnificent job and the on screen chemistry was very convincing, something that does not happen sometimes in these type of films, but in this production the camaraderie, care and sometimes conflict felt very real, as the audience was taken in by this story that seems like it is on its way to be a timeless classic and great continuation of the first film.

All the cast did a magnificent job, but Terrence Howard stood out as a major talent in this film showcasing his acting chops revising his role as Quentin. Transformed from a scattered dude with many interest in the original film into a successful upscale Bohemian, that provides moments of comic relief and thought provoking insight. Howard's role is one that in my opinion was the glue that kept the film interesting and light and helped it from sometimes not slipping into melodrama.

This is as many films have proven that African-American films can get people into seats and make profits. The budget for this film was 17 million dollars and it has already made a profit for the studio in the first week, as have many other re-

leases featuring predominately Black talent. It is my hope that the studios see that the numbers do not lie, and that

the tide of these types of films increase in the days to come. And come to the realization that this is not a flash in the

pan or short-lived trend.

It is time in this the 21st Century with an African-American President and African-Americans with disposable income who wants to see quality films featuring Black talent. Further, I would say of these films hopefully as is with the great music we create that is consumed primarily by non-African-Americans that we can get to a place where people see beyond the race of the character and see stories that have universal appeal. And this is what this film does in a poignant and powerful way, so I would say this is a great holiday film for adults of any age to go and see for this holiday season and many years to come.

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Renisha McBride and Other Black Women Need to be Defended



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

All Renisha McBride wanted to do was to go home. She had been in a car accident, her cell phone was dead, and she needed help. She knocked on a couple of doors in the suburban Detroit neighborhood where she was stranded, but it was well after midnight and people weren't opening their doors. Finally, she found a homeowner in Dearborn Heights who opened his door, but instead of offering the help she so desperately needed, he shot her, saying he thought she was going to break into his home.

He didn't shoot her at close range; he shot her from a dis-

tance. He might have simply shut the door, or he might have shut the door and called 911. Instead he shot 19-year-old Renisha McBride in the face.

On Friday, Theodore P. Wafer, 54, was charged with second-degree murder. He also faces a manslaughter charge.

There are chilling parallels to the Trayvon Martin case. The character assassination of Renisha has begun. According to a toxicology report, her blood alcohol level was 0.22, more than twice the legal limit for driving. Her blood also tested positive for an active ingredient in marijuana.

If Renisha were drunk as Cootie Brown and high as a kite, she did not deserve to be killed. Why didn't Wafer call 911 and tell them (if he could tell) that there was a drunken woman on his porch? Why did he shoot?

Renisha McBride's murder bears attention for several reasons. First of all, it reinforces the unfortunate reality that young Black people are at high risk for

violence, often because too many shoot first and ask questions later. Secondly, in the cases that are highly publicized, usually it is the massacre of a young man that is at the center of a case. It is important to note that young Black women are too often at risk. And it is important to ask what we plan to do about it.

Marissa Alexander didn't want to take another beating. Her husband Rico Gray is an admitted abuser whose brutal beatings of his wife were described as "lifethreatening." She fired a warning shot into the ceiling to warn off her abuser husband. Yet, she was charged with felony use of a firearm and sentenced to 20 years in jail.

The prosecutor in this case, Angela Corey, is the same one who only reluctantly charged George Zimmerman in the massacre of Trayvon Martin, the same prosecutor who assembled a flawed legal team, the same prosecutor who believes in the Stand Your Ground laws. That is, except for Marissa Alexander, who stood

her ground against an abusive husband and hurt no one.

Marissa Alexander, the 32-year-old mother of three, has no criminal record. Her conviction has been thrown out because a judge ruled that the prosecution, not the defense, has the burden of proof. (Alexander was asked to prove that she had been beaten). Friends and family have raised her bail, but the judge in her case says he won't rule on her release until January 15.

he languishes in jail, supposedly, because she remains a threat to her batterer, but even he supports her release. Her continued incarceration is not only meanspirited, but also an illustration about the unevenness of law. George Zimmerman got away with murder for standing his ground. Marissa Alexander is incarcerated because she stood hers.

With domestic violence an epidemic in our country, it seems unfathomable that a woman who wanted to prevent it is charged with a crime. While the civil

rights community has surrounded Marissa, I am not aware of women's organizations or domestic violence organizations that have been similarly supportive. E. Faye Williams of the National Congress of Black Women says that her organization has been active in assisting Marissa, and that's a good thing. Still, just as the hoodie came to represent Trayvon Martin, and people from around the world, including on the floor of Congress, donned the hoodie in solidarity with Trayvon, there has been no similar support for Marissa Alexander.

Marissa Alexander's incarceration and the murder of Renisha McBride have something in common. They illustrate the vulnerability of Black women, both in the legal system, and in the public perception of race and gender. Black women are not afforded the privilege of standing their ground against batterers. Black women can be shot at far range because

Malveaux, Continued
on page 11.

To Be Equal

12 Years a Slave

A Harsh Truth We Dare Not Forget



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

"I read 'Twelve Years a Slave' and thought, this is the Anne Frank diary of America." Steve McQueen, Director of the movie, 12 Years a Slave.

NEW YORK, NY - There have been a handful of books recounting the first-hand experiences of 17th and 18th century North American slaves. These include, "The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an Autobiography," first published in 1845; "The Kidnapped Prince, the Life

of Olaudah Equiano," 1789; and "The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave," 1849. While not a first-person account, I would add to that list Alex Haley's groundbreaking 1977 historical novel, "Roots: The Saga of an American Family." All of these books offer personal accounts of the immoral capture, selling, enslavement and mistreatment of human beings of African ancestry here in America. But, a recently re-discovered autobiography, "Twelve Years a Slave," by Solomon Northup describes a particularly heinous aspect of the slave-trade - the 1841 kidnapping and selling into captivity of Northup, a free black man who had been living with his wife and children in relative comfort in New York. The book has become a highly-acclaimed movie that has left both audiences and critics shaken by its unflinching depiction of the physical and psy-

chological cruelties of slavery. I saw the movie during a premiere screening (during which several people were so disturbed that they walked out of the theater), was similarly moved and feel compelled to offer some thoughts on both the historical and present-day relevance of the film.

Many may feel that there is no longer a need to revisit a time in our history that was so full of brutal hatred. But by looking the viciousness of slavery squarely in the eye, "12 Years a Slave" reveals much about the legacy it left behind and the resilience and humanity of the black and white heirs of this awful crime against humanity.

For example, is it not possible that sub-standard schools as well as the achievement gaps that persist in so many minority communities can be traced in part to the fact, as depicted

in the movie, that for centuries American slaves were forbidden to read or write, punishable by beatings and worse - or that for another century after slavery ended, legislated segregation fostered a separate and unequal society? Could it be that some of the fear of slave rebellions that overseers and plantation owners had in the time of Solomon Northup laid the foundation for a lingering fear of Blacks held by some throughout our nation's history? Is that fear at the root of racial profiling or police brutality against black males? Is that fear behind the 2012 killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin or the November 2 killing of 19-year-old Renisha McBride, who was shot in the face by a white Detroit homeowner after she knocked on his door late at night seeking help after a car crash? This attack against Re-

nisha McBride recalls the heartbreaking indignities endured by black women slaves as shown in the movie, from routine rapes and beatings at the hands of their "masters" to auction-block separations from their children.

The brilliance of the filmmakers is that they made no attempt to spin or varnish the harsh truth. Just as "The Diary of Anne Frank" has become must-reading for generations seeking an authentic look at the daily life of a Jewish fugitive during the reign of Nazi Germany, "12 Years a Slave" is a raw and real depiction of what life was like for American slaves. It is a brutal and uncomfortable, yet necessary, look at a part of our nation's history that has had an incalculable impact on our socialization as a country. Students, journalists and anyone seriously interested in American history should see this movie.

HPV Vaccines Less Effective for Black Women

By Jazelle Hunt
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Although Black women are twice as likely as White women to die from cervical cancer, Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination may not prevent cervical cancer in African American women, according to a new study.

The available vaccines only protect against four strains of HPV, which, according to this study from the Duke University School of Medicine, African American women are half as likely as White women to carry.

The American Cancer Society expects more than 12,000 women to be diagnosed with cervical cancer this year alone. Incidence rates have been falling for all women as screenings have become more routine, but the rate of infection for Black women is the second highest (after Latinas) – and it's still 39 percent higher than their White counterparts.

Black women have been significantly more likely than any other group to die from cervical cancer.

The study examined 280 Black women and 292 White women, all carrying varying HPV strains – some had no signs of cancer, some showed mild signs of pre-cancer, and a small percentage had advanced precancerous abnormalities. In the group with the most advanced signs of pre-cancer, White participants carried strains 16, 18, 33, 39, and 59, whereas Black participants carried strains 31, 35, 45, 56, 58, 66, and 68.

Currently, two vaccines on the market target four HPV strains considered most troublesome. Gardasil, which is produced by Merck and can be administered to anyone age 9 through 26, protects against strains 16, 18, 6, and 11. Cervarix, by GlaxoSmithKline, is available only for girls and women and targets strains 16 and 18. (The vaccines also protect against less-common genital cancers in both men and women).

"Compared with white women, we saw that African-American women had about half as many infections with HPV 16 and 18, the subtypes that are covered by HPV vaccines," said study co-author, Adriana Vidal. "Since African-



American women don't seem to be getting the same subtypes of HPV with the same frequency, the vaccines aren't helping all women equally."

The vaccines are based on these strains because strains 16 and 18 are found in 70 percent of cervical cancer cases, while strains 6 and 11 are associated with 90 percent of genital warts cases, according to the National Cancer Institute. However, studies have a long-documented history of overlooking the need for diverse participants in pharmaceutical and medical trials.

HPV is a common virus that is easily spread by skin-to-skin contact. It is possible to have HPV without knowing it, so it is possible to unknowingly spread HPV to another person, according to the CDC.

There are more than 100 strains of the human papillomavirus and they can affect several parts of the body. Most strains are minor threats to a healthy immune system, which can naturally terminate an infection over time. Though the virus can cause warts, most people who become infected exhibit no symptoms.

More than 40 strains of HPV are specifically passed through sex. It's the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States, and the Center for Disease Control says that most sexually active people will contract at least one type in their lifetime.

Duke University's study is limited by its sample size. But if it reflects a larger trend: African American women are much less likely as White women to carry

these forms of the virus and are thus less protected from the cancers they cause.

Many researchers have been closely following the data to see if

the vaccines are actually affecting HPV infection rates.

A study published this past June 2013 in The Journal of Infectious Diseases has compared HPV rates among girls age 14 through 19 from before Gardasil hit shelves (2003-2006), and after (2007-2010). Between the time periods, infection rates were cut in half for strains 16 and 18, nearly eliminated for strains 6 and 11, and trimmed for milder, less common strains. The results are being touted as proof that the vaccines are indeed curbing HPV among teens, and by extension, will curb cervical cancer in the future.

But for whom?

In the case of high-risk strains that aren't covered by the vaccine – such as 35, 66, and 68, the strains most prevalent in Black women – the report states the decline was too miniscule to be statistically relevant. These strains aren't even pictured on the study's dramatic-looking bar graph. To be fair, though, the low-risk strains prevalent in Black women also saw major declines.

This study's population was reflective of American demographics. Additionally, sexually active, unvaccinated girls were included – 20 percent were African American, 56 percent White, and 23 percent "Other."

Neither Merck nor GlaxoSmithKline has addressed the lack

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CFPB Returns \$750 Million-Plus Million to Consumers

By Charlene Crowell

Richard Cordray, director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), has delivered his mandatory semi-annual report to Congress. For consumers, the good news is that more than \$750 million has been returned to consumers who were victims to various violations of consumer protection laws. In addition, CFPB assessed more than \$40 million in related penalties.

Condray's presentation this month connected how plain language rules, web-based services and timely actions on consumer complaints together provide benefits to everyone from consumers to industry and regulators.

"Every day we work to accomplish the goals of renewing consumers' trust in the marketplace and ensuring that markets for consumer financial products and services are fair, transparent, and competitive," Cordray told the U.S. Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee.

"These goals not only support consumers as they climb the economic ladder of opportunity, but also help responsible businesses compete on an evenhanded basis, reinforcing the stability of our economy as a whole."

Director Cordray also spoke to what is perhaps the Bureau's largest long-term achievement to date: the Qualified Mortgage (QM) rule that takes effect January 2014.

The rule requires lenders to make a good faith, reasonable determination that mortgage borrowers can afford to pay their loans. Similarly, CFPB's mortgage servicing rule will require lenders to clean up sloppy practices and ensure fair and more effective methods to assist troubled borrowers facing the loss of their homes.

In fact, mortgages alone represented half of the more than 230,000 consumer complaints received by CFPB for July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013 reporting period.

Although CFPB investigates



a range of lending areas, including credit reporting, debt collection, money transfers, vehicle and other consumer loans, only three lending areas account for 80 percent of all complaints filed: mortgages, credit cards and bank accounts/services.

Loan modifications, collections and foreclosures represented 64 percent of CFPB's 61,500 mortgage complaints. More than 22 percent of other mortgage complaints concerned loan servicing, payments and escrow accounts.

By comparison, credit card

complaints spanned a wider variety of concerns with billing disputes topping the list of 17,700 complaints. Other credit card complaints included interest rates, credit reporting, identity theft, fraud and embezzlement.

Account management and deposits or withdrawals accounted for more than two-thirds or 68 percent of complaints in the consumers' bank accounts and service category. Consumers identified problems such as confusing marketing, denials, fee disclosure and interest state-

ments. Availability of deposits, withdrawal problems and penalties, lost or missing funds and transaction holds were among the specific problems reported on the category of deposits and withdrawals.

Of the 3,900 student loan complaints, 96 percent were in two areas: repaying loans and problems when consumers were unable to pay. On repayment, fees, billing, alleged fraud and credit reporting all came to CFPB's attention. Default, debt collection and bankruptcy were often cited in complaints related to an inability to repay.

Every complaint filed with CFPB affords consumers the option to review and dispute all company closure reports. Even if a complaint is closed, consumers retain the option to dispute the finding for 30 days.

Additionally, CFPB's Office of Minority and Women Inclusion has a two-fold purpose: to promote diversity in the workplace and among its contractors. As of the third quarter of FY2013, CFPB awarded 26 percent of its procurement (\$13 million) to small businesses categorized as either disadvantaged or woman-owned.

"It is clear from the report that consumers now have a responsive place to turn when financial products and services fail to meet fair and reasonable standards," observed Gary Kalman, the Center for Responsible Lending's executive vice president. "The main takeaway is that the Bureau has delivered for consumers. And as a result, we expect to see more fair and affordable credit options emerge – especially for those who suffered most from the deceptive lending practices all too prevalent in communities across the country."


Whether you are a minority business seeking contract opportunities, or a consumer seeking redress in personal finance issues, CFPB has a lot to offer. For more information on these and other consumer lending concerns, visit: <http://rspnsb.li/1aCCqen>

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Having Access to Excellent Teachers is a Civil Right

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – A new study suggests that access to “excellent teachers” should be a civil right and that students should be able to “take legal action” to get better results.

The Center for American Progress, a nonpartisan Washington think tank, partnered with Public Impact on the report that recommends a number of federal policy reforms designed to increase the influence of excellent teachers in American classrooms. Public Impact is a research and advocacy group focused on the educational needs of underserved students.

“Excellent teachers – those in the top 20 percent to 25 percent of the profession in terms of student progress – produce well more than a year of student-learning growth for each year they spend instructing a cohort of students,” stated CAP/PI joint study.

The study found that one way to ensure that the highest-performing teachers instructed more students would be to make it a federal law.

“If schools and districts do not provide such a child with an excellent teacher, the child should be empowered to take legal action to enforce the right,” stated the report. “Legislating a new civil right to excellent teachers obligates federal and state governments to enforce what should be a fundamental guarantee.”

For poor students who often inherit poorly-trained teachers in poverty-stricken schools, getting access to excellent teachers could mean the difference in educational outcomes that have



wide-ranging consequences for the economy.

According to the Center for American Progress, nearly 43 percent of Black children under age five live in poverty. The Children’s Defense Fund reported that about one in five Black children survive life in extreme poverty in 2012 compared to one in 18 White children.

Schools with a 90 percent White student body outspent 90 percent minority schools by \$733 per student. A CAP report on public school spending estimated that those funds could pay for nine veteran teachers or technology upgrades and resource staffers.

As the United States grows ever-dependent on a well-educated, diverse workforce, the need to fix the academic achievement gap becomes even more critical. By 2050, Blacks and Hispanics will account for 42 percent of the labor force.

“Had we closed the academic-performance gaps of African American and Hispanic students in 2008, the United States would have gained between \$310 bil-

lion and \$525 billion in gross domestic product, or GDP,” stated a CAP brief on the school-readiness gap and preschool benefits for minorities.

According to the brief, in less than five years, one will need an associate’s degree or better to work in almost half (45 percent) of all jobs in the U.S., a rung on the education ladder that nearly 75 percent of Blacks haven’t reached.

Closing the achievement gap will take innovative strategies and great teachers.

The CAP/PI joint study found that “children who start out one year behind their peers can close the achievement gap if they have excellent teachers two years in a row.”

The study continued: “Children starting out two years behind can pull even with their peers if they have excellent teachers four years in a row.”

Without that year in and year out exposure to great teaching, students that fall behind often never recover.

Researchers from the Univer-

sity of London and University of Málaga in Spain found that raising teacher pay leads to greater competition in the job market and elevated professional status across the nation.

According to researchers, making the teaching profession “substantially more attractive” would also mean rewarding innovation in education with increased funding for highly successful classroom models, updating qualifications of current grants to address the needs of a diverse student population, and focusing on research and development in education at the federal level.

The CAP/PI joint study noted that the research and development budget for education is woefully underfunded compared to other government agencies.

“The Department of Defense spends \$70 billion per year on research and development, while the Department of Education spends less than \$1 billion, not even a quarter of a percent of the total education budget,” stated the report.

The federal government accounts for 10 percent of all of the money spent on educating our nation’s students. State and local groups cover the rest of the tab and direct critical policy changes. The joint study argues that federal government needs to get more involved.

“Federal policy changes to support state and local education agencies in providing all students with excellent teaching could flip the odds students now face,” stated the report. “That kind of consistent access to great teaching is just what students need to succeed in school, college, and, most importantly, life.”

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Malveaux/ Continued from page 8.

a 54-year-old homeowner was so frightened that he had to shoot.

More than 20 years ago, when now Associate Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas attempted to character assassinate attorney Anita Hill with his wild accusations, a group of Blackwomen stood up in her defense. Using the moniker of “African American Women in Defense of Ourselves,” the group took out ads both in the

New York Times and in the Black press supporting Professor Hill. (Disclosure – my mom, my three sisters and I all signed the ad). We defended ourselves then, and we must defend ourselves now. The legal system seems unwilling and unable to do so.

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

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of coverage for HPV strains prevalent in African American women, though neither company has ever addressed public and legislative controversy surrounding the HPV vaccine.

Merck is currently testing an updated HPV vaccine that fights nine dangerous strains instead of four (6, 11, 16, 18, 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58). Although their preliminary study results are promising,

the disparity will likely remain.

“The most disconcerting part of this new vaccine is it doesn’t include HPV 35, 66 and 68, three of the strains of HPV of which African-American women are getting the most,” said study co-author, Cathrine Hoyo. “We may want to rethink how we develop these vaccines, given that African-Americans tend to be underrepresented in clinical trials.”



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