

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

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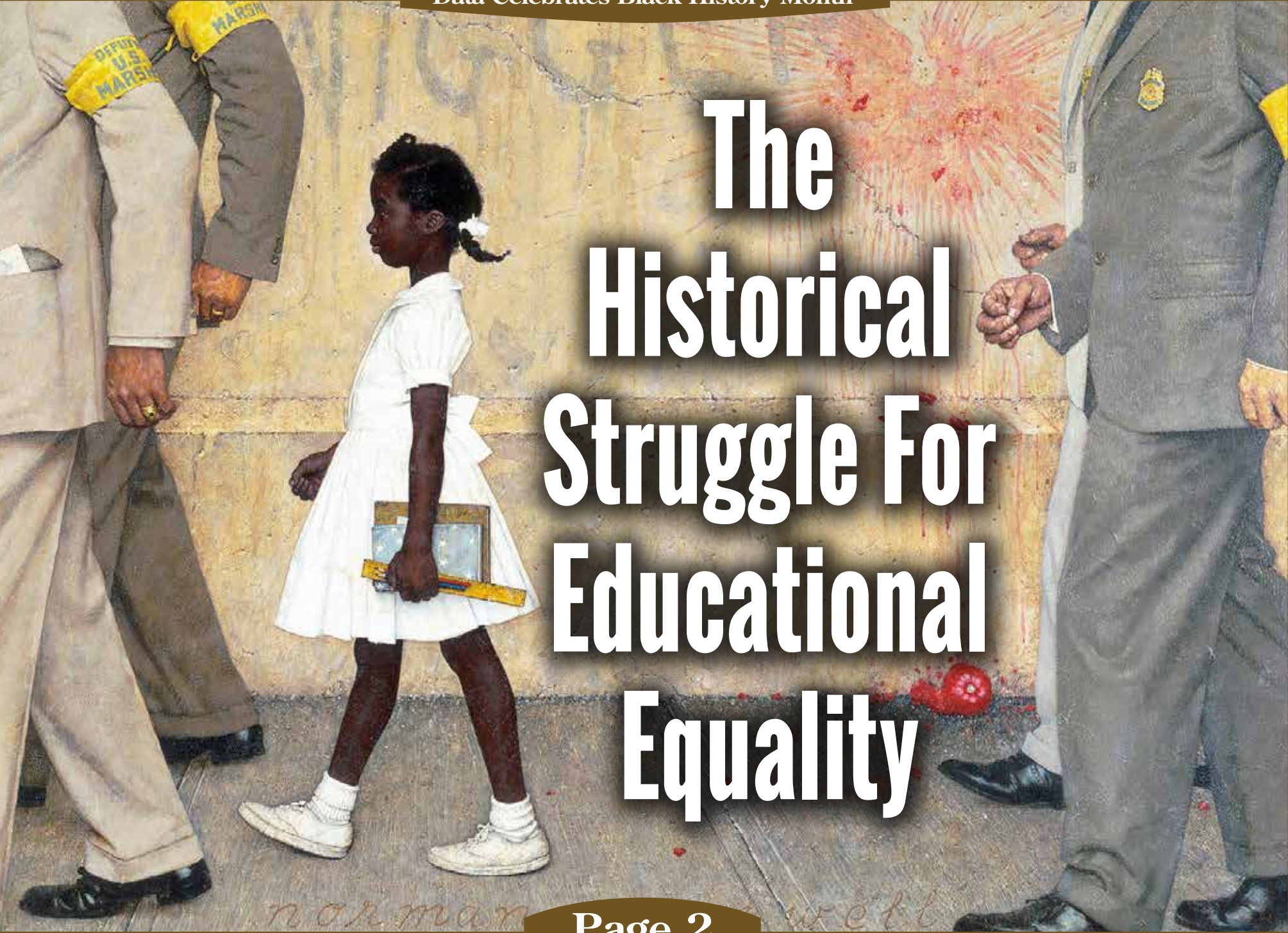


The Road Less Traveled

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February 8 - February 14, 2014 48th Year Volume 41 www.ladatanews.com

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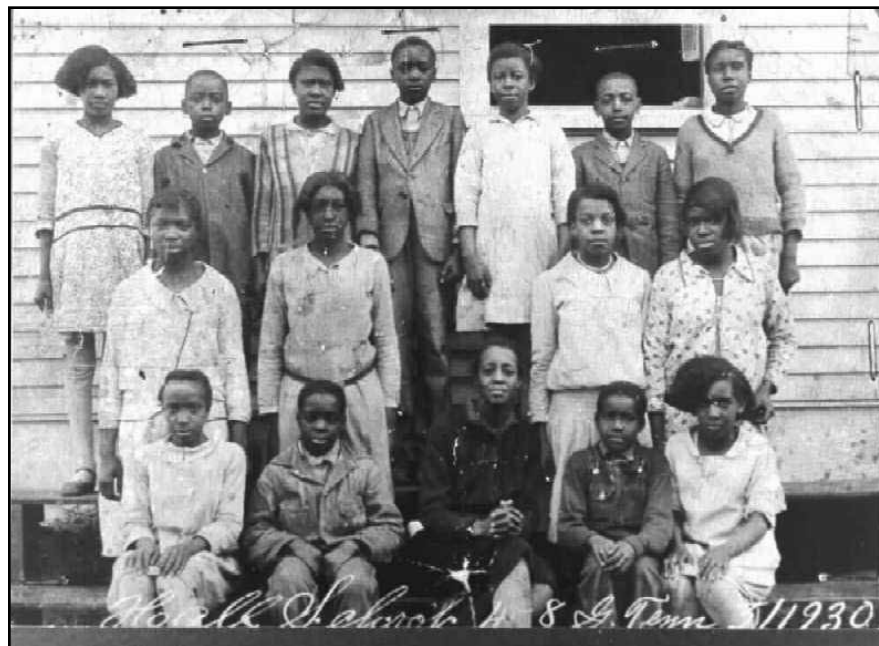
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The Historical Struggle For Educational Equality



Edited By Edwin Buggage and Eric Connerly

In the recent City elections crime was stressed as the number one issue facing New Orleans, and while it scores points on the political front the social reality is that it is only a symptom of the true battle and that is all citizens receive as quality education. Accomplishing this feat would lead to greater opportunities for all of our citizens. Since its founding New Orleans have struggled with providing an equitable education in its public schools; so in this week's installment of our Black History Month series we've pulled together source material provided by Tulane University's Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives. It is our hope that this information can inspire our community showing how far we've come, but also shows just how long we still have to go in the struggle for ensuring a quality public education for all our citizens.

The first New Orleans Public Schools were founded in the 1840s.

James Baldwin, a New Orleans official and early advocate for free public schools, was influenced by the work of Horace Mann, the first Massachusetts State

Secretary of Education and a pioneer of American Public Education. The first New Orleans Public School opened in January 1842 on Julia Street between Magazine and Tchoupitoulas, but New Orleans' free Blacks, who numbered 11,000 in 1860 were denied access to public education along with the City's 14,000 slaves.

The Civil War and Reconstruction brought new opportunities for education to Black New Orleanians.

New Orleans surrendered to Union troops in 1862 and was spared the destruction meted out on other Southern cities later in the war. Union troops encouraged the public schools to reopen but also created a school system for freed slaves. For two years following the Civil War, separate public schools for Whites and Blacks were run in parallel. In 1868, a new state constitutional convention dominated by newly enfranchised Black and White Republicans adopted a constitution that required schools to be established on a common basis without segregation by race.

Though there was initial resistance to school integration in New Orleans, a number of schools did eventually operate smoothly as integrated institutions

in the years 1871-74. A detailed study of the period estimated that 500-1000 Black students and several thousand White students were enrolled in 19 mixed race schools in the Spring of 1874. Resistance to integration and Republican rule, led to the formation of White supremacist organizations opposed to school integration. An attempt to integrate the all-White Upper Girls High School in 1874 led to White mob violence at the school. Vigilante groups then began to forcibly eject Black students from integrated schools and street clashes between Whites and Blacks ensued. Though the number of Black children attending integrated schools declined after the violence of 1874, there were still 300 Black students attending mixed race schools in 1877. When Union troops were pulled out of Louisiana in 1877 schools were desegregated along racial lines.

After Reconstruction, separate and unequal was the norm for New Orleans schools.

Following Reconstruction, New Orleans' population and school enrollment continued to grow. In the 1870s and 1880s, funds from the estate of John McDonogh, a wealthy trader and slaveholder, began to be used

On The Cover: Norman Rockwell's depiction of the court-ordered first day of integrated schools in New Orleans, November 14, 1960, titled "The Problem We All Live With". Ruby Nell Bridges was the first black child to attend an all-white elementary school in the South. She attended William Frantz Elementary School.

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to construct new schools. These schools were predominantly for White students, whose enrollment numbers almost doubled in the three decades from 1878 to 1910. In the same period, Black enrollment remained flat; Black students were routinely restricted to lower grades and had no access to high school. Another spurt of building occurred between 1910 and 1940 and beginning in 1910, Black enrollment started to increase dramatically. McDonogh #35, the first Black high school in New Orleans, was opened in 1917 after Black citizens' groups put significant pressure on the school board (it remained the only Black high school until Booker T. Washington opened in 1942). From 1910 to 1940, Black enrollment more than quadrupled while White enrollment increased by 50 percent.

From the end of Reconstruction two separate school systems emerged for White and Black students: while White schools were more numerous, better financed, and kept in better condition, Black schools languished with fewer resources and overcrowded classrooms. Figures from state reports in the 1930s make the differences explicit:

1939-1940

Average state expenditure on education per child:

\$62.99 per White child
\$17.17 per Black child

1937-1938

Average annual salary paid to Louisiana teachers:

\$1,193 for White teachers
\$504 for Black teachers

1937-1938

Average number of students enrolled per teacher in Louisiana:

White schools: 27.5
Black schools: 41.8

1939-1940

Value of school plant in Orleans Parish per pupil:

White schools: \$297 per pupil
Black schools: \$78 per pupil

While the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision took away legal protection for segregated schools, New Orleans public education only desegregated after a decade of legal wrangling and social upheaval.

The Louisiana legislature quickly reacted to the 1954 Brown decision with several bills intended to

keep public schools segregated. At the same time, A.P. Tureaud, a prominent Civil Rights Lawyer, filed a suit against the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) intended to desegregate the City's schools based on the Brown decision. In 1956, a panel of federal judges ruled the legislature's segregation bills unconstitutional and Federal Judge Skelly Wright overturned the School Board's segregation policy. In reaction, the legislature tried to find new legislative means to continue school segregation. Across the state, White Citizen Councils formed to support segregation in the face of court-mandated desegregation. Few White moderates in

New Orleans raised their voices in the late 1950s to call for school desegregation and the school board remained adamantly opposed.

Once the OPSB's appeals were exhausted, Judge Wright prepared to rule on the process for desegregating schools in 1960. When Judge Wright ruled in May 1960 that the schools would have to desegregate at a rate of one grade per year, the OPSB called on the legislature to stop the ruling. In the summer of 1960, the legislature passed a bill giving the governor control of any school district under court order to desegregate. Governor Davis took control of New Orleans schools and ordered them to open on September

7, 1960 on a segregated basis. Federal judges quickly overruled the new laws and returned authority back to the school board. The OPSB then decided to accept applications for individual school transfers, finally winnowing 137 applications for Black students to attend White schools down to 4. On November 14, 1960, four Black girls protected by police and federal marshals walked past shouting mobs and integrated the first White schools since Reconstruction.

Integration precipitated a partial boycott by White students at Frantz and McDonogh 19, the first schools to be integrated. However, overall White enrollment did not decline

significantly in the first years of desegregation. The pace of desegregation under the school board's plan was also very slow. By 1964-65, only 873 Black students attended desegregated schools in what was now a majority Black school system with over 100,000 students. Angered by the slow pace of desegregation, the NAACP went back to the courts to challenge the school board's desegregation process. A federal judge ordered a speeded up process that officially desegregated schools through the twelfth grade by the 1969-70 school year.

In the era of desegregation, New

Cover Story, Continued on page 9.

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Run-Off Elections to be Held on March 15th

By Elise Schenck

The City of New Orleans held its primary elections for several offices on February 1. Contests were held for several high profile offices; the offices filled during the primaries included the Mayor and several City council races. March 15th is the date of the run-off for the remaining races that includes Incumbent Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman who captured 48.93 percent of the vote running against former Criminal Sheriff Charles Foti. Also on the ballot is the race for City Council District C that pits former Civil District Court Judge Nadine Ramsey against longtime Councilmember Jackie Clarkson. In the primary only twenty-four votes separated the two in a heated race for who



Nadine Ramsey celebrates with her supporters as the results for the race for City Council District C were tallied. Ramsey faces Councilmember Jackie Clarkson for the coveted seat.

will represent District C that encompasses Algiers, the French Quarter, Bywater, Marigny and the Treme' neighborhoods.

There are two other races of interest on the ballot, one is for the City Council-at-Large Division 2 with Cynthia Hedge-Morrell



Sheriff Marlin Gusman (right) is congratulated by Data News Weekly Publisher, Terry Jones at his victory celebration following the election for Orleans Parish Sheriff. Gusman faces former Criminal Sheriff, Charles Foti in the race.

who placed first in the primary seeking the seat after serving two consecutive terms on the council in District D. Her opponent is

Attorney Jason Williams, who is making his second run for elected office after running for District Attorney. Both candidates may be seeking the endorsement of Ernest "Freddie" Charbonnet who ran third receiving 17 percent of the vote. In a race that has been heated and controversial at times. And rounding out the ballot is the race for Coroner, with two candidates vying to fill this post vacated by longtime Coroner Dr. Frank Minyard. The top vote getter in the primary was Dr. Dwight McKenna, with 48% of the total votes cast. McKenna's held elected office before as a member of the Orleans Parish School Board. His opponent is Dr. Jeffrey Rouse, who has been with the Coroner's office since 2002; this is his first bid for public office.

Black History Month Highlight



Many African Americans do not know that black men were a fairly common sight at Confederate soldiers' reunions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Photographs from these reunions are evidence of their service and acceptance in the Confederacy.

Of course some were teamsters, cooks or even musicians and drummers etc. but, nevertheless gave faithful service to the Confederacy.

Arguments concerning the role that Blacks played in the Confederate army continue to this day. Pundits still contend the degree of contributions made by Blacks, in addition to disputing the actual numbers of those freed men or slaves who served with their white southern counterparts.

With the surviving documents, veteran's personal accounts and affidavits, official records, and periodicals, it is however remarkable that many want to 'cover up' or just deny that southern Blacks would serve in, and later be proud of participating in the Confederate army.

For more information on Black Confederate Soldiers visit <https://www.facebook.com/pages/BLACK-CONFEDERATE-HISTORICAL-RESOURCES/358455970031>

Pictured left is Steve Perry, A.K.A. "Uncle Steve Eberhart," C. 1934.



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If you earned less than \$52,000 in 2013, you could get a potential \$6,000 refund through the Earned Income Tax Credit program. Super Tax Day makes it easy to find out if you qualify.

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What to bring:

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- Previous years' tax returns (if you have any).
- For direct deposit refunds, bring a canceled or voided check, or your bank account number and routing number.

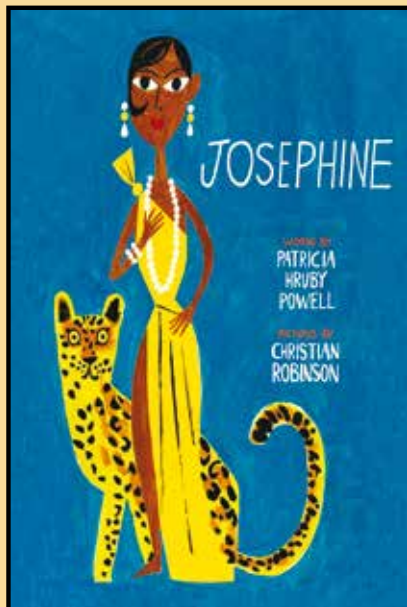
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Celebrate Black History With Josephine



**“Josephine:
The Dazzling Life
Of Josephine Baker”**
By Patricia Hruby Powell,
Illustrated By Christian Robinson
C.2014, Chronicle Books
\$17.99 / \$21.50 Canada
104 Pages

By The Bookworm Sez

You love to sing because it's your thing and you dance when you get the chance.

On the sidewalk and in the park. For school, for church, or just for yourself, you gotta open your mouth and move your feet. No doubt about it, you're the kind of kid who needs a stage.

So what would you do if you were told that you couldn't perform because your skin was the wrong color? In “Josephine” by Patricia Hruby Powell, illustrated by Christian Robinson, one woman decides to do it anyhow...

Josephine's mother loved to dance. It made her happy but she didn't do it much because there was rent to pay and children to feed. So instead of dancing, Josephine's mother scrubbed floors.

While her Mama worked, Josephine listened to sidewalk horns and honky-tonks and “sponged up that funky music.” She loved to dance, too. She loved it so much that she worked hard to earn pennies so she could watch “the Negro theater” where Ma Rainey sang and others shimmied. Josephine loved performing so much that she left home at age 13 to work with the Dixie Steppers. She was just a kid, but she could help dress the dancers – and as soon as they let her, she joined the chorus line.

Yippee! Josephine was finally able to dance and sing to crowds, but she still wasn't allowed inside certain hotels or restaurants. They were for “WHITES ONLY.”

When the Dixie Steppers broke up, Jose-

phine found herself a long way from home in East St. Louis. She fell in love, married a man named Baker in Philadelphia, and then left him to go to Broadway where she found fame.

But the color of her skin kept her from the kind of fame she really wanted. It was frustrating, and Josephine felt like a volcano sometimes – until she was invited to perform in “La Revue Nègre” in France.

Ooh la la, the French seemed color blind! And they were wild for Josephine Baker!

And yet, there was one thing Josephine hadn't done, and it bothered her. She hadn't become a star back home in America. She needed to do it – but was America ready for her?

As I was reading “Josephine” through for the first time, something tickled the back of my mind. I liked the colorful illustrations by Christian Robinson well enough, but that wasn't it. The story is familiar, so that wasn't it, either.

And then it hit me: the words.

Author Patricia Hruby Powell's story is written almost like scat: quick lines, be-bopping here and shooby-loobing there, rising and falling as though Josephine Baker herself was singing the story. It's infectious, even in the sad parts. Your little one might not notice that hoppity-bop but once you do, you won't be able to not see it.

I think smaller kids might enjoy this book for the artwork but readers ages 8-to-12 will probably get more out of “Josephine.” If your child's gotta sing and gotta dance, then she's gotta read this book, too.

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

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Tinkering with Success

The Road Less Traveled:

Alicia Boler-Davis, A Senior Vice-President at GM



Dr. Griggs and Alicia Boler-Davis discuss the road that led her to General Motors.



GM Executive Alicia Boler-Davis was recently in New Orleans as a featured keynote speaker at National Automobile Dealers Association Convention.



Alicia Boler-Davis, Senior Vice President of Global Quality and Customer Experience at General Motors.

By Dr. Eric Griggs
Photos by Glenn Summers

When talking with Ms. Alicia Boler-Davis, Senior Vice President of Global Quality and Customer Experience at General Motors, it becomes quickly evident that she is a master of her craft. From the warmth and smile in her eyes to the melodic strength in her voice, you feel the genuine compassion and commitment of a leader who has journeyed the road less traveled to success.

What started as the mind of young girl who loved math and tinkering with things to find out how they worked, has evolved into one of the most successful and inspirational leaders in the Auto Industry today.

I caught up with Ms. Boler-Davis at the 2014 NADA Convention and Expo here in New Orleans a few weeks ago in the lobby of the Hilton Riverside Hotel. She was selected to deliver the keynote address at the J.D. Power & Associates Roundtable event later that Friday. From what I took from our conversation, she was more than up for the task. A Detroit native, her journey began in the public schools following a successful path laid by her older sister, who eventually attended Harvard and Columbia Universities. Boler-Davis attended Northwestern University in Chicago and majored in Engineering. Her professional journey began with a brief stint in the Pharmaceutical Industry, where she relates, "What I realized is that I liked the technical side of the things,

but I really liked the people. I liked engaging with people...I wanted to get back to the Detroit area because that's where most of my family was located." She laughingly continues, "I had an opportunity with Frito-Lay - potato chips, corn chips, and going home smelling like corn chips every day. But, there was a lot in that environment that I enjoyed with an abundance of equipment with a lot of technology and quality controls." Continuing she says, "At the time I came in, they were upgrading all of the equipment so it gave me an opportunity to do a lot of specifications and installation work. I enjoyed the de-bugging work and the opportunity to work with the people using it. At the Frito Lay plant, we did everything." The appeal to her "Science side" was easily fulfilled, but what began to stand out most to her was how much she enjoyed working with the people surrounding her. Apparently, she wasn't the only one to notice.

Upon a serendipitous meeting with a Honeywell Security representative in 1994, a request for a resume and recommendation to apply for an engineering position at GM was made. Three weeks later, she was hired on the spot. She recalls, "On my third interview, he said, 'I am not going to interview you because these guys have already said that we have to get you here....So, let me show you the new Corvette.' He then walked me through the prototype shop and I was sold...I'm from Detroit and it was GM and the timing worked and it's been great! I started in Engineering where I

did a lot of tooling. I then asked for an assignment in one of the plants, loved it and had a great career there. Then, I had an opportunity a few years ago to come to Customer Experience, then Quality and the rest is history. I've had a great career at General Motors. I have had an opportunity to do everything I've wanted to do."

When asked the common thread that led her down the convoluted path from Big Pharma to Frito Lay to an outstanding Engineering and Plant Management career at GM that has culminated in her position as Vice President of Global Quality and Customer Experience, she states "I think the problem solving is what's been key from the very beginning. Even in Customer Experience there's an opportunity to problem solve and figure out how to best attack problems. So that's been consistent, and I would say the people side of it has also been consistent. Even as an Engineer, working on tooling, people have to use them. You have to be able to ask people 'What do you have? How do you want this to work? And then once you have it, how do you want to improve it?' As I think about my role in the plant, building cars and building trucks...it's all about people. I always tell people that it's a people business. What problems do we have to solve? It's the same way in Quality and Customer Experience. It's about processes and improvement and working with people."

When questioned about keys to her success, she attributes it to "survival

skills" learned early in life due to her parents' divorce and "learning the value of people." However, she cautions, "In learning the value of people, particularly in a male-dominated environment, I had to learn early in my career the difference between being liked and respected. I found that they like you when you compromise your standards. So, I told myself that in order to be effective and be a good leader, I have to hold people accountable. I learned very quickly, in a fast paced environment, to be fair, honest, respected and to act with integrity is more important than popularity. That has been very important to me throughout my career. Problems just don't go away; you have to deal with them. If you have a people problem, you deal with them honestly and with respect, then people know that they have to do their job. That was a matter of success or failure for me."

And succeed she has. From an inquisitive "tinkering" child that followed in her sister's shadow to one of the leading corporate women in the Auto Industry today, she serves as a magnificent role model to kids everywhere. Ms. Boler-Davis' story is clearly an example of how staying true to core principles, recognizing the value of people, being the best in any environment and to never stop learning pays off. Her life has been one fueled by drive, determination and commitment to excellence and it seems she is just at the midway point on the highway of life destined to achieve further greatness in the days to come.

Spiritually Speaking...



James Washington
Guest Columnist

As many of you know I am in total awe of the concept of time when looking at how man calculates time and how God looks at time. The phrase I heard from the pulpit one Sunday morning still resonates with me. "An emergency in your time does not necessarily mean an emergency in God's time." I am reminded that time is a precious blessing and if we are enough, sometimes a moment can indeed last forever. If we could only adjust

our thinking to this fact, then a moment could last a lifetime and living in that moment would be well, truly special. I believe we've all done it, even when we didn't know it.

The question of the day is can you imagine a moment lasting a lifetime? My point and what I'm trying to get at is the reality of faith that knowing God is forever. Have you ever had a moment when you found out something was absolutely true? Can you remember the moment you fell in love with someone, when you knew there was no Santa Claus or when you found out somebody didn't love you? It probably didn't happen over a period of time. More than likely, it happened in the blink of an eye, a touch of a hand, a smile, a hug, a glance, maybe just remembering a series of events. Whatever it was, I'm sure the "knowing" manifested itself as instant conviction when you became aware of the

real deal. If you could capture that moment and hold on to it, then you would begin to see what I'm talking about. If you could measure time in that moment, I believe you might see a little of what eternity might look like.

Time passes but that moment lasts forever. It remains in your mind from a positive point of view, fond memories; from a negative, it can be haunting nightmares. We are taught that God loved us before we even existed (in our conscious time), that is, before we were born. God's love for his people is a universal truth. His faithfulness cannot be questioned. I would like to take a moment and try to illustrate what happens in that moment that we try to be faithful back to Him. Wouldn't it be awesome to live in the moment of your own salvation? I mean stay in the exact moment that you found the Lord. I can't speak for your experience, but I know mine was incredibly deep. For an instant, for one fleeting moment, I knew without question that God was the answer to everything. I knew that I knew that I knew. The emotional turmoil that followed was overwhelming. Guilt, sorrow, anxiety, helplessness, fear and above all love, all, came down on me at the same time. To be honest, it scared the hell out of me and heaven took its place. They say when you're about to die, your life flashes before your eyes. I'm here to witness to you that the same thing happens when you're saved. Your old life flashes before you in preparation for the new one to come. It really is a joyful experience. Lest I digress, back to my original question. Can you imagine a moment lasting a lifetime? If you can look into the moment of your own salvation, I believe it's the first step towards comprehending the

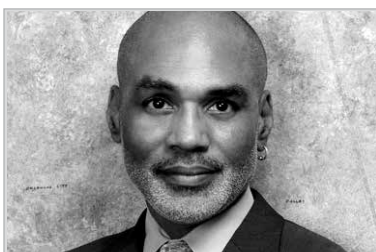
difference between God's time and your own. I know I'm on thin ice here but that moment of salvation gives such insight into the meaning of faith. How long does it take for a thought to occur? How long does it take to replace a lie with the truth? One might say in no time at all or some might say time is irrelevant. I choose to believe that time, God's time, is forever, here and now at this very moment. In order for me to make sense to myself on this, I just try to remember the moment of my own salvation and know that it was in the makings forever. Remember your own faithlessness? Now concentrate on your moment of faithfulness. May God bless and keep you always.

James Washington is Publisher Of The Dallas Weekly And President & General Manager Of The Atlanta Voice Newspaper.

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Commentary

What's PrEP Got To Do With It?



Phill Wilson
President & CEO,
The Black AIDS Institute

This Friday, February 7th, is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. It's an opportunity for the nation to take a look at the AIDS epidemic in Black America from a uniquely and unapologetically Black point of view. What's not to love about that?

On Friday, Black treatment advocate networks (BTANs) around the country are hosting pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) forums to raise awareness and educate our communities about PrEP. Thirty-five years into this epidemic—and with all we know about

HIV, and we know a lot—we still have alarming rates of new HIV infections in this country. Roughly 50,000 Americans are infected every year and 44 percent of them are Black. In many parts of the country, 50 percent of Black gay men are already HIV infected—and many of them don't know it.

If you look at the AIDS epidemic in Black communities, you would not know that the tools to end the AIDS epidemic in America already exist. Many Black Americans are unaware or have misinformation about the new tools that could change the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic in our community and dramatically reduce our current HIV/AIDS rate. PrEP is one of those tools.

PrEP is a treatment to prevent people who are not infected with HIV (that is, they are HIV negative, or HIV-) from acquiring the virus. It involves taking one of the antiretroviral treatments that people with HIV/AIDS use. In clinical trials,

when used properly, PrEP reduced the risk of acquiring the virus by over 90 percent. That is huge!

People attending the BTAN PrEP forums will learn what PrEP is, who it's for, how you use it, and what the risks and benefits are. They will also learn about the possible impact that PrEP could have on condom usage. Current guidelines recommend that PrEP be used with condoms. But PrEP may provide some level of protection to people who have already chosen not to use condoms or are unable to use condoms.

Given the epidemic in Black communities, we need to know everything we can possibly know about all of the potential tools available to us so that we can make informed, rational decisions about which tools to use in which circumstances.

The combination of treatment as prevention—which offers the possibility of reducing transmission of HIV by over 90 percent—and PrEP—with can reduce acquisition

of HIV by over 90 percent—has the promise to break the back of the HIV epidemic in our community. That's a conversation we must have. So check our Events calendar to find the BTAN PrEP forum nearest you. You can also follow us as we have this conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

One of the most important things we need to fight AIDS is to involve local business. Business owners and entrepreneurs can play a huge role in ending the AIDS epidemic—and they should be motivated to do so: a healthier community is a consumer-driven community. And not to be too morose, dead people are not good customers. Car Pros Kia is an example of a business that is committed to the health and wellbeing of its community.

In this issue we continue our series on HIV criminalization courtesy of our friends at ProPublica. We look at new media as it relates to serving Black MSM. New research from NIH

reminds us about the high HIV infection rates among youth and young adults—young MSM in particular. We also run a story to remind us that as important as PrEP is, only one in five doctors who know about PrEP have actually prescribed it. Finally, being able to vote is vital to participating in our democracy. But as our friends at Colorlines report, the vote is at risk in many communities, particularly among people who are Black, Brown or poor. Pennsylvania's Voter ID law was recently ruled unnecessarily burdensome and unconstitutional.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our forums on Friday. Don't forget, if you enter the Drive Out AIDS raffle before Friday, February 7th, you get entered into the raffle for the four-day Carnival Cruise for free!

Yours In The Struggle,
Phill

A Theatrical Three-Peat

Photo By Joe Ricks

The Uptown Music Theater (UMT), founded by Delfeayo Marsalis won their third consecutive outstanding performance awards at the 2014 Junior Theater Festival (JTF) over the MLK weekend in Atlanta. The JTF is produced by iTheatrics and Theater of the Stars, it is the largest celebration of musical theater for young people ages 8 - 18 in the country. Theater groups from across the US perform a 15 minute selection of one Broadway JR. or KIDS Collection show for the competition. This year UMT won outstanding performance for their rendition of Fiddler on the Roof Jr.



McDonald's Gospel Super Choir Breaks Guinness World Record

History was made at the legendary Newark Symphony Hall breaking the GUINNESS WORLD RECORD for Largest Gospel Choir. The McDonald's Gospel Super Choir was made up of 1171 singers of all ages, from across the New York Tri-state area and as far away as Philadelphia and Florida. This record breaking event was produced and directed by Emmy Award winning A. Curtis Farrow. "We did it! We brought the record back to our country where Gospel Music was born! The

community really showed up!"

The choir performed 6 songs; "Oh Happy Day" featuring Bishop George Searight of Abundant Life Family Worship Church of New Brunswick, "Amazing Grace" featuring Cissy Houston accompanied by Jazz great Nat Adderley Jr, "Stand" featuring Gospel Great Donald Malloy, "Amen" featuring Gospel Pioneer Milton Biggum, "Let the Church Say Amen" featuring Maurice Johnson and "Total Praise" featuring Lorraine Stancil Lawson. This amazing

evening came to a crescendo when the official announcement was made and the theater was Gospel pandemonium.

The previous record of 1,169 singers was held by the London Community Gospel Choir (LCGC) joined by hundreds of singers from gospel choirs across Europe.

As a launch to Black History Month, this record breaking choir was sponsored by the McDonald's New York Tri-State Owner Operators Association and McDonald's Corporation.

Cover Story/ Continued from page 3.

Orleans Public Schools have faced the same problems affecting many urban school districts: White and middle-class flight, a predominantly high-needs population of students, and decreasing public investment in education.

Desegregation is often associated with White flight to private

schools or suburban districts, White enrollment only dipped slightly during the period of desegregation from 1960-69. However, in the following decade of 1970-1979, White enrollment in New Orleans public schools fell by over half. In the same period Black enrollment rose slightly, but then also began

a long period of steady decline. While in 1960-61 Blacks made up 58 percent of the student population, by 1980-81 Black enrollment represented 84 percent of public school students. By the 2004-05 school year before Hurricane Katrina, 94 percent of New Orleans Public School students were Black.

Cover Story/ Continued on page 11.

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Banks Bid Farewell To Payday Loans

By Charlene Crowell

More good news keeps coming for consumers in early 2014. On the heels of new mortgage rules that took effect January 10, the following week four banks making payday loans pulled their products from the market. Announcing a halt to their triple-digit interest rates were Wells Fargo, Regions, Fifth Third and US Bank. Together, these lenders have combined assets of \$2.1 trillion, serving customers through 30,000 branches and more than 21,500 ATMs across the country.

Sometimes known as advance deposit loans, or trademarked names such as US Bank's Checking Account Advance or Wells Fargo's Direct Deposit Advance, the loans operate in the same manner as payday loans hawked by stores.



Customers borrow a few hundred dollars and then the bank repays itself from the borrower's next direct deposit, assessing a fee plus the entire loan amount.

Research by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) has found that the typical bank payday borrower:

- Is charged a fee of \$10 per \$100 borrowed, amounting to an annual percentage rate (APR) of 300 percent;
- Has a one in four chance of also being a Social Security recipient;
- Is twice more likely to incur overdraft fees than bank customers as a whole and
- Often remains in debt for six months of a year.

Consumer advocates and civil rights leaders have been shining a bright light on banks that chose to engage in this kind of lending over the past two years. Below are a few examples of that consumer activism.

In early 2012, 250 organizations and individuals sent a letter to federal banking regulators expressing concerns. A year later in 2013, more than 1,000 consumers and organizations told the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau about elder financial abuse, including bank payday lending. CRL in coordination with CREDO, an organization that funds progressive nonprofits, delivered a petition with 150,000 signatures in an ap-

peal to federal regulators.

By April 2013, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency proposed regulatory guidance on bank payday loan criteria. Weeks later amid still-growing consumer concerns, Florida's U.S. Senator Bill Nelson and Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts in May 2013 sent a joint letter to the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC).

"As Chairman and member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, we take very seriously our responsibilities to seniors and elderly consumers who expect and deserve fair and transparent financial services," said the Senators. "Social Security was created to provide seniors with financial support to help them cover basic living expenses not for banks seeking new sources of revenue by exploiting retirees with limited means. Therefore it is critical that banks be discouraged from using government benefits as proof of income, and we would hope such a provision would be included in the final guidance."

By November 2013, FDIC and OCC finalized regulations and advised banks that a borrower's ability to repay a loan must be consid-

ered when issuing these loans.

In December 2013, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCR), representing more than 200 diverse national organizations, unanimously adopted a resolution urging states, Congress and federal agencies to increase regulatory oversight and enforcement of all payday lenders.

"Low-income people and people of color have long been targeted by slick advertising and aggressive marketing campaigns to trap consumers into outrageously high interest loans," said Wade Henderson, LCCR president and CEO. "We're simply advocating for reasonable regulatory oversight that ensures that low-income people won't be swindled out of the little money they do have at their disposal."

Reactions to the bank decisions resulted in cheers from consumer advocates. For example, Dory Rand, president of the Chicago-based Woodstock Institute, said, "We applaud these decisions to stop offering these dangerous products. For too long, these products – like storefront payday loan products – have wreaked havoc on borrowers' finances and trapped them in a cycle of debt."

In short, it was the constant call for consumer protections that ultimately led to banks foregoing payday loans. By combining efforts on a single issue, advocates accomplished together what none might have done alone.

I am hoping the rest of 2014 will be energized by the success of these early 2014 consumer victories. Perhaps federal regulators will soon put an end to all consumer debt traps. As we celebrate this key consumer victory, let us strive towards more financial reforms.

Charlene Crowell is a communications manager with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.



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Sex, Lies and HIV

When What You Don't Tell Your Partner Is A Crime

By Sergio Hernandez,
Special to ProPublica.
This story was co-published
with BuzzFeed.

Being HIV-positive can still carry a powerful stigma. Since July 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice has opened at least 49 investigations into alleged HIV discrimination. The department has won settlements from state prisons, medical clinics, schools, funeral homes, insurance companies, day care centers and even alcohol rehab centers for discriminating against HIV-positive people. Individuals with HIV may also fear that news of their status will spread to third parties, leading to rejection, embarrassment or ostracism for themselves or even their loved ones.

In September, a disability rights group accused the Pea Ridge, Ark., school district of kicking out three siblings after officials learned that members of their family had HIV. The family's lawyers declined to comment. The school district did not respond to requests for interviews but issued a statement acknowledging that it had "required some students to provide test results regarding their HIV status in order to formulate a safe and appropriate education plan for those children."

In romantic or sexual settings, people with HIV often report fear of rejection, abandonment and stigmatization.

"My first girlfriend in middle school — her mom banned her from seeing me, and it took me five years before I felt comfortable to try again," said Reed Vreeland, a 27-year-old New Yorker who was born with HIV. Vreeland works as the communications coordinator for the Sero Project, a nonprofit



advocacy group that campaigns against HIV exposure laws, which it denounces as "HIV criminalization."

In 2006, Vreeland started dating a classmate at Bard College in upstate New York. He disclosed his HIV status on their second date.

"What's going through your head is being scared of being rejected," he said. "It's scary to give someone that power."

Vreeland and his girlfriend continued to date. Last spring, they married at a ceremony in the Bronx. "It took me a long time to propose, because I thought I would die," he recalled. "I was saying, 'Well, OK, why should I propose if I'm scared of dying in 10 years? And if we do have a kid, then I might die and leave my kid without a father, like I grew up without a mother.'"

The fear is "choking" and "silencing," he said. "You're conscious that saying three letters will change the way people will see you."

In some cases, people with HIV have been met with violence — and even death — after disclosing their status. Last month, in Dal-

las, 37-year-old Larry Dunn was sentenced to 40 years in prison for murdering his HIV-positive lover. Police said he used a kitchen knife to stab and kill Cicely Bolden, a 28-year-old mother of two, after she told him about her HIV status. "She killed me," he told investigators, according to his arrest warrant, "so I killed her."

Until recently, criminal punishment was virtually unheard of for infectious diseases other than HIV. Federal and state officials have the authority to quarantine the sick to contain epidemics, but this power was typically granted to health authorities, who are versed in the latest science, not police and prosecutors. Very few criminal statutes take aim at diseases. At least two states have catchall laws against exposing others to "communicable diseases," but only if exposure happens through routes most commonly associated with HIV, such as sex, sharing needles or donating blood. And while some states have laws that specifically punish exposure to tuberculosis, syphilis or "venereal

diseases," HIV exposure is almost always punished more severely.

But since 2007, three states have added hepatitis B and C to laws criminalizing HIV exposure. Those diseases are most prevalent among the same groups of marginalized people most at risk for HIV: intravenous drug users; gay men, especially those who are black or Latino; and black women.

Yet the laws may be unnecessary. In rare cases when someone intentionally tries to spread a virus, prosecutors have been able to put them away using ordinary criminal laws, such as assault or reckless endangerment. In 1997, a New York man named Nushawn Williams was accused of deliberately infecting at least 13 people, including two underage girls, with HIV. Williams pleaded guilty to two counts of statutory rape and one count of reckless endangerment. When his 12-year sentence ended in 2010, state officials kept him confined under laws that allow dangerous psychiatric patients to be locked up. He remains behind bars.

In Iowa, Rhoades' case has prompted some lawmakers to reconsider whether exposing someone to HIV should carry such a heavy punishment.

"Putting somebody in prison for 25 years when they didn't even transmit HIV is the most absurd thing that the state could be doing," said Matt McCoy, an Iowa state senator who has introduced legislation to reduce the penalties. "It's medieval."

Even Plendl, the man Rhoades had sex with, thinks the law is too harsh. "Do I think he needs to be locked up forever?" Plendl asked. "No. Do I think these laws need to be revisited? Yes."

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Cover Story/ Continued from page 9.

Whites and upper and middle-class Blacks abandoned the school system as conditions worsened. As a result, the school population became disproportionately poor and at-risk. This situation was reflected in school test scores, which ranked Orleans Parish 67th out of 68 Louisiana parishes for stu-

dent achievement in 2005.

Public Schools Post Katrina and Beyond

The problems of getting a quality education for many African-Americans still remain a problem even though in post-Katrina new educational approaches are taking shape. But the re-

sults have been mixed as we've seen great success stories with some of the schools, while others have been abysmal failures. And even in this new configuration the schools are segregated by class and most importantly race. For all the undeniable strides African-Americans have made there are still too many

being left behind. So it is incumbent for the community again to pick up the mantle and declare education equality the number one issue affecting the City of New Orleans and make a long-term investment in those who will shape the future history of the City.

It's about Impact.



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