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New Orleans

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Uncle Bobby '63

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Think Like a Man Too

Black Films Equals Green on the Big Screen



Pictured above are the cast of the newly released motion picture, "Think Like a Man Too," the sequel to "Think Like a Man" that was inspired by the book by Steve Harvey entitled "Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man." The highly anticipated feature debuted at number one at the box office this weekend.

By Edwin Buggage

In recent years we have seen films by and about African-Americans hit box office gold. These films that have modest budgets have become very profitable for Hollywood studios. They have discovered that African-Americans and others for that matter will come out to see films with a predominately African-American cast. For example we have seen the ascendance of the Tyler Perry and the Madea juggernaut and other franchises including the Best Man and other movies with African-Americans performing in less stereotypical roles. As a result of this phenomenon we can remain hopeful and think because of these successes at the box office that we will see more of these types of films produced by Hollywood?

The most recent of these films to come out of the gate showing big numbers and debuting at number one at the box office is "Think Like a Man Too," the sequel to "Think Like a Man" that was inspired by the book by Steve Harvey entitled "Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man." In the first film it chronicled four couples at different stages of their relationship and stages in life. With a stellar cast that included Kevin Hart, Gabrielle Union, Taraji P. Henson, Regina King, Meagan Good, Terence J. Mitchell, Mike Ealy and others that rounded out the cast.

The first film was, funny, intelligent and thought provoking. With all the cast getting their time to shine, and the film included elements that made the book such a great success easily translated very well onto the big screen. And while the sequel is equally funny, relevant content was sacrificed for a film filled with burst out laughable moments. Although I still enjoyed the film, I was disappointed that with such a talented cast, a film that could have

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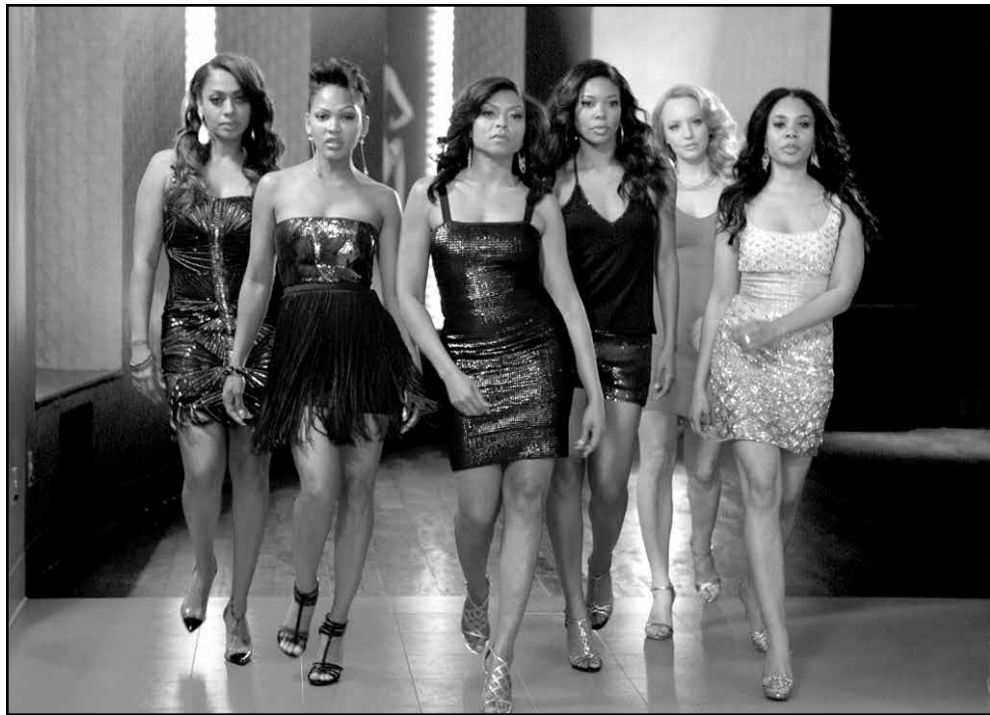
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been sexier, sassier, and smarter sometimes devolved into being predictable and somewhat slapstick in its approach to entertaining the audience.

While understanding that movies such as the "Hangover" franchise have been great for Hollywood studios bottom line, "Think Like a Man Too" is similar in many ways this time out. But to make a film similar to that comes with a cost, given the dearth of films that are made with predominately African-American casts. For it is a known fact that there are many other opportunities for Whites to see themselves onscreen and in different types of situations with various images that reflect their diversity. But for African-Americans those opportunities on the big screen are few and far between, and while it is great to see us in Hollywood films we cannot always simply sacrifice our dignity, diversity and depth for dollar signs.

We must not go to sleep at the wheel and believe we are at a time in our history that is entirely post racial. We must continue to be cognizant and remember that the images that we project do matter in how we are perceived as a community. We must remember that it has only been a short time that we have been able to better shape and mold our images in the entertainment landscape to give the world a more accurate window of our community. So it is in this time we cannot sell

ourselves short when it comes to what we accept as our entertainment choices and the images that are projected to the world in the 21st Century.

In this film that is different than the original is that it is obvious that since the release of the first "Think Like a Man," Kevin Hart has become a breakout mainstream star in Hollywood. He has come a long way since starring in "Soul Plane" he is an extreme talent as a comic and has become a bankable commodity on the big screen. In the sequel this becomes immediately obvious as he serves as the films narrator and focus of the most of the film. And while this make sense to those making the film and the studio that focuses on the bottom line first; during the movie I felt that something was missing from it. When I think back on the 106 minutes of the film I think that maybe more time should have been dedicated to developing some of the other characters and storylines, this is something I felt would have made for an all-around better film.

But in spite of some of the films shortcomings one of the things I have come to appreciate about these types of films is the presence of more upwardly mobile African-American characters. I remember the 1990's when there was a wave of Black films made portraying the African-American community norm as downtrodden, poverty stricken

people involved in crime and the usual framing as the African-American community as a place with problems, pathologies and dysfunctional. So in this spate of films it is good that they are showing another side of African-American life.

I find that this is a film where people can not only laugh at what is going on in the film, but laugh with some of the situations that many of them themselves have faced in relationships. This is a film that while funny has moments that are emotionally riveting. "Think Like a Man Too," is something I think all can enjoy. It is one of those kinds of films that are good for a girl's night or a date with your mate. It is one of those kinds of films that after watching, people can sit around and discuss the timeless battle of the sexes.

This trend of more films being made of this type is great, it is good that again African-American audiences are showing that they will go out and support quality films with predominately African-Americans casts. We are showing with our dollars letting Hollywood studios know that we want stories that show the diversity of African-American life. And while "Think Like a Man Too," as is the case with most sequels fall short compared to the first film, it is refreshing to see these positive images on the screen. And it is my hope that we continue to support these films and get even more of our stories onto the big screen.



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Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. Named NNPA Interim President and CEO

PORTLAND, OREGON – (NNPA) – Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. a global business leader, educator, and longtime civil rights activist, was elected interim president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association at the group's annual meeting here Wednesday, NNPA Chairman Cloves Campbell has announced.

Chavis is president of Education Online Services Corporation (EOServe Corp.), the premier provider of online higher education for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). He is also president, CEO and Co-Founder with Russell Simmons of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), the world's largest coalition of hip-hop artists and recording industry executives. He serves on numerous boards, including the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO).

He was the leader of the Wilmington Ten, a group of wrongly convicted activists who were recently pardoned by North Carolina Gov. Bev Perdue; a former president of the NAACP (1993-1994) and in 1995 served as director and chief organizer of the Mil-



lion Man March. Chavis writes a weekly syndicated column for the NNPA News Service.

"We are pleased that Ben Chavis, a longtime supporter of NNPA, will be able to use his skills and his numerous domestic and international contacts to strengthen NNPA – the Black Press of America," Campbell said. "Dr. Chavis has the talent, contacts and energy to make an immediate impact on our organization,

which represents approximately 200 African American newspapers in the U.S."

Upon his election, Chavis said, "I am honored to have the opportunity to serve, promote and secure the interests of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). As the uncensored, objective, unflinching media voice of Black America, NNPA newspapers, the NNPA News Service and the companion

site, BlackPressUSA.com, represent one of the most important newsgathering and news analysis operations in the world."

Chavis continued, "I am eager to deliver trusted, sustainable and innovative relationships for the NNPA with advertisers, partners, sponsors, and supporters. More than ever before, the leadership and readership of NNPA newspapers and BlackPressUSA are im-

portant to the future of America and the global community."

A native of Oxford, N.C., Chavis received his Bachelor of Arts in chemistry from the University of North Carolina; his Master of Divinity from Duke University (magna cum laude) and a Doctor of Ministry from Howard University.

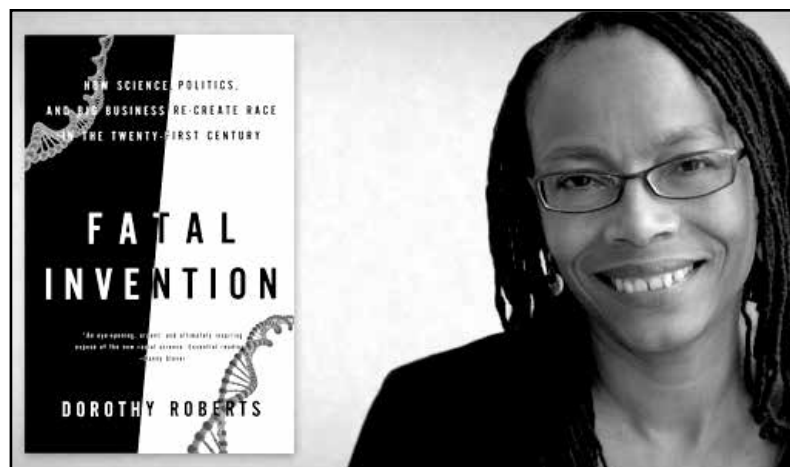
An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, Dr. Chavis began his career in 1963 as a North Carolina statewide youth coordinator for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In 1970, Chavis was appointed Southern Regional Program Director of the 1.7 million-member United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice (UCC-CRJ) and in 1985 was named Executive Director and CEO of the UCC-CRJ. In 1988, Dr. Chavis was elected Vice President of the National Council of Churches of the USA.

He has traveled and worked extensively in Africa and the Caribbean. He is a senior adviser and former president of the Diamond Empowerment Fund, which supports higher education scholarships in Africa.

Tulane Task Force Holds Conference on Black Women's Health

The Black Women's Health Task Force at Tulane University held its second Biennial Black Women's Health Conference June 13-14 at the Hampton Inn & Suites-Convention Center in New Orleans.

The theme of the conference was "Violence, Trauma, Resilience, Recovery: Factors in Black Women's Health." Geared to practitioners, academics, community activists and the community at large, the conference sought to raise awareness of health-related issues that



Pictured above is Conference Keynote Speaker Dorothy Roberts, professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and author of five books including "Fatal Invention."

disproportionately impact black women and girls.

This year's conference included a youth workshop led by Dr. Takei-

sha Charles Davis, who addressed intimate partner violence among youth ages 13 to 17, and a keynote luncheon speech by Dorothy Roberts, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and an acclaimed scholar of gender, race and the law.

Roberts, whose research focuses on public health, bioethics and social justice, is the author of five books, including Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the 21st Century and Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproductions and the Meaning of Liberty. Davis is medical director for the Louisiana Office of Public Health.

Although the conference fo-

cused on black women's health, the event "was relevant to all people, regardless of race and gender/sex," said Nghana Lewis, a Tulane associate professor of English and conference chairwoman.

"The health and well being of black women play vital roles in the overall health and well being of the families black women raise and the communities in which black women live and work everyday," she said.

Among the topics that were addressed are racial disparities in infant mortality, maternal and infant health disparities, racism-based stress for pregnant African American women, familial sexual abuse, and black girls and the juvenile justice system.

trailblazer

Derek Rabb

Lending a Hand in Shaping the Future

by: Edwin Buggage

Derek Rabb is someone who works in a selfless manner giving back to his community. He is a man who has taken it as his charge to work to better the lives of those of his native City New Orleans. As the City found itself drowning during Hurricane Katrina, much wreckage was left in its midst. Of the many things that were problematic was what we would do with regard to the public schools. Rabb, the son of an educator is a person who is committed to educating the youth of the City and worked to help open Andrew H. Wilson Charter School in the Broadmoor area, "I along with many others helped to get A.H. Wilson Charter School re-opened after Katrina. I worked on the board up until last year and I am proud to say now the school is up and running. I am glad to see our kids have a state of the art quality school that will not just service the kids in the Broadmoor neighborhood, but kids throughout the City." In addition he also is involved in work raising funds for his alma mater St. Augustine raising funds for scholarships.

New Orleans is a City rich with traditions. Rabb

is a member of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, where in 2014 he was the Witch Doctor character. While many know the organization for their parade and ball during the Mardi Gras season, they do work throughout the year helping those in need. Rabb says of some of the community outreach the organization does that he's worked on, "I have done work with Zulu with the Toys for Tots a program. Last year we gave away somewhere around 10,000 toys, I've also worked with the Jr. Zulu's, mentoring and working with young people; also I worked on a committee where we were doing holiday baskets; which is when we go throughout the City the Saturday before Christmas and give away gift baskets to needy families."

He says he gets great satisfaction out of going into the community and helping those in need. "It makes me feel good to put a smile on the face of people who are going through hard times," says Rabb. Continuing he says, "It makes me feel optimistic and I feel that if more people got out helping that we could eliminate some of the problems in our



community particularly those things that affect our youth. We need to do more with our male youth from the standpoint, that they have the skills to go out and be productive citizens. That they can have the opportunities to either go the college route or receive some type of trade so that they can support themselves and

be an asset to the community. Also we need more mentorship and apprenticeship programs."

Rabb says that it is his mother and father who gave him a solid foundation for his life and that he is forever grateful to them, "My parents are the biggest influence on me, my father Nelson Rabb owned a business with his brother, they had a body and fender shop. As a young boy growing up I watched my father as a businessman going to work every day to provide for his family. I also saw my mother Marian B. Rabb, who was an educator and principal and taught me the value of education. So I had both parents giving me things I could use to become a success in life and today I try to pass some of things I learned to young people I have the opportunity to experience."

Realizing that everyone did not have the opportunity to be raised by loving and supportive parents, Rabb, in his family and in the community works to fill those gaps. Giving the young people what they need to suc-

ceed. "It is true that it takes a village to raise a child, and when I think about it there are members of my family who are raising kids in single family homes. But we all pitch in and lend a hand, because we know that we must be vigilant in taking care of our own and ensuring that they have a bright future. Continuing he says, "We have to work hard to teach kids to regain a sense of education and most importantly to be responsible and accountable. Because a lot of times some kids are not taught these things and what it does is limit them because they don't develop the work ethic necessary to be successful in life. This is something we have to work on changing in our community." Derek Rabb is a man dedicated to change and lending a hand in shaping future, and for his continued work he is Data News Weekly Trailblazer for the month of June 2014.

JMJ
Joseph M. Jones
Continuing Education Fund



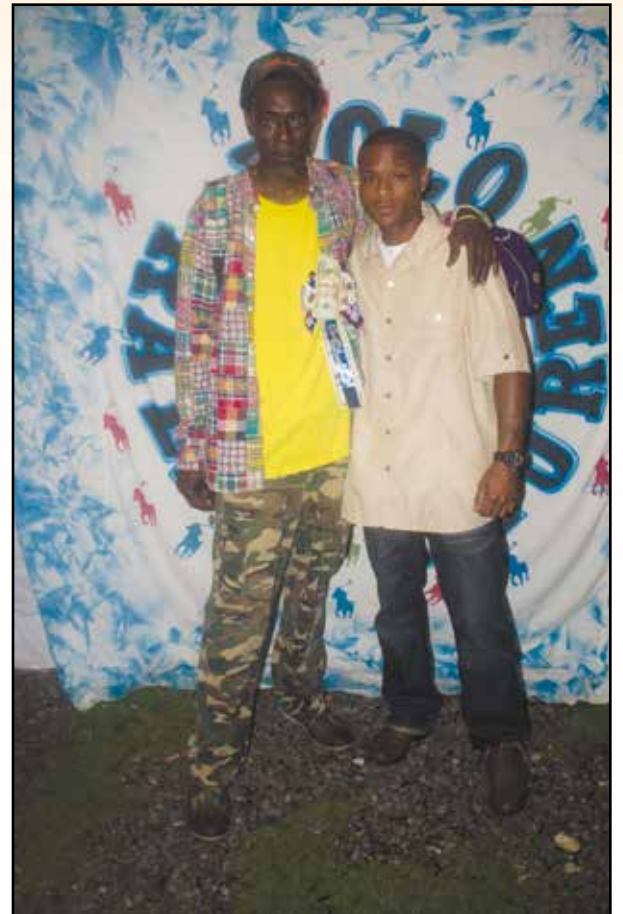
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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Birthday Party for "Polo the Photographer"

Photos by Kirristen Boseman

Recently, Selwhyn Terrell, known to many as "Polo the Photographer" held his big birthday bash at Big Man's Bar and Lounge and Data News Weekly was there.



Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

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Large, Receptive Audience Sees Staged Reading of Harold Ellis Clark's Uncle Bobby '63



Staged readings of plays normally don't attract large audiences, so the most patrons playwright Harold Ellis Clark and director John Grimsley had hoped would attend a reading of Clark's new Civil Rights Era drama/mystery, *Uncle Bobby '63*, this past Friday evening at Ashe Cultural Arts Center was about twenty to thirty, which represents a more than respectable number. By show time, the crowd swelled to more than 100, and additional chairs had to be setup to accommodate the audience. The play, which Clark completed in late May, surrounds three young civil rights workers with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), who deal with a life-threatening situation in mid-December 1963. This past Saturday marked the 50th anniversary of the murders of three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, MS, a fact that Clark learned this past Thursday morning while listening to National Public Radio (NPR).

"I didn't consciously write the play or set out to perform the staged reading with that in mind, so I was quite taken

aback listening to NPR," said Clark. "Our audience this past Friday featured a few former SNCC members, so I was extremely pleased that they as well as other audience members thoroughly enjoyed the reading."

While Clark hopes that a full production of *Uncle Bobby '63* initially premieres in New Orleans, he will immediately begin entering the script into various national playwriting competitions. Having started writing plays in 2010 after eighteen years of writing numerous unpublished novels and unproduced screenplays, Clark began entering his plays into playwriting competitions in 2012 in an effort to gauge his skills as a new playwright.

Earlier this year, Playhouse on the Square (POTS), the professional resident theatre company of Memphis, TN, named him one of two winners of its 2013 New Works@The Works Playwriting Competition for his play, *We Live Here*. POTS will produce the play's world premiere January 2-25, 2015 at Theaterworks, its third performance



space. Last year, he won UpStage Theatre Company's Emerging Playwright Project Award for his play, *Fishers of Men*, and was honored at The Players in Manhattan, NY as one of two finalists for the 56th Annual Stanley Drama Award for his play, *Tour Detour*. He's been a finalist and semi-finalist in several other playwriting competitions, including being named a semifinalist in 2013 and 2014 for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference for *Tour Detour*

and *We Live Here*, respectively.

"Contests are great for getting one's work read, so between those, holding staged readings or self-producing my plays, I'm doing all that I can to make certain that my work gets seen," said Clark, whose first play is 2011's *Marrero Action*. "I've got a forest full of unpublished novels and unproduced screenplays just sitting on the shelves of my closet, but that's not going to happen with my plays."

Blacks Have Not Recovered from the Recovery



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Judging from its June 18-19 meeting, the Federal Reserve is hedging its bets. It says the U.S. economy is on the mend, but more slowly than expected. They've reduced their estimate for economic growth and say that it will take a year or more to get to where we were six years ago.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has offered a starker forecast. Expected growth for the United States is about 3 percent, a level considered "normal" and "in recovery." They projected something right above 2 percent earlier this year. Now, they say the United

States economy will grow at about 1.9 percent, below robust recovery, and that it will take until 2018 to get the labor market back on track.

Meanwhile, the stock market seems to signal a healthy recovery, and surveys of human resource professionals found that more employers are offering signing and retention bonuses to get the best employees and to keep them. Obviously, the nearly 10 million people who are unemployed aren't being offered any kind of bonuses. Most of them just want work. That's not to mention the 3.4 million people who have not worked in half a year or more. Bonus? Please.

The economic recovery is as bifurcated as our economic reality has always been. The Occupy folks estimated it in a way that galvanized energy and spoke some truth. Does the top 1 percent of our population get all the benefits of economic growth? Just about. One of the most telling statistics deals with race and recovery. Aggregately, Whites and

Asians Americans have fully recovered from economic shortfalls, African Americans have seen their wealth rebound by only 45 percent. They have lost 55 percent of wealth, bearing a disproportionate burden from this recovery.

When we parse the data by class, we learn that President Obama's focus on the middle class leaves the poor where they have always been – at the periphery of economic progress. Until the job markets open up at entry level, instead of providing opportunities for the middle class and higher, the recovery will not trickle down. Meanwhile, there are members of Congress who truly believe that the unemployed are jobless because they want to be. These are folks who apparently refuse to read the data about the search for work.

What does economic recovery look like? It looks like vibrancy. It looks like people joyfully working. It looks like people who spend, if not freely, certainly less cautiously.

They don't have to run an algorithm in their brain before they decide that their child can have an ice cream cone. It means being able to put a few pennies aside for college possibilities. It means having a moment to exhale.

For all the talk of Wall Street exuberance and economic recovery, there are millions who are still waiting to exhale. While we mostly focus on the officially unemployed, the equally pressing concern is about those who are underemployed, working part time when they want to work full time. All of these folks are in the job search mix, and they are too often the people we ignore.

In many ways this is also a "race matters" narrative. Economic recovery looks great for some, good for others, and absolutely dismal for those at the bottom. The unofficial unemployment rate among African Americans remains at someplace near 25 percent. The Bureau of Labor Statistics won't measure that, because then they will have to re-

port the economic failure inherent in this so-called economic recovery.

The Federal Reserve and the IMF are reporting economic projections that trickle down. They say the economic recovery will not happen as quickly as they once projected, and that they have a "wait and see" attitude. The Fed is moving closer to raising interest rates, and are withdrawing from their bond buying program that fostered economic stability.

Their "wait and see" really means pulling back, which may help the overall economy. When will those on the bottom, the least, the last, and the left out, experience recovery? Until those who make public policy are prepared to deal with persistent economic bifurcation, economic recovery looks good for some, dismal as ever for others.

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

Freedom Summer

50 years Later



George C. Curry
NNPA

The 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer is being commemorated this week in Mississippi and it provides the perfect backdrop to reflect on the transformation of not only Mississippi, then the deadliest state in the nation, but the entire region.

As I have written in the space before, there was a popular joke about Mississippi making the rounds during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Supposedly, a Chicago seminary student was awakened at 3 a.m. by a voice imploring him: "Go to Mississippi! Go to Mississippi!! Go to Mississippi!!!" The seminary student said, "Lord, you said that

you will be with me always, even until the end of the earth. If I go to Mississippi, will you go with me?" The heavenly voice replied, "I'll go as far as Memphis."

Of course, if the Lord was reluctant to go to Mississippi, the chances of a Black surviving there were slim and none. I had just completed my junior year at Druid High School in Tuscaloosa, Ala. in the summer of 1964. Alabama had its own violent history when it came to race relations, but Mississippi was the one state we knew was worse. In fact, whenever a national ranking of any kind came out, we would always say, "Thank God for Mississippi."

Of course, we all awaited the beginning of Freedom Summer, a national mobilization of mostly college students who would descend upon Mississippi in 1964 to help civil rights activists, led by Bob Moses of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), assist Blacks in voter education and voting.

More than 1,000 students, about 90 percent of them White, participated. With so many northern Whites descending on the state, the nation would be watching. And Blacks like me, who grew up under America's version of apartheid, knew that virulent White racists in Mississippi would not go quietly into the dark. They would go into the dark – where they did their most tawdry work – but they wouldn't be quiet about it.

And sure enough, at the outset of Freedom Summer, three civil rights workers – James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman – were arrested in Nashoba County by Sheriff Cecil Price, a member of the Ku Klux Klan. That night, they were released. Tipped off about their impending departure, Klansmen abducted the three and murdered them. Their bodies were discovered seven weeks later 15 feet below an earthen dam.

While looking for the three civil rights workers in rivers and swamps, other Black bodies were

discovered. One was Herbert Oarsby, a 14-year-old boy who was wearing a Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) T-shirt. The bodies of Henry Hezekiah Dee and Eddie Moore, who had been expelled from Alcorn A&M College for civil rights activities, were also discovered. The remains of five more Black men were found, but never identified.

It wasn't until 1970 that anyone was imprisoned for the slayings of Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman, with six years being the longest time served.

In 1964, only 6.7 percent of Blacks were registered to vote, the lowest in the nation. Today, more than a third of Mississippi's voters are Black and the state has the largest number of Black elected officials in the nation.

But that progress came with a price, with people losing their jobs – and even their lives – simply because they wanted to exercise their constitutional right to vote. The casualties extended beyond the three civil rights workers.

According to the book, Freedom Summer by Doug McAdam, in the summer of 1964 alone:

At least four Blacks from Mississippi were murdered because of their civil rights activities;

Four people were seriously wounded; 80 summer workers were beaten

1,062 people were arrested;

37 churches were burned or bombed and

The homes or businesses of 30 African Americans were bombed or burned.

Visiting college students weren't the only ones responsible for the success of that summer. When Berea College withdrew as a training site for students headed South, Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio, now part of Miami University, stepped forward.

Attorneys volunteered from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the National Lawyers Guild and the ACLU. Medical professionals, participating

Commentary, Continued on page 11.

Gov. Jindal's Misguided Attempt To Abandon Common Core



Walter Leger, Jr.
State Representative,
District 91 Speaker Pro
Tempore, Louisiana House
of Representatives

"Louisiana students deserve the same opportunities as children across the United States, and for too long we have let our education standards lag behind. That is why Governor Jindal's attempts to abandon Common Core are all the more reprehensible."

The public will remember that, before he opposed it, Gov. Jindal supported Common Core in 2010 and signed it into law with Act 275 in 2012. Louisiana joined with 43 other states in setting common expectations in English language arts and mathematics. Unfortunately, as the governor's political ambitions increased, he began catering to extremists who oppose the standards.

The governor is irresponsibly perpetuating a campaign of misinformation surrounding Common Core, including the myth that the federal government would be taking over our schools. The facts are that Common Core is a state-led effort, and the federal government does not govern it. The Louisiana Department of Education, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and local school districts will continue to drive the implementation of Common Core.

In order to keep moving forward, a group of pragmatic Democrats and Republicans joined with me to author HB 953. The bill passed with more than two-thirds of the legislature supporting it, but the governor vetoed it on Friday. HB 953 was a compromise that would have allowed Louisiana to continue implementing the

Common Core expectations and tests, while giving students and teachers two extra years to prepare before accountability measures went into effect.

As a state that consistently ranks 48th or 49th in Education, we took action to ensure that Louisiana's students would be better prepared to compete nationally. There is no doubt that

Gov. Jindal's plan would set us back, and our children would be the ones to suffer most. Districts, schools, teachers, and students have been working to meet the new standards for several years, and the governor is pulling the rug out from under them just weeks before classes are scheduled to begin. It is unethical to denigrate their im-

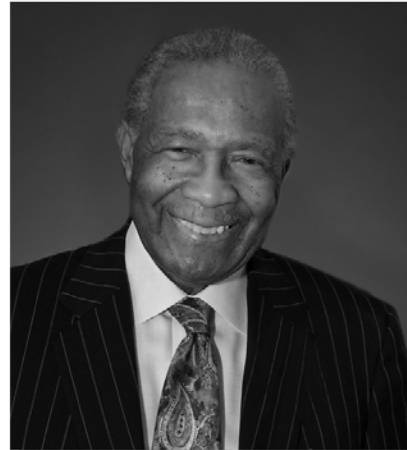
mense efforts at this point in the implementation process.

Governor Jindal's plan to abandon Common Core is a clear example of executive overreach. And while I was disappointed to hear his announcement, I take solace in the fact that the law is on our side. It empowers BESE and the Louisiana Department of Education to set standards and mandates that "[b]

eginning with the 2014-2015 school year, standards-based assessments shall be based on nationally recognized content standards."

I commend Superintendent White and the Louisiana Department of Education and Chas Romer and BESE for maintaining their commitment to Common Core and improving public education in our state."

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Got Rice?

By LMG Calla Victoria

Recently I attended a fascinating lecture on the history and production of Rice as a part of the Eat Local Challenge 2014 sponsored by USA Rice Federation. The speaker was Randy Jemison, Director of Louisiana Field Services of the USA Rice Federation.

Rice was first discovered in China over 2000 years ago and made its way west via Madagascar and first appeared in South Carolina. The railroad allowed rice to move west in the United States. There are 6 rice-producing states and Arkansas is the nation's leading rice producer, followed by California (not part of the Rice Belt), Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Missouri. Southern states get two crops per year of rice. The State of Louisiana has four rice producing facilities across the state.

Rice is a really a semi-aquatic type of grass and what we eat are really the nutrient-rich seeds that are produced when the grass plants bloom. Rice is the seed of the grass plants *Oryza sativa* (Asian rice) or *Oryza glaberrima* (African rice). Although we enjoy the azzcas well as to make seeds and fruit. Of course we know this from observation and the bible.

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according



to their various kinds." Genesis 1:11

Once a plant blooms if we don't cut off the bloom that plant will usually "go to seed" which is the phrase used to denote that a plant has finished its life cycle. The seeds are harvested or disbursed through the wind or by birds. You see the whole purpose of a plant's life is propagation, and that happens when it pushes forth its bloom that makes seeds to multiply its species. When we cut a plant's bloom we make the plant work harder which is a good thing, we get more flowers and the plant has a longer lifespan.

Initial rice planting happens in



March. The seeds are planted in rice patties or fields made by damming up large areas so that they fill with water, then the rice is water planted. Rice grass takes 3 to 6 month for the plants to mature. Crawfish are the sister crop to rice, as the breed in marshy conditions. In the 1970s and '80s, farmers realized that they could make extra money by managing the crawfish that already lived in their flooded rice fields. After the rice matures the fields have to be drained so that heavy equipment can be brought in to harvest the rice. The harvested grains go into drying tanks and

from there to packaging.

Contrary to prevailing beliefs, brown rice is not more nutritious than white rice and in fact there is no such thing as brown rice. All rice is white. What we consider brown rice, is the white rice grain with the brown hulls still attached. That is why there is a little crackle when eating brown rice, it is the hull cracking as you chew it. The only benefit to eating brown rice over white rice is the added fiber that comes from the brown hull. So as far as nutrients go white rice and brown rice are the same. Also rice is naturally gluten-free and a

complex carbohydrate. Rice is sustainable crop and the United States produces 20 billion Pounds of it annually. Two-thirds of the world's population depends on rice as a food source. Rice comes in three different lengths long, medium, and small and is suited for different applications. Say you are cooking a dish that requires large individual grains of rice you should use long grain rice. If you wanted to make rice pudding or hot calas you would use short grain rice which cooks up sticky.

Aromatic rice is one of the major types of rice. It is a medium to long-grained rice. It is known for its nut-like aroma and taste, which is caused by the chemical compound 2-acetyl-1-pyrroline. Jazzmen Rice is a new variety of aromatic rice developed at Louisiana State University and it could become a viable competitor to the Thai jasmine rice that accounts for \$350 million in U.S. business each year.

At the end of the informative lecture we were treated to hot calas which was the forerunner to famous New Orleans beignets. It is fried golden brown and served with brown sugar on top. Also each member of the audience was given a five pound pack of jasmine rice.

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

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Mobilizing Key Groups Can Change Politics of the Deep South

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – As voters' rights advocates and civil rights leaders commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1964 "Freedom Summer" in Mississippi, new study by the Center for American Progress finds that shifting demographics in the South can help to accelerate meaningful social and political change.

The report titled, "True South: Unleashing Democracy in the Black Belt 50 Years After Freedom Summer," defined the Black Belt, a region known for its rich soil and history of plantation slavery, as regions in the following Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

According to the report, between 2000 and 2010, "the non-Hispanic white population in the South grew at a rate of 4 percent, while the so-called 'minority' population in the region experienced a 34 percent growth, the greatest out of any region in the country."

Nearly 60 percent of Blacks live below the Mason-Dixon line and Blacks account for about 20 percent of the total population in the South. The report also noted that 40 percent of the Blacks that relocated "to the South since 2000 were between the ages of 21 and 40 years old" and researchers said this group will likely settle and start families increasing the number of Blacks living in the region.

The report continued: "These trends could have a major effect on the region's politics because voters of color tend to be more progressive and vote overwhelmingly for progressive candidates."

Changing demographics, frustration with right-wing extremists and the growing number of young voters will play a role in the growing progressive electorate pushing back on "a long history of po-

larization" in the Black Belt.

Republican state lawmakers in the Black Belt, who may feel threatened by the growing diversity among potential voters, have enacted a number of laws that have a disproportionate impact of the quality of life of the poor, Blacks and other minorities.

According to the report, "nine states have passed laws requiring voters to bring photo identification to the polling booth in order to cast a traditional ballot" and governors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina,

Tennessee, and Texas refused to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, "effectively denying health care to millions of their citizens, overwhelmingly the poor and people of color."

The report continued: "Eleven states have passed 'right-to-work' laws, which discourage organizing by unions. They are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia."

During a panel discussion about the CAP report, Derrick Johnson, president of the Mississippi NAACP State Conference and the national co-chair of the Mississippi Freedom Summer 50th Anniversary, said that there's "a deficit of morality in the South, because people are not seen as people they are seen as exploitable cheap labor."

Johnson added that access to the polls free of voter suppression, access to quality education, access to health care and workers' rights are the primary issues that civil rights activists must focus on and organize around so that the South can progress.

The report said that today's civil rights leaders and stakeholders should learn three key lessons from the Freedom Summer of 1964: voter registration can overcome voter suppression, coalition-building is the key to transformative political power, and that a successful move-

ment is a marathon, not a sprint.

Stacey Abrams, House minority leader in the Georgia State Assembly, said people that have never voted hear about voter intimidation and voter suppression, but they don't know what that means.

"You don't know if you're going to stand in line and cause trouble, you don't know if you're going to lose your job, you don't know what that card is that you keep hearing about and you know that you don't have whatever ID they think you should have," said Abrams.

More than 800,000 Black, Latino and Asian Americans are not registered to vote in Georgia, said Abrams. It takes less than half of that, just 260,000, to change a state-wide election.

"If you change Georgia, you begin to change the South and if you change the South you change the nation," explained Abrams. "All of those social policies that we like to talk about can be lived in the Deep South and if they are lived and realized they can be exported to the rest of the country."

Abrams said that voters' rights advocates and community stakeholders have to start talking about voter identification in a more positive way.

Ben Jealous, senior fellow for Center for American Progress, former president of the NAACP, and author of the report said, "Right now, when we talk about the South, we end up talking about voter suppression. What we really need to be talking about is the need for massive voter registration."

The report said that "registering just 30 percent of eligible unregistered black voters or other voters of color could shift the political calculus in a number of Black Belt states" and "Registering 60 percent or 90 percent would change the political calculus in an even greater number of states."

The CAP report cited Maryland, where a number of progressive policy changes are taking hold, as an example of a state where a slavery

was once commonplace and now a diverse electorate has had a significant political impact.

"It is easy to forget that Maryland enslaved half its population at the time of the Civil War and that it is the state from which Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass escaped," said the report. "Yet Maryland sits below the Mason-Dixon Line, and it practiced legalized segregation up until 1954."

In just a few years, "The Free State" has experienced a number of key legislative reforms including a ban on the death penalty, the legalization of same-sex marriage, decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana, and the extension of early voting and same-day registration.

The report continued: "Maryland shows what can happen when people come together across old lines of separation and division to promote progressive values and policies. Maryland is not seceding from the South, instead it is demonstrating what the South's future can and should be."

Still, the report suggested that changing politics in the Black Belt won't be an easy battle for pollsters and others seeking to energize potential voters in the South and across the country.

The report estimated that nearly 21 million members of the so-called "Rising American Electorate," consisting of "people of color, unmarried women, and youth voters ages 18 to 29 years old," that voted in 2012, might not vote in the 2014 elections.

Organizers and voters' rights advocates still have a long march ahead.

"What the 'Freedom Summer' taught us is that the antidote for massive voter suppression is massive voter registration," said Jealous. "There is a dormant majority throughout the South that can be unleashed if we can get back to the spirit of the 'Freedom Summer' and focus on massive voter registration."

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Commentary, Continued from page 8.

as individuals as well as members of the Medical Committee for Human Rights, also joined the caravans headed to Mississippi.

The level of national support emboldened Black Mississippians, such as Fannie Lou Hamer, to chal-

lenge the seating of the all-White Mississippi delegation to the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

As Attorney Thomas N. Todd likes to remind us, this was done before the existence of Facebook, Twitter, Insta-

gram and other social media.

It's good that civil rights vets are celebrating Freedom Summer this week. But the challenge today is to reignite that passion and sense of commitment. Many of the problems of 1964 are still prevalent

today. We need another Freedom Summer, Winter, Fall and Spring.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of *Emerge* magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA.)

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