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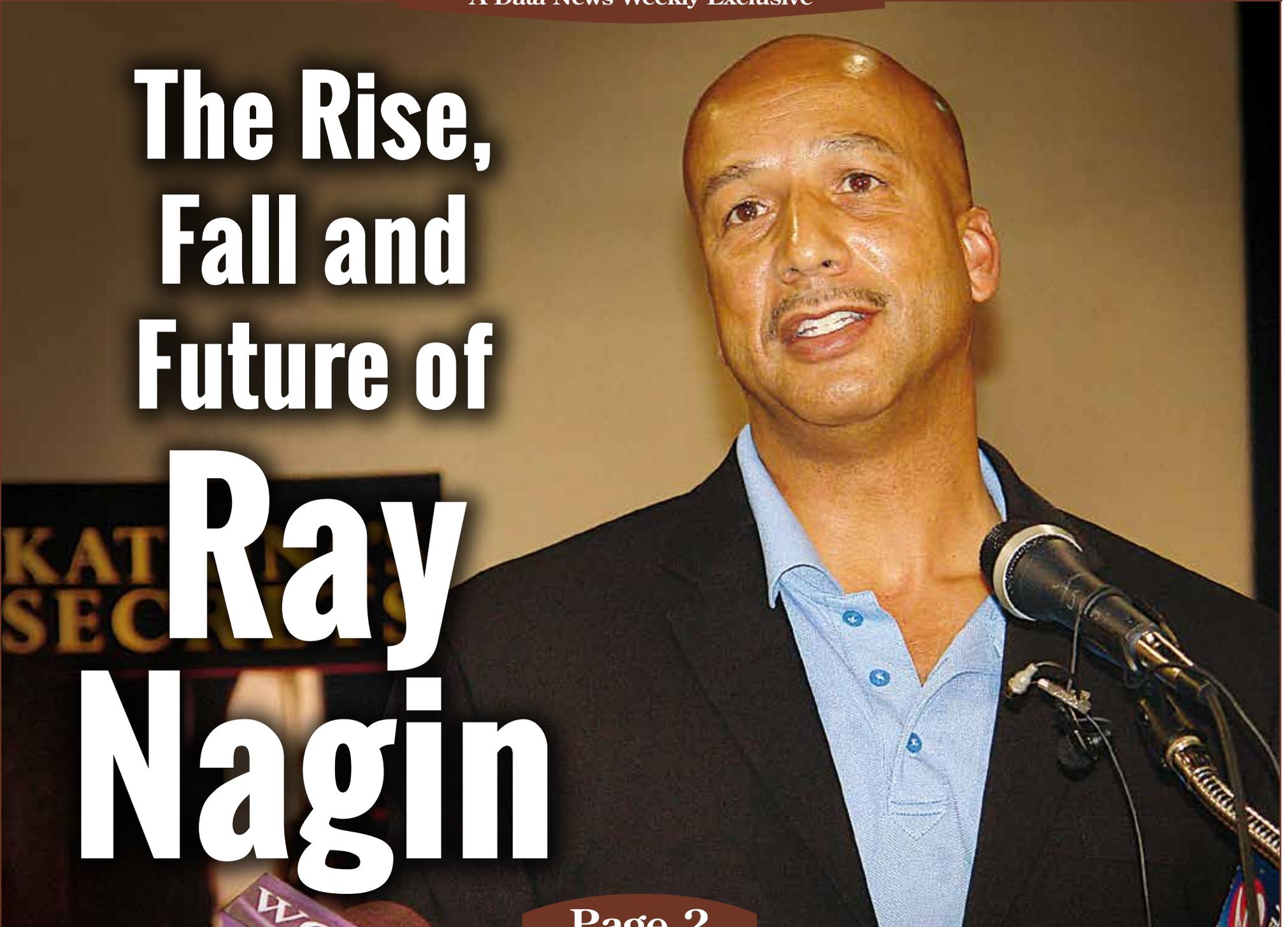
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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

The Rise, Fall and Future of

Ray Nagin



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State & Local
Philip Rebowe is new President of GNOEA

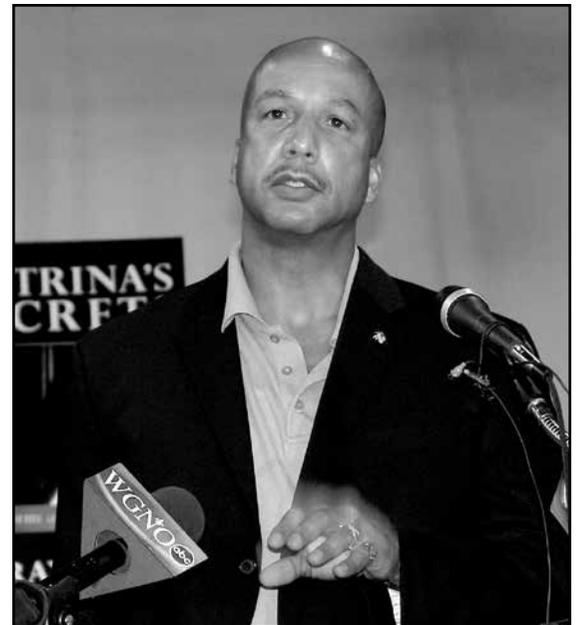
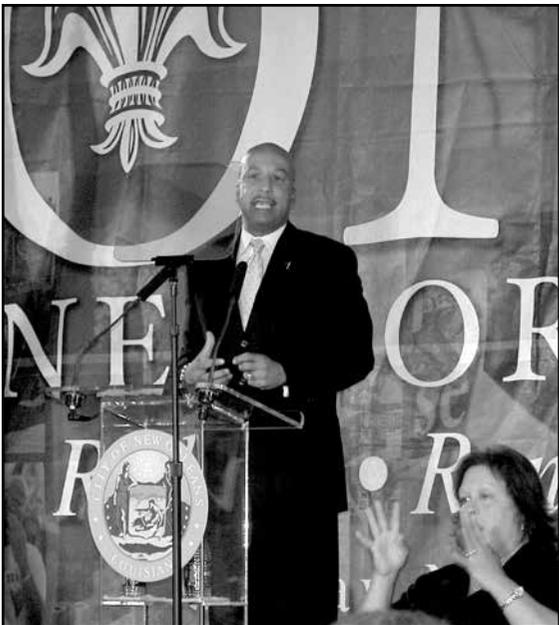
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The Rise, Fall and Future of Ray Nagin



In the days following Hurricane Katrina, Mayor C. Ray Nagin, was front-and-center of an international media firestorm. Nagin, who was initially elected to office with an agenda favoring the business community and the elites, found himself in the position of needing to be the “people’s Mayor” behind the storm, and would be re-elected with largely African-American support. And because of the agenda post-Katrina, Nagin decided not to take part in this Faustian Bargain, which may have ultimately led to his demise. (Photos by Glenn Summers)

By Edwin Buggage

The Rise and Fall of Ray Nagin

A Chapter in the New Orleans Post Katrina saga has ended with former Mayor C. Ray Nagin being found guilty of accepting payoffs for city contracts, becoming the first mayor in the City’s history to be charged and convicted of corruption. He has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. The rise and fall of Ray Nagin is a tale of a man who came in holding a broom promising to root out corruption in our city, where nepotism, cronyism and corruption is as common as red beans on Monday and the blaring sounds of brass bands.

Today there is a sad note of irony in the air as Nagin’s own fate mirrored that of so many who have used the reins of power in questionable ways. It speaks to the question of will New Orleans ever be a place of good government? When looking at the story in

retrospect, Ray Nagin’s saga is not as simple as the guy who infamously said “Chocolate City” or told the President and the federal government in a moment of frustration to get up off their a** and do something as the City was drowning in a sea of chaos during Hurricane Katrina. Nor is it the guy who’s been painted by his detractors or former elected officials as someone that came into office and was on the take. Abusing his power to make all those around him rich while creating a political machine; Nagin, a political novice when he took office in the 2002 was more familiar with the way things were done in business and not politics. And it possibly was the thing that made him both successful and unsuccessful during his eight years as Mayor of New Orleans.

Taking a look back before Hurricane Katrina, Nagin was a popular mayor, a 60% approval rating and praised for his work in his fighting to change New Orleans’ reputation as one of America’s most corrupt cities.

After the storm and the mismanagement that ensued there was enough blame to go around at the local, state and federal level. Something that left Nagin vulnerable in what was an uphill battle towards re-election in 2006 defeating challenger and present New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu; but his second-term was mired with many problems, as a result his approval rating plummeted to 24% by the end of his second-term. His fate would then take another turn for the worse three years after leaving office with him being indicted on 21 counts including bribery and wire fraud charges. After the trial the jury, deliberated for about six and a half hours before finding Mr. Nagin, 57, guilty in 20 of the 21 counts against him. The verdict came after a seven-day trial, with more than three -dozen witnesses, but now as he stands convicted and sentenced, his Attorney Robert Jenkins says the former mayor is poised to continue appealing the verdict. So in Ray Nagin’s saga several chapters are complete, yet the story continues.

Cover Photo by Glenn Summers

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Ray Nagin and the Question of Justice

While some feel that Nagin being sentenced to 10 years was lenient compared to what was originally on the table, it was determined that Nagin was not the ring leader. In addition many members of the community and his family wrote letters in support of Nagin asking for leniency. And while many will never know what a day in jail is like, being handed a ten-year sentence for anyone is a hard pill to swallow, so the question of leniency is relative. Retired New Orleans Criminal District Court Judge Calvin Johnson says that he thinks the sentence given to Nagin was fair, "I think the judge did the right thing in sentencing when comparing it to former Governor Edwin Edwards. Some talk about leniency but let's not forget that 10 years is a tremendously long time, so when they say he only got 10 years in jail, I would say that one day in jail is more than most of us can stand."

Dyan French Cole, known to the community as Mama D, spent every day at the trial and says that it was a miscarriage of justice with far reaching implications that were bigger than former Mayor Ray Nagin. Speaking about the composition of the jury she says, "I was at the trial every day, and looking at the jury pool I saw five White men, five White women, two Asians and one Black woman, and that jury was my first issue. And then when the trial started and the prosecution was allowed to basically persecute Nagin and for what was allowed you could tell what the verdict would be." Continuing she says, "It seems that all the people who had taken plea deals were handed a script to read from once they took the stand. I don't think this trial was just about Nagin, it was something aimed at the Black Community post Katrina."

Chocolate City and Race Matters in Post-Katrina New Orleans

It is interesting to note that a man who was elected to office by what many would consider armed with an agenda that favored the business community and the elites, would have to do an about face to get re-elected with largely African-American support. And because of the agenda post-Katrina that Nagin decided not to take part in this Faustian Bargain may have led to his demise. Paul Beaulieu is the General Manager of WBOK 1230-AM, a station dedicated to tackling issues from a Black perspective. On

the evolution and the rise and fall of Ray Nagin he says of the things his listeners talked about, "Nobody said it shouldn't have happened, most thought the sentence was lenient given the time he could have gotten. But during our broadcast most of the discussion centered on the origins of Ray Nagin, how did he get in the race, and who supported him, and that was the White power structure. I feel he exercised bad judgment thinking like the people who put him there that he became one of them."

Corruption...Conviction... is it a Catalyst for Change?

The trial of Ray Nagin has gained national attention for a City and state that whether fairly or unfairly is routinely portrayed as the poster child for political corruption. And one must ask, have these recent high profile verdicts of which includes Ray Nagin struck a blow in the fight against corruption and changing the image of the City and state that this type of behavior will no longer be tolerated as it's been in the past. Have we moved passed a time when former Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards who escaped several indictments before finally being convicted of racketeering said the only way he would lose an election is either he was caught in bed with a dead girl or live boy.

This kind of looking the other way at corruption because someone is likeable, charismatic or part of a political family is something that people are tiring of according to Judge Calvin Johnson, "I believe the City has moved to a place where they are more unwilling to accept individuals doing less than what they were elected to do; people are now setting the bar higher for those that are elected to office."

Paul Beaulieu agrees that things are changing as citizens are becoming more politically aware post-Katrina, "I think the Nagin conviction can and will be a catalyst for change, and I think that people now are not just turning a blind eye to corruption by our elected officials. Particularly, our African-American officials will be under tighter scrutiny." During the tumultuous and uncertain times after Hurricane Katrina where questions arose about race and power; something that catapulted Nagin to victory, but soon thereafter everything changed. As the City soon had a majority White City Council and eventually a White mayor in a majority Black City, in the recent election in New Orleans all that's changed. Now the City has a majority Black City Council, with

candidates who have found a way to get votes across racial and class lines.

Ray Nagin in Retrospect and the Search for Redemption

There are not many people who could really understand what Ray Nagin could possibly be thinking right now; a man who was the Mayor of a City, now defamed and facing jail time. But one man who could is former New Orleans Councilman-at-Large Oliver Thomas. He was once a popular City Councilperson well liked among a cross section of the city that was often times separated by race and class. He was the odds on favorite to become the next mayor of New Orleans after Nagin left office, but was convicted and served three years in federal prison for taking a bribe to steer a parking lot contract to New Orleans businessman Stan "Pampy" Barre'.

Today no longer an elected official Thomas still remains popular as

a radio talk show host, playwright, and actor and still fighting for the rights of the people of New Orleans. He spoke to Data News Weekly reflecting on Nagin's time in office. While some are harsh critics of Nagin's time in office, Thomas, speaking of the job Nagin did in office he says, "While I cannot give him high marks on everything he did I do have to say that, a lot of the success we are seeing with the infrastructure and commercial development, he worked hard to set the stage for those things; now Mitch Landrieu has continued that. Nagin managed the city budget very well; there wasn't really a lot of increases that affected people during his time as mayor, he did a good job managing what they had to work with."

Ethics in politics continue to be a problem, but Thomas feels it is bigger than simply reforming public policy when people choose to do the wrong thing, "We have done ethics reform and we still have problems, what I think is more important is character reform. In the

book of Isiah Chapter 43 Verse 19 'God said I will do a new thing in you.' That thing that builds integrity and character is an individual thing. It can't be about public policy and the law it has to be about you as an individual."

Barring a last minute appeal in favor of Nagin, he will likely have to report to prison September 8th, this is something Thomas remembers and says "He's got a chance to look inside himself like he's never had before and the people who love him they have to look at themselves and figure out how they will survive without him as they prepare for him to come back home. But first Ray Nagin has to start with forgiving himself and as he forgives himself he can move himself forward on the road to redemption."

We all know history is a strange thing and it will be history that will judge Ray Nagin. One thing is for certain, the name Ray Nagin will always be part of our collective memory as a reminder of New Orleans at its worse and at its best.

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An Encore for Encore Azaleas

Edited By LMG Calla Victoria

As a Master Gardener, I am always intrigued with new discoveries in the world of horticulture. One of the most applauded innovations to rock the agricultural world is the creation of the Encore Azalea by Plant Breeder Robert E. "Buddy" Lee of Independence, Louisiana. I was even more excited to find out this discovery was made by a fellow Louisianan. Robert E. "Buddy" Lee literally went from rags to riches with his new plant introductions.

The Encore Azaleas are re-blooming azaleas unlike traditional azaleas that only bloom in the spring. Encore Azaleas bloom in the spring and explode with color season after season and enjoy more sun than traditional azaleas but offer the same easy care. Those qualities which make Encore Azaleas must-have shrubs in the landscape. When planning garden design foundation plantings, which anchor the garden, should include plant material that has extended bloom times, color variety, are evergreen, perennial and easy care. Encore Azaleas are a big yes for foundation plantings boasting all of those qualities.

Plant Breeder Robert E. "Buddy" Lee stumbled into this awesome discovery in the early 1980s when he found a tray of azalea cuttings blooming in the summer sun at his small Louisiana azalea nursery. Inspired, he began crossing traditional spring-blooming azaleas with the rare Taiwanese summer-blooming azalea, *Rhododendron oldhamii*. And oh my goodness crossing he did with a vengeance ending up with an amazing



29 unique and beautiful varieties of Encore Azaleas. Buddy's designer azaleas are hybrid azaleas cloned into cultivars. Robert E. "Buddy" Lee says that well-drained acidic soil is the key to growing Encore Azaleas. He said, "During the breeding process I never sprayed or coddled the plants in any way, only the toughest plants survived. What is the point of breeding plants that no one can grow? Also we conducted studies in some northern states after last year's hard freeze and found that although the leaves were burned a little, Encore Azaleas sprung back with blooms last spring. Encore Azaleas are cold hardy and definitely heat tolerant, as they were developed in the Louisiana heat." Buddy Lee began acquiring patents and trademarks on his Encore Azaleas in 1990's

and that process continues even now as he breeds and develops new varieties of Encore Azaleas and other plants. Robert E. "Buddy" Lee is one of the most respected plant breeders and horticulturalists in North America with over 30 years of experience in nursery management, breeding, propagation, and new plant development. He currently serves as Director of Plant Innovations for PDSI, the new plant innovation company that manages the Encore® Azalea and the Southern Living® Plant Collection. He is active in numerous organizations, including the Azalea Society of America, the International Plant Propagators Society, and the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association. In 2000, the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association recognized Buddy Lee's significant

contribution to the industry by presenting him with a Professional Achievement Award; and in 2007, the Azalea Society of America awarded him the Society's Distinguished Service Award.

Each of the 29 Encore Azalea varieties begins their performance with the spring flowering season. Once this "first act" of blooming concludes new shoots begin to grow and set buds. The Encore Azalea's "second act" opens when these buds begin blooming into full flower mid-summer. This unique bloom season continues through the fall, the curtain dropping with the onset of cold weather. But, the show goes on as an "encore," these exceptional azaleas flower again with traditional spring azaleas and the process starts over. Encore Azaleas are the only patented brand of azaleas to bloom in spring, summer and fall. Encore Azaleas bloom thick with numerous long lasting bloom colors to choose from. They are hardy and easy to grow so use them where ever you need a hedge, ground cover or just want to add some color. Now being sold all across the United States as well as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other parts of Europe, Mexico, and soon in Brazil; it is safe to say that Encore Azaleas are taking the world by storm and Mr. Robert E. "Buddy" Lee is definitely a hometown boy doing FAB-U-LUOUS! For more information on Encore Azaleas or where to purchase click <http://www.encoreazalea.com/the-collection/>.

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" @ www.thegardeningdiva.com,

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

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

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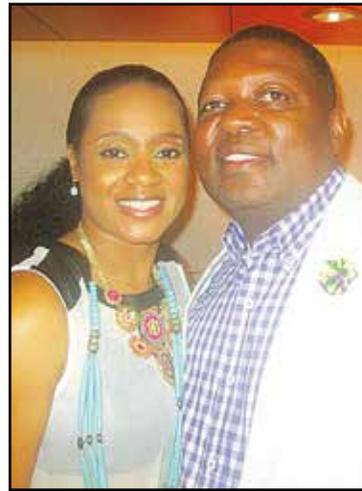
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More Essence Fest Fun

Photos by Terry B. Jones

During the 20th Annual Essence Music, there was so much to do, so many places to go and be seen, we had to give you another dose of the highlights. Here are some scenes from parties which took place throughout the city, of course, as always, Data was there! For more from Essence Fest, visit our website, www.ladatanews.com.



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Stimulating Students During Summer



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

It's mid-July. Do you know if your children are learning? Just a month ago they were eager to leave the regimentation of the daily classroom to "enjoy the summer." A month from now, many will prepare to return to school. Will they return

ready to hit the ground running in the fall? Or, will they struggle to catch up because their summer activities were not stimulating enough to prevent learning losses.

Student's score lower on standardized tests at the end of the summer than at the beginning of the summer, according to the National Summer Learning Association. That organization makes a strong case that young people must be engaged in summer learning and enrichment opportunities, because they lose as much as two months of math learning, and more than two months of reading proficiency without summer engagement. Of course, lower income students ex-

perience more losses, while middle-class students may gain proficiency during the summer.

The National Summer Learning Association says that at least half of the achievement gap between lower and higher income young people is a function of unequal access to summer learning opportunities. Some youngsters don't have summer opportunities because they don't know about them, others because they can't afford them, and still others because they are needed at home. Some teens are tasked with taking care of younger siblings, though they might be better served in enrichment programs that would prepare them for

the next school year. Others must choose between work and summer enrichment programs, and when money matters, work wins over enrichment. And while subsidized summer enrichment programs are available, some students are unable to participate when even modest fees are required.

I've not spoken of race, only income, in examining the importance of summer enrichment programs. But because African American students are more likely to be low-income than others, we know that race matters here. We also know that space makes a difference as well. There will be a greater variety of summer enrichment programs in

affluent neighborhoods, as opposed to other neighborhoods. And while programs in affluent neighborhoods may offer scholarships for those who need assistance, transportation may become a barrier. Whether excuses or explanations, the achievement gap speaks to differential outcomes.

While summer enrichment opportunities are differentially available, with Black and Brown young people less likely to have access to opportunities than others, some organizations are doing the work to ensure that young people are intellectually engaged during the

Malveaux/ Continued on page 7

Republicans' Selective Memory on Executive Order



George C. Curry
NNPA

To paraphrase Ronald Reagan, arguably the most overrated U.S. president in history, there they go again. They, of course, are Republicans in the House of Representatives. And they are going after President Obama yet again, this time over his use of executive orders, presidential directives that have been issued by every president over the past 73 years.

First, let's brush up on our high school civics.

According to a report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), "Presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt through Barack Obama have issued orders that seek to leverage the government's procurement spending to promote socio-economic policies that some commentators would characterize as extraneous to contractors' provision of goods or services to the government."

The report, titled "Presidential Authority to Impose Requirements on Federal Contractors," explained, "Presidential power to issue executive orders must derive from the Constitution or from an act of Congress. Contractor-related executive orders historically have been issued based upon the President's powers under Article II of the Constitution or the powers delegated to the President by FPASA," a reference to the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949.

The CRS report noted. "FPASA states that its purpose is to 'provide the Federal Government with an economical and efficient system for ... [p]rocur[ing] and supply[ing] property and nonpersonal services' and authorizes the President to prescribe any 'policies and directives' consistent with the act that he 'considers necessary to carry out' the act's goals of efficiency and economy."

One of the most significant presidential actions was Executive Order 11246, which was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on Sept. 28, 1965. It requires federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, reli-

gion, sex or national origin."

According to CRS, "Under the authority of Executive Order 11246, officials of the Department of Labor issued two orders commonly known as the Philadelphia Plan. The Philadelphia Plan required bidders for federal and federally funded construction contracts in the Philadelphia area valued in excess of \$500,000 to submit 'acceptable affirmative action program[s],' including 'specific goals' for 'minority manpower utilization' in six construction trades prior to contract award."

Of the past 10 presidents, beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Obama has issued the fewest executive orders per year. According to the American Presidency Project, Obama issued 147 executive orders during his first term, compared to 504 by FDR, 266 by Dwight D. Eisenhower, 247 by Richard M. Nixon, 213 by Ronald Reagan, 200 by Bill Clinton, and 173 by George W. Bush over a similar period.

As of June 20, Obama had issued 35 executive orders during his second term.

His executive actions have stopped the deportation of immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally as children, affected climate

change by compelling power plants to reduce their emissions by 30 percent by 2030, raised the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$10.10 an hour, extended rights for same-sex couples and impacted gun control with 23 separate executive orders.

Strangely, Republicans, who have voted 54 times over four years to repeal or alter the Affordable Care Act, are not planning to sue President Obama on any of those issues. Instead, House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) has asked Congress for permission to sue Obama because he suspended the start date of the employer mandate provision of the health care law.

It doesn't get more ridiculous than this. Unable to repeal what they call Obamacare, House Republicans are moving faster than the lips of an auctioneer on crack to sue the president because he is making it easier to comply with what everyone except anti-Obama Republicans recognize as the law of the land.

As Sabastian Payne wrote in the Washington Post, "... For all the accusations of abuse of power, his [Obama] actual uses of his executive authority so far aren't that far-reaching: Not so much the smack of firm government, more nudging in a certain direction. George W.

Bush for example managed to gut the Presidential Records Act (greatly reducing access to presidential records), limit federal funding for stem cell research and sidestep the Geneva Convention on interrogation techniques – all through executive orders, even when he had Congress on his side. Interestingly, all of these orders were later rescinded by Obama."

Payne continued, "Bill Clinton was no stranger to far-reaching orders either. During his two terms in office, he banned the import of 50+ types of semi-automatic assault weapons and assault pistols... In May 1989, George H. W. Bush temporarily halted the importation of some semi-automatic firearms, following a school shooting in Stockton, Calif. This was made permanent a month later. Ronald Reagan also enacted some significant policy initiatives through executive power. The NSA has said that its controversial collection of e-mail and Internet data, for example, was authorized back in 1981 by Reagan's executive order."

What Reagan did was far more dangerous than postponing a health care start date. Yet, there wasn't even talk of taking him to court.

Allstate Sugar Bowl And R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl Rally Local Youth To Victory With Cheer & Football Clinic Presented By Chevron

Featuring former Saints Running Back Deuce McAllister

The Allstate Sugar Bowl and R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl Cheer and Football Clinic presented by Chevron featuring New Orleans Saints legend Deuce McAllister will be held Saturday, July 19 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Harrell Playground (2202 Leonidas Street, New Orleans, La. 70118).

McAllister will speak at the clinic, presented by Chevron, offering young athletes the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of football and cheerleading in a safe and positive environment.

The program entails football training under the direction of regional collegiate football coaches, including coaching staff members from Southern, Nicholls State and

Tulane universities. Additionally, former Saintsations and other professional cheerleaders will teach cheerleading participants sideline cheers and dances. All who attend the clinic will receive lunch and a T-shirt.

The clinic is free and open to all youths ages 5 - 14. For more information or to register for the clinic, visit www.gnosports.com or call (504) 525-5678.

The Allstate Sugar Bowl and the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl have worked together for the past eight years to sponsor free youth clinics targeted at children throughout the city of New Orleans.

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Malveaux/ Continued from Page 6

summer, enabling them to return to school ready to do their best work.

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and leading light of the Children's Defense Fund, has developed a Freedom School program that teaches young people civil rights history along with basic skills. Organizations can purchase the curriculum and send staff for training in teaching it. Thousands of young people are being positively impacted by Freedom Schools.

Lots of local programs have developed programs that have elements similar to those at the CDF Freedom Schools. A week or so ago, I began my morning with the young people at Washington D.C.'s Southeast Tennis and Learning Center for their "Read Aloud" program. At about 8:30 in the morning, the youngsters, whose ages range from 6 to 15, gather in a circle to hear a book read to them, and to engage in an energetic and affirming ritual. I love the read aloud program because I love looking into the eyes of these young people, to imagine the leaders they will become.

I read Faith Ringgold's Aunt Harriett's Underground Railroad in the Sky as selected students acted out the words, joined me in song, and applauded each other as the story came to an end. Flashback

to preadolescence - the students who played the parts of Cassie and Bebe, a sister and brother separated moving along the railroad were supposed to hug when reunited. While the young man was "up" for the hug, the young woman looked like she wanted to run in another direction.

The Read Aloud program ends with a rousing group rendition of Labi Siffre's "Something Inside," complete with choreographed hand gestures and motions. Every morning, these 50 or so young'uns are affirming themselves through song. The adults who participate in the Read Aloud program are politicians and business leaders, artists and educators. If they are anything like me, they leave uplifted by the children and their promise of resilience.

I'm encouraging those who can to help with a summer enrichment program. Spend a day, a few afternoons, and maybe more time to help provide a summer experience. Funding helps provide great summer opportunities for our youth, and informal programs with a couple of retired teachers and a church basement can go a long way, as well. We cannot afford to widen the achievement gap by leaving too many of our young people unengaged this summer.

Greater New Orleans Executives Association Elects Philip Rebowe As President



Philip Rebowe, Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC has been elected as President of the Board of Directors of the Greater New Orleans Executives Association. He has been an active member since 1984.

Founded in 1971, the Greater New Orleans Executive Associa-

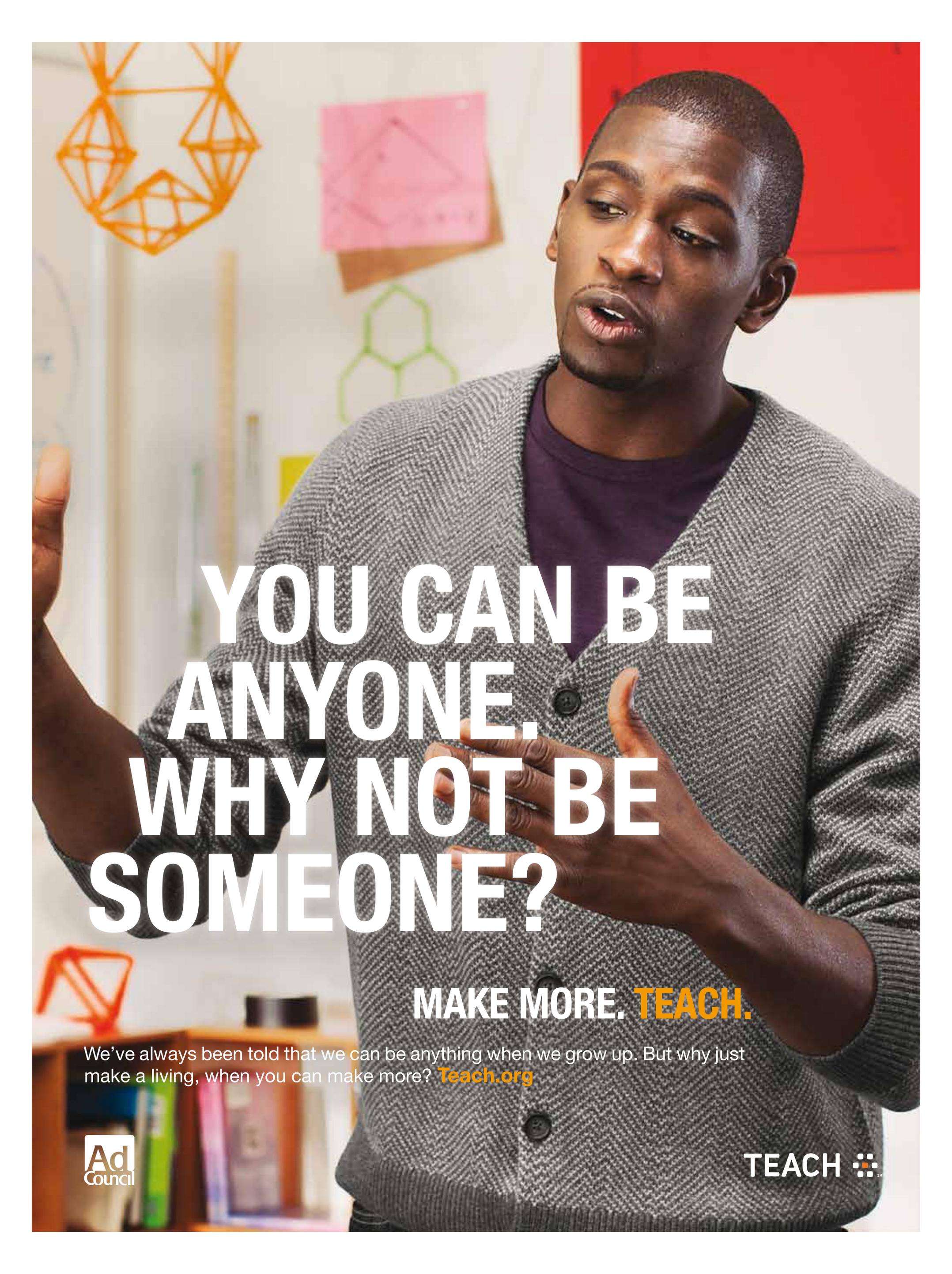
tion is an organization of 60 business owners in the metropolitan area. The Association serves its members by allowing them to share critical business information, referrals and market data along with expert advice on key legal, accounting, insurance and labor issues.

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