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NNPA Legacy Awards

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Uptown Music Theatre

Planting the Seeds of Greatness through Art



Pictured above: Servant (Nya Lombard), President Roosevelt (Delfeayo Marsalis), and Annie (Jaelynn Ricks). Annie learns from President Roosevelt that her real parents are dead.

By Edwin Buggage

Planting the Seeds of Greatness through Art

The arts in the African-American community as is on the continent of Africa and in the Diaspora is like blood running through the veins of a people giving them life.

It is more than just something that is a museum piece to be observed and marveled at or something separate from the everyday realities of life. Delfeayo Marsalis for over a decade has become a leader in passing on this tradition to young people through his Uptown Musical Theatre. Where he takes young people and uses the arts to help them tap into their greatness, teaching

them lessons that go far beyond the stage. Speaking of the origins of the program Marsalis says, "It started in 2000, it was mainly for kids to have an opportunity to get dramatic arts education. So the idea was to have professional teachers, also it is based on the NOCCA model of when I was in high school. It is about training kids on a professional level. They are taught the same

On the Cover: Annie (Jaelynn Ricks) comforts Molly (Nala Hamilton) after she has a nightmare in the opening scene.

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Ms Grace Farrell (Talaire Ducre), Lily St. Regis (Kiya Henderson), Rooster (Wynton Jones), Annie (Hilary Vaucresson), and Oliver Warbucks (Lloyd Dillon). Rooster and Lily try to run a con on Oliver Warbucks pretending to be Ralph and Shirley Mudge, Annie's parents in order to get the \$50,000 Warbucks promised for anyone that could prove they were Annie's parents.



Above is Vance Vaucresson, with his daughter Hilary Vaucresson who also plays the role of Annie, says this is his first year enrolling his daughter in UMT and he sees the immediate impact it's had on her.

way adults would be taught but we understand they are kids but I believe you are never too young to tap into your gift that may lead to your greatness."

Delfeayo Marsalis is someone who is from a family that has become synonymous with making great art. With the seeds being planted for greatness at a young age in addition to getting support from his large extended family; speaking of the many influences in his life and what has become part of his life's mission serving young people he says, "We grew up around our older relatives and I grew up with a certain respect and reverence for older people. I was taught to respect them and learn from them and it made me a better person and now I am trying to pass on what I've learned to young people; giving them a head start in realizing their dreams and making them a reality through discipline, focus and hard work."

The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow: UMT Brings Annie to the Stage

In past years UMT have produced many shows starring the kids in addition to competing and winning in national theater competitions. This year UMT brought to the stage "Annie," it is to coincide with a Broadway production that will feature an African-American in the lead role. Speaking of his production of "Annie" and the theater and what he and his staff strives to achieve he says, "There is a Broadway production that will have an African-American main character and we wanted to produce our version of it," says Marsalis. Continuing he says, "I feel that our kids need to

understand that to be successful it takes more than natural talent; and that it takes much more than that to be a success at a high level. We have trained our kids to compete at the highest level at the Jr. Theater Festival with kids from across the country of all backgrounds and we have won awards three years in a row. That says a lot about the effectiveness of our program and our kids and their commitment to be the best."

For his production the role of Annie was double cast, with 10 year old Jaelynn Ricks and 8 year old Hilary Vaucresson playing the lead role. Jaelynn Ricks has been with UMT for four years and was excited to play the role of Annie and have learned a lot in the time she has spent at UMT that she applies both on and off the stage, "I had a lot of fun playing Annie and in my four years with UMT I have learned a lot of things, I have learned how to project, how to stay focused on one thing, how to get a point across. It's also helped me do better in school with reading, because before I didn't like to read but now I love it and I am reading more."

The things that are taken away that one applies beyond the stage are a fact not lost on many of the parents who enroll their children in UMT. Vance Vaucresson, the father of Hilary Vaucresson who was also cast as Annie. This is his first year enrolling his daughter in UMT and he sees the immediate impact it's had on her. "I wanted to put her in an environment where she could flourish. Since she has been in the program I see the changes in her already in her ability to focus more and she is getting that from so many places such as her voice

teacher Ms. Chase or the Director Mr. John Grimsley reinforcing that. And what I am hoping is that going into the school year that this experience is something that can help her because some of her teachers men-

tioned she sometimes had problems with focusing. So we feel that this experience would make her a better student."

Vaucresson who occasionally performs onstage and is a songwrit-

er speaks of his daughter and what he experienced seeing his little girl light up on stage. "I have been a

Cover Story, Continued on page 10.

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It's Back to School for the Eastbank Collaborative of Charter Schools (ECCS)!

The Eastbank Collaborative of Charter Schools (ECCS) invites you to come visit! We're proud of our schools and excited to get back to work.

Back to School Dates Date/Grades

Lake Forest Elementary (PK-8)
August 11 (1-8), August 18 (PK & K)
12000 Hayne Blvd., NOLA 70128
(504) 826-7140

Morris Jeff Community School (PK-6)
August 14 (3-6), August 18 (PK-2)
3368 Esplanade, NOLA 70119
(504) 373-6258

New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics High School, Sci High (9-12)
August 8 (9th only), August 11 (9-12)
5625 Loyola Ave., NOLA 70115
(504) 324-7061



Warren Easton Charter High School (9-12)
August 11 (9-12)
3019 Canal St., NOLA 70119
(504) 324-7400

Einstein Charter School & Extension (PK-8)
August 18 (1-8)
Main Campus: August 25 (PK & K)
5100 Cannes St., NOLA 70129
Extension:

5316 Michoud Blvd., NOLA 70129
(504) 324-7450

Benjamin Franklin High School (9-12)
August 11 (9-12)
2001 Leon C. Simon Dr., NOLA 70122
(504) 286-2600

Andrew Wilson Charter School
August 11 (1-8), August 18 (PK & K)
3617 General Pershing St., NOLA 70125
(504) 373-6274

Audubon Charter School (PK-8)
August 18 (K-8), August 20 (PK4), August 27 (PK3)
Lower School (PK-3):
6101 Chatham Dr., NOLA 70122
(504) 324-7100

Upper School (4-8):
1111 Milan St., NOLA 70115
(504) 324-7110

International School of Louisiana, ISL (K-8)
August 18 (1-8), August 20 (Kindergarten)
Uptown Campus (K-8):
1400 Camp St., NOLA 70130
(504) 654-1088

Westbank Campus (K-2):
502 Olivier St., NOLA 70114
(504) 274-4571

Jefferson Parish Campus (K-8):
8101 Simon Street
Metairie, LA 70003
(504) 934-4875

Lusher Charter (K-12)
August 13 (1-12), August 20 & 21 (K)
Elementary/Willow Campus (K-5):
7315 Willow St., NOLA 70118
(504) 862-5110

Middle/High School (6-12):
5624 Freret St., NOLA
(504) 304-3960

Hynes Charter School (PK-8)
August 21 (1-8), August 28 (PK & K)
990 Harrison Ave, NOLA 70124
(504) 324-7160

New Orleans Military and Maritime Academy (NOMMA)
August 12(9-12)
New Campus!
425 O'Bannon St, NOLA 70146
(504) 227-3810

Robert Russa Moton Elementary (PK-7)
July 21
Year round school
3774 Gentilly Blvd,
New Orleans, LA 70122
(504) 430-3143

International High School of New Orleans (9-12)
August 15 (9th only), August 18 (10-12)
727 Carondelet St., NOLA 70130
(504) 613-5703

Data News Weekly is Hiring

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

Editor/Reporters

About the Job

Journalists — tired of reading of layoffs, closings, the dire straights of the profession? Recent college graduates — think your job prospects are bleak? Not with us!

At Columbia-Greene Media, we are expanding! This includes starting a print newspaper/digital endeavor in one of the most dynamic and exciting cities, New Orleans.

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If interested, send your resume, cover letter and at least three clips of your work to Terry Jones Publisher, Data News Weekly, 3501 Napoleon Ave, New Orleans, LA 70125, or via email to terrybjones@bellsouth.net, or call (504) 821-7421.

Sales Manager/Retail Ad Manager

About the Job

Data News Weekly Newspaper is the leading African American media company in New Orleans, publishing a weekly newspaper. Additionally, its website under ladatanews.com is the most read Black website in the region.

We are currently seeking a strong leader to proactively manage broad aspects of the advertising division. You will be working in a positive team-oriented atmosphere which has a modern press, leading website and award-winning newspaper.

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- Increase overall revenue opportunities in both print and online
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skills and experience:

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- Team player and leader
- Understanding of Analytics and ad serving technology
- Strong motivational skills
- Recruit talent

Our company provides a competitive salary, and an environment that encourages personal and professional growth. We are an equal opportunity employer.

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New Orleans City Planning Commission Releases Final Draft of City's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance

The New Orleans City Planning Commission (CPC) released the Final Draft of the City's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO). The CZO is the law that governs land use throughout the city of New Orleans. The CZO includes lists of permitted land uses for each of the City's zoning districts, in addition to height limits, setback requirements, urban design standards, operational rules, and other regulations. The release of the Final Draft CZO culminates nearly three years of review by CPC staff and consultants and includes refinements based on concerns raised by residents and neighborhood associations, as well as from interactions with City agencies, citizen advisory groups, various interest groups, and business community leaders.

"New Orleans has made great

strides planning and rebuilding in the years since Hurricane Katrina," Mayor Mitch Landrieu said. "The CZO builds on this momentum by incorporating the vision, priorities, and goals that New Orleanians have been working toward since the storm. The CZO is a crucial step to implementing the City's Master Plan and creates a blueprint for development moving forward."

The First Draft CZO was released in 2011. Initial input was gathered at a series of Neighborhood Planning District meetings attended by more 2,000 residents. In October 2013, the CPC released a Second Draft CZO and held ten community meetings across New Orleans that was attended by 1,500 residents. During the public comment period, over 1,000 written comments were received. CPC also hosted approxi-

mately 30 follow-up meetings with various neighborhood, business, and interest groups to discuss the Second Draft CZO.

Some of the key attributes of the Final Draft CZO include:

Adjustments to ensure that the administration of the ordinance is consistent, predictable, and understandable;

The replacement of the cumulative zoning structure with place-based zoning districts;

Design controls and review processes to preserve neighborhood character;

New requirements to guarantee meaningful neighborhood input;

Clear standards for sites and uses that allow flexibility and protect adjacent uses;

New parking standards to reflect on-the-ground realities of historic and non-historic areas of the City and;

Landscaping and storm water management standards.

AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The Final Draft CZO can be viewed on the CPC's website at www.nola.gov/cpc

Beginning Monday, July 28, 2014, copies of the Final Draft CZO are available at the following New Orleans Public Libraries:

New Orleans Public Main Library

219 Loyola Avenue

New Orleans 70112

Algiers Regional Library

3014 Holiday Drive

New Orleans, LA 70131

East New Orleans Regional Library

5641 Read Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70127
Rosa F. Keller Library & Community Center

4300 S. Broad Street

New Orleans, LA 70125

Martin Luther King Library

1611 Caffin Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70117

Norman Mayer Library

3001 Gentilly Blvd.

New Orleans, LA 70122

Robert E. Smith Library

6301 Canal Blvd.

New Orleans, LA 70124

The CPC has scheduled hearings on the Final Draft CZO for Tuesday, August 26, 2014 and Tuesday, September 9, 2014. Once CPC approves a recommendation on the Final Draft CZO, it will go to the New Orleans City Council for review.

Blessed 26 College Send Off Celebration

Blessed 26 and The American New Wave Media Group present

BLESSED 26

THE AMERICAN NEW WAVE MEDIA GROUP
NEW ORLEANS

THE ILLUMINATION OF INVISIBLE MEN

600 Fulton Alley Tuesday, August 5th 6:30pm to 9:30 pm

The Blessed 26 Organization and the American New Wave Media Group New Orleans invite you to come celebrate and send off of Mr. Darrell Howard who is on his way to New York to attend Bard College on a full scholarship. The celebration will be hosted by Shawn Barney of Fulton Alley.

Where: 600 Fulton Alley New Orleans LA 70130

Time: 6:30 - 9:30 pm

Guests are welcome and we are asking that everyone bring a monetary gift of any denomination for Darrell so that we can assist him in purchasing airfare to travel home and real winter clothes. You will also be able to support the Blessed 26 program and the "Illumination of Invisible Men" Film Project.

Help us inspire you: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-illumination-of-invisible-men/x/8249565#home>

Picture your ceremony in front of our elaborate 20-foot fireplace and the twinkle of the 11 crystal chandeliers throughout the ballroom as you walk down our beautiful staircase from the bridal suite. But don't just imagine the perfect wedding. Call us today and let us help you bring your perfect day to reality!

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Texture in the Garden



By LMG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

Of course we look for color and fragrance when planning a garden, but texture is an important design element that we must always include to round off garden interest. Texture in the garden is achieved by introducing different kinds of foliage to your garden. Unusual shaped leaves like the Poor Man's Parasol (*Gunnera insignis*) with its huge sandpaper-like leaves and scarlet branches definitely command attention. Some grasses like papyrus add a soft wispieness to the garden while others like

bamboo and sugarcane add cylindrical interest, structure and sound. Juniper ground covers add a layer of fluffiness, cactus and succulents can add texture, color, and sculptural interest in the garden. Cockscomb (*Celosia argentea*) also known as the wool flower; it's one of those plants that gives you a 4-fer for your money providing velvety texture, vibrant color in the bloom, contrasting striking color in its chartreuse foliage, as well as the unusual shaped blooms that resembles the comb on a rooster's head.

Other plants that add textural interest in the garden include the Mimosa tree *Albizia julibrissin* (Persian

silk tree, pink silk tree) with its small leaves on linear stems and the powder puffy blooms that add texture and whimsy. The puckered leaf varieties of hostas are a great inexpensive texture tool for the garden, also Lambs Ear, so named for its fuzzy texture. Sedums, Kalanchoe, and other broad leafed succulents like Jade and Hens & Chicks (*Sempervivum tectorum*), have waxed-like foliage that add a smooth texture to the garden. While succulents like the *Aloe cameronii*, with curvy spiny foliage, crimson hues, and chandelier shaped orange blooms; brings drama, drama, drama to the landscape.

Of course we cannot discuss texture without including the Foxtail Fern (*Asparagus densiflorus var. meyeri*), a type of asparagus fern rather than a true fern, a great little textured jewel to enhance any garden room. This unusual evergreen fern with its long tapered plume-like stems resembling a fox's tail. On your next trip to your favorite garden center, think texture when making your plant selections.

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" at thegardeningdiva.com

Remember, never get too business to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!

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

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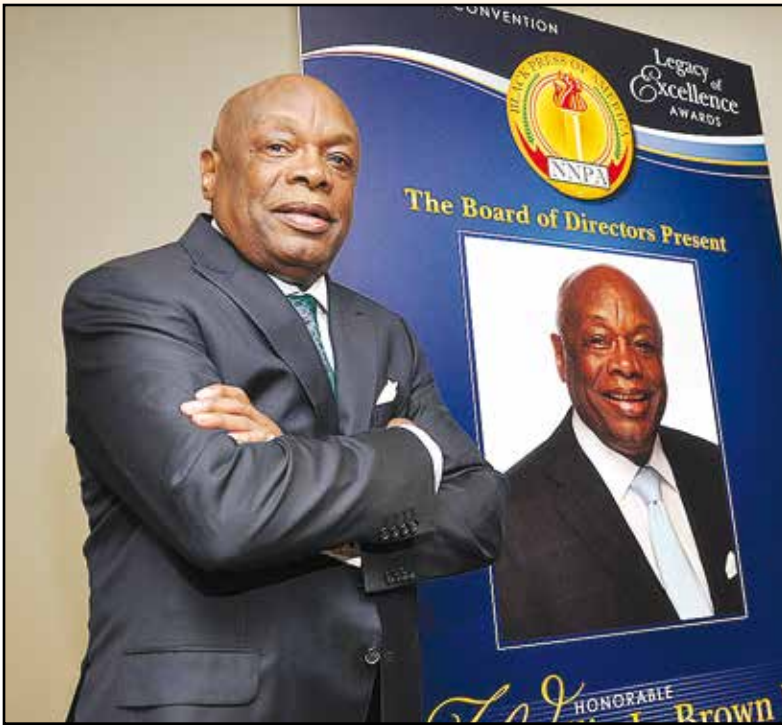
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NNPA Legacy Awards Highlights

Photos courtesy of Worsom Robinson

The National Newspaper Publishers Association "The Black Press of America, held its Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon recently. Former San Francisco mayor and Democratic powerbroker Willie Brown received the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) prestigious Legacy Award last week for his distinguished public service. As a proud member of the Black Press of America, Data News Weekly was there.



The High Cost of Injustice



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

nearly a million students to college if the \$25,000 covers the cost of attendance (which it does for most state schools and Historically Black Colleges and Universities). It could put nearly half a million teachers in under-served K-12 schools. It could restore availability to libraries and parks. Instead, we spend it incarcerating people, particularly those who are locked up for relatively minor crimes.

The \$2.4 billion that the Sentencing Project has calculated may be a low estimate. According to the Justice Department more than \$80 billion is spent on incarceration annually. How much of this spending is unnecessary and could be easily converted to drug treatment and recovery? Why do we find it so easy to incarcerate people but so difficult to rehabilitate them, knowing that the recidivism rates are high?

Within five years of incarceration, more than three-quarters are rearrested. Most were arrested for property crimes, not for drug offenses, or violent offenses. Much of the property crime could be alleviated if it was easier for ex-offenders to

find employment, but after incarceration, many find the doors of employment slammed in their faces. Incarceration combined with education and societal embrace might reduce recidivism and the level of property crime.

President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder are moving in the right direction. First, the president moved to reform drug sentencing laws, reducing the discrepancy between crack and powdered cocaine. This resulted in the Smarter Sentencing Act, which has yet to be scheduled for a vote in Congress and the Senate, despite bipartisan support for this legislation. Advocates of the bill, including the ACLU, the Sentencing Project, the NAACP and many others support the legislation and have encouraged people to reach out to their Congressional representatives to push for a vote on this legislation.

The Smarter Sentencing Act, when approved, will make modifications in sentencing requirements. Now, the US Sentencing Commission has ruled that those with drug sentences and be ap-

plied retroactively. This will affect as many as 46,000 prisoners. It's not enough, but it's a reasonable first step. If release were combined with education and access to employment, recidivism rates would certainly decrease.

The United States represents just 5 percent of the world population, but incarcerates more than a quarter of the world's incarcerated. Nearly half of those incarcerated in federal prisons are African American. Is there a bias here? African Americans are as likely as Whites to commit nonviolent drug related crimes, but African Americans are far more likely to be incarcerated. The difference – the money that provides access to great legal services; maybe the attraction of a plea bargain, guilty or not, because of the prospect of an unfair sentence; maybe bias on the part of arresting officers. Whatever the cause, it seems unfathomable that African Americans and Whites commit the same crimes, but African Americans are arrested six times as frequently as Whites.

If you read a November 2013 A

Living Death: Life without Parole for Nonviolent Offenses from the ACLU, you won't know whether to scream or cry.

More than 3,200 people have life sentences without parole for such minor offenses such as shoplifting, trying to cash a stolen check, and threatening a police officer while handcuffed. Some are sentenced because of sentencing guidelines, which mean judges have no choice in their sentencing. What makes sense about giving a shoplifter more time than a murderer?

As many as 65 percent of those who have been sentenced to life without parole are African American. According to the ACLU, "many were struggling with mental illness, drug dependency, or financial desperation." Only in an injustice system can this be considered "just."

There has been some progress in making sentencing fairer. Yet much more must be done until we can claim the "justice" that our Constitution promises.

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

The Lynching of Eric Garner



By Walter Fields
Northstarnews.com
NNPA Columnist

find ourselves enraged over the police killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island, which was captured on cell phone video as a police officer puts him in a choke hold, with the man pleading that he can't breathe. Garner was taken away unconscious and later pronounced dead. Another day in America.

Let me be clear – Eric Garner was lynched. He was brutally assaulted and choked to death by a police officer who, supposedly trained, abused his authority with deadly precision. It is not enough to state that the officer used deadly force because when it comes to Black males and police, there is a violent regularity that has persisted for decades. The manner in which Black men and boys are set upon by law enforcement is consistent with

their marginalization in society and the degree to which they are a criminalized class. There is no benefit of the doubt, no reasonableness, no dialogue – just force and upon the slightest protest on our part, violence and probable injury or death.

We need to be clear and unambiguous about Eric Garner's death in the larger context of the suppression of Black males. What is experienced by Black males on a daily basis is seldom the experience of White males, and cannot be fathomed by Whites in general. White mothers do not have to counsel their sons on their behavior should they encounter police or worry when their sons step out their door whether they will be a victim of police violence. Even in the most extreme situations when White

males are the perpetrators of violent crime, police are in apprehend mode and not in pursuit with deadly intent.

Eric Garner was lynched.

He is the most recent case in a gigabyte file of such cases. I have yet to see the movie "Fruitvale Station" because I know how difficult it will be to see the reenactment of the killing of Oscar Grant. It cuts too close to home because I remember the killing of 15-year-old Phillip Pannell by a White Teaneck N.J. police officer in 1990. The boy was shot in the back with his arms raised in surrender mode. The White police officer, Gary Spath, was acquitted by an all-White Bergen County jury. The acquittal came amidst a massive police march through the community in support of the officer. That's the

other piece of this ongoing horror show; the closing of the ranks of the blue fraternity and the perpetual denial on the part of law enforcement that these episodes are not the end result of racist intent.

Eric Garner was a victim of racism.

The New York City Police Department is not alone in perpetuating crimes against Black males or operating in a way to violate the civil liberties of Black people. The NYPD just happens to be the largest police force in the country and has perfected the art of police abuse. Last week, the federal government announced the monitoring of the Newark, N.J. police force, which for years residents lodged

My Brother's Keeper Initiative Is Destroying the Black Male Mentoring Movement

By Phillip Jackson
Founder and Executive Director, The Black Star Project

The White House's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative is destroying the Black Male Mentoring Movement in America—decades-long work to save Black boys. Virtually all of the small, community-based agencies that comprise this substantial, historic effort to mentor Black boys have been left out of the overall conversation, the planning, and the funding essential to save Black boys and to chart a new course for their continued survival. Many of these groups provided mentoring for Black boys long before President Barack Obama became president and they will be working to save Black boys when he leaves the office.

The White House made a strange decision to allow The University of Chicago to be its lead academic partner in the mentoring of Black boys although no visible plan exists to increase that school's dastardly low Black male student population, which has hovered at about 2% for the past fifteen years. The Black males on campus at the University of Chicago have to deal with severe racial profiling from their own campus police, and one Black male student was even put in a choke-hold and "arrested for not properly using the library." Funding the elite, well-healed University of Chicago as the leadership organization for Black

male mentoring while ignoring grassroots organizations that have facilitated Black male mentoring programs for decades guarantees that his initiative will fail!

I support President Obama on many things, but I cannot support the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative as operated in its first year. In fact, this initiative has given America the excuse to say, "We gave Black men 'My Brother's Keeper'"; what else could Black men possibly want? Most insidious is the fact that corporations and foundations that once funded smaller entities that mentored Black boys, now direct those dollars to "My Brother's Keeper", essentially putting these effective, mostly Black agencies out of business.

Equally appalling is this initiative's lack of grassroots leadership and the underrepresentation of Black organizations and agencies in "My Brother's Keeper". The failure to include these important stakeholders severely undermines the integrity of the initiative. Who are these people rushing to save young Black men and where were they when there was no money to do this important work? To those of us working long before "My Brother's Keeper", the motive remains to save the lives of our children and rebuild our communities—not money or contracts. Now Black-led organizations are being systematically locked out of the process of mentoring Black boys by The White House!

Fact sheets, press releases and photo-ops will not transform the state of Black men in America. Yet these seem to be the initiative's most-used tools. A recent study, also out the University of Chicago claimed there has been little-to-no progress for Black men in America over the past 45 years. The National Assessment of Educational Progress recently reported that only 10% of 8th-grade Black boys in America read at or above a proficient level while the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University reported unemployment rates for various age groups of young Black men and teens are two, three and four times that of non-Black age-

related groups.

The murder statistics for young Black men, and for Black and Latino children in Chicago, are astounding and some of the highest statistics for any population in the world. President Obama does not have to go far see and understand the magnitude of challenges, on all levels, faced by Black men and boys. He can simply walk down the block on which he lives in Chicago to see the problem—and the solution. The question is, will he!

Where are the "Brothers" in the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative? "My Brother's Keeper" can be a good thing for young Black men in America—just not in its cur-

rent, shallow iteration. Experienced stakeholders and grassroots leaders need to be a part of this initiative for it to succeed. And this initiative must succeed! It is hypocritical for America to continue to fail/destroy Black men and boys and still consider itself to be one of the greatest, most humanitarian countries in the world.

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Commentary. Continued from previous page.

complaints against. Now, it has come to light that officers in New Jersey's largest city are even suspected of stealing personal property from residents they detain. In Chicago, the former city police commander, Jon Burge, presided over a department that regularly brutalized citizens and he himself was alleged to have engaged in violence. He was convicted in 2010 for lying about the torture of police suspects.

NYPD Chief Bill Bratton's order that all officers undergo training on the proper techniques to apprehend suspects is too little in light of the brutality of Garner's death. For starters, every officer on the scene should be dismissed. If officers sworn to uphold the law can witness a citizen being choked to death and not intervene, they are not capable of fulfilling their legal duty to protect and serve. The video clip clearly shows a man who was not confrontational, who was attempting to defuse the situation and was trying to communicate with the officers. He is taken down by the officers and then thrown to the ground as an officer puts him in a deadly choke hold. Garner can be heard on the video pleading "I can't breathe," but his physical condition was of little concern to the officers who were intent on demonstrating that they were the dominant force.

Eric Garner was lynched.

Walter Fields is executive editor of NorthStarNews.com

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LSUHSC Initial Site for Lung Cancer Clinical Trial

LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans' Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center is one of the six initial sites to enroll patients in the Lung Cancer Master Protocol, or Lung-MAP, clinical trial. Sponsored by the National Cancer Institute, Lung-MAP is a collaboration between six major cancer programs and five pharmaceutical companies. For the first time, the trial offers patients with advanced lung cancer a personalized medicine approach to investigational treatments based upon the genetic makeup of their cancers. Lung-MAP uses genomic profiling to match patients to medications targeting the genetic changes fueling the growth of their tumors. Participants will be tested just once using a "master protocol" before being assigned to one of five different clinical trial arms.

LSU Health Sciences Center



New Orleans, in partnership with Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, will enroll patients at four clinical

sites in Louisiana – the Interim LSU Hospital in New Orleans, as well as Mary Bird Perkins Cancer

Center locations in Houma, St. Tammany and Baton Rouge. The overall goal of the Lung-MAP trial

is to enroll a total of 10,000 patients among all sites.

The genomic profile screening uses a comprehensive and sophisticated platform to check more than 200 cancer-related genes for abnormalities. The results of this screening will determine which one of the five arms testing investigational medications will best suit each participant's individual needs. Lung-MAP is characterized as an innovative approach that will improve a patient's likelihood of receiving a drug that will work for them while allowing for new therapies in development to be added as the trial progresses. Medications will be provided to participants at no charge.

For more information about the Lung-MAP clinical trial, contact Eileen Mederos, RN, LSUHSC Program Manager, at 504-407-7395.

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performer and I know what it takes, and I just hope that she did well, I had no idea what she would do, but when I saw what she did on stage I was amazed. I had family members that came and they were in tears, for me I felt a sense of calmness. I thought now my work is going to begin to work with her on her craft because now I see the potential. It is the same with my son with baseball and basketball and now I have something to share with my daughter, a way to connect working on her passion and seeing her grow."

The Need for Arts Education in Schools

The arts can help students become well-rounded individuals and the goal for Marsalis is to replicate his program hoping to reach more kids and impact their lives in a positive way. "Our goal is to have UMT Programs in schools across the City because this is what kids need. We

are already in Lusher and will be going in A.H. Wilson School; by 2015 we are looking to have our program in six schools." Continuing he says, "This is about bringing the community together. We have students come back to work with us to serve as mentors and actors in our productions. That is how our community has and can be developed by us realizing that we are a family."

Vance Vaucresson is an advocate for arts in the schools and feels UMT should have a larger reach that can impact more kids, "I think having the arts in schools make people better-rounded. What Delfeayo has done is something we need in schools. This is a great City and it is about how we nurture the talent of the next generation." Going further he speaks of his daughter and how the things she's learning can be applied later in her life in a profession that may have nothing to do with the stage; but the skills

taught may be used to make her a success at whatever career she pursues. "I want to support her, she may say one day I want to become a lawyer and this type of training may help her become a great attorney in the courtroom and that may become her stage where she finds greatness."

Jaelynn Ricks has seen the benefits of being involved in UMT and sees the benefits for other kids saying, "I think that acting can be good to help other kids read better and also it is a great way to make friends; because this year there were a lot of new people in the program, and by the time we were done I knew everybody's first and last name. And I think acting is good if you are a shy person it can help break you out of your shell. It also can help you be more confident about yourself." At a young age you can see the seeds of greatness planted in this young girl, who is getting support from

her parents as well as a village of elders who is helping her, and so many other young people to be the best they can be. And because of the arts and all the support she has around her she advises young people to never stop pursuing their dreams, wise beyond her years she says, "I would tell my peers to follow their dreams, don't ever let anyone tear you down and always stay positive, and regardless of what others may sometime say stay positive about yourself and what you are focused on doing. Remember you were made perfectly it is no mistake who you are and if you believe this your dreams can come true."

In a City that continues to rebuild itself post-Katrina questions still arise about what New Orleans will look like moving forward? Will the City that gave the world Jazz and so much in the fields of the arts ever be the same? Will there be a next generation of great

artists if the arts continue to be cut from the schools? Where will the next great painter, actor, dance, singer or musicians come from if there is a divestment in one of the things that makes this City unique and great? The art of New Orleans has become so much of what gives New Orleans its ID, and is part of its cultural identity and is such a vital part of the culture. To imagine New Orleans without it is something that one could not imagine. Marsalis says this is why UMT and other programs aimed at preserving the arts and the traditions of New Orleans are important. "The arts are very important; in our tradition it is functional and is part of the community. Today we think of art as being separate from the community, but it is all one thing. That is what we need our kids to understand; that it is important as us breathing, it is what gives our City life and it must continue."

Drug Offenders Receive Retroactive Sentence Reductions

By Jazelle Hunt
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – In a major move last week, the U.S. Sentencing Commission voted unanimously to moderate federal sentencing guidelines for drug offenses, and apply the guidelines retroactively. Consequently, more than 46,000 currently incarcerated drug offenders – 73 percent of whom are Black or Latino – will now be eligible for a reduction in their sentences.

“This amendment [to the guidelines] received unanimous support from Commissioners because it is a measured approach,” said Judge Patti B. Saris, chair of the commission. “It reduces prison costs and populations and responds to statutory and guidelines changes since the drug guidelines were initially developed, while safeguarding public safety.”

The Sentencing Commission is an independent agency in the federal court system tasked with creating federal prison sentencing policy. Though the amendment is aimed at reducing overcrowding (another of the agency’s responsibilities), there are also implications for the legacy of the war on drugs. The Commission reports that federal prisons are over capacity by 32 percent. In the long run, the amendment could save nearly 80,000 “bed years.”

“We think [the amendment] represents really an historic step forward in terms of making changes to the war on drugs, which has been waged for three decades – and hasn’t really reduced the amount of drugs that are available, and hasn’t done that much about drug abuse, but has filled half our federal prison cells with people with drug offenses,” says Jeremy Haile, federal advocacy counsel for the Sentencing Project, a national incarceration research, reform, and advocacy organization.

“It’s been a particularly devastating blow—the war on drugs—to communities of color. So even though people of all races use and sell drugs at roughly the same rates, Blacks and Latinos are far more likely to be incarcerated for drug offenses.”

The amendment works by raising the drug quantity thresholds that trigger mandatory minimum sentences. Sentencing for federal



drug offenses moving forward will use this new threshold, but the amendment is also retroactive. Many offenders’ cases would no longer meet those thresholds.

Offenders must meet seven criteria to be eligible for a revised (and likely reduced) sentence, including: an original sentence longer than the mandatory minimum; no convictions under career criminal guidelines; and no alterations to the original mandatory-minimum sentence through special leniency or assisting authorities.

Starting now, eligible offenders can file a motion to have their cases reviewed and sentences reduced. The courts will review to determine whether reducing the sentence poses a public threat. Motions will be decided on a rolling basis—but actual releases won’t begin until November 1, 2015.

The time allows for a smooth transition. Judges will be able to carefully review each of the eligible 46,290 cases, and prosecutors will have time to object, if desired. Fed-

eral probation professionals will have time to prepare to supervise those being released earlier than expected, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons will have time to set-up reentry provisions for them.

The commission estimates that those approved will receive a reduction of about two years, on average. Because the eligible cases span a few decades, these early releases will take place over many years. There are a few thousand offenders whose resentencing would allow them to be released immediately on the November date.

This amendment is another step in a slow, but sweeping effort to get a handle on ineffective drug policy. In 2010, the Obama administration released its first plan for drug policy reform, a holistic strategy to address drugs as an international and public health issue. And according to independent political fact-checking project, Politifact, President Barack Obama has kept most of his drug reform promises.

In 2010, he signed the Fair Sentencing Act, which reduced the mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines that had created a decades-long 100-to-1 sentencing disparity between crack and cocaine offenses. Funding to state drug courts, which funnel low-level drug offenders to treatment as opposed to incarceration, has increased each year since 2012.

Additionally, there has been some traction and effective collaboration on drug reform in recent years. In 2008, for example, President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act into law, which gave subsidies to companies that hired ex-offenders. Even the Commission’s vote has been a collaborative process, eliciting more than 60,000 mostly-favorable letters from elected officials, organizations, citizens, and legal professionals during a public comment period.

However, social, executive, and judicial interventions alone are not enough to address the lingering effects of the drug war. For example, the scope of the Sentencing Commission’s vote only affects those serving time in federal facilities; meanwhile, the bulk of the nation’s drug offenders are convicted at the state level.

Without Congressional action, some drug policy problems—particularly the mandatory minimum guidelines that impose sentences based on the amount and drug involved, regardless of the case facts and/or judge’s assessment—will remain in effect. Several elected officials have made attempts at legislation to address these issues. Most recently, the Smarter Sentencing Act, introduced in the Senate last year, and again in March, seeks to allow the court to disregard the mandatory minimum guidelines in cases involving low-level, nonviolent offenders.

“The Sentencing Commission did about as well as it could, given the constraints with mandatory minimum [sentencing guidelines], which can only be repealed or reduced by Congress,” says Haile. “Some people might be tempted to think that...this [vote] means the problem is solved, but really it’s going to continue to be a problem even when all these reforms are carried out. We’ll still need to heal the problems from mandatory minimums, and we’ll still need Congressional action.”

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