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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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The Great Awakening

Outrage Moves Across the Nation at Ferguson Decision



Profoundly Disappointed, Michael Brown's Family Reacts to Lack of Indictment (photo credit NBC News)

Data News Weekly Special Report

The family of slain teenager Michael Brown held a press conference Tuesday, following the previous evening's announcement that there would be no indictment in the case of Ferguson, Missouri police

Officer Darren Wilson, who fatally shot an unarmed Brown on Aug. 9.

Brown's family members did not speak during Tuesday's press conference, but attorneys for the family offered strong criticism of the grand jury process that led to Monday's announcement.

Attorney Benjamin Crump claimed that Wilson's "veracity" and "credibility" were never challenged during his four-hour testimony before the grand jury, and that "a first-year law student would have done a better job" than the prosecutor's office of cross-examining Wilson. Crump also characterized the prosecution as

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P.O. Box 57347, New Orleans, LA 70157-7347 | Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622
editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Terry B. Jones	Contributors
CEO/Publisher	Edwin Buggage
Edwin Buggage	The Bookworm Sez
Editor	Corey Anderson
Calla Victoria	James Washington
Executive Assistant	The Huffington Post
June Hazeur	NBC News
Accounting	Eric Conerly
	Art Direction & Production
	MajorMedia.com
	Editorial Submissions
	datanewseditor@bellsouth.net
	Advertising Inquiries
	datanewsad@bellsouth.net

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Tirezz Walker, a resident of Ferguson speaks to Missouri Highway Patrol officers in riot gear during a protest of the shooting death of Michael Brown. Photo credit Huffington Post

having “a symbiotic relationship with the local police.”

“The process is broken,” said Crump. “The process should be indicted.”

Also present was the Rev. Al Sharpton, who took St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Bob McCulloch to task for his lengthy, sometimes confusing press statement Monday night.

“I’ve never seen a prosecutor hold a press conference to discredit a victim,” said Sharpton.

The death of Brown, 18, led to months of protests in Ferguson and across the country, and reignited national conversations about police militarization and systemic racial bias in law enforcement.

Thousands of pages of grand jury materials were made public Monday night, including evident and testimony from Wilson and a number of eyewitnesses, much of it conflicting. Crump said that upon looking through the materials released Monday, “we saw how completely unfair this process was.”

Brown’s family released a statement Monday night, immediately following the grand jury’s announcement, that said in part:

“We are profoundly disappointed that the killer of our child will not face the consequence of his actions. While we understand that many others share our pain, we ask that you channel your frustration in ways that will make a positive change. We need to work together to fix the system that allowed this to happen.”

In addition, Brown’s mother, Leslie McSpadden, could be seen tearfully addressing a crowd Monday night in a video that was uploaded to Facebook.

“They still don’t care,” says McSpadden in the video. “They’re never gonna care. I’ve been here my whole life.”

About 1,000 protesters took to the streets of Ferguson after the grand jury’s decision was made public. Protesters broke into and burned at least a dozen buildings in Ferguson Monday night, despite numerous calls for calm in the preceding days from Brown’s parents, as well as President Barack Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder. At least 80 people in the St. Louis area were arrested.

Protests also broke out Monday night in New York City, Washing-

ton, D.C., Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver and Oakland, California, among other cities.

Sharpton criticized the violence during his remarks Tuesday.

“There’s another way other than to explode,” he said. “That doesn’t get us justice. We need to show a better way.”

“If you’re on Michael Brown’s side you walk with dignity,” he added. “If you do anything to harm others, you’re on your own side.”

Wilson’s lawyers released a statement reacting to the grand jury decision shortly after the announcement. The statement made no mention of Michael Brown or his family.

Today, a St. Louis County grand jury released its decision that no charges would be filed in the case involving Officer Darren Wilson. From the onset, we have maintained and the grand jury agreed that Officer Wilson’s actions on August 9 were in accordance with the laws and regulations that govern the procedures of an officer.

In a case of this magnitude, a team of prosecutors rightfully presented evidence to this St. Louis County grand jury. This group of

citizens, drawn at random from the community, listened to witnesses and heard all the evidence in the case. Based on the evidence and witness testimony, the grand jury collectively determined there was no basis for criminal charges against Officer Wilson.

Law enforcement personnel must frequently make split-second and difficult decisions. Officer Wilson followed his training and followed the law. We recognize that many people will want to second-guess the grand jury’s decision. We would encourage anyone who wants to express an opinion do so in a respectful and peaceful manner.

On a side note, Officer Wilson would like to thank those who have stood by his side throughout the process. This continued support is greatly appreciated by Officer Wilson and his family. Moving forward, any commentary on this matter will be done in the appropriate venue and not through the media.

In response to the shocking and disappointing decision, Dr. Benjamin Chavis, President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (The Black Press of America) released this statement;

Today’s announcement that the Grand Jury decided not to indict Ferguson, MO Police Officer Darren Wilson who killed unarmed 18 year-old Michael Brown in August 2014 is yet another systematic and tragic slap in the face of equal justice in the United States. On behalf of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), today our prayers and solidarity are first resolutely with the parents and family of young Michael Brown as well as concern for everyone in the Black American community and all people of good will in St. Louis County, Missouri. I have personally spoken directly to two our NNPA member publishers who published in the St. Louis area: Donald M. Suggs of the St. Louis American and Michael C. Williams of the St. Louis Metro Sentinel. We discussed the tense situation in Ferguson. We are the “Voice of the Black Community” and the NNPA will not be silent or rest until there is justice in the Michael Brown case and other cases of racially-motivated police killings and violence in our communities across the nation.

Various Sources contributed to this story.

The Battle of the Cats Comes Back to New Orleans

By Edwin Buggage

The Classic Turns 41

The Bayou Classic is in its 41's year, more than just a football game it has become an important part of the Thanksgiving weekend as a destination for many African-Americans. In addition to what's going on the gridiron there is the Battle of the Bands and the halftime show that is as much of an attraction as the game. In its origins in 1974 it was just a game between two Louisiana schools that at one time grew with people coming from all over the country to participate in the battle of the cats. Since Hurricane Katrina the attendance have decreased, but last year on its 40th Anniversary saw an upward spike in attendance, a sign that it may be a resurgence of interest in the game. And while the numbers are less than what it's been in past years there is still a multi-million dollar impact on the City of New Orleans. Working more closely with the tourism commission to re-brand and reposition the game to attract larger numbers it is an experience that's not just targeted to football fans. It is five days of events featuring a parade, fan festival, a golf tournament, empowerment seminars, the highly anticipated Battle of the Bands with The Grambling "Marching Tigers" and the Southern "Human Jukebox" competing in an event held the night before the game in the Superdome. And of course the big game and events for fans and



plenty of parties both day and night, so the 41st Anniversary of the Bayou Classic promises to be bigger and better than ever and again show New Orleans as a first-rate destination to hold large events.

The Battle of the Cats: Breaking the Tie

Last year while writing this story Southern Graduate Alger Taylor 99 called the Bayou Classic: The Black Super Bowl.

Something that rings a note of truth, this year's game will be the tie breaker in the battle of the cats that are tied at 20 wins each. This year both teams are on a roll the Grambling State Tigers are 5-0 in the SWAC (South Western Athletic Conference) and the Southern Jaguars are 3-1. This year's game promise to be a knockdown drag out affair to be loved by all as to who will this year own the bragging rights in this tie breaking game.

Black Football Equals Green for New Orleans and Focus on Community Service

Every year the Bayou Classic brings in approximately 200,000 people into the Crescent City with an estimated economic impact of \$30 million dollars on the City. In addition the schools will also raise millions of dollars in scholarships to deserving students from both institutions. When the game is over the impact is still felt throughout the City because

of the many community service projects that take place on that weekend.

Since Hurricane Katrina every year there is a day dedicated to service where volunteers work on community service projects, working to help in some of the most damaged areas after the storm and levee breach. In past years they worked with the New Orleans Recreation Department in projects to help rebuild neighborhood parks for young people in addition to working in the Lower Ninth Ward.

Bayou Classic Continuing a Great Tradition

The decades old Bayou Classic is now as much a part of New Orleans as red beans on Monday and the sounds of second-line bands. It is an opportunity for the world to see the world of HBCU's and the great tradition that continues within these great institutions of higher learning. In their hundreds of years these schools gave opportunities for many when the doors of segregation kept many from receiving a college education. And while we live in a world that is more integrated and African-Americans in some instances have access to un-presented opportunities these schools are still important. As the incubators of young people to achieve future greatness. So with the Bayou Classic it gives the world an opportunity to witness the best in Black college football and also take part in the great tradition of African-American uplift that is good for the City, the state and the nation.

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can be extended to others."**

—Thabiti Boone

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New Orleans Receives Bid to Host 2020 Women's Final Four

The City of New Orleans will host the 2020 NCAA Women's Basketball Final Four, the NCAA announced on Monday. The bid process was a city-wide effort involving every major sports organization in the city, including Tulane University, the University of New Orleans, the Allstate Sugar Bowl, the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation, the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans, the Sun Belt Conference, the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau and SMG/Smoothie King Center.

While Tulane and UNO will be the host institutions for the event, all of the contributors to the bid process will be integral in the hosting process as well.

The seven finalist cities under consideration to host a Women's Final Four during the 2017-20 bid cycle were Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; Nashville, Tennessee; New Orleans, Louisiana; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Tampa Bay, Florida. Of that list, only New Orleans (1991, 2004 and 2013) and Tampa Bay (2008) have hosted previously. Nashville served as host of the 2014 Women's Final Four, while Tampa Bay will host again in 2015. Indianapolis will host the event in 2016.

Following the 2017 event being awarded to Dallas, Columbus will host 2018, Tampa Bay will host 2019, and New Orleans in 2020.

"Together with Tulane University and the University of New Orleans as Co-Host institutions, our New Orleans Bid Committee made a very compelling bid that promises a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the student athletes and fans of the Women's Final Four in 2020," New Orleans Local Organizing Committee Chairwoman Kim Boyle said. "We look forward to working with the NCAA and our Local Organizing Committee partners, including the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation, Allstate Sugar Bowl, Sun Belt Conference, the Smoothie King Center and the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, to host a 'Party of Four' like the NCAA has never experienced. We appreciate the continued confidence and trust that the NCAA Women's Basketball Committee and Staff have in our ability to host their marquee event, and we promise to continue raising the bar for other host cities."

In late August, NCAA officials did a site check of the potential host



cities. A group of four individuals visited New Orleans and reviewed the Smoothie King Center, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, local hotels and venues for ancillary events and visited with the LOC about lo-

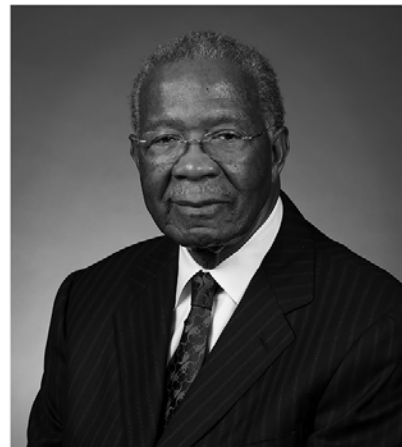
cal transportation options, the city's financial commitment and vision for the event. Boyle and the New Orleans team presented to the full selection committee in Indianapolis on Thursday, Nov. 13.

In addition to Boyle, presenters included Barbara Burke, Deputy Director of Athletics at Tulane University, Derek Morel, Director of Athletics at the University of New Orleans, Laurie Ducros with

SMG and the Smoothie King Center, Cristin Hopkins with the New Orleans Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Risa Hall, Director of Community Affairs for the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation.

New Orleans has hosted three previous Women's Final Fours, including 1991 at Lakefront Arena and 2004 and 2013, both at the then-New Orleans Arena and now Smoothie King Center.

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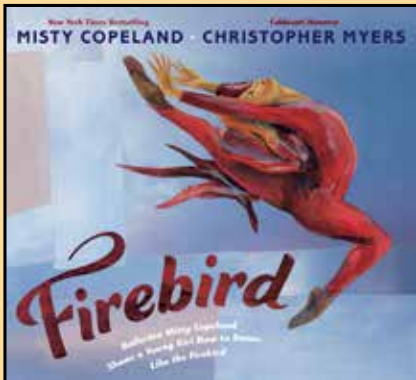
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"Firebird"



"Firebird"
by Misty Copeland,
Illustrated by
Christopher Myers
c.2014, Penguin
Young Readers
\$17.99/\$19.99 Canada
40 pages

By The Bookworm Sez

You can't.

Doesn't it make you mad to hear those words? Of course you can – maybe just not now. Someday, you can drive a car, for example. Years from today, you can vote for President. Not now, but later, you can live where you want, eat what you want, do what you want with no "can't" at all.

But then there are times when you hear "you can't" and it makes you sad. In the new book "Firebird" by Misty Copeland, illustrated by Christopher Myers, a young girl learns to replace the word "can't" with one that strengthens.

Once, there was a little girl who loved to watch ballet, but she knew she was nothing like the dancer on the stage. Yes, she loved to dance, but the ballerina was so much better and the little girl was told that she'd never be like that.

The ballerina leaped and spun and bent. Her legs stretched like the New York skyline, which was

something the girl couldn't do. "I could never hope to leap the space between," she said, and that made her "heavy" and heartsick.

But then, the most amazing thing happened! The ballerina came to the girl to tell her a story of a dancing child who wanted to fly among the stars, a child who wanted to soar but she saw "can't" because there were few other dancers like her.

Still, the dancing child bent and dipped at the barre, and leaped like her heart told her to. She spread her wings, changed her slippers, and practiced arabesque. The ballet positions were like "stair steps to the sky," and she never listened to can't.

The ballerina promised the girl that, if she believed, there would come a day when she would be just like the dancing child. She would "become a swan... a firebird for sure." She would be light and beautiful. Maybe she'd even dance on stage with the ballerina, jumping to the stars, and showing bal-

lerinas not yet born that dreams come true and can't can't hold them on the ground.

I liked "Firebird" well enough the first time I ran through it. With their bold colors and scrapbook-mosaic edges, I was especially pleased with the illustrations by Christopher Myers but there was something about the narrative that I felt I'd missed...

The second time around, there it was: the font between the characters is different, as if there's a conversation on each page.

Now that you know that, you'll be able to easier understand how author Misty Copeland tells her story – and, once you read her afterword, you'll see that it really is her story. Copeland explains how she was that self-conscious girl once, and how she wants "to expand the idea of beauty and art" with this book.

That's surely accomplished, but my recommendation would be to read through this tale once before you read it aloud, just to you know how it's set up. Do that, and "Firebird" will be a story your child can't help but love.

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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Pre-Holiday Fun, Data Around Town

Photos by Brisket

Data Zone on the move around town at The Prime Example, Spice and The Chocolate Bar and Data was there!!!



Sal and his wife Sharon celebrate her 50th Birthday with family and friends at their newly opened Chocolate Bar.



Hot 8 band entertains the crowd at Spice.



Brice Egana, Troy Rhodies and his mother Terri Egana celebrate with him at his 50th Birthday Party at Spice.



Owner Troy celebrates his 50th Birthday with Keenan Lewis from the N.O. Saints at Spice.



Kim and Nicole from The Prime Example join Actor Wendell Pierce and others at The Prime Example.



Rod Stewart and Elray Holmes at Spice during Troy's 50th Birthday Party.

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



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Pipeline to the People

Questioning Outrageous Actions from Ferguson Prosecutor and Grand Jury

By Eric Connerly

In the wake of the decision by a grand jury in Ferguson, Missouri to not indict Officer Darren Wilson in the shooting death of 18 year old Michael Brown has caused outrage and unrest across the nation. Data Mews Weekly asked two New Orleanians who are members of Generation Next to weigh in on the decision and to talk about the questions of race and justice in America.



Melanie Kaufman

To be in 2014 and be witnessing injustice against a race of people, my people it's saddening. My question is when will we ever be protected? When will the system operate to benefit us? It's evident that those who are appointed to protect the community are allowed to kill mem-

bers of the community and get away with it. The media surrounding the Michael Brown case is an announcement to law enforcement agencies that it is OK to engage in the killing of young Black adults. Unfortunately, I don't believe that there will ever be a day where this country recognizes us as equal to our White counterparts.



Corey Anderson

I must say that I'm not surprised in the least. For one, after what happened in the Trayvon Martin case, anything seems like it goes in the case of Black men in general. Second, a State of Emergency was stamped on the city almost a week before the decision came out not to indict Wilson. Hence, the troopers and SWAT being put on watch.

I don't want to hear about due process...I don't want to hear about him stealing cigarettes and "that's why he was shot." It's utter chaos in Ferguson, and I must say, it needs to be. No civilization that has ever

garnered the respect they deserve have done it in a peaceful or protesting manner. Romans/Greeks? No. Europeans arriving and taking the Natives' land? No. No protests, signs, or talking. I don't remember Alexander the Great holding a sign saying "please give me your territory," so why are we ASKING to be treated fairly and not be killed, LITERALLY, one by one? Why are we being peaceful? This is only going to happen again next year and the years following until we decide that this country doesn't consider the life of, not just Black men, but Black people as a whole, with the same value as other ethnicities. I laugh to myself because I might spare my mother and father the pain and torture knowing that their only son was killed by his own hands instead of another who didn't care the hue of his skin.

In The Spirit

Spiritually Speaking

Age Well, Please



James Washington
Guest Columnist

As someone who has come to Christ as a mature adult, I'm challenged from time to time as ministers and bible study leaders and others of faith talk about the process of becoming a mature Christian. The challenge is in knowing what it means to mature as a person and applying some of those same principles to the maturation process as they relate to faith and knowledge. Faith as a concept is pretty easy to understand. The knowledge I'm speaking about accompanies the experience of knowing God's word. As such, just like a mature adult, your behavior starts

to be dictated by your experience, your knowledge. In other words your decisions are affected and guided by what you know. For the mature Christian, your faith is easily expressed in words. However, your deeds, your actions now have parameters set in stone due to the experience of faith. So the more you know about God's word and God's will, the more responsive you become in what you do, don't do, say, don't say etc.

Forgiveness for instance is an example of what I'm talking about. The more you accept the truth of Christ in your life, the more mandatory it becomes to forgive those who have in some way 'trespassed' against you. You see a mature Christian knows if you don't forgive your enemies, God will not forgive you. How dare you not at least undertake the notion of forgiveness when Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice so we all could be forgiven! Some people refer to this as knowing that you know that you know.

It is a process however and it does take time. Maturity requires action and it is this action that I'm saying challenges me more often than not. It is not always easy to do the right thing. But for the mature Christian, it is purely a matter of knowledge that easily lets you know what the right thing is. It's what you're supposed to do in all situations and circumstances.

The more mature you become in your faith, the more evident it becomes in your behavior. However, I think you pass the real test when your maturity readily surfaces in what you think. The thought process of the mature Christian is where I find myself these days. I guess you can say I am now a proponent of 'you are what you think.' I believe faith does move mountains. And as I start to move mine, I'll be living proof of what they say about mustard seeds. Believe me, I'm working on it.

May God bless and keep you always.

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Kendal Francis

"Blessed 26" Helping Young Men Become MVP's in Life

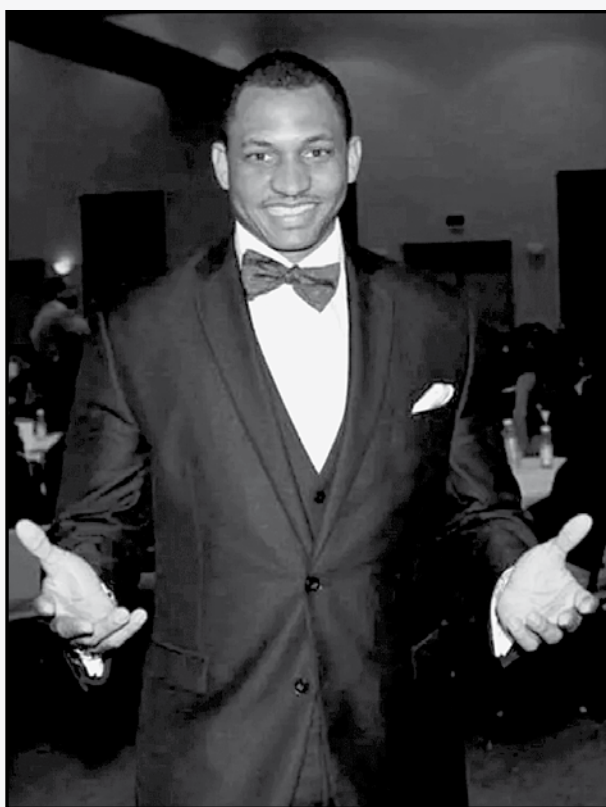
by: Edwin Buggage

As we are in the middle of football season and with the Bayou Classic also taking place on Thanksgiving Weekend people will be focused on the greatness of the players on the field. And while this is going on there is a man who is the quarterback and coach of a group of young people becoming MVP's in the game of life. Kendal Francis is a person who has dedicated his life to serving others. Throughout his life he has become a beacon of hope for many young people. He has become for many young people the bridge between simply surviving and thriving. He says his will to give was instilled in him as a young man growing up in Jacksonville, Florida where he was a standout football star and witnessed from an early age his whole family involved in giving back. "I don't think about it as giving back, rather I think of it as respecting the struggle, I look back at what my parents and grandparents did. They worked to help others and they also paved the way for me and created a blueprint for how I should live my life and that is to be a blessing and help others," says Francis.

He has always been involved in giving back and performing community service, winning several awards such as the Jay Stein Caring Award in 1995, or working to en-

sure the rights of women while a student at Tulane University as a member of Tulane Men Against Rape. This passion led him to start working with young people in the New Orleans Metro Area on a voluntary basis. Kendal began volunteering his time mentoring young people that participated in the Reconcile New Orleans Program. He arranged field trips and designed programs that assisted program participants in realizing their full potential while using his personal resources to fund his organization, Blessed 26. "I realize I am blessed and I have a lot to share, it is not about being a rich person to give back. I feel it is not about money all the time, it is about giving your time and I feel I have been blessed, so in the work I do I meet so many young people who wish for the basics, things like stability and I don't think it should be that way. I feel our kids need to be given the foundation they need to build a solid foundation for their lives that they do not fall through the cracks of society but rather on a path to success. That is the reason I created Blessed 26," says Francis.

In his work Francis encounters young men who could, with the proper guidance and direction, do great things in life, but he feels that they are "distracted" by many things in their immediate environment creating barriers to climbing the ladder of suc-



cess. "In my life and in my work with "Blessed 26" I meet so many young people with so much potential, but unfortunately we don't tap into it and nurture it, and it is not only the child that loses but our community does also when our kids don't get what they need," says Francis. Continuing he says of his successes in helping young people, "I don't feel personally responsible for turning a kid around, I feel I have been an intricate part of seeing a light bulb going off. I feel every kid can potentially be great but we as adults just have to do a better job and helping them get there."

Kendal Francis beams with pride when speaking of one of his success sto-

beginning I did not know he was in foster care and had aged out and was living on his own. And I was impressed at how courageous he was with limited resources trying to make it work. Before he left and went onto college I felt this young man needed to be celebrated for his accomplishment, so I reached out to some of the men around me to contribute to helping this young man while he was away at college. I feel he is an inspiration and I will continue to help him in any way I can; I am truly proud of him and what he's accomplished."

He's worked with kids like Darrell who've gone onto college, but he says that the lessons learned in "Blessed 26" do not end when one becomes a young adult. Instead it becomes the foundation of a life centered around giving. Francis says that his goal is to build "Blessed 26" to give more kids the opportunity to be in an environment giving them what they need. And as the late great artist and

scholar John Scott always said "Pass it on." "It is about creating a chain to make our community stronger. So an important factor in achieving that goal is for those who come through the program to serve as mentors to help others to grow.

Francis also serves as a life coach for athletes at Warren Easton High School where he works with young student athletes helping them navigate the course to a successful life. Speaking of his work as a life coach he says, "I put what you want to do in front of you and say go get it and make you accountable in making it happen. My goal for them is to build relationships with people who can help them reach their goals. Like when I played sports putting all the players in the right position. To become an MVP in life you have to take yourself seriously, also you have to be a person of your word, and while it's good to dream big, wake up and begin to do the work and make those dreams a reality".

JMJ
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Continuing Education Fund



Statements from Around the Nation Regarding the Ferguson MO Grand Jury Decision

New Orleans Branch, NAACP

The New Orleans Branch NAACP joins the hundreds of thousands of NAACP members across our nation in expressing deep disappointment that the grand jury did not indict Darren Wilson for the senseless and tragic death of Michael Brown. While we are frustrated, we stand committed to continue our fight against racial profiling, police brutality and the militarization of local authorities. We will remain steadfast in our fight to pass the End Racial Profiling legislation. And we stand in solidarity with peaceful protesters and uphold that their civil rights not be violated as both demonstrators and authorities observe the "rules of engagement."

Our prayers continue to go out to the family, friends and neighbors of 18-year-old Michael Brown. The senseless death of yet another African-American at the hands of

those sworn to protect and serve the community where he lived is heartbreaking.

We will continue to the fight to outlaw racial profiling, whether it comes at the hands of law enforcement professionals or armed citizens. Too often, the indefensible fear of black and brown bodies and the abuse of power by those unlawful few in blue uniforms have produced fatal results.

For more information, please call 504-821-3221.

Danatus N. King
President
New Orleans Branch NAACP

Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

WASHINGTON—A. Shuanise Washington, president and CEO of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) today released the following statement on the grand jury decision on the shooting death of unarmed teenager Michael Brown by Ferguson

Police officer, Darren Wilson.

"Our heartfelt prayers are with Michael Brown's family as they cope with the pain and frustration of the grand jury's decision.

"Although our justice system may not always seem fair, violence and riots will not bring peace and balance to our country. CBCF will continue to believe in our judicial process. As a nation, we can move forward from this decision by re-examining law enforcement arrest procedures involving unarmed individuals.

"As the CBCF continues its mission to develop young leaders, educate the public and inform policy, we encourage people to become more civically engaged and collaborate with community groups, faith leaders, legislators to reevaluate our social, political and moral commitment to building up the next generation.

"Instead of letting this decision divide us, we should ask ourselves how we can prevent tragedies like this from happening again. That is

the best way to honor a young man whose life was taken too soon."

Mayor Mitch Landrieu, City of New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS, LA— In light of the Ferguson, Missouri grand jury decision, Mayor Mitch Landrieu released the following statement:

"Today I pray for the Brown family and everyone in Ferguson. In the United States we remain divided. Divided by race. Divided by poverty. We live a block away from one another, but are often a world apart.

It is time for each of us, every American, to accept the fact that we must begin to acknowledge and discuss the most difficult issues we face. And we must agree to face them together.

American citizens have the right to protest, but I encourage peaceful protests in these difficult times."

US Black Chambers, Inc.

Like most Americans, we are disappointed by yesterday's grand jury

decision in Ferguson, Mo. and the results of the protests that followed. As we at the U.S. Black Chambers Inc. (USBC) watch dozens of small and minority businesses be destroyed by fires and looting, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the city's rebuilding and its economic empowerment. We commend those of you who have chosen to stand up and reopen your doors, as we know those were not easy decisions. Representing more than 100 Black Chambers of Commerce and small business associations across the country, we understand and appreciate the importance of standing in solidarity and moving beyond the hurt and anger. Together we will rebuild the city of Ferguson, therefore offering hope and opportunity to its residents.

In the Spirit of Success,

Ron Busby, Sr.
President & CEO
U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.

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Obama Threatens To Veto Corporate Tax Cut Deal For Locking Out Middle Class

WASHINGTON – The Obama administration on Tuesday threatened to veto a bipartisan tax deal that would reportedly create permanent tax perks for corporations without advancing key tax breaks for middle- and low-income families.

“The President would veto the proposed deal because it would provide permanent tax breaks to help well-connected corporations while neglecting working families,” White House spokeswoman Jennifer Friedman said in a statement provided to HuffPost.

Congressional negotiators from both parties and both chambers have been working since the mid-term elections to strike a deal extending a host of business tax preferences that, according to a report in PoliticoPro, would cost upwards of \$400 billion over the next 10 years.

But the administration quickly cried foul over providing billions of dollars in permanent corporate aid without including aid for the middle class. Both Treasury Secretary Jack Lew and White House press secretary Josh Earnest delivered clear rebukes of the talks on Monday.

“An extender package that makes permanent expiring business provisions without addressing tax credits for working families is the wrong approach, at the expense of middle class families,” said Lew in a press statement. “Any deal on tax extenders must ensure that the economic benefits are broadly shared.”

“The reports suggest that there may be some in Congress who want to provide tax relief to businesses and to corporate insiders, but not [ensure] that those benefits are shared by middle-class families,” Earnest told reporters on Monday. “So certainly the administration



would not be supportive of a package that provided relief to corporations without providing relief to middle-class families.”

“We wouldn’t want to see that move in the lame duck,” Earnest continued. “We wouldn’t want to see that move [at] any point. We believe that if we’re going to have a conversation about lightening the tax load, that we need to start that conversation by focusing on how that will expand opportunity for middle-class families.”

The deal would make the research and development tax credit a permanent part of the tax code, despite criticism that the broad provision allows companies to deduct an extremely wide array of costs from their IRS bills. The deal would also permanently codify a corporate tax perk that lets companies deduct up to \$25,000 a year from their tax bills for purchasing new equipment.

A host of other tax benefits approved by the Senate finance committee in April would also be extended for two years. Those provisions include a rule allowing corporations to avoid paying federal taxes on income stashed overseas until they bring the money back into the country. The only corpo-

rate tax credit that would be allowed to expire under the reported deal is for wind energy, a program broadly supported by environmental groups.

In exchange for the business perks, Senate Democrats secured a provision to allow middle-class families to deduct up to \$2500 a year in college tuition costs from their tax bills.

White House aides told HuffPost that President Barack Obama is particularly concerned about any deal that would not extend key provisions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the child tax credit that expire at the end of 2017. About 50 million people benefit from these tax credits each year. Failing to extend three key provisions would force 1.8 million Americans into poverty, and further erode the income of an additional 14.6 million who already live below the poverty line, according to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Both tax programs were once Republican priorities. The child tax credit was expanded under President George W. Bush’s tax cuts, and the GOP at one time celebrated the EITC for only re-

warding people who work for a living – setting it apart from other poverty assistance programs, like food stamps, that do not come with work requirements.

Obama has leverage over the talks, since the EITC and child tax credit provisions do not expire for another three years, while the corporate breaks already expired on Dec. 31, 2013, with companies holding out hope for a deal by year-end to prevent their tax bills from going up for the current year.

But after 2017, eligibility requirements for the child tax credit will narrow, shutting out many very poor families who currently qualify under provisions enacted by both Bush and Obama. Obama’s 2009 economic stimulus package also lessened the EITC’s marriage penalty and provided additional aid to families with three or more children – provisions that are likewise set to expire after 2017.

The 2018 effects would predominantly hit low-income Americans. A married couple with two children making between \$28,000 and \$50,000 a year would lose out on about \$460 annually, according the CBPP analysis, while the same family of four making \$15,200 would lose about \$1750 a year.

Republicans have decried deficit spending under Obama, and insisted that deficit reduction work emphasize spending cuts, rather than raising taxes for corporations or the wealthy. But some hard-line conservatives also oppose the selective nature of many of the perks in annual tax deals like the one currently being negotiated. In April, the powerful tea party group Club for Growth came out against the two-year tax extension package incorporated into the current talks, urging lawmakers to kill the bill and consider broader tax reform instead.

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