

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



Hail Zulu! Parade Highlights



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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Leading the NAACP into the Future



Morris Reed, President,
NAACP New Orleans Chapter



Cornell William Brooks, President,
National NAACP

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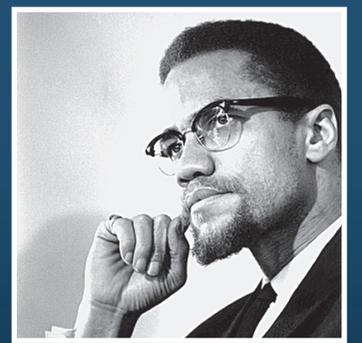
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Morris Reed and Cornell William Brooks Lead Local and National NAACP into the Future



The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded by W.E.B. DuBois on February 19, 1909. The NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization.

By Edwin Buggage

NAACP History of Leading the Civil Rights Struggle

For over a century the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) is the oldest continuous Civil Rights Organization in the United States. Many great leaders have been part of this organization from its founding with W.E.B. DuBois, through the Civil Rights Era with, Thurgood Marshall, Roy Wilkins nationally and people such as A.P. Tureaud and Ernest "Dutch" Morial locally were fighting to tear down the walls of separate but equal. In an America that was far from being a country where all were created equal.

The national NAACP last year named Attorney Cornell Brooks its National Chair after Ben Jealous stepped down. Under his leadership with renewed vigor that this organization as well other historical Civil Rights Organizations have come back to address the issues of today. As we discussed in the previous editions of Data News Weekly this month, that focused on NNPA (National Newspaper Publishers Association) and the National Urban League that the fight for Civil Rights/Human Rights is an ongoing struggle that is relevant today as it was in the turn of the 20th Century when the NAACP began.

Morris Reed and his Vision for local NAACP

The local NAACP has recently changed its reigns of leadership with the stepping down of Danatus King. The organization is now being led by longtime Attorney and Judge Morris Reed. Speaking of his agenda he says, "The

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first order of business regarding community outreach will be to organize the City into manageable units that will allow for block-by-block organizing to provide voter education, registration and participation. Once it is put in place, this model could serve as a catalyst for improving our lives, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Some recent conversation centered on is there a need for Civil Rights Organizations in the 21st Century? But as we have seen more recently with many things happening in the areas of racial injustice it has put the issue of race back in the center of the conversation of fairness and justice in this country. Reed believes the NAACP and other Civil Rights Organizations that have a track record dealing with these issues of inequality and injustice must take a lead role in finding workable solutions to the problems regarding race today.

"No, I do not believe we can say there is no longer a need for the NAACP. We still need the NAACP, which is the oldest (since 1906) and largest (with over 2 million members) to remain engaged on the following issues impacting the community: economic sustainability and ending poverty; educational equality; healthcare for all our people; fairness in the criminal justice system; and of course voting rights," says Reed.

NAACP Connects Young and Old around Issues of Justice

In some regards there is a disconnect between the younger and older generations when it comes to issues of Civil Rights. This is something that must be corrected according to Reed. "There exist in the community a great deal of apathy and false sense of security. You know the saying that our people could perish for lack of knowledge. Well there is a generation out there who is not knowledgeable sufficiently of the Civil Rights struggles and price paid by ancestor to get them here. We as adults have to do a better job of educating."

Narrowing the Wide Divide

In the nation as well as in the City there is a racial and class divide as far as access to opportunities. Reed feels in a post-Katrina environment this divide is widening and needs to be addressed. "Just as the economic gap between Black and Whites has widened, so has the gap between the races in our community gotten wider. I find that there exist a great deal of distrust and polarization between the races Post-Katrina, in our City. A house divided cannot pros-

per. Blacks and Whites alike have to be committed to changing and improving this, however we can. We at the NAACP are committed to working towards change."

Going further he speaks of after nearly a decade the pace of the recovery seems separate and unequal. "Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, the recovery effort still hasn't visited some neighborhoods like it should have, i.e., the Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans East just to name a few. This is not equitable and certainly not fair. This must be addressed by our City leaders. We just can't continue to leave entire neighborhoods behind and not rebuilt."

Formula for a Great Community: It Takes a Village

As we think of those who become successful in the African-American community; in many instances it goes back to the African Proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child and this is something Reed firmly believes is true. Also as some ascend to leadership and public service they are influenced and inspired by those who came before them.

"My heroes and heroines are: Mrs. Zenobia M. Johnson, Principal of Joseph A. Hardin Elementary School when I attended there. Also, my third grade teacher, Ms. Thompson. She took no prisoners if you were caught acting up in school. These were my heroines no doubt. Also, Mr. Mackie, a carpenter who had an under graduate degree from Tuskegee Institute; and I had the privilege of working the summers as his helper and protégé. He had no children and treated me as a son. I learned a lot from these people, such as respect for my elders and a good work ethic," says Reed of these ordinary people who did extraordinary things in his life.

Of those who shaped his political ideology and awakening he says, "I was influenced by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sr., and Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Viola Liuzzo, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Dick Gregory, Dr. Joseph Lowery and Mrs. Evelyn Lowery, the Three Civil Rights workers (C.O.R.E.) killed in the 60's in Philadelphia and Mississippi as civil rights activists are a few who have my admiration and deep respect for their courage; as well as Dr. Robert Pritchard of Washington, D.C., a concert pianist and one of the founders of the Black History Month concept."

But he says the greatest influence on his life of service is his father who planted the seeds of greatness in young Morris and all his

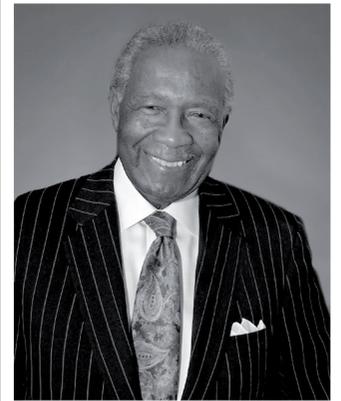
children at an early age. "My father, of course, a Baptist deacon and longshoreman, is my biggest hero. I was sworn in as Judge of Criminal District Court for the Parish of Orleans, Section "A" at his bedside. He fathered twelve children; sheltered, protected and educated them all without public assistance. No one ran afoul of the law and we loved

him for it all. We have a large family and we are close thanks to Dad. Dad said we were guided by Faith."

Reed Leads NAACP into the Future

Today the Civil Rights Struggle and the NAACP continues to be a force to be reckoned with. Locally and nationally issues continue to

plague a country built on life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Unfairness and injustice continues and it is Morris Reed who has been chosen to lead the local NAACP into the future. Where the organization will go under his leadership is still unknown, but based on his past record and life it seems it will be headed in the right direction.



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Zulu Parade Highlights

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

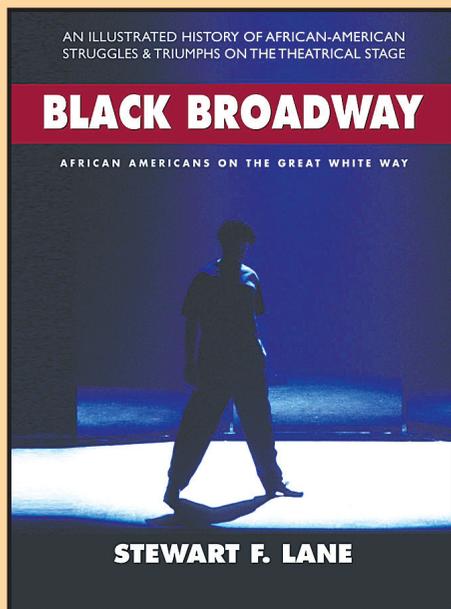
The temperatures were chilly, but the Zulu Parade was HOT! Thousands gathered to cheer as the Zulu Parade rolled down the streets, tossing beads and the coveted 2015 Zulu coconuts. It was a day not to be missed, and Data was there to capture all the moments.



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

Black Broadway

African Americans on the Great White Way



**“Black Broadway:
African Americans on the
Great White Way”**
by Stewart F. Lane
c.2015, Square One Publishers
\$39.95 / \$49.95 Canada
288 pages

By The Bookworm Sez

A remote control and five hundred channels.

That’s what you’ve got for entertainment, and there’s still nothing on TV. That doesn’t keep you from looking, though, and wishing for something different.

Finding entertainment shouldn’t be such a big production – but in decades past, that’s exactly what it took for African Americans, in more ways than one. In the new book “Black Broadway” by Stewart F. Lane, you’ll find out why.

When William Alexander Brown decided to retire, he knew where he’d do it: in the two-story home he’d purchased in lower Manhattan. It was 1821 and Brown, a free black man, knew that there were few places for black actors to perform for black audiences, and he planned to allow performances there.

The popularity of those performances spurred Brown and a friend to “go a step further” with a 300-seat establishment they named the African Grove Theatre. It, too, was successful, until Brown was forced out of business by a local white theatre owner who feared competition.

Not long after the African Grove Theatre was closed, minstrel shows began attracting crowds of both races. Many shows featured white and black entertainers in burnt-cork blackface, as well as comedy sketches and dancing – including many skits satirizing black life and culture.

“It’s not clear,” says Lane, “why the African Americans of the era turned out to see” those shows – but they did, perhaps to laugh “at the absurdity of the caricatures...”

By the late 1800s, vaudeville and burlesque had become popular, and that added increasing diversity to shows. Black entertainers were often included on-stage, and entire productions were created with black troupes, for black audiences. White people, of course, were welcome and did attend; one theatre owner even gave them their own section... in the back of the house.

Throughout the years, African Americans – both performers and audience members – made strides, but slowly and with help from the NAACP and the Harlem Renaissance. By the 1930s, Broadway shows included racial issues; by the 1940s, interracial marriage was a common theme. In the 1950s, audiences enjoyed performances dealing with poverty and racism – but it wasn’t until well past the Civil Rights years that black faces became a non-issue on the Great White Way.

Loaded with pictures, playbill reproductions, advertisements, and drawings, “Black Broadway” is a theatre-goer’s delight.

But I was equally happy to see that there’s plenty for the historian, too: in addition to a rich narrative on equality for African Americans on Broadway (and off), author Stewart F. Lane includes a running timeline of national and world history to put the main body of this book into perspective. We’re also treated to dozens of short-but-comprehensive profiles of influential performers and people who, though many haven’t graced a stage in decades, are still familiar to followers of theatre, jazz, dance, and music.

With all that’s inside this book, give yourself time to browse, read awhile, then browse again and enjoy. “Black Broadway” is perfect for fans of stage and screen and, of course, when there’s nothing on TV.

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To Be Equal

From Malcolm X to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

"You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it." – Malcolm X, Letter from Mecca, April 1964

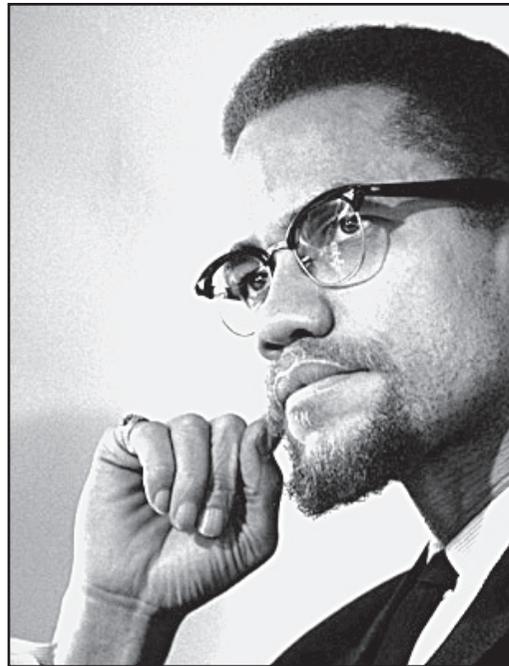
There is perhaps no American civil rights leader who generated as many divergent opinions as Malcolm X. As we near the 50th anniversary of his assassination of February 21, 1965, our nation will inevitably scrutinize his life, his work and his lasting impact on our country and our continuous struggle to address racial inequality and its heinous consequences.

Born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925, Malcolm became accustomed to the cruelties of racism at an early age, losing his father in a suspected attack by white supremacists. His early life was a blur of broken homes, petty crime and incarceration. Introduced to the teachings of the Nation of Islam during his time in jail, Malcolm X traded prison for a pursuit of racial justice and equality for Blacks in America.

While his initial approach may not have always been championed by or aligned with other civil rights leaders of the time, Malcolm X's lat-

er life transition and his embrace of multiculturalism is an important story to be acknowledged and retold. But often, supporters and critics alike attempt to isolate the "by any means necessary" civil rights leader to one part of his journey.

Ten days after his famous "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech, Malcolm X left the United States on April 13, 1964 for a life-altering trip through the Middle East and Africa, including a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, the holiest city in Islam. It was during his experience of the pilgrimage that his next transformation would occur. In letters from his trip, he described scenes of unimagined interracial harmony among "tens of thousands of pil-



grims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans." As he began to see that unity and brotherhood were not impossible

realities between "the white and the non-white," his fight for equality never changed. It only became more inclusive.

In a letter to then Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) President James Farmer, Malcolm, now El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, wrote, "I am still traveling, trying to broaden my mind, for I've seen too much of the damage narrow-mindedness can make of things, and when I return home to America, I will devote what energies I have to repairing the damage."

Unfortunately, Malcolm X's newfound approach to the pursuit of racial equality was cut short less than a year later under a fatal hail of bullets in Harlem's Audubon Ballroom. But rather than end his journey to mend our wounded nation, we can each walk a few steps in his remaining miles to ensure equality and justice for all.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Black History Salute to Prince Hall Masons



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

During Black History Month 2015 I believe it is important to highlight some of those long lasting institutions and entities that have continued to serve the empowerment interests of Black America for over the past 200 years. Too often some of us forget too quickly about the historical groups and social bridges that have helped to bring Black America across troubled and perilous waters during the last two centuries.

One group that I know we should resolutely salute during every Black History Month is the organization known today as the Grand Lodge

of Prince Hall Masons. They have grown exponentially from their first lodge in Boston, Massachusetts in 1787 to numerous other masonic lodges today strategically established and recognized throughout the United States.

Without a lot of external fanfare and public boasting about the accomplishments of Prince Hall Masons, the facts are that this organization of skilled and talented "Brothers" has been consistent in contributing to the long protracted progress of Black America. The living legacy of Prince Hall is still today focused on the mission of providing leadership of high moral character, charitable assistance to those in need, and steadfast support of freedom, justice, equality and empowerment for Black Americans and all people.

Who was Prince Hall? He was one of the earliest Black abolitionists against the slavery of African people in America in the mid-1700s. He was a Free Black leader in Boston who was proud of his African

ancestry and committed to improve the quality of life of African people during the early founding years of the United States. Prince Hall was a Black American freedom fighter who, like Cyprus Attucks, fought bravely in the Revolutionary War.

Prince Hall was one of the first Black Americans to be made a mason in America on March 6, 1775 in Boston. Interestingly, he and 14 other Black men initially established and named their first lodge: African Lodge #1 on July 3, 1776, one day before the United States Declaration of Independence was adopted and issued on July 4, 1776.

Once again this was a bold historic move by Hall and his masonic brothers with the clear unambiguous intention to stand up and work for African liberation and empowerment as a sacred fraternity. Hall was named master of African Lodge#1. Years later in honor of Prince Hall after his passing, the name of the lodge was changed to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons.

Why is this important and relevant 239 years later today in 2015? It is important because Black history did not start on a slave plantation in the south of the U.S. Prior to the birth of the United States, African people in America were engaged and involved in promoting unity to advance the cause of freedom and liberty. The evidence and truth about the historic and contemporary contributions of Prince Hall Masons to advance our interests needs to be better known and understood today by 44.3 million Black Americans.

The history of African people is as old as the history of humanity. Given the fact that racism and racial discrimination are still prevalent throughout the U.S. today means that we have to remain vigilant and committed to keep pushing forward to improve the quality of life for our families and communities. Similar to the fundamental necessity of maintaining the Black church, press, businesses and HBCUs, the issue concerning our awareness of

the good work of historic groups like the Prince Hall Masons is equally important.

Black History Month, yes, is a time for reflection and memory of the past. But we must learn from the past and build upon what previous generations have built as a foundation. Let's celebrate Black history by renewing our determination and spirit to uplift all of our families and communities. Let's strengthen our institutions and businesses, in particular our HBCUs are in critical need of financial support. Let's learn from the sustainable tradition of the Honorable Prince Hall: unify, build, outreach to care for others, demand justice and freedom, and enjoy the blessings of life to ensure a better future for those who will come after we have transitioned.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

Second-liner Profile Series for Data News Weekly

Terrylyn Dorsey and Terrinika Smith

Dance Like a Girl

Rachel Carrico

Terrylyn Dorsey is usually second-lining near her cousin, Terrinika Smith. "When it's me and Terrinika, we tear the floor up." On Sundays, they tear the street up as well. Dorsey is "trying to walk on my knees, flip, spin, walk on top of my head if I want to, jump up and down, crawl." Her cousin is usually nearby, coaching, encouraging, and dancing alongside her. "Terrinika always be telling me, 'Uh uh! Don't be doing that! You can't be doing the same thing over! You got to do some new moves!'" Smith agrees: "Exactly. Shock them every time."

Smith, now in her mid-twenties, was raised in the second-line culture. When she was a child, her father, Wellington Ratcliff, Jr., paraded with Young Men Olympian (see last week's profile), and her mother paraded with the Lady Sequins. Smith recalls, "I was five years old when Lady Sequins used to come out uptown on Dryades Street. That was my first second-line. It was a group of women and they used to wear these hats with furs, and they used to come down the steps. I was like, 'Man, I want to do just what they doing!'" Five-year-old Smith went home and dressed up in her mother's suit. "I just put her little jacket on and her little hat, and her little gloves, and I looked at her, I was like, 'I'm coming out the door!'" Smith performed as a drum major all through elementary and high school, but waited until she was older to join social aid and pleasure clubs—first the Uptown Swingers, and now Jazzy Ladies.

Smith's younger cousin, Dorsey, is often referred to as one of the best young footwork artists coming up today. "When I'm in the streets, they be like, 'Shorty got footwork! She know how to dance.'" Dorsey started dancing at age seven when her mother, who parades with the Single Ladies, started taking her to second-lines. Dorsey's mother was her first dance coach, and still pushes her at every parade. "She'll



say, 'C'mon now, you better not get tired! You better show them what you can do! Knock at them, knock at them.' Then she'll say, 'Oh I had you at this second-line! You didn't beat me today!'" Last season, Dorsey moved inside the ropes and

came out the door with the Single Men. "I love to come out with the men because they make you dance. The men make you dance."

As young female footwork artists, these women have encountered a bias against female danc-

ers and feminine movement in the second-line world. In order to be respected as dancers, they find that they must "dance like a man." Smith recalls an experience as the sole female contestant in a second-line dance competition in 2010. She made it to the final round, dancing off with Gerald Plattenburg of the Nine Times. "They said, 'We're gonna give you the trophy and give him the money.' I was like, 'Give me the trophy give him the money?'" I didn't understand that. And it was like, because you a girl." In March of 2014, Dorsey entered a similar contest and also lost to a male competitor. As Smith concludes, "That's why you got to dance like a man. You can't really dance like a female, because you're not going to get no kind of recognition. If you dance like a man, they going to know who you is."

What does it mean to second-line like a man? Some say that it means "going hard," focusing on the feet, and doing daredevil tricks. If a second-liner is too "soft," emphasizing her hips more than her feet, and refraining from gymnastic stunts, then she might be seen as dancing like a woman. This gendered division could have one root in the dances performed at Congo Square. During the "Congo Dance," a man would leap and spin around a woman while she made slow movements with her torso and hips, sometimes while waving a handkerchief. Much like the Nineteenth-Century Congo Dance, today's second-liners often see athletic movements and elaborate footwork as qualities of "dancing like a man." In reality, both men and women "go hard"—and some women can do it in heels.

Smith and Dorsey do not let any bias interfere with their love of second-lining. When that band strikes up, Dorsey "ain't worried about nothing. The music be in my head. I don't be worrying about all of that." Smith also frees her mind when she starts to dance. "Second-lining is me, where I can be free, be who I am. Second-lining is who I am. I am second-lining."

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