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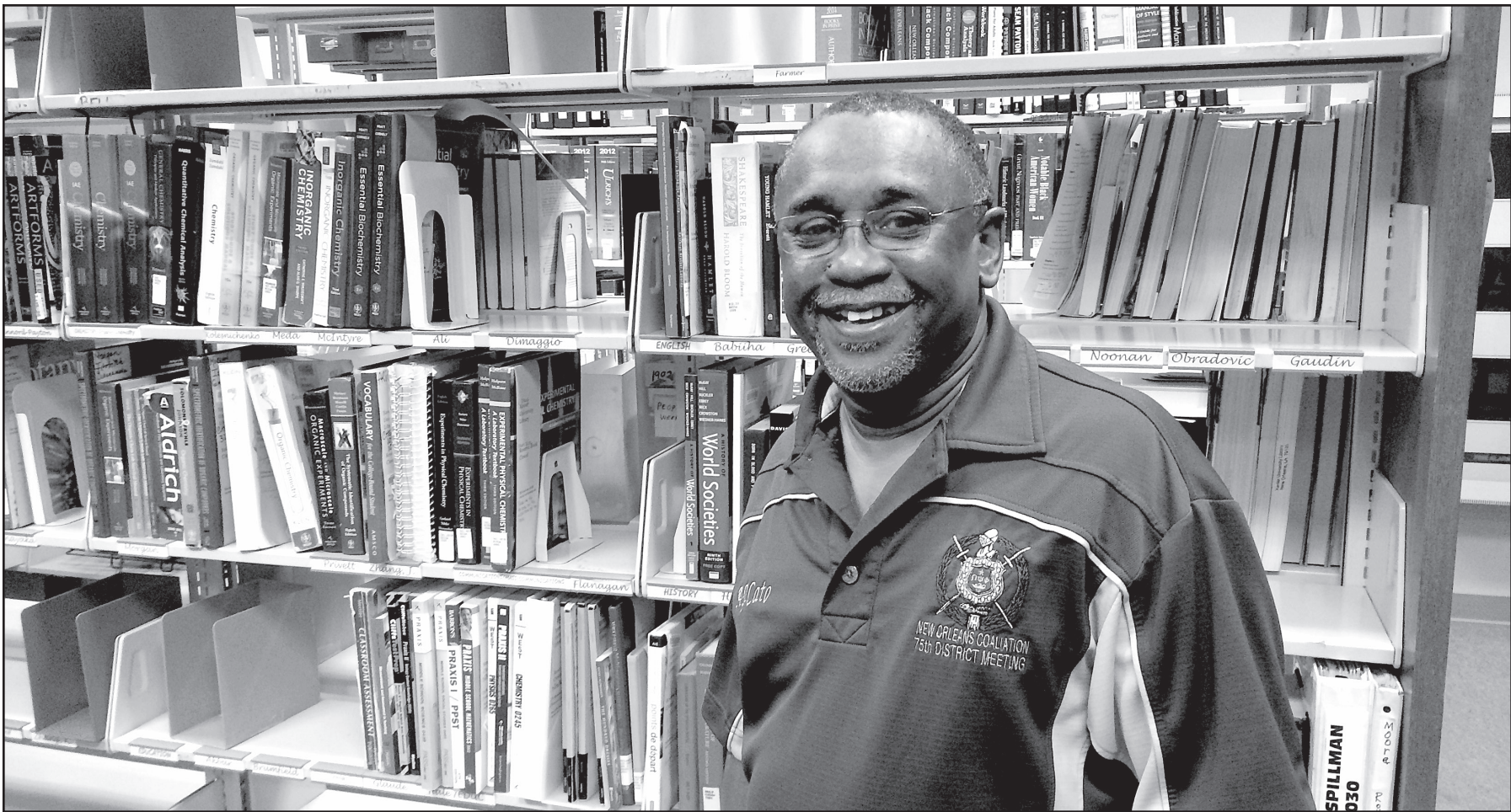
March Madness at Green Park Elementary



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African American Male Educators

Making a Difference in the Lives of Young People



Pictured above is Almore Cato, he has spent many years as an educator working at the elementary level with at-risk kids in public housing.

By Edwin Buggage

Where are the African American Male Teachers?

When you look at most classrooms at any level of education what are usually absent is the presence of

Black males as teachers, or professors. We must ask ourselves what does this do to the psyche of young Black males and others for that matter to rarely see African-American men in positions of authority during their educational experience.

In New Orleans post Hurricane Katrina over 7500 teachers were dismissed as the City's taken on an

educational experiment with charter schools that outcomes are questionable as numbers driven data has become paramount at the expense of the social development of the most at risk students. Today older veteran Black teachers many of them Black females and males have been replaced with young White teachers many of who seemingly use teaching as an entry level

On Cover: Retired Educator Almore Cato

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Teaching science for over a decade Charles Dickerson is more than an instructor. He also runs mentoring programs for youth in Houston and New Orleans.



Derek Bardell is a Professor of Education at Delgado Community College and leads a program that's aimed at attracting young Black males to education.



Joe M. Ricks, Jr., Ph.D., Chair, Division of Business, J.P. Morgan Chase Professor of Sales & Marketing, Xavier University of Louisiana. Having Black males as instructors at every level from Kindergarten to College is important.

transient job. And as our City has so many unemployed Black men perhaps we can invest in programs that can promote education careers to Black young people as a gateway to the middle-class and a profession with a greater purpose.

On any given day you can look into any classroom inside New Orleans Public Schools or schools across this nation and see Black students seated at desks with many of them being young Black boys. But what they do not see is men who look like them who can serve as role models and leaders in their lives. According to a recent report in the ranks of U.S. Teachers they are still overwhelmingly White and female with Black men being among those most underrepresented in the teaching ranks.

Recently, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan set a 2015 goal to add thousands more Black male teachers in U.S. schools. Programs and initiatives have been put in place to recruit and place young Black male teachers in classrooms, but it will take time to see the results.

Derek Bardell is a Professor of Education at Delgado Community College and leads a program that's aimed at attracting young Black males to education. He says of his experience as an educator has been rewarding but he sees getting more African-American males to pursue careers as educators especially at the elementary level a challenge.

"I consider being a Black male Educator on any level an honor as well as a privilege in that one has an opportunity to develop critical thinkers, set an example as a role model, mentor the next generation of students and build institutional diversity. From my position

as a college professor with experience at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels, I see firsthand the need for more African-American male educators in classrooms across the nation, in both urban and suburban areas. However, the reality is that there are not many Black males aspiring to be educators, particularly at the elementary level where the dearth is most prevalent."

Almore Cato who spent nearly three decades as an educator agrees, as someone who spent much of his career working at the elementary level with at-risk kids in public housing. He speaks of a program early in his career that had positive outcome where military veterans were incentivized to work with kids at the elementary level. He believes there are a need for more Black males in the classroom at all levels.

"I remember when I first started teaching there was a special program for veterans and they were giving incentives to teach in elementary schools. I worked with a couple of them and they were kindergarten teachers, those kids loved them, one went on to become a principal and the other is still working. I believe kids that young to be exposed to Black males is such a good positive thing and should happen more often."

Teaching and Helping Kids Reach Their Full Potential

In many at risk schools every day the teachers that are there work hard to service their students. But it is an arduous task when you look at many of the environments some of the young people are coming from. While economic poverty is nothing new in the African-American community other social in-

stitutions were intact. Whether it was two-parent homes, extended family and kinship networks or places where people got to know one another be it neighborhood parks and churches; today teachers take on a much larger role as mentors and sometimes surrogate parents or guardians.

"I am a teacher role model, mentor, community figure. These are a few words that describe a teacher," says Charles Dickerson, a New Orleans native who worked as a teacher for a number of years in Houston, Texas and recently returned to contribute to his home town. "I feel the overall role of a teacher is to impart knowledge to learners in order for them to achieve. As a Black male teacher, it is my responsibility to know my subject which I teach in order to ensure learners receive correct information. As a seasoned 11th year teacher who has worked in all types of schools and presently at Landry/ Walker, it is important as a Black male teacher that I set a good example by behaving in a professional manner. This should be demonstrated through appropriate dress, using appropriate language at all times and showing respect to learners and colleagues."

Charles Vaughn is an art teacher at Joseph S. Clark High School; he takes an unconventional approach to reaching his students. He is like a coach in the classroom. He says his job is to motivate his kids to reach their full potential. "They already have everything in them to be great, all I do is help bring it out of them."

Bardell feels it is a problem when you have young men and women going through school and the only Black males they may see are cafeteria workers or custodians. While these are honest pro-

fessions he says Black males need to be seen in the classroom. Citing an article on the lack of Black male teachers he says, "Education Week published a February 25, 2015 article by Donald G. Nicolas entitled Where are the Black Male Teachers? In this piece, the author explores the dilemma head on using his personal experience and statistical data on this plight to make his case. He also makes mention of the only adult Black males found at many schools are primarily in menial positions. He asserts and I agree that this has to change. Students of all races could indeed benefit from seeing Black males in a different light."

It is not just young Black males who benefit from seeing African-American Educators, but everyone because it breaks down myths about Blacks and their ability to lead. "The Whites and others who didn't have experience with Blacks sometimes come with prejudices were being dispelled after coming in contact with us on a daily basis. They found out about our character and skill set and became more enlightened," says Almore Cato.

From Kindergarten through College African-American Educators are Important

There is no doubt a need for Black male educators at all levels. Undoubtedly, there is a need for elementary and high school teachers but the low numbers of professors in our colleges and universities are equally staggering. According to the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, only 4 percent of professors in American colleges (excluding Historically Black Colleges where the numbers are slightly higher.)

"Even Being an African-American male educator at an HBCU where I can impact a critical mass of African-American students provides an intrinsic value so large it's hard to quantify," say Joe Ricks, a Professor in the Department of Business at Xavier University. "There is clearly a shortage of African-American male faculty which leads to a shortage of role models and even more importantly a shortage of people who can be very comfortable in telling African-American male students let's cut out some of the excuses that are given for non-performance."

While teaching is not one of the highest paid professions, it pays off in so many other ways. Charles Vaughn says it is seeing his students doing well that fulfill him. "Working with my students gives me a sense of purpose. When I think of the kids I see myself when I was their age and coming from a similar environment understand their needs and to see them succeed gives me an incredible feeling to see them reach their full potential."

Charles Dickerson, who in addition to teaching runs a mentoring program for young boys and girls in addition to giving them scholarship monies for college stresses the importance of Black Male educators on young people and its impact, "I feel Black male teachers are vital; especially given that there are few positive role models for young men in the Black community. Most students in the Black communities have few, if any, Black male teachers. The youth are the future and along their educational journey they need to see Black male teachers. Hopefully, we who are in the classroom right now can inspire other young Black males to follow in our footsteps."

Green Park Elementary School March Madness Teaches Young People about Colleges

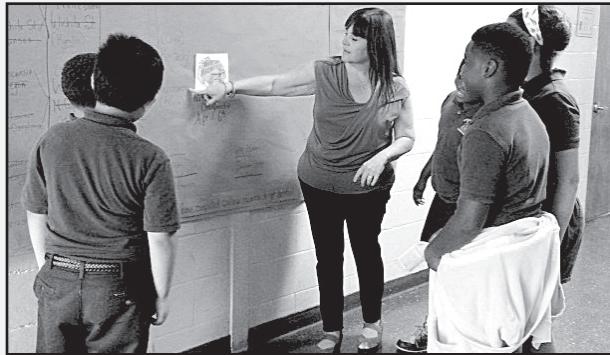
Edwin Buggage

As we have ended March Madness with Duke winning the Division I Male College Basketball Championship students from Green Park Elementary School in Metairie took part in a contest and learning experience. Students were assigned by their teacher Mrs. Yvette Spinner to research the college they chose from the teams that made the tournament and they had to make a presentation to their classmates. They could either decorate a hanger, a paper bag, or make a shoebox float. Their project had to have items on it that represented something they learned about the college. Mrs. Spinner's goal is to open up or continue the dialogue about college with the students and their parents.

Several students took part, one of her students Ananda Wide said, "I picked Brigham Young University (BYU). I enjoyed making a cougar out of modeling clay for my float. I also learned that they have a Meals on Wheels program



Ananda Wide



Teacher Mrs. Yvette Spinner with students.



Cedric Jones



(left to right) Cedric Jones, Joseph Brown, Ananda Wide, Darren Pich, Alexis Crouchet

at BYU. It's also great that they have a bowling center on campus for the students!"

Another student Alexis Macaluso says of his experience, "I picked Purdue. Drew Brees went

there! I also researched and found out that Neil Armstrong went there. He was the first man to

walk on the moon. I read that he said, 'One small step for man-one giant leap for mankind.' The best part was getting to work on the project with my dad. He said it was so much fun that he would like to do it again! The project made me want to go to Purdue when I graduate from high school."

Cedric Jones, another one of Mrs. Spinner's students said, "My mom and I worked together to make the project on my college-Stephen F. Austin. I found out that Austin was one of the founding fathers of Texas, and the capitol of the state is named after him. They are called the Lumberjacks. I pulled pictures of their players off the Internet and glued them on to action figures to make it look like they were playing basketball on the float. I also learned that it was established in 1923."

All were supportive of the exercise and the lessons they learned including Principal Sandy Phillips, "The kids are excited about learning. As a principal, that's what I love to see!"

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Louisiana Housing Corporation Launches New LHC Preferred Conventional Mortgage Program

Program Will Enable More Louisiana Families to Realize Their Dreams of Homeownership

In an effort to further expand homeownership opportunities across the state, the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) will now offer a 30-year LHC Preferred Conventional Mortgage Program with 3 percent down payment assistance and reduced mortgage insurance.

"Our new mortgage program will enable more Louisiana families to realize their dreams of owning a home," said LHC Executive Director Fred Tombar. "The program offers some unique advantages including a higher loan to value compared to FHA, higher income

limits, and no up-front mortgage insurance premiums."

Benefits of the LHC Preferred Conventional Mortgage Program include:

- 3 percent assistance provided for down payment, closing costs or prepaid items
- Competitive 30-year fixed rate
- Maximum Loan amount of \$417,000
- Available to potential homebuyers with household incomes up to \$99,000
- Minimum credit score of 640
- First-time homebuyer requirement does not apply
- Reduced mortgage insurance
- No origination or discount fees
- Available for purchase of 1-2 unit single family residences in Louisiana

Potential homebuyers may also be interested in the LHC's Market Rate GNMA Program, which offers 30-year FHA, VA or RD mortgage loans with 3 percent down payment or closing cost assistance. This program is available to families whose annual income does not exceed 115 percent of the median income in the parish where the property is located.

For more information about LHC mortgage products, lenders or housing counseling classes, visit www.lhc.la.gov and click the "Buyers" icon on the homepage. The LHC also operates a toll-free hotline at 1-888-454-2001 and posts program news on Facebook and Twitter.

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Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

Economic and Property Damages Settlement

The Deadline to file a Claim is June 8, 2015

June 8, 2015 has been established as the deadline to submit a claim in the Economic and Property Damages (“E&PD”) Settlement with BP Exploration & Production Inc. and BP America Production Company (“BP”) related to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. So if you are eligible to file a claim, you must act soon.

WHO IS INCLUDED?

The E&PD Settlement Class includes people, businesses, other entities, and properties in the states of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, and certain counties in Texas and Florida, that were harmed by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that occurred on April 20, 2010. The website DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com has detailed descriptions and maps of the included geographic locations to help you determine whether you are a part of the E&PD Settlement Class. Additionally, you can call 1-866-992-6174 or e-mail questions@DeepwaterHorizonEconomicSettlement.com to find out if a geographic location is included.

WHAT ARE THE PAYMENT CATEGORIES?

The settlement provides payments if you had economic loss or property damage because of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. By submitting a claim, you can request a payment in one or more of the following seven categories:

- Economic Damage ■ Loss of Subsistence
 - Vessel Physical Damage
 - Real Property Sales Damage
- Vessels of Opportunity Charter Payment
 - Coastal Real Property Damage
 - Wetlands Real Property Damage

Economic Damage payments are available for Individuals and Entities that lost profits or earnings as a result of the Deepwater Horizon Incident. **Coastal Real Property** payments are available for property that was physically damaged in connection with the Deepwater Horizon Incident. Detailed descriptions of all seven categories are available at the website.

There is no limit on the total dollar amount of the E&PD Settlement. All qualified and timely claims will be paid in full once they are approved. The Settlement also allowed for Seafood Compensation claims, but the deadline for those claims has passed.

HOW DO I REQUEST A PAYMENT?

You must submit a Claim Form to request a payment. You can get a copy of the various Claim Forms by visiting the website or by calling 1-866-992-6174. Claims can be submitted online or by mail. If you have questions about how to file your claim, you should call the toll-free number for assistance. The claims process can be complex, so if you are eligible to file a claim, you should act now so you may complete your claim before the **June 8, 2015** deadline.

DeepwaterHorizonSettlements.com ■ 1-866-992-6174

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Michael Ward Has Another Birthday Bash

Photos by Kurte Pellerin

Michael Ward celebrated his birthday on Saturday, April 4th at the Daiquiri Dock on the Westbank. Everyone enjoyed an epic performance by Michael himself. Several of his musical friends stopped by such as Ceasar Elloie who sang and Michael's son Sean Ward also played his violin. BRW performed for the event.



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

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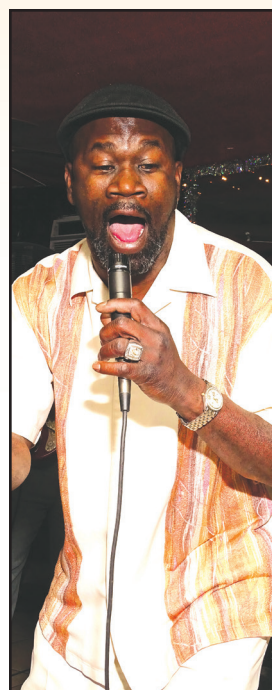
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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Bertha's Place Easter Showcase

Photos by Glenn Summers

Bertha's Place Easter Music Showcase with Music Konnect Band featured father & son vocalist Big Frank & Lil Frank. Music filled the room as the audience was treated to the smooth sounds of the band, and Data was there.



Data News Weekly is Hiring

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

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.

If you want to be an integral part of your community, tell stories in a multi-media environment — look no further.

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.

Responsibilities include but not limited to:

- Prospect and develop sales leads for print and digital product lines
- Drive online and cross platform advertising sales
- Identify, create strategies, develop influential contacts, and help close new digital products
- Increase overall revenue opportunities in both print and online
- Develop a team sales atmosphere

Our ideal candidate will possess the following education,

skills and experience:

- Minimum 5 years print and digital sales and manager experience
- Self-starter, capable of executing within all phases of sales cycle
- Strong relationship building and client service background
- Strong organizational, communication and presentation skills
- 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.

If you are interested in a rewarding career, email a cover letter and resume to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net or mail to: Data News Weekly, c/o Terry Jones, Publisher, 3501 Napoleon Avenue, New Orleans LA 70125

To Be Equal

The State of Black America Part 2, Jobs



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

One of the advantages of my position as the president and CEO of the National Urban League is that I have both the opportunity and platform to speak to so many of our nation's young people. I was presented with another opportunity last week as a featured speaker of the Medgar Evers College Global Lecture Series. As I addressed that crowd

of future lawyers, IT professionals and perhaps even a president of the National Urban League, it struck me that for a number of these students—our future workforce—they may encounter an America, and a job market, that is hostile to the principles of economic mobility on which our country was founded.

Five years after the widely-accepted end of the global economic downturn commonly known as the Great Recession, America's economy inches ever closer to full recovery. In fact, the start of 2015 saw the most sustained period of job creation this century. But the dark cloud inside this silver lining is that too many people are still being left behind – particularly in our communities of color, where unemployment remains at a crisis

“The hardest work in the world is being out of work.”
– Whitney M. Young,
National Urban League
President 1961-1971

level, even as our economy continues to rebound.

For Blacks and Latinos in America, the economic devastation of the Great Recession is as real today as it

was when it began in 2007 and what we've found in our newly released 2015 State of Black America® report – “Save our Cities: Education, Jobs + Justice” is a mixed econom-

ics bag that reflects a stark tale of two Americas.

The U.S. economy added 295,000 jobs in February of this year. For the first time since 1997, we have seen 12 straight months of private-sector job growth above 200,000 and unemployment is down to 5.5 percent – its lowest rate since May 2008. But despite this encouraging news, the Black unemployment is twice that of White unemployment, wages are stagnant and many working people are not earning enough to make ends meet.

The Equality Index in the State of Black America® report catalogued Black, Hispanic and White unemployment and income inequality in the nation's largest metropoli-

Morial, Continued on page 9.

Jailing Educators for ‘Cheating to the Test’



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Eleven Atlanta teachers have been convicted of altering student test scores on standardized tests. They are charged with racketeering and conspiracy. The much-celebrated Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools Beverly L. Hall was among the indicted but was too ill to stand trial. She died March 2.

Another group of teachers, principals and administrators took plea bargains. A total of 178 people were accused of taking part in the cheating “scam” and in 2011 Hall reminded observers that “we have over 3,000 teachers in Atlanta,” and just a few were part of the cheating scandal. She also denied having any knowledge of the cheating. Until her illness, she insisted that she wanted to stand trial and clear her name.

In what was described as the largest cheating scandal in the na-

tion's history, District Attorney Paul L. Howard Jr. prosecuted the educators under a law originally designed to snare organized crime figures. Of the 12 defendants, 11 were convicted of racketeering, a felony punishable up to 20 years. One defendant, Dessa Curb, a former elementary school teacher, was acquitted.

Those 11 convicted were taken straight from the courtroom to jail. Sentencing should take place this week. On top of the 20 years maximum sentence for racketeering, they could be convicted on other charges including making false statements. It is interesting to note that most of these teachers are African American.

You can serve as few as 15 years for second-degree murder in Georgia, and as little as a year for involuntary manslaughter. Further, most convicted offenders get a day or even months to go home and straighten out their affairs before reporting to prison. But not this group of educators.

These Atlanta teachers aren't the only teachers involved in similar cheating scams. A year ago, 130 Philadelphia educators were accused of cheating. In September, several were ordered to stand trial.

Why have those who chose a low-paid and little-regarded profession stoop to cheating on standardized tests? Are they judged by the number of students who pass these flawed tests, and the number who fail? Is there a culture of cheating in too many of our nation's schools? Is there a culture of “teaching to the test”?

There is no excuse for the cheating in Atlanta, or Philadelphia, or in El Paso, where the school superintendent was imprisoned for reporting faulty test scores. While there is no excuse, it would be foolhardy to ignore the pressure that many face when federal laws mandate the use of standardized tests to “prove” that teachers and schools are doing their jobs.

In some districts, including Atlanta, teachers are given bonuses when their students do well on tests, and may be terminated when students do not. Even now, after revisions in teacher evaluation, half of teacher performance is based on standardized tests. Teachers can be reassigned, or schools can be closed if there are too many poor-performing students enrolled.

It makes sense to look at the many ways that the system encourages teachers to manipulate, if not outright

cheat, when they administer standardized tests. Some schools spend days preparing students to take the tests. They aren't spending days teaching the material students must learn, just the rote material needed to pass standardized tests. Passing a test in English and grammar may prove some proficiency, but does it prove that a student can write a paragraph or an essay, or engage in critical thinking?

When teachers spend too much time focused on standardized testing and not enough on course content, are they cheating students? In teaching to the test, are they cheating to the test? I'm not referring to the multiple erasures that investigators found on some of the Atlanta tests, or schemes that excluded poor-performing students from testing so average grades could be higher. I'm referring to teachers who choose to teach content that they know will show up on the test, or those who spend tens of hours in “practice sessions” with old copies of tests used as drills. From my perspective students are being cheated when there is too much emphasis placed on standardized testing.

One might ask how teachers and students can be evaluated without standardized tests, but there is an

extensive body of research that suggests other methods of evaluating teachers, including classroom observation and curriculum review. Interestingly, an increasing number of colleges do not use standardized tests to evaluate students for admissions because they recognize such tests are flawed.

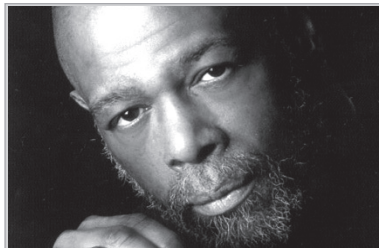
Obviously, there must be some way to measure progress among students, and proficiency among teachers. Still, standardized test results should not be tied to teacher compensation, or to threats of school closings. If standardized tests are one way to measure results, they must be combined with other measures to ensure fairness.

It makes sense, though, to ask if there is a racial dynamic to leading nearly a dozen teachers, mostly African American, out of a courtroom in handcuffs. And it makes sense to wonder if the charge of racketeering is being applied to harshly for what is clearly illegal misconduct.

While teaching to the test is not against the law, isn't it cheating our students nearly as much as the scams?

Julianne Malveaux is an economist, writer, and President Emerita of Bennett College. She can be reached at juliannealveaux.com.

Forgive and be Forgiven



James Washington
Guest Columnist

I'm reading a book that I highly recommend by Beth Moore, Jesus, the One and Only. It reminds me rather vigorously that forgiveness is still a critical concept in the life of so many so called Christians, who profess faith as their spiritual cornerstone. The book is turning my soul inside out because it vividly reinforces to me that I

am getting prayer answered with each chapter and that realization is the impetus for this column. Back to forgiveness! How many of you repent, but remain in a guilty state of mind because you really don't believe God will forgive you your acknowledged transgressions? If there was ever a challenge to faith, this is it. Deep down inside, you can't really live a life of spiritual freedom, because you have never thought God would really forgive you for all that 'sinnin' you used to do and sometimes miss, even today. I bring this up because I believe you and I are dealing with another clever trick of the devil. If you really don't believe you've been forgiven, you keep asking God to forgive you.

Now follow me for a minute. If you keep asking for something that is already done, the mere prayer insults the God who took care of this for you. Enter the devil. Since you cannot accept your own forgiveness, you cannot stand on the faith you profess in God. Hence, you cannot live the life God has cleared for you to embark upon. That's a hypocrite. Enter Jesus. He took care of that. You are forgiven. Your faith in Him allows you to accept that forgiveness and move on in freedom, which brings you the courage necessary for the testimony that undoubtedly will help others. The ensuing behavior change in you lets the world know your faith is real. That's a believer.

Some might say that's a soldier for the Lord. Anyway you look at it, the basis for faith rests in the belief of who Jesus was, what He did, why He did it and who He did it for, i.e. you and me and anybody who looks like us. Face it. You are forgiven; not because I say so, but because Christ says so. Deal with it please. With this truth, also comes a peace that defies understanding; a peace that most assuredly will set you free.

It does not matter your degree of sin, your quantity or your perceived propensity to sin again. Christ did not and does not discriminate on that basis. Remember, you had nothing to do with this. God's grace is what I'm talking about. That forgiveness

thing should resonate in your soul when it collides with that grace thing. It's up to us, you and me, to accept it. And when we do, something wonderful happens. You begin to see yourself as God sees you. You begin to understand the beauty of salvation and oddly enough, you truly want others to understand this gift also. Your testimony takes shape and your words are then shaped around the blessing that is Jesus Christ. Reread Luke and the tears that washed the Savior's feet. "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved so much..." Luke 7:47. The answer to your being able to forgive yourself lies not within you but within the One who has already forgiven you.

Morial, Continued from page 8.

tan areas. Overall, the Black unemployment rate was at 11.3 percent and the Latino unemployment rate stood at 7.4 percent versus a White unemployment rate of 5.3 percent. Of the 70 cities ranked for Black-White unemployment, almost half (33 cities) had a Black unemployment rate above 15 percent. In seven of those cities we discovered Great Depression era Black unemployment rates of 20 percent or higher.

It is clear that for far too many Blacks and Latinos, our nation's economic recovery is only something they read or hear about. According to our analysis, America's comeback is bypassing large swaths of people in Black and Brown neighborhoods – and that is dangerous – not only to those communities, but to our nation. A recovery that leaves millions of its citizens behind will ultimately threaten America's sustained growth.

In a recent report on jobs and unemployment in the Black community, Economic Policy Institute economist Valerie Wilson said, "Even before the Great Recession, black unemployment has consistently been twice as high as white unemployment. To address this problem, we need to look beyond simply returning to the pre-recession status quo and implement policies aimed at ensuring that everyone who is willing and able to work has a job."

A central focus of the National Urban League is workforce development, and being in the business of creating jobs and proposing solutions to our longstanding challenges, our organization has advanced the following public-policy recommendations:

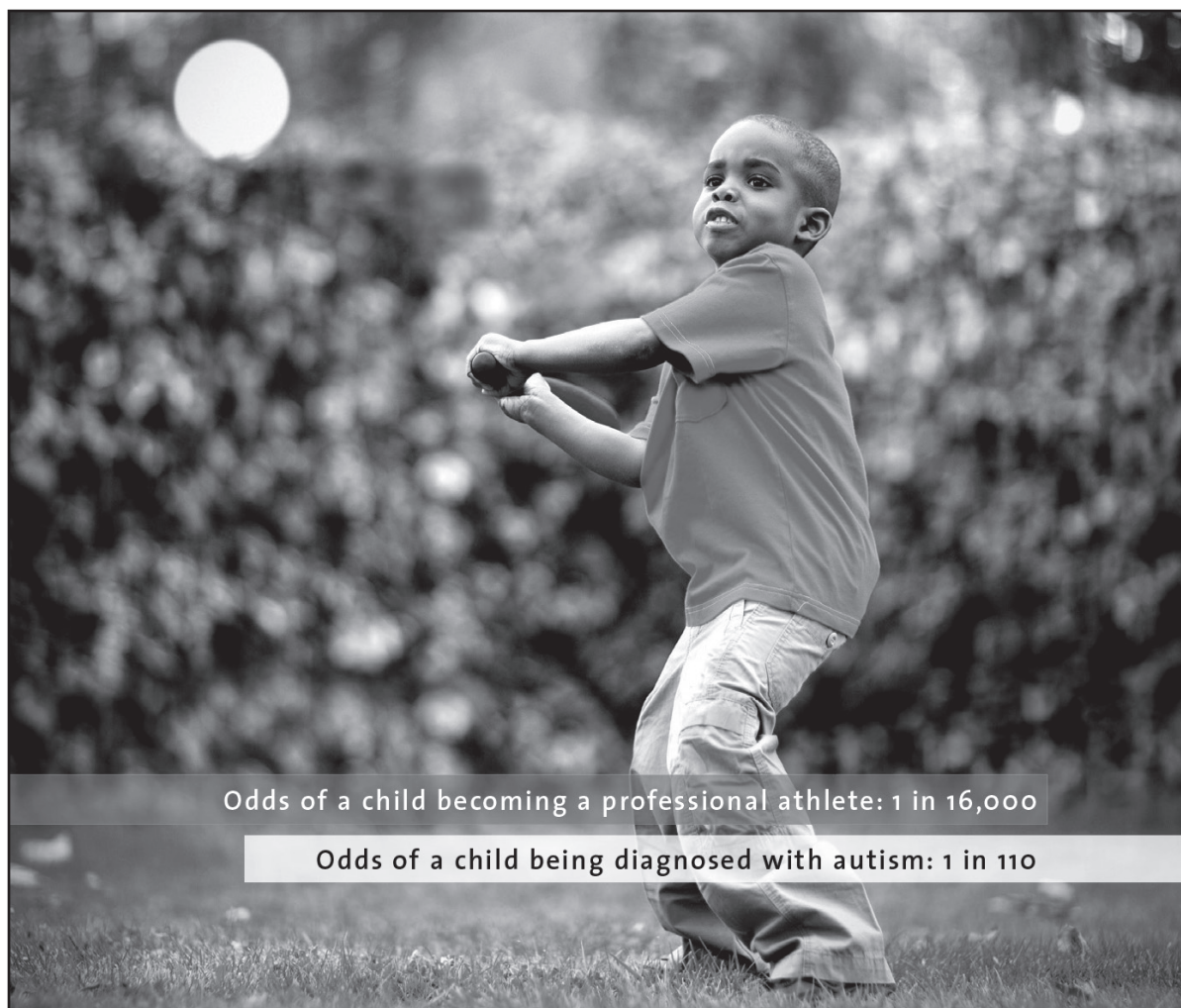
Passage of a transportation infrastructure bill with a targeted jobs component.

Passage a targeted, large-scale summer youth/young adult jobs bill.

Raising the minimum wage to a living wage.

Last week, the U.S. Department of Labor published the March jobs report. While we applaud every stride our country makes in resuscitating our once battered economy, we remain vigilant – and concerned – about the disparity of access to these benefits among our nation's citizens as revealed in the State of Black America® report (for more details and essays from leading figures on the economy, be sure to visit www.stateofblackamerica.org). I am concerned for all Americans, but especially for all the students I meet who live in those communities in crisis and are working so hard in their classrooms now while they dream of a better future.

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



Odds of a child becoming a professional athlete: 1 in 16,000

Odds of a child being diagnosed with autism: 1 in 110

Some signs to look for:

No big smiles or other joyful expressions by 6 months.

No babbling by 12 months.

No words by 16 months.



To learn more of the signs of autism, visit autismspeaks.org



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Endometriosis

More than Just Painful Cycles

by Shantella Y. Sherman
Special to the NNPA from the
Afro-American Newspaper

Cassandra Nivens has experienced painful periods since age 14. To cope with being mostly incapacitated for some time each month, Nivens learned to manage what she believed were normal hormonal shifts, often scheduling time away from school and work around a 28-day cycle. It wasn't until a routine ultrasound during her first pregnancy that her painful periods were diagnosed as endometriosis.

Defined as a condition where tissue that normally grows inside the uterus grows outside of it, endometriosis impacts 176 million women. Each month as the lining of the uterus sheds and the blood and tissue is released, the same thing happens to the tissue outside the uterus. But with no way for the released tissues to leave the body, inflammation and scar tissue develop. While endometriosis affects White women 33 percent more often, deaths from undiagnosed endometrial cancer is roughly 80 percent higher among African-American women.

"I was relieved to be able to put a name to what felt like some type of



torture I endured every month, but was scared and concerned for the health of my baby. My system felt out of whack because of the pregnancy, and I was afraid that after my son was born, my hormones would go into high-gear, and it would be even more painful," said Nivens,

who found some relief in breastfeeding her healthy child.

Once her cycle resumed, Nivens she sought treatment from a naturopath. After two years of progressive yoga (from BandhaKonasana poses to hot yoga), acupuncture, and change in diet, she and her

husband were able to welcome a second son.

According to research from the Mayo Clinic, Nivens is among the fortunate able to conceive with endometriosis, as an estimated 30-40 percent of infertile women have endometriosis. Because the disorder can only be definitely diagnosed through visual inspection inside of the pelvis and abdomen (as well as tissue biopsy of the implants), even ultrasounds can only hint at its presence.

General symptoms of endometriosis include: extremely painful or disabling menstrual cramps; pain increasing in severity over time; chronic pelvic pain including lower back and pelvic pain; pain during or after sex; intestinal pain; painful bowel movements; or painful urination during menstrual periods.

As more women become aware that endometriosis is more than just painful periods, the hope among physicians is that more women will note their symptoms and seek professional advice.

The Howard University Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology recently served as local sponsors of the 2015 Worldwide EndoMarch for Endometriosis to raise awareness

among African Americans. The second annual march took place at Upper Senate Park in Northwest, March 28, and simultaneously in more than 56 cities worldwide.

Chandelis Duster, a Virginia precinct manager of the EndoMarch diagnosed six years ago with the condition, took part in the march to help raise awareness. "It has been a rough six years during which I have had three surgeries. Initially there was a big cyst on an ovary that needed to be drained and that was how they found endometriosis. No one had ever talked to me about it and as a freshman in college, it was scary to be told I had a disease with no cure," Duster said.

Following a laparoscopic surgery to remove the tissue, more endometriosis was found. "It's been tough dealing with the pain constantly and everyday... a heating pad is [my] best friend. It has gotten better since the last surgery, but emotionally, it is a lot to deal with and it is a financial strain," Duster said.

Among African-American women, endometriosis is one of the most common indications for major gynecological surgery and hysterectomy.

Fair Housing Action Center Announces New Director

The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC), a private nonprofit organization dedicated to ending housing discrimination in Louisiana, is pleased to announce the selection of Cashauna Hill, Esq., as its new Executive Director. Ms. Hill was selected by GNOFHAC's Board of Directors to succeed outgoing Executive Director James Perry, who has led the organization for more than ten years and has seen the Center through some of the largest housing challenges to face the region in recent history. The decision was the result of a thorough national selection process, during which more than 100 candidates were reviewed and considered. Ms. Hill will officially begin her new position as Director on Monday, April 6, 2015.

Ms. Hill is a dedicated housing



Cashauna Hill

advocate who has advised both the City of New Orleans and the City of Portland, Oregon on effective fair housing policy. She has extensive fair housing litigation experience, having previously served as both Fair Housing Staff Attorney at the Oregon Law Center in Portland, Oregon and Staff Attorney at the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing

Action Center. She received her Juris Doctor from Tulane Law School and her Bachelor's Degree from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to accepting the position at the Fair Housing Action Center, Ms. Hill served as an Assistant City Attorney for the City of New Orleans, where she represented the City and its employees in state and federal court and administrative proceedings and managed multi-million dollar litigation.

"I am thrilled to return to the Fair Housing Action Center," remarks Ms. Hill. "I was incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to work with James directly and see how his leadership and tenacity transformed the Center into the thriving organization that it is today, and I look forward to continuing his good work to ensure that all Loui-

sianans are granted fair access to housing that meets their needs."

GNOFHAC outgoing Executive Director James Perry comments, "Cashauna Hill is a top rate fair housing advocate. I am confident that under her leadership, the Center will become ever more vigilant in its efforts to stem housing discrimination."

GNOFHAC invites all members of the public to join the Center's board, staff, and friends in welcoming Cashauna Hill at its third annual Fair Housing Month crawfish boil. The boil will be held on Wednesday, April 22 from 5-7PM on the front lawn of the GNOFHAC offices (404 S. Jefferson Davis Pkwy, New Orleans). The event is free and open to the public.



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Jailed Atlanta Educators Await Fate in Cheating Scandal

NNPA Newswire - A group of former educators in Atlanta convicted in a widespread test cheating scandal now await their fates behind bars.

Sentencing begins April 8 for the 11 educators, who were convicted Wednesday of a scheme to inflate students' scores on tests administered in the city's public schools.

Jurors convicted all but one of the 12 defendants of racketeering, a felony that carries up to 20 years in prison, as well as other charges such as making false statements, that could add years to their sentences. The remaining defendant, a teacher, was acquitted of all charges.

A state investigation found that



Former Atlanta Public Schools School Research Team Director Tamara Cotman, center, is led to a holding cell after a jury found her guilty in the test-cheating trial on April 1 in Atlanta. — Kent D. Johnson/Atlanta Journal-Constitution/AP

nearly 200 educators had been feeding answers to students or altering submitted test answers since at

least 2005. The convicted 11 were accused of falsifying test results to collect bonuses or secure their jobs,

The Associated Press reported.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Jerry W. Baxter ordered all but one of the defendants — former teachers, testing coordinators and administrators — jailed immediately following Wednesday's proceedings, and they were led from the courtroom in handcuffs. The remaining defendant, a pregnant teacher, is expected to give birth soon and was allowed to go free on bail until sentencing.

The convictions follow a 2½-year investigation in which Beverly L. Hall, the once-lauded superintendent who died of breast cancer in March, was charged with racketeering, theft and other crimes connected to the scandal.

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'If I Had Sneezed'

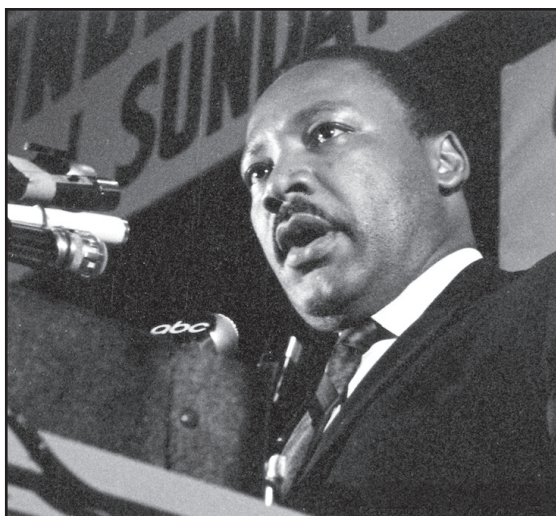
5 Surprising Lines from MLK's 'Mountaintop' Speech

By Sheryl Huggins Salomon

NNPA Newswire - Fifty-three years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968, we still recall the fateful words of his last public speech the day before.

Delivered in Memphis, Tenn. in support of striking sanitation workers there, his address is popularly known as "The Mountaintop Speech" for these famous closing lines: "We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop....I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

They're unforgettable — the final, soaring, prophetic words of a leader who seemed to know his hours were numbered. Yet if you listen to the entire speech, what comes through is a call to action in support of organized labor, buttressed by rhetoric that ranges



from scripture to statistics to personal anecdotes to complaints that ring true over half a century later.

Even the more prosaic elements of his last public speech are enlightening. For instance, did you know that in "The Mountaintop Speech," Dr. King:

Recounted the time a woman stabbed him during a book tour stop in New York City.

"...while sitting there autographing books, a demented black woman came up. The only question I heard from her was, 'Are you Martin Luther King?'... the X-rays

revealed that the tip of the blade was on the edge of my aorta, the main artery... It came out in the New York Times the next morning, that if I had sneezed, I would have died."

Cited Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr. — and paused to ask him a question mid-speech.

"We are asking you tonight, to go out and tell your

neighbors not to buy Coca-Cola in Memphis...Tell them not to buy—what is the other bread?—Wonder Bread. And what is the other bread company, Jesse? Tell them not to buy Hart's bread. As Jesse Jackson has said, up to now, only the garbage men have been feeling pain; now we must kind of redistribute the pain."

Complained about the press.

"You know what happened the other day, and the press dealt only with the window-breaking. I read the articles. They very seldom got around to mentioning the fact that

one thousand, three hundred sanitation workers were on strike, and that Memphis is not being fair to them...They didn't get around to that."

Rattled off stats on the size of Black buying power.

"The Negro collectively is richer than most nations of the world. We have an annual income of more than thirty billion dollars a year, which is more than all of the exports of the United States, and more than the national budget of Canada. Did you know that? That's power right there, if we know how to pool it."

Stressed the need to support Black-owned businesses.

"We've got to strengthen black institutions. I call upon you to take your money out of the banks downtown and deposit your money in Tri-State Bank—we want a 'bank-in' movement in Memphis... We begin the process of building a greater economic base. And at the same time, we are putting pressure where it really hurts. I ask you to follow through here."

To read "The Mountaintop Speech" in its entirety, go to the AFSCME site.

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