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Data Zone Page 7

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Sankofa Fresh Stop Market

Page 2



State & Local Garifunas Celebrating Afro-Hispanic Culture

Page 4

Home Style Planting Trees and Shrubs



Page 6

Sankofa Fresh Stop Market

Bringing Fresh Fruits and Veggies to the Ninth Ward



By Tatyana Aubert
Data News Weekly Staff Writer
Photos by Tatyana Aubert

A small, eye-catching fresh produce shack that sat at the corner of Forstall and St. Claude Streets in the Lower Ninth Ward opened for business on Saturday,

Oct. 24th. The Sankofa Fresh Stop Market celebrated its grand opening with the goal of bringing healthier food options to residents. The unique market caught many residents' attention on the sunny Saturday with its vibrant color produce and aroma of smoked veggies. Sankofa Fresh Stop Market was founded by Rashi-

da Ferdinand, who is also a Lower Ninth Ward resident. The process of creating Sankofa Fresh Stop Market began when Ferdinand won the vacant land in the "Lots of Progress" competition in 2014. Ferdinand decided to use the lot to provide fresh food for her community. She created a fresh market that is also mobile, that would go to different locations in the New Orleans

Cover Story, Continued
on page 5.

INSIDE DATA	
Cover Story	2
State & Local News . . .	4
Home Style.	6
Data Zone	7
Commentary.	8
In The Spirit	9
Health News	10
Book Review.	11

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Celebrating Afro-Hispanic Culture, New Orleans Garifunas Prepare for Annual Mass

By Kendall Lawson
Data News Weekly Staff Writer

The Garifunas of New Orleans shared their bilingual heritage at "The Misa Garifuna: A Celebration of Faith and African Heritage," on Xavier University's campus on Oct. 23rd. The event, which showcased this Afro-Hispanic group's religious customs, traditions, and foods was a part of a wider Louisiana Folklife Month series taking place across the state. Xavier's Department of Modern Languages, Xavier's Division of Arts and Humanities, the Louisiana Folklife Commission and the Louisiana State Library put on the presentation of New Orleans Garifunas. At the event, the New Orleans Garifunas demonstrated how they typically would mark their faith and heritage at their November Annual Catholic Mass known as the Misa Garifuna.

"I am a Garifuna," said Maria Elena Zúñiga, who spoke on stage at Xavier's Administration Auditorium as she held up a plate with fish, vegetables, and other ethnic assortments towards the audience. "It's a gift God gave us. We try our best to



remind everyone of our heritage," said Zúñiga, who was honored by the State Folklife Commission for her leadership in organizing the Annual Garifuna Mass.

According to the Louisiana Folklife Commission, there are roughly 50,000 Garifunas living in the United States, with possibly one-fifth of them residing in New Orleans, prior to Katrina. Scholars continue to document how many of the New Orleans population have returned after Katrina, but have identified a new enclave of New Orleans Garifunas that have created a new community in Houston. Garifunas are an Afro-Central American ethnic group of mixed Arawak, West African, and Carib Indian descent. Garifunas claim that their ancestors escaped becoming enslaved in the Caribbean. A ship transporting Africans bound for slavery in the Americas sank sometime between 1635 to 1675 near St. Vincent, according to the Folklife Commission. The surviving Africans fled to the island and adopted the customs of the Carib Indians, who were initially present on the island.

In 1797 the Garifunas then relocated to the island of Roatan, a Honduras bay island and at this point adopted Catholicism. Today the majority of Garifunas live in Honduras, but a strong diaspora group reside in the U.S. in cities such as Houston, Dallas, New York, Los Angeles and New Orleans. The Garifunas migrated to New Orleans in the 1960's spurred on by President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress initiatives that attracted many Central

American agricultural workers to migrate to the U.S. for jobs. Their numbers in New Orleans have been bolstered by a new wave of Garifuna immigrants to New Orleans who are part of a wider migration of Hispanics to the City attracted by recovery construction jobs. New migrants of Garifunas, post-Katrina, have mostly connected with the existing community.

New Orleans Garifuna's have kept their traditions strong by an annual mass called the Misa Garifuna. This year the mass takes place at noon on Sunday, Nov. 15 at the Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Church on Dauphine Street. The mass commemorates the arrival of Garifunas to the Central American countries of Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and Nicaragua. "The Misa Garifuna celebrates the African Heritage as it's found in the practice of Catholicism," said Dr. Susan Spillman, an Associate Professor of French at Xavier, who organized the event. Spillman who has worked to document the group's presence in New Orleans and preservation of their traditions said that Garifunas have often been seen as invisible in the community. Census data does not often capture their race and it is through working with the community, scholars like Spillman are able to learn more about them.

"Instead of us going out to their community, we're bringing them to

our campus. I want to build that relationship," Spillman said.

The mass has become the signature way in which the Garifunas in New Orleans have kept their heritage alive for decades. "The Misa Garifuna has been in New Orleans for approximately 30 years," said Austra Zapata, a New Orleans Garifuna. "The significance of the Misa Garifuna is to keep the Garifuna culture alive and around for Garifunas."

Cuisine is one tool the Garifunas used to tell the story of who they are. They brought and shared meat pies, sweetbread, and coconut bread with the audience to offer them a taste the Afro-Hispanic flavor. "Each Garifuna generation is exposed to Garifuna food, music, language, and clothing," Zapata explained.

The Garifuna women sang "Our Children Must Know" by Rhodel Castillo, a Garifuna recording artist in the U.S., that's a spiritual song played at many Garifuna gatherings. They also recited two poems titled "Waladiva Bunguiyu" and "Lachuluran Uganu" which are Garifuna folk poems passed through several generations. When someone says, "I am a Garifuna," or performs Garifuna customs, that person is acknowledging the Carib, Arawak, and African blood pumping from their heart and through their veins, Spillman said.

"What's really astounding is that their race is so small, yet prominent in the City," said Marine Thomaz, a Mid-City resident, who attended the event to learn more about Garifuna customs and community. "I'm now intrigued on doing future research on them and their culture," Thomaz said.

Scholars like Xavier's Spillman who have spent the last 3 decades studying the history and sense of community of the Garifunas said knowledge of such Afro-Hispanic groups better explains the make-up of the city. Spillman received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in 2002 to record, document, and study their history and current traditions.

"I consider them a hidden treasure," Spillman said. "Nobody talks about them in the African or Hispanic culture. They have a tremendous economic tradition. I think they should be better known, in order to complete our universal knowledge."

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Walmart to Hire more than 1,300 Seasonal Associates in Louisiana for Upcoming Holiday Season

Walmart today announced it will hire more than 1,300 seasonal associates in Louisiana for the upcoming holiday season. In addition to offering a chance to earn extra money during the holidays at one of the 130 stores in Louisiana, starting salaries of at least \$9 an hour will also provide opportunities to earn at least \$1.75 an hour above the current federal and state minimum wage.

Walmart traditionally brings on additional help during the holiday season after offering current associates the opportunity



to sign up for additional hours. Employees initially hired as seasonal sales associates, cashiers and stockers often continue as full-time employees and progress within the company. Last year, more than half of Walmart's seasonal employees nationwide continued with the retailer as permanent employees.

Walmart has also made a commitment to provide shoppers with a customer service-oriented holiday shopping experience for both in-store and online shoppers, as seasonal department

managers will be hired to help customers conveniently pick up their online orders in stores across the nation.

Both customers and communities in Louisiana will benefit from Walmart's additional holiday season hires this year, as they will join more than 37,000 associates in the state who are preparing to provide customers with a seamless holiday shopping experience.

Anyone interested in seasonal work opportunities with Walmart may apply online at jobs.walmart.com.

Cover Story

Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

area. The Sankofa Mobile Market plans to visit the Lower Ninth Ward Senior Center in the Andrew P. Sanchez & Copelin-Byrd Center on Caffin Avenue; the Mercy Endeavors Senior Center on Andrew St., and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center downtown.

"This is definitely a community development initiative but it is also part of economic development. We want to build this market in order to bring in more jobs," said Ferdinand as she relaxed in her lawn chair at the entrance of the market.

The Sankofa Fresh Stop Market partners with many organizations including local farmers. "We sell these greens to chefs all over New Orleans," said Shane Gunter as he described the different greens that he grew in his own farm just around the corner from the market. Gunter is the owner of All Goods Farm and has been farming for two years. He said he specializes in growing hydroponic micro greens, which contains high levels of nutrients.

"These greens smell so fresh, I can't wait to cook them for my Sunday dinner," said Tonya Brown, a local Ninth Ward resident, as she gazed upon the greens.

The Sankofa Fresh Market also partners with the National Food Day Campaign celebrated on Oct. 24th. Food Day raises awareness for healthier diets in neighborhoods by organizing informational seminars and guides for local citizens. The National Food Day hosts, Jessica McNally and Grace Williams welcomed



patrons into the fresh food market and offered flyers and buttons that promoted healthier eating. Louisiana ranked fourth in the nation for adult obesity in 2014 and adolescent obesity in 2011. Roughly 34.9 percent of adult Louisianans are obese, according to the Trust for America's Health reports for 2014.

"We use our social media platform to support and draw more attention to fresh markets like this one," said Grace Williams of the national effort. "The National Food Day Campaign worked a lot with Rashida and spotlighted what's happening here, so people nationally know about this," Williams said.

Workers of the National Food Day Campaign also do research on why fresh markets are good for the community and why they should be continued throughout the nation. Food Day is a day to motivate communities to live healthier lifestyles and improve their diets. It supports neighborhood markets like Sankofa because it allows residents to have closer access to fresh foods and local farmers that grow and harvest local foods. Such economic activity creates jobs and supports local agriculture, Williams said. Food Day Coordinators, Williams added, are committed to providing the resources that Lower Ninth Ward residents need to improve health in their community.

"We need a place to provide fresh food in our community on an ongoing basis that we can call our own," said Rashida Ferdinand.

Main location

The Sankofa Fresh Stop Market opens on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Lower Ninth Ward at 5029 St. Claude Ave. at the Corner of Forstall and St. Claude streets.

Mobile Locations

Andrew P. Sanchez & Copelin-Byrd Multi-Service Center's Senior Center on 1616 Caffin Ave, every other Tuesday 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., began on Oct. 27.

Mercy Endeavors Senior Center on 1017 St. Andrews Street, every other Tuesday 12:15 p.m. to 12:45 p.m., beginning Oct. 29.

Veterans Affairs Medical Center on 1601 Perdido Street, every other Friday, 10 a.m. to noon, beginning Friday Oct. 30.

For information contact Sankofa Nola at www.sankofanola.org or 504-872-9214.

Planting Trees and Shrubs

By LMG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

I think that I should never see a poem as lovely as a tree. Trees by Joyce Kilmer

Now is the time to plant trees and shrubs in the ground. As the major growing seasons has culminated, planting now will allow the energy to go down to the roots of trees and shrubs making them big and strong; as opposed to planting other times when the root system has to compete with the bloom-making process which saps most of a plant's energy.

Consider carefully what trees you want to plant on your property and their location on said property. Very large trees like live oaks should not be planted close to the home as their massive root systems can damage the home's foundation, their constant leaf loss will keep you cleaning the gutters, and their long reach will keep you constantly cutting branches off of your roof. Huge trees like live oaks are best in a large back yard far away from the home, as sometimes large trees fall or get struck by lightning and you don't want them crashing through your roof.

By all means pay attention to the care tag on your new tree saplings. It will give you the mature height of the tree, growth rate, sun exposure, and the mature spread of the tree. You also need to know if the tree is deciduous (loses its leaves in winter) or evergreen. If you have a west-facing window that gets too much sun in the summer, that would be the perfect place to plant a deciduous shade tree. It will give you cover during the summer month, but as it will lose its leaves in the winter it will allow rays of sunlight through to warm your home during the winter months.



Unless you have long cash and are buying mature trees to have placed on your property, you will most likely be buying saplings (small trees that are only about 4-5 feet tall) that look really cute, but know that sapling could get up to 100 feet tall with a spread of 60 feet across. I noticed a neighbor who planted 3 native fringe tree (*Chionanthus vir-*

ginicus) sapling in the small horseshoe space adjacent to her arched driveway, which is only about 6 feet from her front door. Little does she know that fringe trees get 12 to 20 feet tall and 20 feet wide, yet she has planted three of them in a very small space. Unfortunately, in a few years there will be some heavy equipment involved, some hard digging,

and relocating at great expense to her simply because she did not properly research the plant material.

Aside from a tree's beautiful canopy, shade, and a place to climb or hang swings from; some trees have the added bonus of having very unusual trunks. I love crepe myrtles because when their bark exfoliates (usually after the fourth year), the trunk looks very vascular and almost looks petrified as the plant matures. Melaleuca trees (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), also known as punk trees or paper-bark tea trees, trunks look very flaky as the white bark exfoliates. But my all-time favorite tree for unusual trunk interest is the Rainbow Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus deglupta*) tree, featured in the image above. When you peel off the bark, what is revealed is a vivid color palette of incredible beauty. No, that is not some ambitious art project that you are looking at, that tree has not been painted. I visited the Fairchild Botanical Gardens in Miami with my son a few years ago, and when we happened upon the Rainbow Eucalyptus tree I thought that it was some kind of art exhibit, until the tour guide explained that as the tree's bark exfoliates all of those colors are revealed, and allowed us to peel away parts of the bark. The amazing thing was that every piece of the bark we pulled off revealed a different brilliant color. The Rainbow eucalyptus tree is HUGE and soars to 80 feet in height. It is a rainforest tree so it needs a tropical climate.

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

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

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United For The Cure

Photos by Glenn Summers

Natasha, (in the jean cap) a 3 year breast cancer survivor of New Orleans, hosted her 3rd Annual Cancer Run/Walk commemoration picnic at City Park's Susan G. Komen "Race the Cure" Event, held on October 24, 2015. Each year, Natasha hosts the event to express her gratitude & appreciation to family, friends & all the supporters for their support in helping to find a cure for breast cancer and funding breast cancer research. She believes that love, hope, faith & treatment was the formula for defeating her breast cancer. And that the path to healing is driven by Gods grace. Keep going Natasha!



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

Twenty Questions Every Presidential Candidate Should Answer



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Bye, bye Biden. The Vice-President who might have given the Honorable Hillary Clinton a run for her money has concluded that the timing is not right for him. Clinton needs someone to rattle her cage, to push her to be more focused in the general election. Now, Senator Bernie Sanders will push her to the left. Biden may have pushed her back to center, enhancing her electability.

It doesn't matter now. The late Congressman William Clay (D-Mo.) often said that black folks should have "no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, only permanent issues." How hard will African Americans push candidates for President in 2016, whether they are

African American or white, Democratic or Republican, legacy candidates (Bush, Clinton), or outsiders? We should directly challenge these candidates on race matters, and push it as aggressively as we can. Hats off to the #BlackLivesMatter movement for doing exactly that – pushing until our issues garnered recognition among Democrats. Republicans were not asked, nor did they volunteer, their perspective on race matters.

If I were questioning these candidates on race matters, here's what I'd ask about their views:

What do you think about race relations in our nation? If you think they are broken, how would you fix them? If you think everything is fine, how do you account for the differentials we can measure in terms of income, employment and educational attainment?

Do you think that race matters? How? Do you think that the Presidential bully pulpit is an appropriate platform from which to raise this issues? Assuming that you are inaugurated in January 2016, what would be your first speech on race, and whom would you offer it to?

Do you believe in targeted programs? In other words since African Americans were disproportionately hit by the Great Recession, should this community get disproportionate assistance in recovery funding. How would you manage this?

How do you define affirmative action? Do you agree with its premise and support its implementation?

The African American unemployment rate has been twice that of Whites for five decades. Do you feel any obligation to close the gap? How would you approach that? Too many have accepted this employment gap as historic. Should the African American community accept this as a permanent gap?

How would you deal with some of the educational challenges in the African American community, from differences in high school graduation rates, to differences in college attendance? Would you increase the Pell Grant, and where would the money come from? How strongly will you support HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), and can these institutions expect more support from your administration?

The criminal justice system seems biased against African Americans, and the recent spate of the killings of black men at the hands of white officers magnify this. What are your plans to reform a system that is so clearly biased that half of prison populations are African American (yet only 13 percent of the population)?

African Americans disproportionately depend on Social Security, mainly because as few as a third have company provided pensions. Calls for Social Security reform have included proposals to cut benefits, raise the retirement age, or both. What is your position on Social Security changes? How do you think African Americans are affected by these changes? What will you do to mitigate the disproportionate impact of social security changes on African Americans?

Who are the African Americans on your campaign team? What are their roles? Will you contract with African American entrepreneurs to do your printing, or media buys and to provide other services? Do you have a goal for what percentage of your campaign budget will be

awarded to African American businesses?

Do you support the Affordable Care Act, which increases health insurance availability for African American, as well as all Americans? If you do not support the Affordable Care Act, how will you improve health access?

Historically, African Americans heavily support Democrats, and from what I see in the Republican field, we should continue to do so. However, Democratic candidates should not take the African American community for granted and those Democrats in the race should be willing to answer these questions.

Hilary Clinton enjoys significant support among African Americans. Our support should not excuse her from asking questions about her support of African Americans. If we don't ask her these questions, we have no right to ask them of others.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, D.C. Her latest book "Are We Better off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" will be released in November 2015 and is available for preorder at www.juliannealveaux.com.

Its Not Over Folks, We still Need to Vote!



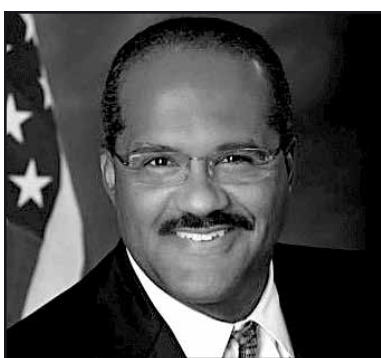
Terry B. Jones
Publisher,
Data News Weekly

Last Saturday, October 24th, Louisianians traveled to the electoral polls to make decisions which were vital to all of us. To many, the most visible race was the contest to fill the seat of the vacating Governor Bobby Jindal, where the sitting US Republican Senator David Vitter, faced his most formidable challenger, who also happened to be the only Democrat in the race, John Bel Edwards, (Data Endorsed).

The two ended in a run-off, with Bel Edwards receiving 39.8% of the vote compared to the second of 9 candidates Vitter, who earned 23% of the total vote. With neither candidates earning the requisite 51% of the vote to be declared the winner, the two will face each other in the run-off in 3 weeks.

Data News Weekly is proud to support Bel Edwards in his bid for Louisiana's top spot, we still believe he is the man for the job, and we encourage you to get back out there and cast your vote again on November 21st.

In a separate race, we also again endorse former City Councilman Troy Carter in his run-off race against state Rep. Jeff Arnold to represent the Senate's 7th District in the State Legislature. The two veteran politicians received the lion's



Troy Carter

share of the votes while defeating two other challengers: businessman and New Orleans Recreation Department Commission Chairman Roy Glapion and Orleans Parish School Board member Leslie Ellison. We wholeheartedly believe that Carter is the best candidate to represent the 7th District, and encourage you to get out and vote for him in the General Election.



Wesley Bishop

Congratulations are due to the newly elected State Senator of the 4th Senate District Wesley Bishop (Data Endorsed). Data News Weekly supported Senator-Elect Bishop during his run for his now vacated seat as Representative of District 99, the Lower 9th Ward.

Senator-Elect Bishop is a native New Orleanian and spent the last several years representing House



John Bel Edwards

District 99, which includes much of eastern New Orleans and the Lower 9th Ward. During that time in office, he made a lot of friends in the local Democratic in-crowd, and he reaped the lion's share of endorsements from left-leaning political groups.

Remember to get back to the polls on Saturday, November 21 and support these two candidates.

Gospel Rap at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church



By Alexia Pierre
Data News Weekly Columnist

Gospel Rap at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church

This column is a weekly feature taking Data News Weekly readers behind the scenes of the New Orleans gospel scene. We launched this column with a series on New Orleans gospel rap and rappers.

Christian rap has not been without controversy. Rapper Amisho Lewis, whose stage name is Sho

Baraka, used the n-word and the b-word in his track titled "Jim Crow" a.k.a. "N***a Island," off his 2013 Christian album *Talented Xth*. Sho Baraka's response to the media backlash was similar to other Christian rappers who have come under scrutiny on a national scene and at churches across the country in recent times. Some still get tattoos like Lecrae. Others pen lyrics on social issues like racism and abortion like Baraka. And others are known for the rawness to their music like Andy Mineo. The social and musical undertones sometimes feel similar to secular rap. But the main difference that Christian rap is a testimony of redemption, some church leaders feel, could get lost in the hype.

The debate was one brought up at a Christian Hip Hop Panel at the National Center for Family Integrat-

ed Churches 2013 conference. Pastors and youth leaders questioned whether the new resurgence and popularity of Christian rap was ungodly. The panelists argued that rap is not about its message, but that the nature of rap was to draw attention to rappers. Christian speakers on the panel that supported the resurgence of rap argued that no musical genre should be off limits as a tool for Christians to use to spread the message of their beliefs. To not use rap, they argued, was to alienate a generation and its culture, particularly African-American young Christians.

It's a debate that takes place at churches across the country and here in New Orleans. Every third Sunday of the month, at the 10:30 a.m. service at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, the young members between the ages of 13 to 20

get to take over. Usually, they worship in the gym on second and fourth Sundays. However, on the designated youth Sunday, they usher, greet, sing, dance, and pray in the sanctuary in front the entire congregation. When it's time to worship it's not "His Eye is on the Sparrow" instead it's "Against Us" by Dee-1, "Bitter" by Andy Mineo and "Rise" by Trip Lee. Senior Pastor Fred Luter steps aside and allows his young members to be led by their Youth Pastor Will Lloyd. Luter lets them worship and preach in the style and language of their generation. Franklin Avenue's young members have total control of the service whether senior members embrace the Hip Hop in their worship or not. However, most of Franklin Avenue's senior members say they don't just tolerate the new music, they embrace its positive ef-

fect on young Christians.

"I think gospel rap is very good because it is something that our young people are used to hearing," said Tammy Barney, a member of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church since 1992. "They hear rap that is not always positive but this is a way that is a type of music that they like and is positive," Barney said of the youth services.

Youth Pastor Will Lloyd said he understands some of the reservation by older believers. "I think that gospel rap is very appealing to youth because of the beat," Lloyd said. "However, playing gospel music alone won't completely attract the youth to Christ because they have so much of the sinful rap thrown their way every day."

Spirit, Continued on page 11.

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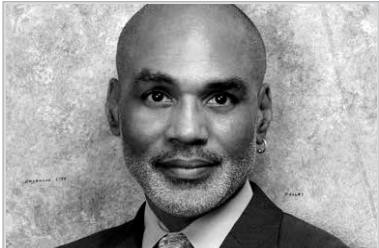
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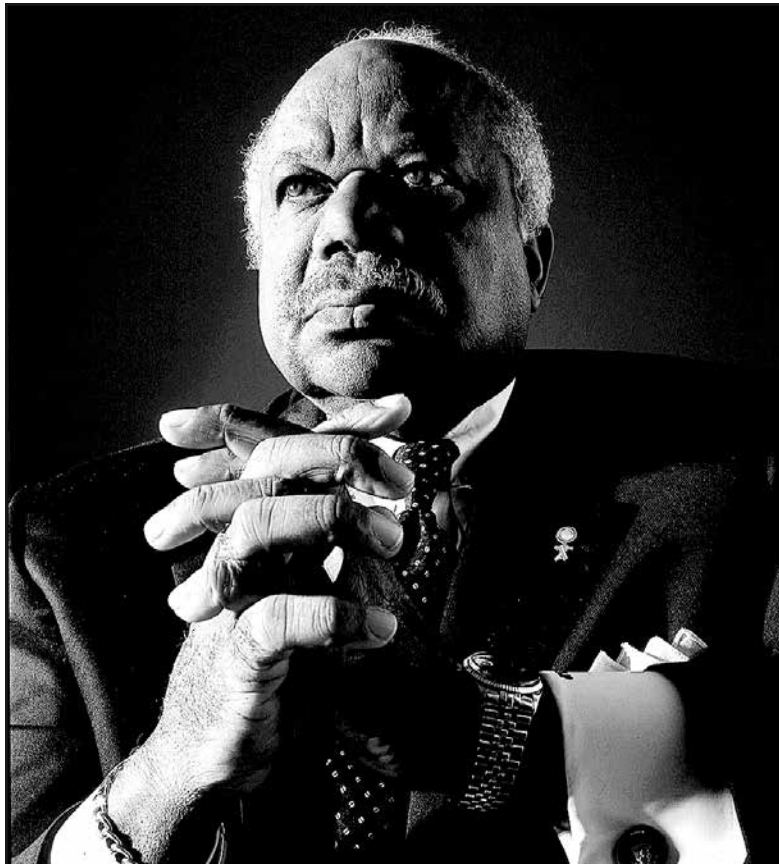
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President & CEO,
The Black AIDS Institute

The world lost a hero, the AIDS community lost a leader, the Black AIDS community lost a giant and many of us lost a mentor, a father figure and a friend with the passing of Dr. Beny Primm. I don't know how or if we can comprehend what a huge hole the passing of Beny Primm has left. Whenever I think about leadership and progress and movement toward a more inclusive and effective response to the AIDS

epidemic in Black communities, I think about Beny Primm.

I remember the first time I met Beny; it was in a room full of Black women, gay men, and Beny. Beny was the only straight man in the room that day. For a young Black gay man to see this distinguished older Black male figure was a little intimidating. At a time when AIDS was really a "Gay" disease, I couldn't figure out why he was there or what he thought of us. Beny taught me then—and continued to teach me over the next 30 years—about power, security, sincerity and love. He just intuitively understood what surprisingly takes so many people so long to get—and that was we all matter. We all deserve dignity and respect.

Beny understood and he taught us that our individual worth is, in



anathema—his initial perspective actually made sense. But in typical Beny style, he became a student of the topic. When he looked at the data and discovered that needle-exchange programs, when properly implemented, did, in fact, reduce HIV infections and did not increase drug use, he became a strong proponent.

There are so many reasons why my heart is broken today as we grieve the loss of Beny. I will miss him. I could talk about all the contributions he made to this movement forever. But the thing that I will miss the most is that every time I saw him, every time I spoke to him and every time I thought about him, just knowing that he was there, made me feel safe and made me know that everything was going to be okay. Beny wouldn't have it any other way.

Farewell and God speed, beloved one.

Yours in the Struggle,

Phill Wilson

President and CEO
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fact, inextricably connected to how much we value others. I never saw or heard Beny disparage anyone, even when he did not necessarily understand. He didn't need to understand what it was like to be a Black gay man because he knew that our humanity mattered. He didn't need to understand that it was important to be inclusive of transgender women, because he grasped the humanity of all transgender people. He understood that we could not make any progress whatsoever in fighting HIV without mastering that basic concept. He didn't need to understand every issue in order to be compassionate and empathetic towards people,

and when it came to issues that he didn't understand, he was willing to study and learn about them so that he could have honest conversations with the people who were impacted.

Another mark of Beny's leadership was his willingness to change once he understood a topic differently. Here's a case in point: Beny was initially opposed to needle-exchange programs. He originally bought into the thought that providing needles to addicts would exacerbate the drug problem in Black communities. Quite frankly, given his field of expertise—substance abuse in an era when the conventional wisdom was that making it easier for people to use drugs was

In Lieu of Flowers the family has asked that donations be made to:

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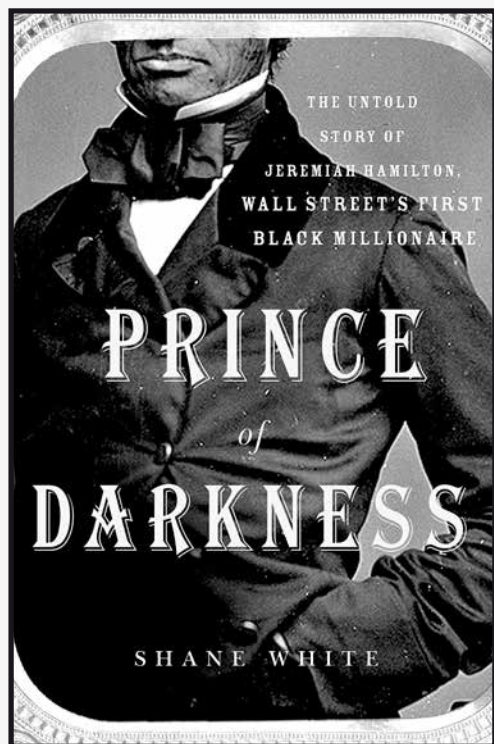
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The Prince of Darkness

Wall Street's First Black Millionaire



**"Prince of Darkness:
The Untold Story of Jeremiah
Hamilton, Wall Street's First
Black Millionaire"**
by Shane White
c.2015, Palgrave MacMillan
\$27.99 / \$32.50
Canada 368 pages

By The Bookworm Sez
Data News Weekly Guest Columnist

Your numbers weren't picked last night.

Ah, another worthless lottery ticket. No shopping spree or mortgage payoff for you. You'll have to go to work and get your incredible wealth just like everybody else. Or, as you'll read in "Prince of Darkness" by Shane White, you could become rich the old-fashioned way: through grift.

Though he showed up in New York City in the wake of scandal, nobody knew for sure where Jeremiah G. Hamilton had come from. Some sources said he was born in the Caribbean - which he admitted to, but he also claimed Richmond, Virginia, as his first home. Nobody knew, though, because Hamilton, an African American man, spent most of his adult life hiding facts and creating fiction.

Wherever he got his start, Hamilton launched himself early: in 1828, and "barely into his twenties," he was involved in a counterfeit scam in Haiti that would've meant death, had he been caught. With the help of locals, however, he escaped and arrived in "Gotham," but not without notice: newspapers of the day splashed the story, but Hamilton managed to keep mum on who'd helped him.

Almost immediately, he started borrowing money in a "frenetic, almost desperate" way, money he had no intention of paying back, which ultimately landed Hamilton in court: there were at least ten lawsuits against him between 1830 and 1835, and there may've been more. Then came The Great Fire of 1835 in

which "dozens of acres" of Manhattan were burned to the ground, along with the records of several businessmen who'd been convinced to invest with him. Hamilton denied the transactions, kept their \$25,000, and gained the moniker of "Prince of Darkness."

For the rest of his life - even after being forced to declare bankruptcy - Hamilton always landed on his feet, "shunned" other African Americans, and even invested in companies that overtly practiced racism. He died in 1875 in a "comfortable and elegant" residence he shared with his white wife and family.

So why are history books silent on Hamilton's story? That's a question author Shane White had, after he discovered Hamilton's name and began digging. Could it have been due to the color of Hamilton's skin?

It's possible, White says, but in "Prince of Darkness," he also indicates that the lack of documentation may've been because Hamilton rankled white financiers and investors, and didn't appear to care that he'd done so. That insouciance, in light of the racism that Hamilton surely endured, would be an interesting story itself but White embellishes the tale with an abundance of history and extensive biographies of other influential people of Hamilton's time. That's good - to a point - but it occasionally can also makes this book deadly dull. I found my mind wandering much more than I might've liked.

So is this book worth reading? I think so, but you may want to give it a rest now and then to regenerate yourself. Start it, take a break, repeat as necessary and you might find "Prince of Darkness" to be just the ticket.

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Spirit, Continued from page 9.

At the Hip Hop Panel hosted by the NCFIC, some of the panelists argued that there was no such thing as a "Christian" rapper, others defended Christian rappers. Some Christian leaders said they worried that fans usually give more attention to the beat of rap rather than the lyrics, in which the rappers get glorified and not God. In addition, the rappers portray an image similar to secular rappers in the way they dress, opponents said.

"They're serving their own flesh. They're caving into the world," said Geoff Botkin, one of the panelists who expressed concerns about Christian rap. Some opponents felt Christian rap focused on storing up treasures on earth instead of spiritual virtues. Brian Davis, said at the panel that, "When speaking of Christian maturity, we

do not bring up the prevalence of the fruit of the Spirit in people's lives, or their rootedness in the Word of God and how firmly they cling to the gospel. Rather, we reference sideways hats, music styles and earrings, as if that is somehow a good measurement of maturity from God's point of view?"

The image Christian rappers portray as they sell their music can be confusing to young believers, Christians leaders said, especially when gospel artists, such as Al Green, have been known to go back and forth between secular and Christian music albums. It is not sufficient for young Christian believers to look up to Christian rappers whose music they enjoy either for the lyrics, the beat or the cool factor. Critics say that Christian rappers should also be mindful of the

example and standards they set. "In addition to showing them an alternative type of music, the youth need convicting, Holy Spirit-filled preaching to further attract them to Jesus, the source where we get secure power over sin," Lloyd said.

"The truth is that man is sinful, so we need to avoid any content, music or anything else, that will feed our sinful nature," Lloyd explained about the caution Christians should take with all music. "We need spirit-filled music that will encourage us to stay away from sin, not celebrate sin," he said.

Stay tuned for next week's column as we continue to share opinions and highlights of the local gospel scene.

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