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New Orleans

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News Weekly

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Happy Birthday Julius Kimbrough

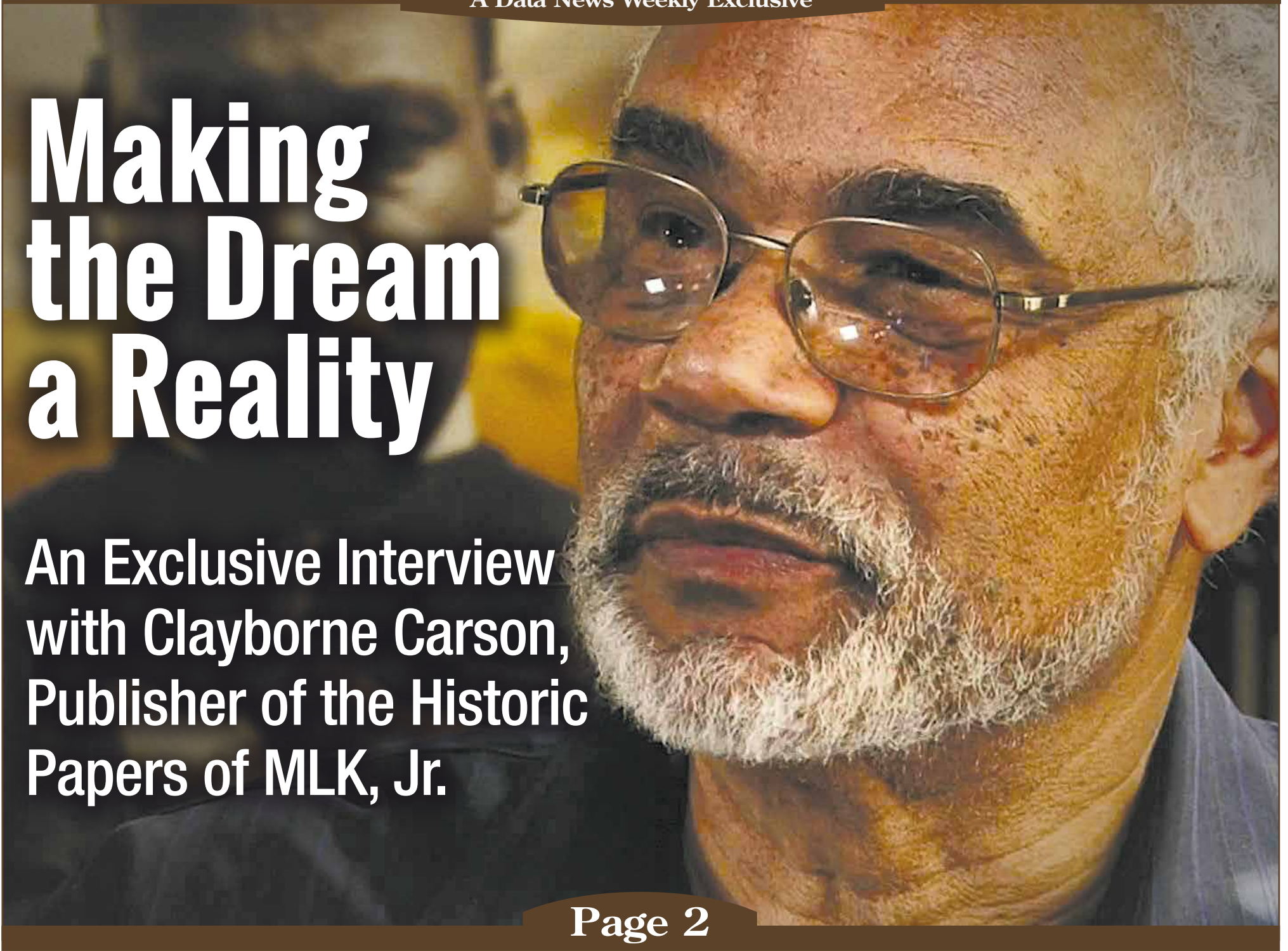
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January 16 - January 22, 2016 50th Year Volume 38 www.ladatanews.com


A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Making the Dream a Reality

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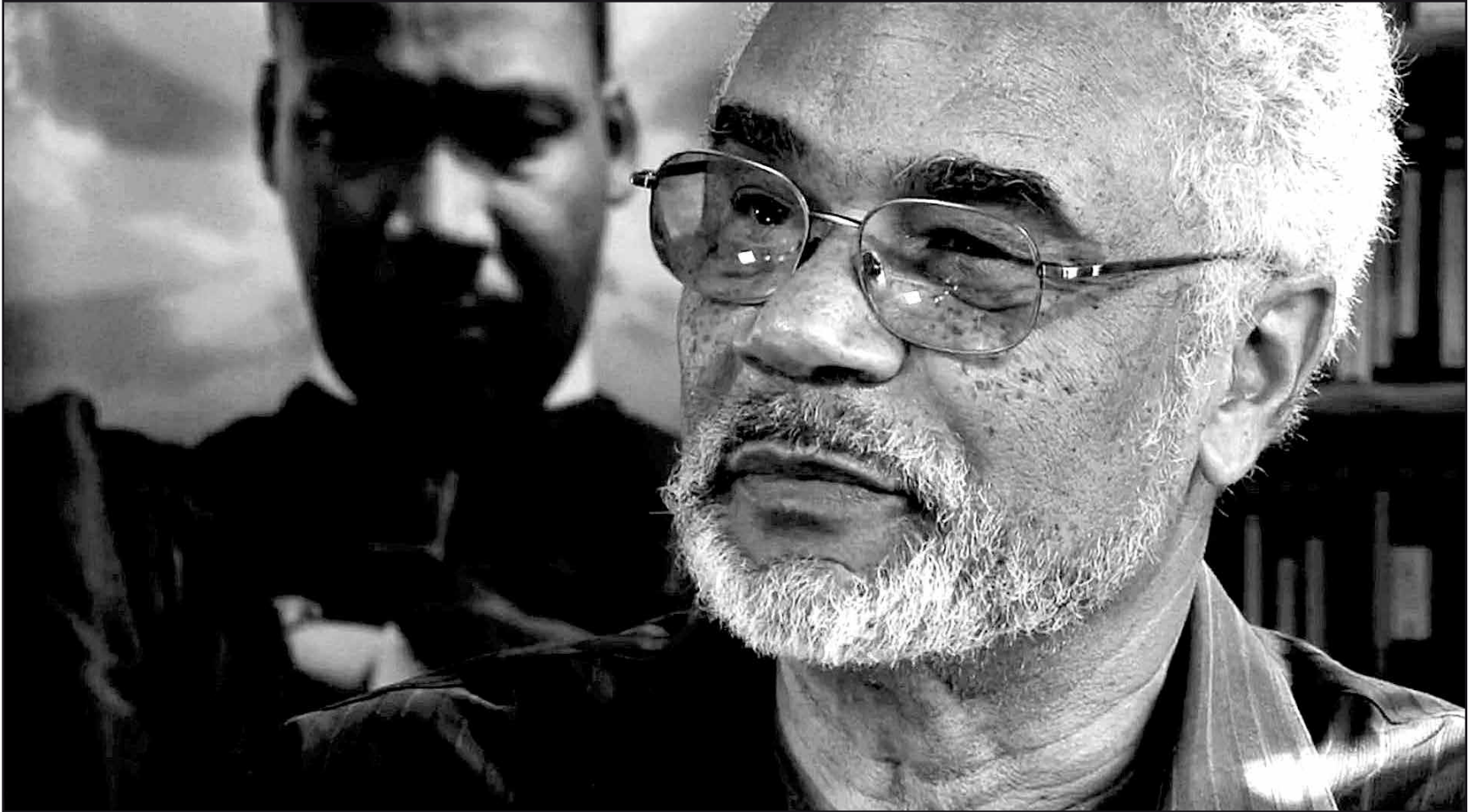
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Making the Dream a Reality

An Exclusive Interview with Clayborne Carson, Publisher of the Historic Papers of MLK, Jr.



Clayborne Carson, pictured above, is a scholar, activist, publisher and author of books on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X as well.

By Edwin Buggage

A Life Dedicated to Chronicling the History of Civil Rights

Clayborne Carson is a scholar activist who's dedicated his life to chronicling the history of the Civil Rights

Movement in America. For the last four decades as a Professor of History at Stanford University he's been one of the preeminent scholars shedding light on the movement that changed the lives of African-Americans and impacted future global struggles for freedom, justice and equality. He is the author of several books: In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the

1960s (1981); Malcolm X: The FBI File (1991); African-American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom (2005, co-author); and a memoir, Martin's Dream: My Journey and the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. (2013). He's also served as a senior advisor to the award-winning documentary Eyes on the Prize and other surrounding issues of race and inequality across the globe.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

In 1985 the late Coretta Scott King invited Dr. Carson to direct a long-term project to edit and publish the King's speeches, sermons, correspondence, publications, and unpublished writers. Under Carson's direction, the King Papers Project has produced seven volumes of The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. In 2005 Carson founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute to endow and expand the work of the King Papers Project.

"Mrs. King contacted me unexpectedly by phone one evening. We talked about the life and work of Dr. King and had a number of meetings and she decided to choose me as the editor of the King Papers," Clayborne says of how he came to edit the King Papers. Continuing he says speaking of how he wanted to proceed to tell the story of the freedom struggle in a more holistic way, in what he calls bottom up history. He feels that re-framing the story of the movement is essential in telling the whole story. "When I

took on the project I had to ask myself what did King supply to the movement. And I think he was the visionary of the movement. But it required people like Ella Baker, Fred Shuttlesworth and the young people of SNCC and many others. I think they were more significant at the grassroots level, but they were all interconnected parts which was the goal and that was freedom and equal opportunities for African-Americans."

When we met Carson was in Paris speaking on the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King speaking at the American Church in Paris. Even then King placed the struggle of African-Americans on the global stage, as it was aligned with the fight for independence happening on an international scale.

"He talked about issues like social justice and placed the issues of the movement in a global framework; tying it to the Anti-Colonial Movements around the world and that allowed him to express ideas that still has a lot of relevance today."

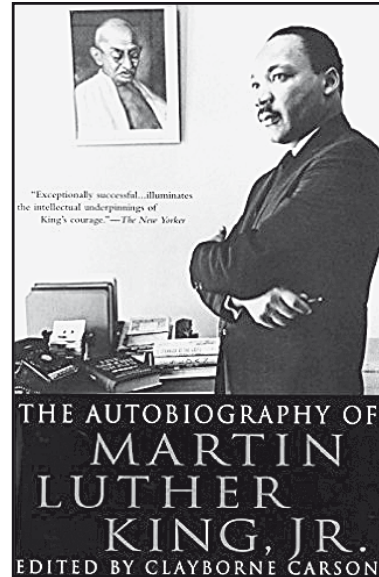
Achieving the Dream By Any Means Necessary

Carson, whose written books on both Dr. King and Malcolm X, says while both men were portrayed as polar opposites in the press at the time, he feels they were very similar and feels if both men's lives were not cut short by an assassin's bullet their ideas would have merged and perhaps took the movement in a different direction.

"They were very similar but differed on tactics but both emphasized the global dimension of our struggle. King was at independence ceremony in Ghana and Malcolm X was at the Bandung Conference of Third World Nations. Both of them traveled to Europe and Africa. With both of their lives being cut short, we don't know what could have happened but I feel their ideas would have converged."

The Struggle For Freedom and Equality Continues

Over 50 years later we have seen monumental strides for Af-



rican-Americans, there are still perverse amounts of racial inequality. Carson feels these gains are significant, but believes more needs to be done if full equality is to be achieved.

"While admittedly there's been progress, what disappoints me is that we have become complacent about the fundamental issues of human rights and the elites trying to

New Orleans in Black and White

Poverty and inequality is a big part of the struggle for civil and human rights. Over ten years ago this issue came to a head when Hurricane Katrina and the wreckage afterwards left a City already separate and unequal even more so as a wave of gentrification and in some instances social neglect have left natives of New Orleans without the resources to rebuild or repopulate the City.

"I remember being in New Orleans in December of 1963 in the planning stages of what would become the Mississippi Summer Project in 1964 as part of Freedom Summer, a project to increase voter registration in the state. A time where there was not equal access to the ballot box or to access power; this is what I was reminded of when I saw what happened in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina."

"I was deeply saddened but the more disappointing part was the human part the suffering that did not have to happen if the conversation would have been focused on people having basic human rights

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"We were calling for freedom now. What we got was legislation. But it is important for us to keep our eyes on the prize of freedom, justice, equality of treatment many of these big pursuits."

get a Civil Rights Bill passed but that in my view are not the substance of freedom."

Harkening back to his days in the movement and his participation in the March on Washington Carson says, "We were calling for freedom now. What we got was legislation. But it is important for us to keep our eyes on the prize of freedom, justice, equality of treatment many of these big pursuits. We have become satisfied with limited changes. King kept his eyes on the prize, realizing it was bigger than any piece of legislation. That's why he was in Memphis fighting for poor people and that these were tools that he was pursuing that would have took us to the next phase of the struggle."

and who has economic resources. If a hurricane happened in an affluent neighborhood five years later they are redeveloped. In a poor neighborhood 10 years later it could be weakened and this seems to be the case in New Orleans."

The Future of the Dream

In his over seven decades of life he's seen the changes in the racial landscape remains optimistic in spite of the obstacles to progress.

"I see many positive things in terms of social justice there were I a Black Professors at Stanford. It would have been inconceivable to think of a Black president, I think some of the things we have achieved are beyond what I thought was possible. But today the dream is closer to becoming a reality than any time in our history."

New Orleans, Don't Miss the Health Insurance Marketplace Enrollment

Data News Staff Edited Report

The New Orleans Citywide Day of Enrollment is January 16, 2016

Have you been waiting for your chance to sign up for Obamacare? Your wait may finally be over!

The Health Insurance Marketplace (a part of the Affordable Care Act, sometimes called "Obamacare") helps people without health coverage find and enroll in a plan that fits their budget and meets their needs.

The New Orleans Citywide Day of Enrollment is January 16, 2016.

Free, in-person assisters will be available at each enrollment site to assist New Orleanians with their health insurance application. If you need help applying for health insurance, come to any of the events below on 1/16. Be sure to bring social security information and proof of income.

Locations, addresses and times for the enrollment day are as follows:

Alvar Library
919 Alvar St.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Mid-City Library
3700 Orleans Ave.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Martin Luther King Library
611 Caffin Ave.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

New Orleans Public Library
219 Loyola Ave.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

East New Orleans Library
5641 Read Blvd.
10:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Finn McCool's Irish Pub
3701 Banks St.
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Maple Leaf Bar
8316 Oak St.
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Refresh Project
300 N. Broad St.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Fire Station: Engine 40
2500 Gen. DeGaulle Ave.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Fire Station: Engine 27
2118 Elysian Fields Ave.

Enrollment, Continued
on page 10.

REMEMBER THE DREAM

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Julius Kimbrough Celebrates his 75th Birthday

Photos by Jerry Lavigne

On Saturday, January 9th Julius Kimbrough, owner of The Prime Example, Blues & Jazz Club celebrated his 75th birthday with family and friends. There was good food and great fun enjoyed by everyone especially Julius and Data was there!!!



Data Zone,
Continued on next page.

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

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Data Zone, Continued from previous page.

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“Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Need Customer Service from Facebook? Good Luck



Bill Fletcher, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

It happened very suddenly over the summer. I have been using Facebook for several years. A friend convinced me that once my Facebook “friends” had hit the 5000 mark (the maximum permitted) that I should replace my existing page with a “Fan Page” or “Celebrity Page.” It sounds more important than it actually is. It permits you to get an unlimited number of “Likes”

to your page; you can post whatever you choose; you can get private messages from anyone who likes your page. But you cannot “like” other pages and you cannot have “Facebook Friends.” Let’s leave aside, for a moment, whether or not it was a good idea for me to create this page.

In any case, this summer, overnight, the ability to reply to “Comments” that were made on my page disappeared. In other words, anyone “liking” my page was still able to offer a comment on anything that I posted, but I no longer could respond to their comments. I assumed that all I needed to do was to reboot my computer. I did that, yet nothing changed. I tried opening up Facebook via Internet Explorer

rather than Chrome. Nothing changed. I tried opening Facebook via my iPhone; again nothing changed. I sent a “Help” message to Facebook about the problem. No answer. I started asking around, but no one knew what to do. A computer expert friend of mine started looking into the problem and discovered that many other people were having exactly the same problem, yet no one was getting an answer from Facebook. I sent two or three more messages to Facebook asking them for help, but heard nothing. Finally, my computer expert friend discovered a way around the problem so that I have regained the ability to respond to “Comments.” To this day, Facebook has yet to

reply to my inquiries.

Why do you need to know any of this? The experience has been very unsettling. Instead of being addressed by Facebook, I felt blown off. To add to this problem, there was no other way to get Facebook to respond to my concerns. In other words, there was no accountability and, simply put, I was stuck. There is no phone number to call, nor any monitoring agency from which I could gain assistance.

We are in an era of incredible dependence on electronic technology, the so-called Information Age. We seem to speak with other human beings less frequently in business, commerce, and even social interactions. Instead we either interact with machines or we are told that we need to get answers from other

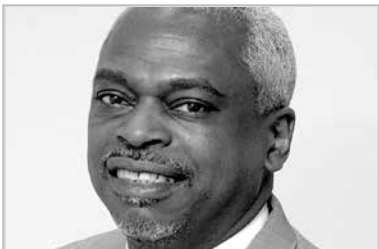
‘customers’ rather than being addressed by the company, organization, etc., where the problem lies. We are then left to accept our situation, whether the problem has been resolved or not.

The situation we have found ourselves facing is one with the growth of robotic technology, the massive accumulation of wealth by a small number of people who control this technology, the dismissal of human labor in the supposed interest of increasing productivity, and the burden for resolving problems—or even the burden of carrying out the work of the company or organization—placed on the “customers.”

Welcome to 2016!

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the host of The Global African on Telesur-English. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.org.

Supreme Court Puts Reliable Government Jobs At-Risk



Wade Henderson
NNPA News Wire
Columnist

Both of my parents worked in stable government jobs, so I had the privilege of growing up in a family that owned a home, a car, and set me on a path to college and even law school.

Among members of the African-American middle class, my story isn’t at all uncommon. If you asked any African American over the past century what the pathway to a sta-

ble career was, they’d probably say “a government job.” That’s because when people of color were subject to widespread discrimination, unionized public sector jobs such as teachers, postal workers, and administrators were often the only opportunities available.

But those jobs are under attack at the Supreme Court, and this should alarm anyone who cares about economic mobility.

The court is considering a case called *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, which could destroy the ability of government employees to receive the benefits that unions secure through collective bargaining like fair pay and safe workplaces.

The lead plaintiff is a lot like thousands of other teachers in

California whose wages and benefits are a direct result of the California Teachers Association’s bargaining on her behalf. But Ms. Friedrichs sued because she doesn’t want to contribute to the union. If the California Teachers Association loses, the impact could be widespread, as any public sector worker anywhere in the country could decide not to pay their fair share of dues, effectively starving their union.

Ms. Friedrichs isn’t just acting on her own behalf. She is being represented by the Center for Individual Rights, the same organization that sued to gut the Voting Rights Act and to eliminate race-conscious admissions for colleges. This lawsuit is another part of a coordinated campaign to use the

Supreme Court to roll back longstanding civil rights protections that people fought and died for in the streets.

Civil rights groups have filed a brief in the case because a ruling against the California Teachers Association would undermine the ability of the nurses, firefighters, postal workers, and teachers that built the Black middle class to thrive.

The reality is that women and people of color still experience pernicious barriers in employment, including unequal pay, discriminatory treatment, and unpredictable schedules. For these communities, unions have been vital to combatting discrimination and unfair treatment.

More than 30 percent of public

sector union members are racial and ethnic minorities, and 55 percent are women. Wages for women union members are not only higher than their non-union counterparts, they are closer to those of male co-workers. Unsurprisingly, wages for African-American union members are also higher than their non-union counterparts. And unions improve the lot of all American workers by setting minimum workplace standards for all.

At a time of increasing inequality, the need for strong public sector jobs is especially critical. The Supreme Court should reject this rollback of collective bargaining.

Wade Henderson is president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

Can't Run, Can't Hide



James Washington
Guest Columnist

In this world, yours and mine, it is almost impossible for people to lead with their weaknesses, as opposed to showing the world their perceived strengths. We all want the world to see us at what we think is our best light. It's for those other reasons, the ones we're most ashamed of, that we want to keep our shortcomings hidden in the dark, hopefully never to see the light of day. Some of us can even

fool ourselves into believing that our true self is the one we show to others and not the one we take to bed with us each and every night. The longer we hide from ourselves, the more we're likely to have difficulty understanding and then dealing with who we really are. Some might call this denial.

The problem with spiritual denial is that it's impossible to do. You cannot deny your own sinfulness. You cannot hide from your own sins. There is no rationalization for the exclusion of God in your life. Regardless of how much you want to show the world your high moral and spiritual standing, when it comes right down to you and God that dog simply will not hunt. In order to put your life in balance, you must first recognize the futility of trying to come off to others as if sin is not a part of who you are, or

at best who you were at one time. The truth is, it's how you come off to God that really matters and He, sorry to say, for most of us, cannot and will not be fooled by a fool.

After all, when the lights go out and it's just you, are you really alone? That might be why some people need to have anything but silence and solitude as companions. In relation to God it's not a very comfortable situation to know that you're never alone in His eyes. You can't run. You can't hide. Wherever you are, He is. Whatever you are, He knows. Whatever you did, well, that's the nature of God. And the nature of God dictates that you must lead with your weaknesses. Bring Him your sins. Confess and then, only then, maybe you can begin to take some positive actions about your life, with God's help of course.

But first you've got to take care of the basics. Empty the closet. Acknowledge the dirt. Understand its nature, which is truly who you are, and then bring it into God's house. After all, He's the only one who can clean up that mess anyway. He's the only one who can and by His nature, the only one who's really interested in doing so. That's one of the many beautiful things about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His life and death and life paid for and took care of the need for you to think that you have to hide your sinful nature from anyone. "He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but he whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

Confession allows God to enter the picture. Confession is a declaration that comes from that place

deep inside you that you mistakenly think is controlled by you. Once you recognize and accept who really is in control, from that point forward you become an example to the world that openly declares, "My name is—and I am a sinner who is saved. God has accepted me for who I am really am. I am who He made me to be. Now it's your turn. Look at me and learn about you. Examine me and see God in yourself. You too, are who he made you to be. I am blessed. And you are too." We live forgiven by God's grace and Jesus' sacrifice. Deal with that and life becomes so much better. You will begin to live guilt free as God intended and Jesus' life and death and life guaranteed.

May God bless and keep you always,

James

jaws@dallasweekly.com

Dollars & Sense

How To Protect More Than Your Heart This Valentine's Day

By Hillel L. Presser, Esq.,
MBA
Data News Weekly Guest
Columnist

4 Ways To Make The Best Of A Potentially Bad Situation

There may be no worse feeling than having your heart broken, especially on Valentine's Day.

"But anyone who has had their heart broken – whether in a divorce or a long-term relationship where assets were an issue – knows that romantic heartbreak can extend to financial heartbreak," says attorney Hillel Presser of the Presser Law Firm, P.A., which specializes in comprehensive domestic and international Asset Protection.

"Moving forward after a divorce can leave you guarded romantically, and most professionals would tell you that, at some point, you have to open up. But there's absolutely nothing wrong with protecting your

wealth as your next relationship progresses."

Knowing that your liability is limited, asset-wise, may even help hungry hearts in a relationship. Presser, author of "Financial Self Defense" (www.assetprotectionattorneys.com), offers four ways to start protecting your assets from a possible bad breakup in the future.

- Get the prenup. One barrier to the pre-marriage agreement is that intended spouses hesitate to raise the delicate subject of a prenuptial agreement. Few believe their marriage can fail, and many fear that a prenup communicates distrust. But a pre-marriage agreement is the safest way to protect yourself from a future divorce, Presser says. Consider a prenup as a mature consideration for those who can admit that not everything works out perfectly in a marriage.
- Don't cohabit without a cohabitation agreement. A cohabitation agreement defines the couple's property rights. More than a few



want to avoid the legal and financial complications from marriage – particularly when one party has substantially more wealth. Many of these folks are seniors who don't want to disqualify themselves for Social Security or pension benefits. But if things go wrong your former partner may have a claim on your assets.

- Write a post-nuptial agreement even if you're married. Mar-

ried spouses may want to contractually agree on how they'll divide their assets should they later divorce, and most states allow for these post-nuptial agreements. As with pre-marriage agreements, Presser says, the enforceability of the post-nuptial agreement requires the agreement to be fair; that both spouses

fully understand the agreement; that neither party defrauded the other; and that each party had independent legal counsel.

- Keep your good credit. Good credit is one asset you must diligently protect during divorce. You'll lose your good score if your spouse runs up huge bills on your charge accounts and credit cards. It's difficult to financially cope during the turmoil

and expense of divorce, but there is a path, Presser says.

First, immediately notify your creditors that you will no longer be responsible for your spouse's debts. Next, destroy and revoke all credit cards on which you have liability. Finally, publicly disclaim liability responsibility for your spouse's future debts.

"Knowing that your wealth and assets are protected is liberating," Presser says. "Whether or not you've been hurt before, don't fall for the idea that romance is perfect; it's not. When things go bad, the power of the positive can easily turn to the power of the negative. I advise folks to avoid fear by reasonably protecting themselves in marriage, cohabitation and divorce."

Hillel L. Presser, Esq., MBA

Hillel L. Presser's firm, The Presser Law Firm, P.A., represents individuals and businesses in establishing comprehensive asset protection plans. Complimentary copies of his book "Financial Self-Defense" are available through www.assetprotectionattorneys.com.

Solange Knowles to Ride as Honorary Muse

The Krewe of Muses has announced that New Orleans resident, Solange Knowles, the singer/songwriter, founder of Saint Records and noted creative director will serve as the Krewe's Honorary Muse for the 2016 parade. As the Honorary Muse, Solange will lead the carnival organization's sixteenth parade, on February 4, 2016. Solange will ride in the Krewe of Muses's iconic shoe float, a 17-foot tall fiber optic encrusted red pump.

The Krewe of Muses is a non-profit women's organization that puts on a beloved parade attended by hundreds of thousands of revelers in New Orleans each year on the Thursday night before Mardi Gras. The Honorary Muse is selected annually to honor a female role model who inspires the women of Muses by contributing to the arts in extraordinary ways and embodying the creative spirit of the nine original muses of Greek mythology.

"We are honored to have Solange



Solange Knowles

Knowles as our 2016 Honorary Muse. As a creative powerhouse, she embodies the spirit for which the Muses are known, and serves as an inspiration to all New Orleans girls and future Muses. Her bright personality will dazzle all those on the parade route as she leads the Muses in our Krewe's signature red high-heel shoe," said Krewe of Muses Captain Staci Rosenberg.

Says Solange Knowles, "It is a true and incredible honor to be the 2016 Honorary Muse. I am immensely humbled to join such an inspiring organization that celebrates such diversity, leadership, and philanthropy. The Krewe of Muses and I share the same passion for rejoicing in the overall

magic and bad ass-ness of girlhood and all of the many ways we are able to express and embody being women!" Adds Solange, "As the granddaughter of Agnez Dereon and Lumis Albert Beyince of New Iberia, Louisiana, I moved to New Orleans to be closer to my roots, for deeper self-reflection, and to be in the midst of a continuously inspiring and rich culture that I feel an endless amount of connection and gratitude for. This city has shown me the universe in ways I could never put in words, and I can't wait to celebrate all of it right on top of that red high heeled shoe."

The 2016 Muses parade will roll on Thursday, February 4 at 6:30 p.m. The parade will follow the extended route, beginning at the corner of Magazine St. and Jefferson Ave., proceeding down Magazine to Napoleon Ave., where it resumes the traditional St. Charles Ave. route.

Jazz & Heritage Concerts Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Free Concerts Celebrate MLK Weekend at Dillard University

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation will present two Jazz Journey concerts celebrating the civil rights movement and the legacy of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - a gospel concert on Thursday, Jan. 14, and a jazz concert on Friday, Jan. 15.

Both events are free to the public and will take place at Dillard University's Lawless Memorial Chapel (map).

The Jan. 14 gospel praise and worship concert features the some of the best gospel singers and choirs in the region. These include the Dillard University Choir, Bishop Sean Elder and the Mount Herman Baptist Church Choir of Avondale, La. For the complete list of performers, see here. A program honoring Dr. King begins at 6:30 p.m.; the concert starts at 7 p.m. Admission is free and no advance registration is required.

The Jan. 15 jazz concert features the singer Mary Stallings (pictured above), the veteran saxophonist



Jazz Songstress Mary Stallings

Ernie Watts, and a rising young jazz vocalist, Charles Turner. The concert also includes a tribute to the great New Orleans jazz singer Germaine Bazzle, featuring performances by singers Leah Chase and Sharon Martin, along with George

French on bass, Clarence Johnson III on saxophone, Larry Sieberth on piano and Shannon Powell on drums.

Admission for both events is free, and no advance registration is required.

Enrollment, Continued from page 5.

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

The Esplanade Mall
1401 W Esplanade Ave.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Fire Station: Engine 18

778 Harrison Ave.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Fire Station: Engine 1

2920 Magazine St.
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Fire Station: Squad 7

1441 St. Peter Ave.
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President Obama Delivers Final State of the Union Address

Data News Staff Edited Report

Putting aside a sudden crisis with Iran, President Barack Obama on Tuesday urged Americans in his final State of the Union address to reject the politics of tribalism and fear that have rocked the campaign to find his successor and to build a "clear-eyed, big-hearted" and "optimistic" nation.

Delivering his annual report to the nation, Obama did not name Republican 2016 candidates. But he took clear, implied shots at them nevertheless, particularly front-runner Donald Trump, as well as Sens. Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. America's destiny, the President said, was imperiled by a political system festering in malice, gridlock and in the grip of the rich and the powerful.

Obama also took on critics who accuse him of weakening American power abroad and Republicans who say he is underplaying the threat from radical Islamist groups such as ISIS. He mocked the contention that fighters on "on the back of pickup trucks and twisted souls plotting in apartments or garages" represented an existential threat to America.

The President acknowledged that a torrent of change, technological advances and economic dislocation has left many Americans fearful of the future and anxious as social structures that have underpinned the life of the nation for decades fray. But he urged them not to fall prey to the periodic temptation that has emerged throughout history to alienate minorities and resist social change.

"Each time, there have been those who told us to fear the future; who claimed we could slam the brakes on change, promising to restore past glory if we just got some group or idea that was threatening America under control," Obama said. "And each time, we overcame those fears."

"We made change work for us, always extending America's promise outward, to the next frontier, to more and more people. And because we did – because we saw opportunity where others saw only peril – we emerged stronger and



better than before."

Economic opportunity, security and a sustainable, peaceful planet are possible, he said, if the country could return to "rational, constructive debates."

"It will only happen if we fix our politics," he said.

In a way, Obama's seventh and last State of the Union address was a microcosm of his entire presidency: He invoked a chorus of hope and optimism about America's destiny and the transformative nature of change but was undercut by the poisoned political divides he has been unable to narrow – and that have even grown during his presidency. Then he encountered fierce opposition from Republicans who believe he has transformed the nation by eroding its exceptional qualities and thwarting the Constitution.

Meanwhile, a foreign policy crisis raging in the Middle East after Iran seized 10 U.S. sailors exemplified the struggles in which Obama has had to impose U.S. authority in an increasingly chaotic world that has challenged his core mission of ending costly American wars abroad.

While Obama, in deference to his ebbing power as a lame-duck president, avoided the long list of legislative proposals that Congress has no intention of taking up, he strongly defended his domestic record, claiming credit for 14 million new jobs and a halving of the unemployment

rate. He said those who claimed the economy was in decline are "peddling fiction."

He rebuked politicians who draw congressional districts to protect safe seats and vowed to launch a national effort to secure voting rights, an issue particularly important to minority communities. And he named Vice President Joe Biden, who lost his beloved son Beau to cancer last year, to head "Mission Control" in a new "moon shot" to cure the disease. He told conservatives who deny climate change to "have at it" because they were defying the world.

Obama also vowed – once again – to fight to close the war on terror camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, renewing one of the first promises of his presidency that has been thwarted by Congress. He called the facility a "recruitment brochure for our enemies and was expensive and unnecessary."

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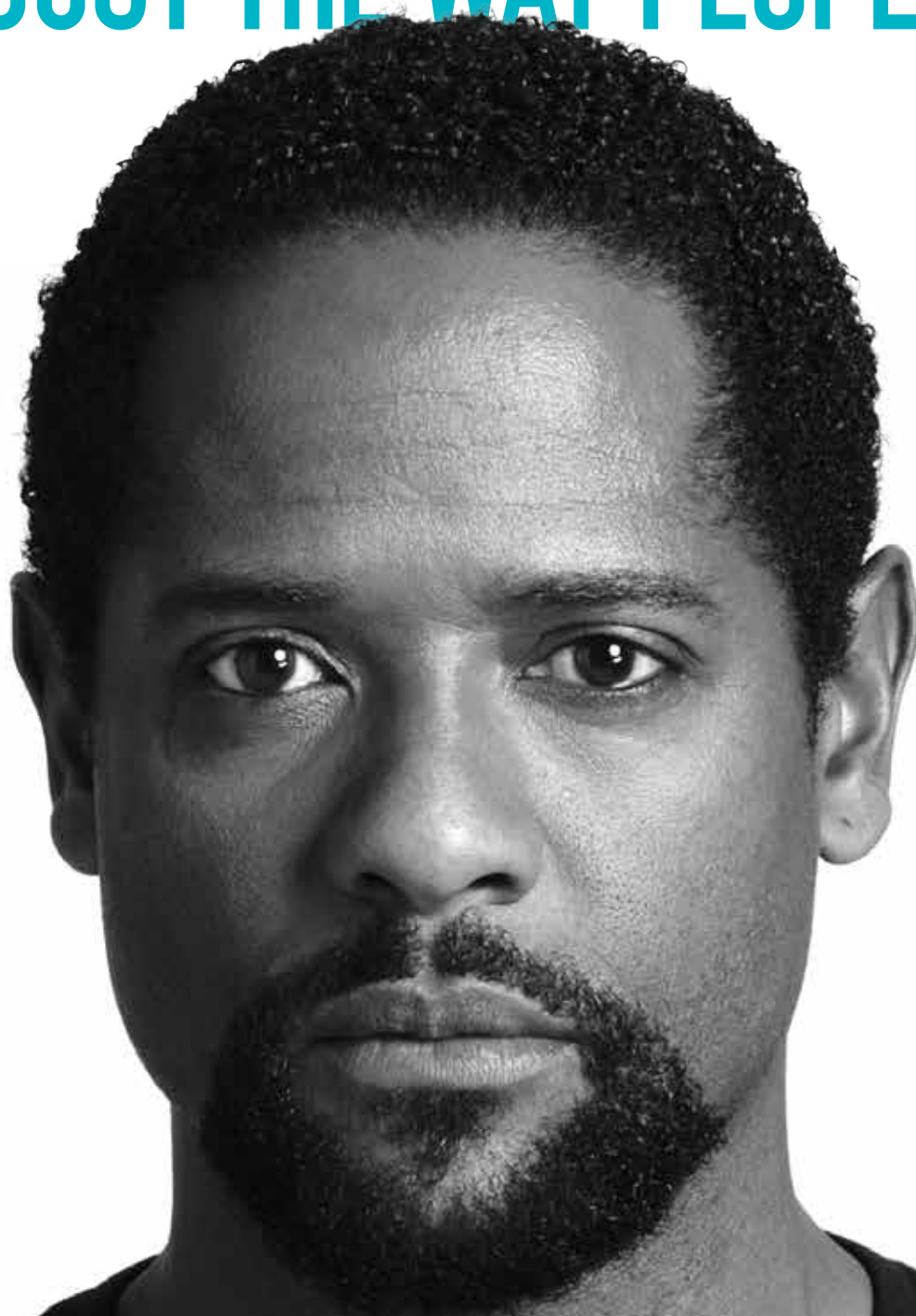
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