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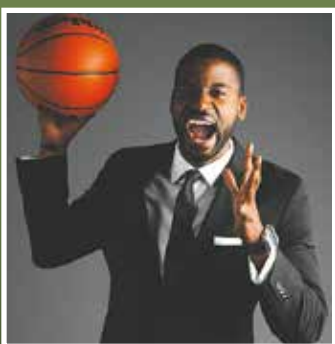
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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

2016 NOLA FoodFest

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2016 NOLA FoodFest

Food, Fun & Music on the River at Riverwalk's Spanish Plaza



In addition to fantastic food, the 2016 NOLA FoodFest will feature an outstanding musical line up. Bo Dollis & the Wild Magnolias (on the cover) are scheduled to perform on Saturday with Michael Baptiste & The Real Soul Band (above) taking the stage on Sunday.

Data News Staff Edited Report

For the 8th year in a row, NOLA FoodFest is back to excite and entice the taste buds of New Orleans' locals and visitors. This time the festival finds a new home along the beautiful Mississippi River at Riverwalk's Spanish Plaza.

Festival goers will enjoy hometown eats prepared by popular chefs from across the country. The new location allows attendees to experience premiere food and shopping amongst the serene backdrop of the Mississippi River.

The free Festival takes place on Saturday, April 2 from 11 AM to 7 PM and Sunday, April 3 from 11 AM

to 6 PM. It will feature over 20 different restaurants, including Salt Lick BBQ, Driftwood, TX; Gus's Famous Fried Chicken and Central BBQ; Memphis, TN; and Lasyone's Meat Pie Restaurant, Natchitoches, LA.

"Thanks to continued success in New Orleans, FoodFest continues to grow and attract nationally recognized restaurateurs," said NOLA FoodFest Co-

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Cover Story

Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

Food Line-Up:

Central BBQ -- Memphis, TN
 Lasyone's Meat Pie Restaurant -- Natchitoches, LA
 Woody's Fish Tacos -- New Orleans, LA
 Voleo's Seafood Restaurant -- Lafitte, LA
 Bobby Hebert's Cajun Cannon -- Metairie, LA
 Oceana Grill -- New Orleans, LA
 Peck's Seafood Restaurant -- Slidell, LA
 Imperial Woodpecker Snoballs -- New Orleans, LA

Flambeaux Café -- Slidell, LA
 Gus's Fried Chicken -- Memphis, TN
 Café Reconcile -- New Orleans, LA
 New Orleans Hot Dogs -- Arabi, LA
 Charlie Rhodes Cali-Cajun Cuisine -- Violet, LA
 Tessier Gourmet -- Folsom, LA
 The Big Cheezy -- New Orleans, LA
 Salt Lick -- Driftwood, TX
 Sheraton New Orleans Hotel -- New Orleans, LA

Music Line-Up:

Saturday:
 Noisewater
 Claude Bryant Allstars
 Dash Rip Rock
 Bo Dollis Jr. & The Wild Magnolias

Sunday:
 Little Freddie King
 Michael Baptiste & The Real Soul Band
 Tank & The Bangas

Founder and Organizer Stephen Rushmore. "This year we're excited to have special guests checking out FoodFest. The Society of Fellows from The Culinary Institute of America is hosting a weekend getaway in New Orleans and will be stopping by this year to try some hometown eats."

The Salt Lick is proud to represent Driftwood, Texas at NOLA FoodFest with their world-famous barbecue. The Roberts Family have been perfecting their craft over an open pit since 1967 and are thrilled to share their delicious brisket, ribs and coleslaw to the great people of New Orleans.



Lil Freddie King will perform on Sunday at the 2016 NOLA FoodFest.

A portion of the festival's proceeds go to support Café Reconcile, a New Orleans-based not-for-

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Pictured above, Tank & The Bangas, will bring the funk to the stage on Sunday at the 2016 NOLA FoodFest.

profit, dedicated to transforming the lives of young adults and the community through hospitality job training.

Festival goers will not want to miss the Annual Beignet Eating Contest on Sunday at 12:30 PM. The contest pits members of the New Orleans Fire Department against members of the Jefferson Parish Fire Department to see who can eat eight beignets

the quickest. The winner will take home the coveted Champion Beignet Eating Trophy.

For more information on the festival, visit: <http://www.nolafoodfest.com>. Follow NOLA FoodFest on Facebook.com/NOLAFoodFest, Twitter @NOLAFoodFest, and on Instagram at NOLAFoodFest for real time updates. Share your experience with the hashtag #NOLAFoodFest.

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Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp Taking Applications

It was created as a way to preserve the rich jazz tradition of New Orleans. Since its inception in 1995, more than 2,000 youths and young adults aged 10-21, have been served by the program. "It" is the Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp and applications for the 2016 session, which will be held at Loyola University June 27 - July 15, are now being accepted.

Focused on developing the next generation of Jazz artists as well as preserving this great American art form, the camp attracts young musician from around the county and is known as a pre-eminent jazz education program. "This is one of the most unique experiences a young musician can encounter," notes Jackie Harris, Founder and Executive Director of the summer camp. As Harris further explains, "Students will participate in programs that center on refining musical skills, including composition, voice, and even swing dancing. Even more beneficial, all of the students will be taught by some of the city's most revered and respected music educators. Ninety percent of



the camp's faculty are elementary and high school teachers as well as current and retired university professors."

In addition to announcing the opening of camp registration, the jazz camp is proud to announce this year's Artist-in-residence - renowned bop-based drummer, Albert "Tootie" Heath. The

80-year-old, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-born drummer extraordinaire, is the younger brother of bassist Percy Heath and reedman Jimmy Heath. Heath made his musical debut on record in 1957 with John Coltrane and has had a long and industrious career ever since playing with the likes of Herbie Hancock's sextet and Yusef Lateef.

He is now the producer and leader of The Whole Drum Truth, a jazz drum ensemble, which brings together the greatest jazz drummers. Among his many workshop and classroom teaching assignments, Heath is a regular instructor at the Stanford Jazz Workshop. The Louis Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp is honored to have him appear this year.

Those interested in attending the summer jazz camp should submit an application, which can be found on the camp's website www.louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com. The website also has a list of criteria for those applying. Deadline for registration is June 10.

For more information on the Louis Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp, call (504) 715-9295 or email jazzcamp@louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com.

strongjazzcamp.com.

The Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp is a project of the New Orleans Arts and Cultural Host Committee (NOACHC), a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving our cultural legacy and providing opportunities for arts education for New Orleans youth. The Jazz Camp is a three-week experience that offers intense music education classes to young students between the ages of 10 and 21 years old. Students must have studied music for a minimum of 2 years or demonstrate ability at this level to qualify. Jazz Camp takes place June 27 - July 15 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday at Loyola University in the Communications/Music Complex. More information is available online at www.louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com.

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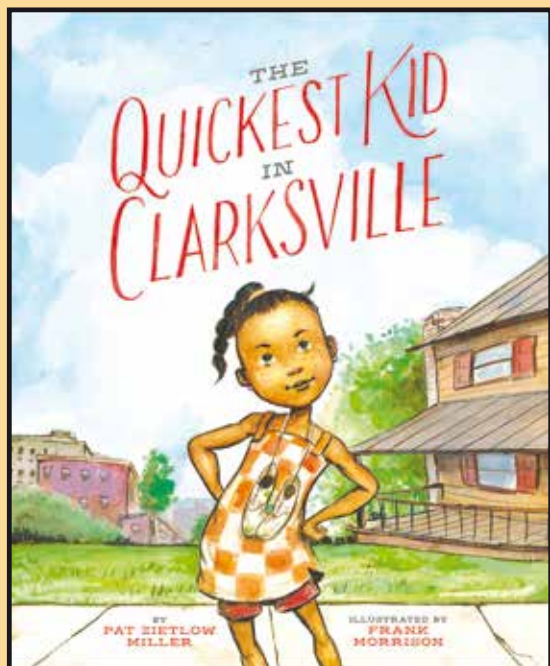
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The Quickest Kid in Clarksville



The Quickest Kid in Clarksville
by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated
by Frank Morrison
c.2016, Chronicle Books
\$16.99 / \$23.99 Canada
40 pages

By The Bookworm Sez
Data News Weekly Contributor

You are the best kid... at something.

You can run the fastest. You can jump the highest. You're the best skipper, the best hopper, or the best dancer. But what if there was somebody better than you? See what might happen in "The Quickest Kid in Clarksville" by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Frank Morrison.

Alta was the fastest runner in Clarksville, Tennessee, and everybody knew it.

She wasn't as fast as Wilma Rudolph, but Alta was close and that made her dream. What, she wondered, would it be like to have three Olympic gold medals hanging around her neck? Would Wilma bring her medals to the parade she'd be riding in? The parade was tomorrow; Alta and her friends were even making a banner for it.

And then some girl Alta had never met before came "sashaying" over with the brand-spankingest, whitest shoes Alta had ever seen. She said her name was Charmaine and her shoes sparkled - they were just made for running. Alta's shoes had holes in them but shoes can't tell who'll win a race. Not even Wilma had the best things, at first.

Alta challenged Charmaine to a race - and won.

Charmaine challenged Alta to another race - and Charmaine won.

Alta was sure that was because Charmaine tripped her. Or because Alta's toe was poking out of the front of her shoe, which really made her sad because Mama said those shoes had to last...

On parade day, while Alta and her friends were finishing the banner, Charmaine came by, strutting "like she's queen of the block." Alta wasn't having any of that; she far preferred to remember that Wilma Rudolph, the fastest woman alive, was coming to town to be in a parade. Maybe she might even see the banner, and she might wave.

As Alta started to run to the parade route with the banner, she suddenly realized that the banner was heavy and awkward. It wrapped itself up and caught the wind. It was long, too. There'd be no way she'd get to the parade in time.

How would she ever make it?

Who likes to lose? Nobody, that's who, but there are times when losing isn't a bad thing. Sometimes, it means winning and "The Quickest Kid in Clarksville" shows your child how that works.

There's a lot of sass and attitude inside this book, and charm all over: Author Pat Zeitlow Miller's main character has scads of it, in fact, but it's a confident boldness that kids just can't miss. Thanks to artwork by Frank Morrison, the fierceness never leaves Alta's face, even when her new adversary steps into the 'hood - a frenemy who's surprisingly equal to Alta - leading to a show-down, an ultimate olive branch, and an ending that'll make you smile.

If your kids are curious, Miller also includes a page on the real Wilma Rudolph, putting this book into further prospective. That may be too much info for younger readers, but 5-to-8-year-olds might find "The Quickest Kid in Clarksville" to be the best.

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Batman Vs. Superman



By Dwight Brown
NNPA News Wire Columnist

Director Christopher Nolan, gone. Oscar-winning actor Christian Bale, gone. There will never be another "The Dark Knight Rises." That iconic, once-in-a-lifetime action trilogy is over. If you can wrap your head around that, and get past the first sluggish minutes of this Batman derivative, you just may find some instances of wonder in between the baffling moments.

First, the elephant in the room. Ben Affleck, aka Gigli. He isn't totally miscast. However, his stiff performance does nothing to elevate the Batman character or this movie. And his toupee, a distraction that should get second billing, steals his scenes. Henry Cavill as Superman looks more comfortable in his tights. Both actors' characters are sourpusses most of the film. The incessant brooding is off-putting. It's like watching teenagers pout because they can't go to the mall. Blame the screenwriters Chris Terrio and David S. Goyer for handcuffing them. And even those scribes deserve a pass because the task of writing a script about two normally centered heroes, who now want to destroy each other, is a tad preposterous.

An alien force, Zod, is in the midst of destroying downtown Metropolis where Bruce Wayne has an office building full of employees. Zod is facing the brutal force of Superman, who is, of course, out to save the world. In the process, their fight causes Wayne's building to crumble. The eerie similarities to 9/11 border on bad taste.

That incident strikes a nerve with Bruce Wayne/Batman. He becomes

enraged and obsessed with wiping out Superman. Meanwhile, Superman's repeated collateral damage as he saves lives becomes a cause célèbre for Senator Finch (Holly Hunter) and her Congressional Superman Committee. A mouthy, jittery and obscenely wealthy tech entrepreneur named Alexander "Lex" Luthor (Jesse Eisenberg) has a beef with Superman, too. He's plotting to bring kryptonite into the country. It's a weapon Bruce Wayne also wants. The Man of Steel had better watch his cape.

Batman hating Superman never really gels. The congressional committee subplot is equally suspect. The only person who logically hates the Superman is Lex Luthor, and that's just comic book legend. But as played by the mousy Eisenberg, who acts with the verve of a pesky mosquito, even Luthor is lame.

Ben Affleck (left) and Henry Cavill star in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice." (Warner Bros.)

Ben Affleck (left) and Henry Cavill star in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice." (Warner Bros.)

Director Zack Snyder (Man of Steel) has his hands full trying to make the silly plotline work. He does himself no favors by starting the film with a funeral that is poorly directed and filmed with too many overhead shots (cinematographer Larry Fong, "300"). The graveyard scene with the young Wayne running off into the woods is like watching an outtake from a B-movie. Not an auspicious beginning.

The obliteration of downtown Metropolis is a bit better, but not excellent. Perhaps the best action sequences are when Batman, in his natty Batmobile, chases a truck that is transporting the

kryptonite. It's fun to watch. The film almost should have stopped there. It doesn't. Subsequent action scenes aren't as imaginative. The finale, involving a huge monster that looks like an electrified Hulk on steroids, is no better than a scene from any generic sci-fi/action movie. That beast is a poor effect (visual effects supervisor John "DJ" DesJardin). The loud score (Hans Zimmer and Junkie XL) doesn't help either.

Visually (set decoration Carolyn

'Cal' Loucks; art direction Patricio M. Farrell, "300: Rise of an Empire"; production design Patrick Tatopoulos, "300: Rise of an Empire") the film has high and low points: Lex Luthor's party, perfect. The Bat Cave, dull. At least the pacing (editor David Brenner, Man of Steel) is tight, which makes the two-hour and thirty-three minutes roll by at a decent clip.

Amy Adams as Lois Lane is great, but her character is not pivotal. Diane Lane is far better as Superman's mom. Laurence Fishburne as Perry White overacts. Gal Gadot, the sultry mystery woman who is always two steps ahead of Bruce Wayne, is gorgeous and bold as she morphs into Wonder Woman. She deserves her own franchise.

As this uneven film grinds to an end, it sets itself up for more shenanigans in more episodes with more super heroes.

Comic book fans will flock to this movie regardless. Whether they come back to see it a second or third time, like they did for The Dark Knight Rises or Deadpool, is the question. If they do, Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice will make a dent at the box office. If they don't, Christopher Nolan and Christian Bale will look even better in hindsight.

Read more movie reviews by Dwight Brown here and at www.DwightBrownInk.com.

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Do Black Organizations Really Have Our Backs?



By James Clingman
NNPA News Wire
Columnist

While Black people are bogged down in shallow and meaningless political discourse, our vaunted Black organizations continue to be M.I.A. except for their time in front of the cameras with Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. They say they cannot endorse candidates, but we all know that's a sham.

In an article written by Freddie Allen of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, Marc Morial said the nine Black organizations that met with the candidates wanted to "provide to every candidate who is running for president of the United States, be they Republican or Democrat, the opportunity to hear from us on issues of civil rights, social justice, and economic justice in America, today." Any real demands made on our behalf?

Al Sharpton said, "For the first time in American history, we will watch a Black family leave the White House and we do not want to see the concerns of Blacks leave with them." So, that's where our concerns have been hibernating for the past seven years; and all this time I thought Sharpton and the POTUS were taking care of them.

And, I suppose to give comfort to Clinton and Sanders, Morial said the nine historic civil rights organizations represent tens of millions of Americans and that all of their organizations were "multicultural and multi-ethnic." Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic? That's strange; I thought they were Black or at least "colored."

Speaking of colored, let's look at one of these "Black" multi-cultural/ethnic organizations.

The NAACP, known for "Nonstop Aiding and Abetting in Corrupt Practices," in my opinion, answered the Ferguson issue by walking 130 miles to the Missouri Governor's office, followed up by a 1,000 mile stroll from Selma to the steps of the U.S. Capitol in search of justice. Guess they didn't find it when they got there.

This is the group that practices outright hypocrisy by railing against voter suppression and voter ID laws, while accepting and even promoting those corrupt practices within their own ranks. More specifically, this is the group that has wreaked havoc in Ohio by conducting four elections for State President, two of which were legitimately won by Jocelyn Travis over Sybil McNabb, and two of which were do-overs by the national office via its henchman, Gill Ford, to keep their chosen candidate, McNabb, in office.

In the first corrupt election over which the national office presided, children were allowed to vote for McNabb—yes, children! In the second corrupt election, which just took place on March 12, 2016, again under national supervision, the same corrupt practice used in Cincinnati was used by Gill Ford in Columbus. He suspended Travis three days prior to the election, just as he did the Cincinnati president, whom he suspended the day before the election in an obvious effort to have his chosen candidate run unopposed.

The NAACP's "Nonstop Aiding and Abetting in Corrupt Practices" is shameful, especially in light of holding themselves up as the national champion for fairness in the voting process. Even more shameful is the fact that only a relative few members, among those who have actually seen these shenanigans take place, are willing to stand up against the NAACP's corruption.

The good news is that a group of members throughout Ohio have followed the lead of the Crittenden County (Arkansas) and Cincinnati branches by seeking and winning a temporary restraining order against the national office of the NAACP, due to its continued interference in local elections. The results of the March 12th election are being held in abeyance by a Columbus, Ohio judge, who will conduct a hearing on April 7, 2016. You can be sure that all evidence of corruption, voter suppression, and election rigging will be brought forth at that time.

Aside from the obvious hypocrisy displayed by the national leadership of the NAACP, not only in this case, but also in several other branches across the country, their

corrupt practices also point to a larger problem. So-called Black organizations like the NAACP, despite their implied social contract with Black folks, can be swayed, bought, rented, or leased with nothing expected in return except a few dollars under the table, a political photo-op, or a nice hotel suite. The NAACP needs to stop abusing its members' rights before purporting to speak on our behalf.

As for nine Black organizations suggesting they are the repository of Black power, here's a question: If they have power, why after nearly eight years of a Black President are we, as cited in Morial's State of Black America Report, worse off now and in "crisis?" As the heads of those organizations now intercede on our behalf, by meeting with presidential candidates, what would make us believe Blacks will get anything specific from the next administration?

James Clingman is the nation's most prolific writer on economic empowerment for Black people. His latest book, *Black Dollars Matter! Teach your dollars how to make more sense*, is available on his website, www.Blackonomics.com.

Spiritually Speaking

God, Man's Final Frontier and Last Resort



James A. Washington
NNPA News Wire Columnist

The older I get the more convinced I am that I am going to surely fail, fail miserably as a matter of fact, in my attempt to be perfectly Christ like. We all know, or should know, this is just not going to happen. However, as we also know, it is our job to humbly and consistently keep trying and striving to emulate our Lord and Savior. There are all kinds of expressions to de-

scribe this rather unique occurrence in the Christian experience; everything from 'backsliding,' to falling off the wagon, to suffering a setback, or simply falling down. In each instance, I think the Christian's obligation is to weather the storm and reverse direction, or more aptly put, 'get back up on my feet again.' I don't know about you but one of the hardest things for me to do is to know I've blown it with regard to Christian behavior. I have maintained an un-Christian attitude for longer than I should; held onto my anger too long. Or, I've enjoyed someone else's misfortune much too much. You see when that happens, because I profess and believe the good news of the gospel, I do understand what is supposed to be inherently good and what is not. Yet I've acted or reacted outside of the

parameters of what I know is good Christian behavior. At this point I know I'm in trouble because I indeed do know better. It becomes hard and kind of embarrassing to ask God for forgiveness, when you know He knows that you do know better.

For me that's pretty tough. It's like stealing and having to confess to your mother, or, being caught cheating and your punishment was delivering the bad news to your mother by a note from your teacher. For those of you who have had to carry such burden, I'm sure you understand that sinking feeling as you have exhausted every excuse possible in a vain attempt to delay the inevitable. The moment of truth has come. You've got to tell Mom. Stay with me for a moment and relate this situation to having to tell God.

You know that He already knows. It is then absolutely necessary and incumbent upon me or you to stand up, 'fess' up and proceed down the only road that makes sense, with the full knowledge that you will be okay. The Lord still loves you. Getting through that whole process has always been very difficult for me because, I believe what I'm feeling is generally stupid and certainly clear about knowing better. When you're a Christian, you do know better. I don't know which is worse, knowing better or having to tell God that you knew better. The good news is, God knows what's in your heart. It is His measure of who you are and who you are in relation to Him that really matters. It's because of that, that God knows you are repentant, just like your mother knew you that you knew better because she raised

you. She also knew you were truly sorry. It remains the only basis for forgiveness.

For me it still remains an uncomfortable exercise to square my shoulders, assume the position faced down in reverent prayer and enter into the domain of my Father and reveal that kind of failure. Each time it happens, I'm reminded that God did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners of which I am one, regardless of how enlightened I might think I am. Remember this the next time you review the day and realize how much better you could have behaved.

May God bless and keep you always.

James

Brandon Okpalobi

Helping Make Big Dreams Come True

by Elise Schenck

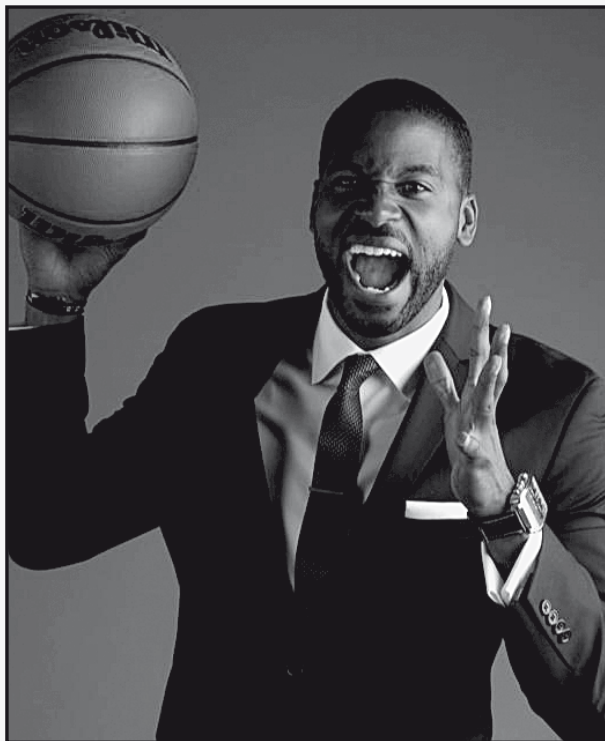
Young people today face many obstacles to achieve greatness and reaching their full potential. Oftentimes this is because of a lack of role models. Brandon Okpalobi, a New Orleans native who now calls Miami, Florida home is a shining example of someone that's spent his life committed to reaching greatness as an individual in addition to being a community servant inspiring and encouraging people across the globe in making their dreams a reality.

Early in Brandon's life, he was given a recipe for success where his vision could be realized through staying focused and taking a disciplined approach to reach his goals. These seeds were firmly planted in him by his parents and others who helped raise him. Recalling their impact, he says, "They say, it takes a village to raise a child, and I am a living testament. My parents, extended family and elders in my community helped me stay on the straight path. I would not be who I am without the unconditional love, support and structure of my parents. My father, Chief Ochendo Chuka Okpalobi, is Nigerian and ruled with an "iron thumb" and my mother Calla Victoria, a native New Orleansian who was stern, but allowed me to have fun. It is the mix of my parents and

community that's really shaped me into the man I am today."

He is a graduate of St. Augustine High School, an institution with a rich legacy of turning out young men who become civic, community and business leaders. While a student there Brandon played on the basketball team, he says of his experience as an athlete and the lessons he learned there, he has applied to other areas of his life. An example of his fortitude, perseverance, and persistence is after applying to five colleges the University of Miami offered him a partial academic scholarship. Determined to play basketball he tried out for the team and received a full scholarship, eventually, becoming the captain of the team in his senior year. Not only did he stand out on the court, but also as a student earning a degree in Computer Information Systems.

Brandon Okpalobi's story exemplifies that with hard work anything is possible. It is the motivation behind his company, DIBIA Athletic Program, that he describes as "Providing elite sports training for athletes to develop fundamental skills through detailed analysis of individual skills, innovative drills and dynamic instruction. Our intense training program is designed for boys and



girls, ranging from age 7 to professional athletes. DIBIA trains athletes worldwide and hosts camps/clinics in Miami, New Orleans, LA, Bermuda, Bahamas, Latin America and Nigeria."

He speaks passionately about DREAM which is DIBIA's community outreach initiative. "We bridge their desire for excellence, leadership and sports to educate youth on other essential core value systems. We translate the skills that are required to win in sports into skills that are required to win at life. This allows for the development of a blueprint for success, in language young athletes understand."

ing with entertainment devices such as the internet, videogames and mobile devices. Kids need positive influences that encourage them to go outside and explore nature, outdoor sports other and community activities. We also have to continue to expand ideas and grant exposure to youth with STEM programming and arts. Kids really enjoy our STEM and art projects at DREAM, so much that we are adding it to our DIBIA Athletic Curriculum."

Over the years his program has touched many and said he is elated when kids are seeing their dreams come to fruition. One of them is Khambrel Roach, who is a student athlete at Trinity University in Texas who also has started a company called Lifecache App, that's developing mobile apps. He says of DIBIA DREAM, "The skills acquired by working with DIBIA DREAM are a big part of why I feel confident every time I step on the court and probably

why my coaches feel I'm one of the more versatile players we have. Working on life skills and basketball fundamentals with DIBIA DREAM has really given me an edge."

While there are some who have been in the public eye that eschew being thought of as a role model, it is something that Okpalobi fully embraces, "There is nothing I don't like about being viewed as a role model. I embrace it every day. This honor is a constant reminder to me daily on how to conduct myself. In college they said that someone is always listening, observing and there's always a camera watching. This falls in line with being a role model. Parents and kids everyday tell me how I have inspired them to push forward; my words on social media gave them inspiration to keep the faith and continue to fight and helped them stay positive in bad situations. Those messages let me know that what I do count in the world."

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Marian Pierre

Reaching Back and Giving to Others

by Edwin Buggage

Marian Pierre, CEO and Founder of Crescent Guardian, Inc., is an example of someone that's making an impact in the field of business and is also committed to serving her community. Since its founding in 1993, she's become the first woman owned multi-million-dollar professional Security Service Firm in a three state region. In addition to being a successful entrepreneur she also works with others giving them the tools to become successful. Speaking of what motivates her to give back she says, "I was raised in a family who cared about community and people. We have always shared, everybody took care of each other. I was always involved in church and it's helped make my four sisters and I who we've become, because we knew we had to follow God's teaching and it's my obligation to always reach back and bring somebody with me."

Her life's journey has been a path where she's always strived for excellence. Prior to founding Crescent Guardian, Ms. Pierre had a successful career in New Orleans City Government. Through her time working for the City she gained extensive knowledge and experience

that helped her prepare for the rigors of entrepreneurship and being a leader. Throughout her professional career, she has been devoted to empowering women through politics, education, social involvement, and economics through an organization she founded, Women Organized Mobilized for Empowerment Now (W.O.M.E.N.)

In her years of owning several businesses she's acquired the aptitude and knowledge on the do's and don'ts in business and now passes it on to entrepreneurs just starting out. "I teach others business owners how to get certifications that they may need, in addition to getting their financials in order so they can get loans. I am willing to share anything I've learned on my own, through from the school of hard knocks, if it can make it easier for newer businesses." She is also part of a group called "The Collaborative" a collective of African-American business owners from different sectors who work together in various business ventures. "In this collective we look at how we can come together to bid on projects and receive entire contracts and not only parts of them. It is important



that we show we can work together moving forward as African-American businesses to help employ and empower people in our community."

For her work as a business and civic leader she's won numerous awards; City Business named Ms. Pierre Woman of the Year in 2007 and most recently in 2012. In 2008 she was awarded the Parrin J. Mitchell Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Under her leadership, CGI was also honored as New Orleans Small Business of the Year in 2000. While she appre-

locking arms while climbing the mountain together when we get to the top, it is harder to get knocked off because you have something that keeps you anchored."

Pierre is someone who is committed to young people and through her company and church she's working to help them acquire the skills to be productive citizens. "After the storm through my company we were working with the Children Defense Fund where we adopted 25 young men and partnered them with mentors in the community that would help encourage and inspire them, by spending quality time with them. Also during the Christmas rather than accept gifts I tell them to use that money and give it to someone in need. I also do the same thing through my church, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, adopting families in need and making their holiday season special."

She also believes that post-Katrina that the City

must do a better job at building the education system where all children can receive a quality education, in addition to building an economy where educated kids have a reason to stay. "We need to change the pipeline from school to jail and make New Orleans a place where our kids have the proper opportunities here; we must invest in our future and our children, planting seeds in the City allows them to grow, prosper and make a positive contribution to our City."

Marian Pierre today is a woman that is an inspiration to all. She says that it's not always been easy, she says if you have a goal then you must have a plan and have the will to see it through, never give up, and always trust in God. "If I had to say something that could inspire people I always go back to anything I have done, I have not accomplished on my own and once I got to my destination I always reach back and help somebody else."

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NNPA, Chevrolet Launch Historic Internship Program at Howard University



(From left to right): Chairwoman of the NNPA Denise Rolark Barnes, legendary lyricist and hip hop pioneer MC Lyte, President and CEO of the NNPA Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Dean of the School of Communications at Howard University Gracie Lawson-Borders and Chevrolet's Diversity Marketing Manager Michelle Matthews-Alexander break for a photo-op during the launch of the NNPA's "Discover the Unexpected" Fellowship Program Sponsored by Chevrolet. (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Newswire Managing Editor

In an effort to provide student journalists with a unique experience working in the Black Press, the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), teamed with Chevrolet and the School of Communications at Howard University to launch an innovative journalism fellowship program.

The program titled, "Discover The Unexpected" (DTU), will feature internships at four NNPA member publications for eight Howard University students.

The journalism fellows that are selected for the program will receive stipends and also have access to a 2016 Chevrolet Malibu to commute between their local newsrooms and their assignments.

The Michigan Chronicle, the Chicago Defender, The Washington Informer, The Atlanta Voice, were selected as participating publications for the first round of internships and legendary hip-hop pioneer MC Lyte will serve as the national spokesperson for the program.

MC Lyte said that she entered into the music business not only to have a voice, but also to inspire people to be unique and to stand up for what they believed in. The hip-hop icon, who is known for her storytelling prowess, said that she

wanted the journalism students to have the opportunity to tell stories that mattered and that have the capacity to change lives.

Denise Rolark Barnes, the chairwoman of the NNPA and the publisher of the Washington Informer said that student journalists who work at Black newspapers get a global experience, because the needs are often greater and the expectations are higher.

"We don't have beats," said Barnes. "Today you can be covering a student who's won a [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation] scholarship at one of the local high schools, tomorrow you might be at the White House covering an event for First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign. The next day you might be on [Capitol Hill] covering a congressional hearing."

Barnes continued: "The collaboration between the NNPA, General Motors and Howard University provides the perfect environment for students to discover these opportunities."

Francina Akuazaoku, a senior television production major at Howard University from Washington, D.C. said that she was shocked, when MC Lyte walked into her classroom to announce the new venture.

Akuazaoku, who grew up in the nation's capital said, that if she were selected, she would use the experience to help her community and

future generations.

Chavis said that the practical experience that the students will gain from the DTU program will be invaluable in helping them get to the next level after they graduate.

"These experiences are going to be unique," said Chavis. "The Black Press is the trusted voice of Black America. When the students file their stories, they do it within the context of that trusted relationship. This program is going to give the students a foundation that they will use for the rest of their careers."

Hiram Jackson, the publisher of the Michigan Chronicle agreed.

In an e-mail to the NNPA News Wire, Jackson said that he wants the student journalism fellows to learn the importance of being accurate, fair and unbiased and that he hoped that the program would help to build a foundation of core journalism principles that will stay with them throughout their careers.

Chevrolet's Diversity Marketing Manager Michelle Matthews-Alexander said that the auto company recognizes the important role that the School of Communications at Howard University plays in producing the next generation of journalism leaders.

Matthews-Alexander added that it was truly exciting for "[Chevrolet] to be able to partner with the NNPA and Howard University to

create this program to help students think about," the possibilities for their future.

Gracie Lawson-Borders, the dean of the School of Communications at Howard University thanked the NNPA and General Motors for launching the fellowship program at the school and said that it is a wonderful opportunity for all communication students, "to prepare for the next journey in their lives."

She said that the experience will open the doors to new pathways of opportunity for student journalists and communicators in a 24-7 digital environment and that the stories that the students will report on from Washington, D.C. to Atlanta, to Chicago, to Detroit "will provide insight into the lived experiences of the people in those communities working, living, and acting to make their lives better."

The NNPA member publishers who are participating in the DTU program this year also expressed their support of the program and the long-standing partnership between the NNPA and General Motors.

In an e-mail to the NNPA News Wire, Janis Ware, the publisher of the Atlanta Voice said that she hopes that the student fellows who work at the Voice learn the importance of the Black Press and the critical role that African American newspapers play in reporting, documenting and recording the everyday events of the Black community for future generations.

"The Atlanta Voice is unique in that we are in a city that has African Americans in leadership positions in all walks of life, including business, politics, education, music, entertainment and much more," said Ware. "We will provide opportunities for the students to meet with some of these leaders and gather information for the purpose of sharing their stories with our readers."

Ware said that the partnership between General Motors and the NNPA provides both parties the opportunity to expose a younger population to their brands, using the Black Press as a valuable and viable vehicle to do so.

Ware continued: "We can evolve together. It's a win-win for everybody."

For more information about the "Discover The Unexpected" journalism fellowship program, visit www.NNPA.org/dtu.

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