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News Weekly

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7th Annual Class Got Brass

March 4, 2018

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Inaugural Black Masking Cultural Festival

Tradition, Culture, History

The Soul of New Orleans

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Inaugural Black Masking Cultural Festival

Tradition, Culture, History



Pictured above is Big Chief Fiyo of 7th ward Hard Head Hunters. (Photos by Oba Lorrius)

By Glenn Jones, Oba Lorrius,
Tamara Singleton
Data News Weekly Contributors

Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines an American as A native of America; originally applied to the aboriginals, or copper-colored races, found here by the Europeans; but now applied to the descendants of Europeans born in America.

Louisiana is home to some of the oldest Black Aboriginal Tribes in North America such as the Chiti-

macha, Choctaw, Houma, Washita, Atakapa, Natchez, Tunica, Chawasha, Adai, Doustione, Natchitoches, Yatasi, Acolapissa, Mugulasha, Okelousa, Wuinapisa, Tangipahoa, and others known for some of the earliest civilizations and earthworks such as Poverty Point built between 1650 and 700 B.C. which is recognized as a world historic site.

In Southeast Louisiana, the aboriginals led the French colonists towards high ground through what we know today as Bayou Rd across the Esplanade Ridge. Jean Baptiste Bienville began construction on

what the world knows as the French Quarter March of 1718 three hundred years to present day New Orleans.

After almost two decades of painting their faces red for battle, the Chitimacha, entered a treaty with the French in 1718 to end the colonial quest of land acquisition and American Aboriginal Slave driven war that began in 1706. The French were unable to keep the Chitimacha from escaping to their homes in the surrounding region, so in 1719 with the rising demand for slaves with specific skills such as agriculture, architecture, and textiles, the French brought enslaved people

On the Cover: In beautiful suits made of red feathers are the father and son “Wildman” for the 7th Ward Hard Head Hunters.

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

from Africa to Louisiana. Nearly all the Africans brought to French Louisiana came from Senegambia/Congo because they were skilled in growing rice from swamps, processing tobacco, and thriving in environments like New Orleans.

Africans escaping the trauma of slavery ran to the safety of the American Aborigines that are native to the New Orleans territory. In 1724 the Code Noir (Black Code) was ordered by Louis XIV of France to restrict the activities and religious freedoms for people of color. Anyone colored was forced to be Roman Catholic and restricted from participating in cultural ceremonies like drumming, dancing, and masking.

In 1791 slavery reached its boiling point on the island of Haiti. The melting pot of aborigines and Africans on the small island made history by defeating the French, Spanish, and British in a battle to successfully bring an end to slavery and send a message of unity and freedom around the world. In 1804 Haiti became the first independent Black nation in the Western Hemisphere. In 1811 near present-day LaPlace, Charles Deslondes who is believed to have arrived in Louisiana from Haiti led the largest slave insurrection in the history of the United States. The resistance of these tribes throughout our Tricentennial history created the cultural appropriation barrier necessary to preserve the Aboriginal Cultures Native to New Orleans. The mixing of the American Aboriginal and African Diaspora Culture is the gumbo that we enjoy today as Black Masking Culture, Second-Line Culture, Brass Band Culture, etc.

The name Mardi Gras Indian was given by descendants of French colonists who organized the Mardi



New Orleans Mardi Gras, 1942. "Yellow Pocahontas Indians" at residence of Chief Paul Joseph during Mardi Gras at 1911 Marais Street in New Orleans, Louisiana. (Courtesy of Wikipedia)

Gras celebration. Mardi Gras began in 1858 and was officially desegregated in 1994. Once the Mardi Gras laws changed to include people of color, aborigines known for their elaborate hand-sewn ceremonial suits, were included and branded the Mardi Gras Indians. In the early days of Mardi Gras, people of color were restricted to be the Flambeaux, a group of aborigines and slaves that carried dangerous giant torches so festival goers could see their favorite floats at night.

The robust Black Masking Culture that New Orleans feeds to the world was established through

great struggle and sacrifice. The torch has been carried a great distance by culture bearers like Allison Marcel Montana better known as "Tootie" who is honored as the Chief of Chiefs of the Yellow Pocahontas Hunters, dubbed the Renaissance Man of the Black Masking world. Amongst other life lessons, Tootie shall be remembered for inspiring tribes far and wide to embrace and harness their creative abilities through the obedience of sewing. On June 27th, 2005 Tootie Montana gave his final breath addressing the New Orleans City Council on the City's treatment of

Black Masking Indians. Jerome "Big Duck" Smith of Tambourine & Fan and Fred J. Johnson Jr. the former Spy Boy of the Yellow Pocahontas Hunters who stood alongside Tootie are keeping the torch of Tooties message lit.

Culture is the customary beliefs of a racial, religious, or social group. Tradition is the handing down of beliefs and information by word of mouth from generation to generation. Week 2 of our Big Chief of the Week Series, Big Chief Walter "Sugar Bear" Landry said it clearly, "tradition varies, but culture stays the same". Week 30 of our series we

learned through Big Chief Shaka Zulu of Golden Feather that Masking Culture is celebrated by indigenous people on five of the seven continents. This wisdom further validates our likenesses as a people globally, unified in our historical resistance to tyranny and celebration of our preserved culture.

To ensure that our culture is preserved, the Inaugural Black Masking Cultural Festival and Feather Fundraiser were created. Both events take place on March 15, 2018. In association with the French Market Association, Data News Weekly, and Cumulus Broadcasting we are presenting the Black Masking Festival at Crescent Park Pavilion from 3p to 7p. The festival is dedicated to the legacy of the active 42 Tribes we have been documenting and sharing this past 32-weeks through www.bnola.love making a better Nola. This is the first time in North American History that a cultural festival is dedicated solely to the historical contribution of our Black Masking Culture bearers, their local fame, and global acclaim.

BNola in conjunction with Better Family Life(501c3) brings the community a one of a kind festival including 3 Black Masking Tribal processions with Brass Bands and Traditional Drumming. Red Cheyenne, 7th Ward Hard Head Hunters, Big Chief Shaka Zulu of Golden Feather, roots music sensation Love Evolution, and more, hosted by Platinum Recording Artist: Fiend Mr. International Jones.

The celebration continues the evening of March 15th from 9p to 1a at Tipitina's where we will be hosting the Feather Fundraiser. All proceeds from the Feather Fundraiser are dedicated to purchasing

Cover Story, Continued
on page 11.

#6

ELECT

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE - DISTRICT 93



Louisiana Democratic Senate Caucus Leader Troy Carter Speaks to Data News on Taxes, the State Budget and Need for Cooperation in the Legislature to Get Things Done

By Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly Editor

Special Session Focus on Balance Budget

The Louisiana Legislature is presently in a special session in an attempt to balance the budget for 2018-19. Presently, there is a 1-billion-dollar deficit that legislators are trying to figure out how to cover this shortfall.

During this session Democratic Senate Caucus Chair Troy Carter is leading the way in trying to create a more responsible, fair and equitable way to distribute the tax burden where everybody pays their fair share.

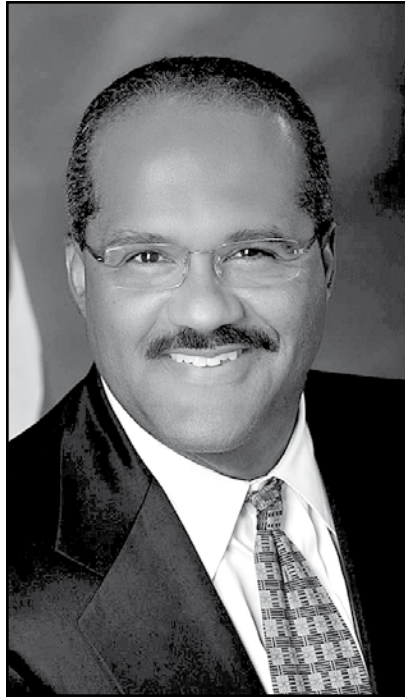
Why the Poor Pay More

Recently, Carter sent a letter to Governor John Bel Edwards regarding the special session. In

short, he and his Democratic colleagues are arguing against extending a temporary one-cent sales tax increase and feels there are other ways to balance the state budget.

"There has been some rumbling that some primarily THE Republicans to balance the 1-billion-dollar shortfall that they would fight to extend to fight the temporary 1 cent sales tax and make it permanent," says Carter. "This would raise 980 million dollars, but I want to be abundantly clear to the governor that we were not going to support this measure; when we enacted this tax, we said it would be temporary, and we are not going to allow balancing the budget of the on the backs of poor and working-class people of Louisiana."

In Louisiana, the poor, working and middle-classes pay sales taxes on mostly every item they



Louisiana Democratic Senate Caucus Leader Troy Carter

purchase. While there are exemptions for items rarely purchased by everyday people of the state according to Carter.

"A person that collects antique airplanes they don't pay sales tax on that item. The last time I checked many people I know cannot afford to buy antique airplanes or to collect gold bullion which is not taxable. You tell me a person can buy these types of things and not pay taxes, but working-class families have to pay taxes on a loaf of bread and everything else they purchase. Let's be fair when it comes to taxes that everyone pays their fair share across the board."

To Serve the People or Special Interest

In politics, it is often the disconnect between the people, who often times feel powerless and special interest through contributing money and hiring lobbyist that their agenda is often first priority and not those of the average citizen. This is something Carter and the Senate Democratic Caucus are trying to change.

"Big business has their lobby oil and gas have their lobby, but we are taking the position that we are the lobbyist for the working-class people of Louisiana. The people have been abused by government and they feel they don't have a voice. We are saying yes you have a voice and we will fight for legislation that benefits the majority of the people of the state many of which who are struggling to make ends meet or maintain what they have."

Solutions May Lie in Bi-Partisanship and Amending the State Constitution

Many times, when there are budget shortfalls there are cuts in healthcare and education. This is the case because 75% of the budget is constitutionally protected. Senator Carter is proposing changes to the State Constitution that hasn't been amended since 1974 to address making cuts to other areas that can balance the budget and spread the responsibility of taxation to more people of the state.

As is the case in much of America, the State of Louisiana is experiencing a partisan divide that is preventing legislators from working on bi-partisan solutions to the problems that face

the people of the state.

"Having served in elected offices for as long as I have served, it was never as divided along party lines as it is now. We have never had these kinds of problems before. I don't know if it's the boldness that Trump may have made people feel or the issues of what's going on nationally. But there's been a sense of division I've never seen. This is strange because day to day we walk around and talk to each other, but when it comes to these policy issues we are divided. I often question why are some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are oftentimes working against the best interest of their constituents because they are tied up to a partisan position to get someone out of office and take the ship down with them is a real problem that we can put politics and political party agendas before people."

Legislation and the Human Impact

But Carter says his Democratic Senate colleagues and the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus are willing to work with Republicans on solutions for all the people of the state. Quoting from his letter to the governor he spoke of their support for Republican Senator Act 402 by Jack Donahue that received unanimous votes for a standstill budget. Carter says now the Republicans are backing away as if they are unwilling to honor this commitment.

"We have continued to extend our hand, that unfortunately as of late it seems my Republican colleagues in the State Legislature are following the misguided direction of Washington and the partisan divide and we are missing the boat working together for the people of Louisiana."

He says that bi-partisanship and a sense of thinking about the human impact of legislation are key in coming up with solutions to the problems that plague cities across the state.

"I am a proud member of the Democratic Party, but I understand alone that we cannot by ourselves get things done and we must work harder together across party lines because what we do here in Baton Rouge does impact people in a real way and this is something we cannot forget when we are making public policy."

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Activist David Banner Calls On Young People to Engage the Black Community.

By Precious Smith
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Today's generation of Black millennials should give their smartphones a break and become more involved in the community. Hip-hop Activist David Banner shared this and other insights when he spoke at a Black History Month event at Xavier University, on Feb. 28, 2018.

"As both an Activist and a Millionaire, I can really do whatever I want to do. But I use that power to seek, encourage and inform people who want to be something besides what they see on television," Banner said.

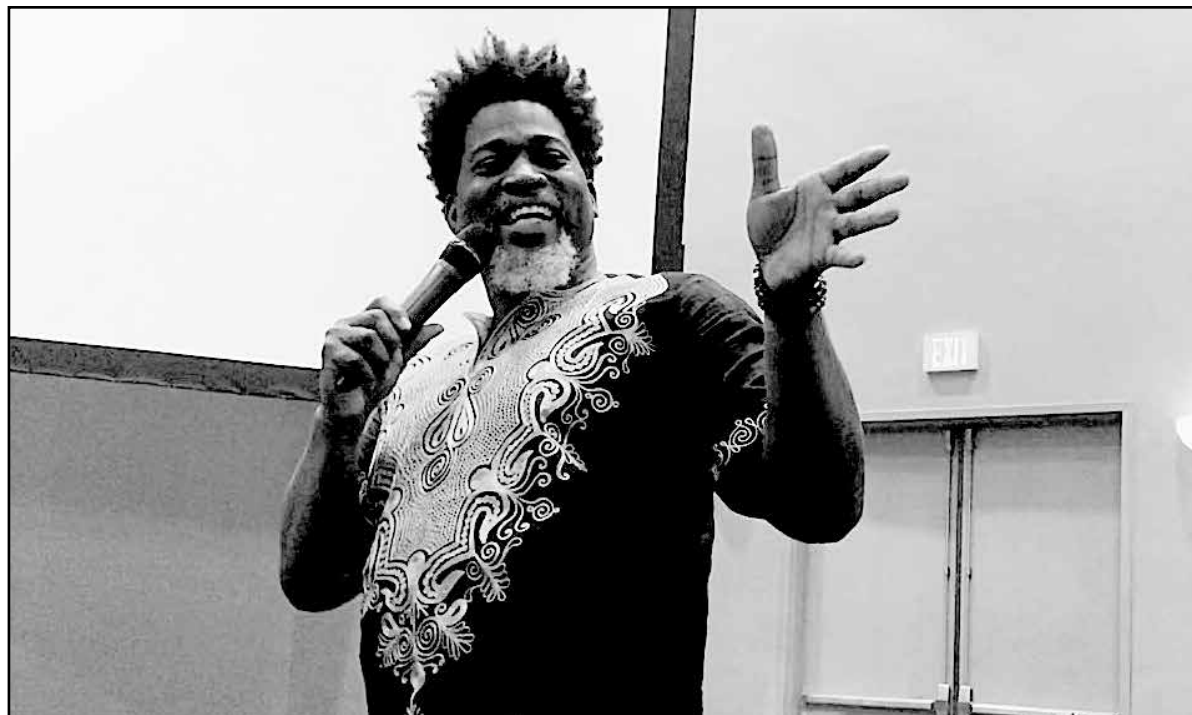
Banner said he strives to not only serve as a positive representation of a strong, Black male for communities around the country but also his hometown community back in Jackson, Miss.

"I am very proud of him. I just don't picture him the way the world does," said Loyce Alexander, Banner's cousin from Jackson, Miss., who attended the event in New Orleans. She said that she sees him as the cousin she's always looked up to. Banner's intellectual and leadership skills first began as a student at one of Louisiana's top HBCUs.

"From serving as the [student government] President for Southern University during his time as a student to traveling around the world as an African American Activist, he's made me beyond proud," Alexander said.

Banner's career as a Rapper and Record Producer has allowed him to work with Chris Brown, Yung Joc, and Lil Wayne. He has appeared in the 2006 "Black Snake Moan" film starring Christina Ricci and Samuel L. Jackson while also serving as Executive Producer of an Adult Swim show titled "That Crook'd 'Sipp." Banner's desire to open the eyes and ears of today's generation of young people has become a cornerstone for his public life. Traveling the world with his thought-provoking "The God Box Lecture Series," Banner has emphasized crucial topics ranging from the social injustices Black people face to examining education today.

One topic that Banner discussed at the event was the lack of support within the African American community. He stated that the Black community lacks a genuine appreciation and



David Banner spoke to Xavier students and New Orleans residents on Feb. 28, 2018, for Black History Month. (Photos by Precious Smith)

acceptance of one another.

"There is far too much colorism within our community," Banner said. He pointed out that today's generation of young Black women continues to single out this distinguishing factor between one another. "Our melanin is the same, no one sister is superior over the other," Banner said.

Banner's experiences about growing up Black in the American South encourages many African Americans to maximize their role within their community. As a child he said sometimes he questioned his fathers' love for him. His father did not show emotions the way he would have liked. One day Banner came home from school ecstatic to show his father that he had finally made all A's and thought his father would be proud. After seeing the grade report, Banner recalled his father telling him: "These are the type of grades you are supposed to receive." His father then handed the grade report back to Banner. He said his father later explained that success can never be solely based on pleasing and making others proud.

The success and accomplishments of Banner stem from the self-motivating man his father sculpted him into. He used that self-motivation as a driving force for his career and activism. Once Banner did that, he realized that no one would ever be able to take his pride away from him, even if that meant working twice as hard as a White male to

achieve success. Banner now realizes that his father's way of showing him love was through tough love. He expected Banner to want to make good grades for the sake of himself and his future success as a Black male battling all the odds pushed against him.

"I have a deep appreciation for my father because he didn't strive to be my friend growing up...he strived to be a great father figure," Banner said.

Students who attended the event said Banner set an example to them about how to use their fame to help the community.

"I admire how knowledgeable David Banner is about the misconceptions within the Black community and also how willing he is to share such pivotal information with us millennials," said Chynna Dubuclet, a Xavier student.

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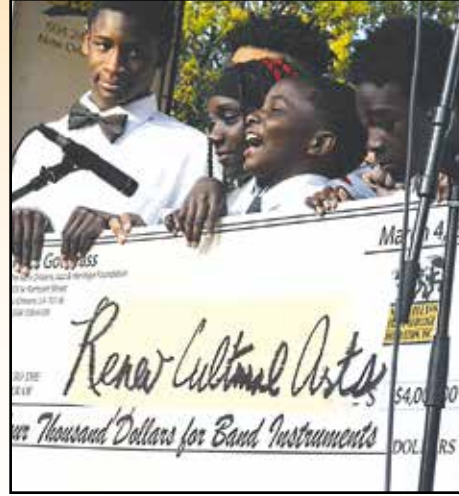


CULTURE TRICENTENNIAL

7th Annual Class Got Brass

**Story and Photos
by Kichea S. Burt
Data News Weekly
Contributor**

In its 7th year, Class Got Brass is a program of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation to support music education in the schools while promoting the traditional music of New Orleans. It is open to middle schools and high schools in Louisiana to address two core issues: 1) lack of funds for music education in the schools, and; 2) a lack of emphasis on traditional New Orleans music in the many school band programs that are doing great work despite tremendous obstacles. This year there were a total of 20 schools from as far away as Baton Rouge competing in either the beginner or advanced categories. Every school competing receives a minimum of about \$750 for band instruments. The top prizes range from \$3,000 to \$10,000. Overall about \$40,000 is awarded.



Competing schools Included:

Beginners:
 Renew Cultural Arts Academy Middle School, New Orleans Band Director Brandon Kelley
 Democracy Prep K-7, Baton Rouge Band Director: Karron Brown
 L W Higgins High School, Marrero Band Director Justin Rush
 Lincoln Elementary School For The Arts, Marrero Band Director Carlyn Glenn
 Marrero Middle School, Marrero Band Director Jeremy Williams
 Mildred Osborne Elementary, New Orleans Band Director Thomas Grant
 Park Forest Middle, Baton Rouge Band Director Doretha Williams
 Riverdale High School, New Orleans Band Director Desmond Venable
 St. Katherine Drexel Preparatory High School, New Orleans Band Director Lester Singleton
 Harry S Truman Middle School, Marrero Band Director Joe Franklin
 Young Audiences K-7 Charter, Gretna Band Director Matt Bruzzi

Advanced:
 Edna Karr High School, New Orleans Band Director Chris Herrero
 George Washington Carver High School, New Orleans Band Director Jeffery Herbert
 KIPP Morial Middle School (formerly KIPP McDonogh 15), New Orleans Band Director Kelvin Harrison, Sr
 Landry-Walker High School, New Orleans Band Director Wilbert Rawlins
 McKinley Senior High School, Baton Rouge Band Director Frank Williams

And the winners in the beginners are:
 1st Place Park Forest Middle School of Baton Rouge, LA \$5,000
 2nd Place Renew Cultural Academy of New Orleans, LA \$4,000
 3rd Place Young Audience Charter of Gretna, LA \$3,000

Winners in advanced are:
 1st Place Landry Walker High School of New Orleans, LA \$10,000
 2nd Place KIPP Morial Middle School of New Orleans \$7,000
 3rd Place Edna Karr High School of New Orleans, LA \$5,000

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Tuesday, March 20th	Thursday, March 22nd
Monday, March 26th	
Tuesday, April 3rd	Thursday, April 5th
Monday, April 9th	Friday, April 13th

To reserve a seat for the 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. session on one of the dates below, contact Lisa Griffin at (504) 407-0042 or lgriffin@orleanscdc.com.

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

New Orleans on Display at the 11th Annual Congo Square Fest

Photos by
Kichea S. Burt
Data News Weekly
Contributor

New Orleanians played host to visitors from near and far as they came to enjoy the 11th Annual Congo Square Rhythms Festival on March 3rd and 4th. Event presenters, The Jazz and Heritage Festival Foundation organized the festival in Armstrong Park. and the food, music, and festivities didn't disappoint. Of course, like always, Data was there!!!



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Data News Weekly Encourages Everyone to Get Out and Vote



By Edwin Buggage
Editor, Data News Weekly

The citizens of New Orleans will again be going to the polls on March 24, 2018, the primary for a special election with runoff elections if necessary on April 28th. Three seats are on the ballot: Louisiana 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, Civil District Court and State House District 93, that includes the French Quarter, parts of Tremé, the 7th Ward, Mid City, Central City and the Garden District.



Dale Atkins

Robin Pittman

Ellen Hazeur

Taetrece Harrison

Richard Perque

Eldon Anderson

Kenny Bordes

Royce Duplessis

Danil Faust

Early voting begins March 10th-17th; we have listed below a sample of what's on the ballot in the races in Orleans Parish.

As Data News Weekly continues on its over a half-century mission of being "The People's Paper" we encourage you to get out and vote and have a hand in the shaping of New Orleans and let your voices be heard.

Early Important Dates for March 24th Election

- Feb. 21, 2018: Last day to register to vote in person & by mail
- March 3, 2018: Last day to register to vote (online)

March 10-17, 2018: Early voting, 8:30am-6pm

Voters who need help finding their polling location can call (504) 658-8300 or use the Louisiana Voter Portal.

Important Dates for April 28th Election

- March 28, 2018: Last day to register to vote in person & by mail
- April 7, 2018: Last day to register to vote (online)
- April 14-21, 2018: Early voting, 8:30am-6pm

Early Voting Sites

City Hall

1300 Perdido Street, Room 1W24
New Orleans, LA 70112

Algiers Courthouse

225 Morgan Street, Room 105
New Orleans, LA 70114

Chef Menteur Voting Machine Warehouse Site

8870 Chef Menteur Highway
New Orleans, LA 70126

Lake Vista Community Center

6500 Spanish Fort Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124

The races in Orleans Parish are as follows:

Louisiana Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal

Dale Atkins
Robin Pittman

Judge Civil District Court

Ellen Hazeur
Taetrece Harrison
Richard Perque

State House District 93

Eldon Anderson
Kenny Bordes
Royce Duplessis
Danil Faust

The Student Loan Debt Crisis is a Civil Rights Issue



Wade Henderson
Founding Board Member,
Center for Responsible Lending

From attacks on voting rights to police killings of unarmed civilians and growing inequities in earnings and wealth, the civil rights gains of the past six decades are facing threat after threat. But one front in the fight for full equality—meaningful access to higher education—is particularly urgent. With 65 percent of jobs soon requiring more than a high school diploma, the need is greater than ever, especially for African Americans and other communities of color.

More than 50 years ago, Congress passed the Higher Education Act (HEA), intending to open the doors to higher education by providing students with financial assistance and low-interest loans.

Conventional wisdom has traditionally held two things: 1) Higher education is the great equalizer; 2) It is okay to take out debt for the tickets to upward mobility: a college education and a home mortgage. These life decisions—and the struggles and sacrifices that made them possible—helped to build and grow the Black middle class.

Now, aspirations for advancement are colliding with the discriminatory legacy of the financial crisis. Our country's student loan bill has skyrocketed. Student debt is now the second-largest source of household debt after housing. Forty-four million Americans have \$1.4 trillion in student loan debt. One reason: Since the 1990s, the average tuition and fees at our universities have jumped an average of 157-237 percent depending on the type of institution.

As with the Great Recession, people of color, poor people, and predatory institutions are at the center of this socioeconomic catastrophe. They must also be at the center of the solutions.

We must face up to the fact that students of color are more likely

to borrow for their education and, unfortunately, to default on these loans. Even Black college graduates default on their loans at almost four times the rate of their White counterparts and are more likely to default than even White dropouts.

This increased risk of defaulting on student loans is the direct result of inequities in financial resources, as well as discrimination in hiring, salaries and, all too often, social capital. In 2013, the median White family had 13 times more wealth than the median Black family and 10 times more wealth than the median Latino family. African American students tend to take out more debt than their White counterparts, and both Blacks and Latinos are more likely to default than Whites. Since Blacks with bachelor's degrees earn only 79 percent and Latinos only 83 percent of what their White counterparts earn, African American and Hispanic students have a harder time repaying their loans.

Further contributing to the crisis, Blacks and Latinos comprise 41 percent of the students at the high-cost, low-quality, for-profit colleges. These institutions frequently fail

to prepare students for high-salary jobs, instead saddling them with exorbitant debts that they can't repay.

How then can we address these challenges? Education Secretary Betsy DeVos wants to ease regulations on the loan servicers and for-profit colleges that have gotten us into this mess. U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) of the House Education and Workforce Committee would take this effort even further. Her proposal for reauthorizing the HEA, the "PROSPER Act," would ensure that students will have to borrow more to get a postsecondary education with the very real likelihood that they will never pay off the debt. This would all but guarantee that predatory, for-profit programs would continue to rise exponentially right alongside our national student debt bill. Efforts to make student aid more costly for students rather than hold institutions accountable for what they do with the aid reflects either a catastrophic misunderstanding of the root causes of this issue or something more disturbing: the blatant effort to recreate the system we had before the HEA was enacted. In

this system, traditional college was by and large only accessible to the wealthy, who were usually White.

Fixing our broken student debt system should not mean un-doing years of progress since the HEA or saddling marginalized groups with a lifetime of debt. Instead, we need to hold student loan servicers, debt collectors, and institutions of all kinds accountable for their practices. African Americans, Latinos and low-income students from all backgrounds need more income-based grants, loans, financial assistance, and admissions policies that tear down barriers of color, culture, and class, not support them.

Helping college graduates to repay their loans isn't the only challenge. The challenge is enabling and empowering all our young people to make their fullest contribution to our country. This is, in the last analysis, a debt that all Americans owe to ourselves and our nation's future.

Wade Henderson is a Founding Board Member of the Center for Responsible Lending. You can follow Wade on Twitter @Wade4Justice.

Sista Strut Heightens Breast Cancer Awareness

By Amyre Brandom-Skinner
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Black women came out in solidarity for a walk to heighten Breast Cancer Awareness in the African American community. Women and families from the top of the bayou to the bottom traveled to New Orleans' Woldenberg Riverfront Park to increase solidarity among breast cancer survivors and loved ones who aim to help fight breast cancer. It was the Third Annual Cracker Barrel Sista Strut on Saturday, March 3rd near the French Quarter. The 3k walk proceeded around the 1.86-mile stretch starting and ending at Canal Street.

This walk also takes place in Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Memphis, and several other states. With the help of iHeartRadio and Cracker Barrel in each City, the fight against breast cancer has not stopped. The first Sista Strut in New Orleans took place in Spring 2016. Sista Strut is an attempt to spotlight the fight of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer, and the commitment of their support team of loved ones. The event's mission is to enhance awareness, educate families, and encourage a search for a cure.

"Oh, my goodness, it has grown so much! We started at a different place and moved here [Wolden-



Participants in the 2018 Cracker Barrel Sista Strut warm up for the 3-k walk on Saturday, March 3rd. (Photos by Amyre Brandom-Skinner)

berg Riverfront Park] because we needed a larger event space," said Jennifer Luquette, an iHeartRadio General Sales Manager. "We decided to bring it to New Orleans because we have so many people in the City that have breast cancer, have had it, or knows someone that has cancer. We knew that we had to get behind it."

Several Mardi Gras Krewe Organizations came out to participate in this event. Each year a trophy is given out to the team that can register the most participants. The

Krewe of Athena and Femme Fatale were very close to coming in for a tie. But the Krewe of Athena edged out Femme Fatale to come in first place, this year. The team won a sign with their team name on it, a trophy, and a lot of bragging rights until the next Sista Strut.

Carol Myre and her two friends from New Orleans are cancer sur-

vivors who have walked in the New Orleans' Sista Strut for the past three years. This year, the three women along with their friends and family participated with a team of 10 participants.

"I have been cancer free for eight years, praise God," Myre said. "I had breast cancer and found it when I was 43 years old, so I encourage a lot of young women to get a mammogram no matter how much they say it hurts. Just go and get it done because that is how I found mine."

Friends of Myre, Wendy Willis, and Willeen Gatlin, share her fight to raise awareness because of their personal cancer stories. "I have been a cervical cancer survivor for 12 years, since Hurricane Katrina," Willis said. "I've been free for 10 years," Gatlin said.

Before the walk began, participants enjoyed several entertainment acts. All participants learned a Pink Glove Dance during the opening ceremony of the walk. This dance is performed by survivors and their loved ones in solidarity to emphasize that they have fought cancer and beat it. Strutters, as the participants were called, made their way around the park to vendors for

raffles, free souvenirs, pictures, and more. There was a warm up with Q93.3's Uptown Angela and Miss Black United States Ambassador LeighAnna Kingvalsky. The Voice contestant, Tonya Boyd Cannon took the stage to perform Whitney Houston's "I'm Every Woman" and motivate the participants before the walkers lined up at the starting line.

"I was walking in the French Quarter and heard the walk going on, so I knew that I had to check it out in person," said Lucrecia Reddit, a Slidell resident. "I'm happy I had \$25 on me to register as an individual."

Reddit said that what surprised her is that she didn't feel alone. "When I got here because my fellow sistas welcomed me with open arms: we talked, we danced, we walked, and exchanged numbers," Reddit said.

Sista Strut did not limit involvement to just women as men, children, and pets were on registered teams and actively supporting the women in their lives. "It is the least I can do. She fought and beat cancer for me, now I will walk to raise awareness for her," said Darrell Kennedy, the son of a cancer survivor.





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Project Revisits 19th Century Freed People's Activism through Colored Conventions.

By Jared Braud
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Colored Conventions began in 1830 and were held by free, once captive, Black people who came together to organize Civil Rights activities. This is why students and residents came to Tulane University to learn more about this forgotten piece in Black History. The Colored Conventions Project held a public workshop and talks in New Orleans, led by co-founder, Gabrielle Foreman, a Professor of English at the University of Delaware on Feb. 27, 2018.

Louisiana was an obvious stop for The Colored Conventions Project, Foreman said because there were seven Louisiana conventions that are known to have been held here. The project's staff are hoping to track down surviving records of these organizing efforts for Black Voting Rights and Black Civil Rights in Louisiana. New Orleans is the site of the first Colored Convention before the Civil War ended in 1865.

"Rich men and poor men are sitting together, freed," Foreman said about how these conventions

brought all walks of life together in support of one goal to improve the future of Black people. "The opulent tradesmen and the humble mechanic are sitting as equals in a parliamentary procedure in order to advance Black Rights. It is inspirational and important history covered by the New Orleans Tribune, which is one of the most important African American newspapers in the South," Foreman said.

Foreman's workshop and the talks were organized by Kate Adams, an Associate Professor of English and Women's Literature at Tulane, who wanted to include the City in this national project.

"It's important for those of our culture and other races as well to understand the long history of Civil Rights organizing and the way in which Black communities in the 19th Century advocated for Civil Rights, voting rights, labor rights, and equal pay for equal work," Foreman said.

Churches are where Colored Conventions were mostly held, said Denise Burgher, the Committee Chair and Project Leader of the Colored Conventions Project. "Most of the Colored Conventions were held in 'autonomous Black spaces'



(Left to right) Professor Kate Adams, Denise Burgher, Professor Gabrielle Foreman, and Denise Frazier gather the community to discuss the Colored Conventions Project, with its speaker, Professor Gabrielle Foreman. This event was held in Rogers Memorial Chapel at Tulane on Tuesday Feb. 27, 2018. (Photos by Jared Braud)

which would be any church, sanctuary, lodge, and independent Black schools because it was the 19th Century," Burgher said.

The community was not safe, nor was it even socially or legally allowed for African Americans to gather in other areas. Burgher said her whole role is to get in contact

with people that are interested in learning about what these Colored Conventions were and to make presentations to start conversations with different community groups who may be interested in collaborating with the Colored Conventions Project.

Since the project's goal is to re-

cover these historical documents, the team tries to work directly with the community. In the workshop held on Feb. 26, 2018, residents spent time looking at exhibits on the project's site.

"I invited public school teachers and other visitors to the workshop who are trying to do online public education projects," Adams said. "Everyone was thinking about Black History and Black recovery as well as digitization. We reviewed the documents from the Colored Convention of 1865 that was held in New Orleans," she said.

Some attendees said they wanted to know if ordinary citizens could support this type of historical work. Nile Pierre, a freshman at Tulane, said for people who were not accustomed to digital historical projects can join workshops in the African American community to become familiarized with the importance of discovery and preservation.

"I didn't realize how vital Black women were in the Civil Rights Movement. No one hears about Colored Conventions in school. This was a great opportunity for me as a Black woman to feel empowered by learning about this salvaged history," Pierre said.

"Champion" Performance Puts Boxer Emile Griffith's Story on Stage

By Victoria Clark
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Very rarely do stories of a Black, gay man who became a middleweight champion in boxing get their day in the spotlight. The story of Emile Griffith is described by most as unusual, but people in New Orleans get a chance to see the story on stage as an operatic piece of art. "Champion" the story of Emile Griffith, will be performed at the Mahalia Jackson Theater for Performing Arts on 1419 Basin Street. The first performance is March 9, 2018, at 8:00 p.m. The last performance is March 11, 2018, at 2:30 p.m.

A panel discussion based on the Emile Griffith Story took place on March 1, 2018, at Xavier University. In the 1960s, Griffith was discrimi-

nated against because he was an openly bisexual man. One person in particular that would make fun of Griffith was Benny Paret. Paret was a middleweight boxer who fought Griffith many times.

Kimberly Chandler, an Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Xavier who organized the event said the public perceived Griffith and Paret as two Black entertainers in America.

"One thing that really stuck out to me is the way in which these two fighters were exotified. What we know about Black, brown, men of color, we exotify them, so we can objectify them and use them for our own entertainment," Chandler said.

During the second fight of Paret and Griffith in 1961, Paret called Griffith a derogatory term in Spanish for gay men. Anthony P. McGlaun, who plays Paret in "Cham-



Opera Singer Anthony P. McGlaun, who plays boxer Benny Paret, explains the composition behind the operatic performance "Champion" on March 1, 2018. (Photos by Victoria Clark)

pion" talked about how Griffith's Story stood out at the time for a man to be brave enough to be openly bisexual in the society that Griffith was living in.

"The interesting thing about the

opera as a whole... you think in 1961, in 1962, this man (Griffith) could not be out," McGlaun said.

Sexuality has always been a hard topic not only for people of color but for America as a whole, the panelists

said. People are not accepting when it comes to sexuality, said Santrell Perdue, a Xavier music major who attended the discussion. "Usually people have a hard time accepting what they aren't. People who don't understand others wants and needs tend to attack them and put them in a small box," Perdue said.

The last fight between Griffith and Paret was March 24, 1962. Paret called Griffith a derogatory term at the weigh-in, again. This upset Griffith, but he decided to channel his anger in the boxing ring. Griffith was told during the timeout of the fight by his trainer to keep punching until Paret held him or until the referee stopped him. That day in 1962, Paret was beaten unconscious. Ten short days later, Paret was announced dead. Relat-

Champion, Continued
on page 11.

Bill Cosby to Change Strategy in Upcoming Sexual Assault Trial

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Special
Correspondent

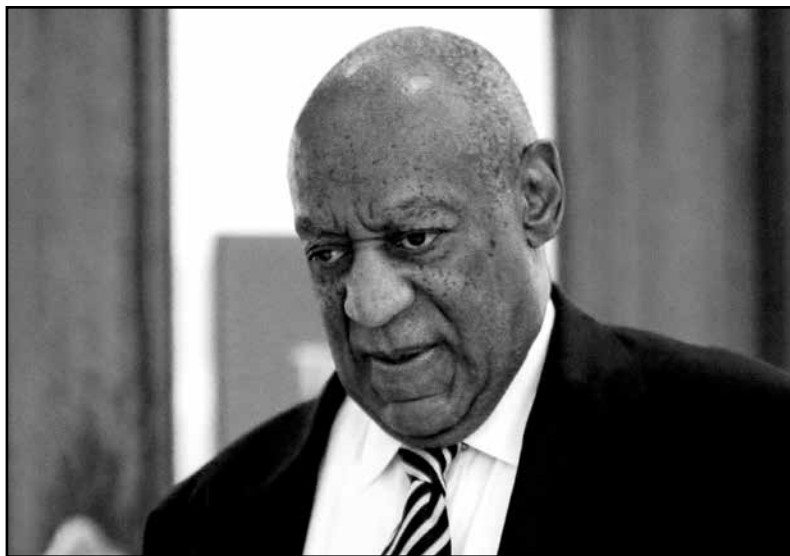
Bill Cosby is taking a no-holds-barred approach in his sexual assault case in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

The embattled comedian is set to ask Judge Steven O'Neill permission to unseal his decades-old civil settlement and payout to accuser Andrea Constand.

O'Neill is expected to rule on that and other pertinent matters during two days of hearings scheduled for Monday, March 5 and Tuesday, March 6 in the Montgomery County Courthouse.

Jury selection is scheduled to begin Thursday, March 29 while the trial is on the calendar for Monday, April 2.

"[Cosby] submits that evidence of the civil settlement and of the underlying civil litigation with Constand may be admissible," Cosby's lawyers wrote in court filings ahead of the hearings. "Among other things, admissibility is warranted for an impeachment of Constand, in showing her financial motive to lie about the allegations she made



On March 5th, hearings begin for Bill Cosby's sexual assault trial. (POOL Photo)

against Cosby, or for any other purpose...including as may be warranted by the testimony of Constand or otherwise."

O'Neill declared a mistrial last summer in the original trial after jurors failed to reach a unanimous verdict. During that trial, the sealed civil settlement between Cosby and Constand was kept from jurors.

Constand claimed during a January 2004 visit to Cosby's Philadelphia area home, that he drugged

and sexually assaulted her. She testified that she went to the TV star's home for advice.

When she told Cosby she had trouble sleeping and had a big decision to make, the comedian offered her what he described as a Benadryl tablet.

"These are what I use to help me to relax," he told Constand, according to a deposition read in court.

Constand claimed the pills may have been Quaaludes and caused

her to pass out.

She claimed Cosby forcibly groped her and, the next morning, he made her tea and gave her a muffin before seeing her out the door.

While Cosby has admitted to having an extra-marital affair with Constand, he has maintained that he never gave her Quaaludes and he never assaulted her.

Allowing the civil settlement, which was reached in 2006 after then-District Attorney Bruce Castor told Constand that there wasn't evidence to proceed with a criminal case, promises to provide even more insight into Cosby's relationship with Constand, a former Temple University employee.

It also offers a stark contrast to Cosby's strategy, a year ago, when his defense successfully argued that jurors should not hear about the civil suit or the settlement, because "the value of the information is outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice."

Cosby's spokesman Andrew Wyatt wasn't immediately available for comment.

A message left for District Attorney Kevin Steele also went unreturned.

Champion, Continued from page 10.

ing Griffith's Story to "Champion," McGlaun explained that the opera changes some parts of the Griffith Story.

"In real life they never allow Emile to see Benny in the hospital, so in Emile's mind you could possibly see what was happening (in the opera)," McGlaun said.

Paret had two children at the time of his death. Chandler acknowledged that both children would grow up without a father. Between the war on drugs and mass incarceration of people of color, this has been a problem for people of color since the 1960s.

"That is the collateral damage. When all the people at the ring are gone, his (Paret) family is left with that. All I could hear was we got some money to make off of you (Griffith)," Chandler said.

The Emile Griffith Story speaks

on not only how men of color were perceived in America, but it also speaks on how homosexual men are perceived. Panelists say that we live in a better time where the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transsexual-Queer (LGBTQ) Community is accepted more. Aaron Ambeau, who identifies as a gay man, and a chorus singer in "Champion" said he believes times are changing.

"To see this cultural shift from when I was a child, children are in a much better place," Ambeau said.

Wilfred Delphin, an artist-in-residence at Xavier and Brian Arreola, who plays Louis Rodrigo Griffith in "Champion" believe that the work will challenge people.

"Champion is a unique piece," Delphin said.

"There's not a single person that's seen it that wasn't just emotionally destroyed," Arreola said. Tickets are available at Neworleansopera.org/champion/

Cover Story/ Continued from page 3.

feathers to donate to active Tribes so that they can continue to mask regardless of economic constraints. Headlining the Feather Fundraiser is Cyril Neville with performances by Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. & The Wild Magnolias and 79ers Gang featuring Big Chief Jigga & Big Chief Romeo. International Recording Artist Yahzarah St. James coming off tour with Lenny Kravitz will bring the spirit of the Queens to the stage.

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Mr. Carter's journey to veganism, he connected with his indigenous roots and its intimately bonded culinary culture. Mr. Carter will speak on the indigenous foods that were eaten by the early aboriginal civilizations of Louisiana and how those diets correlate to a plant-based diet.

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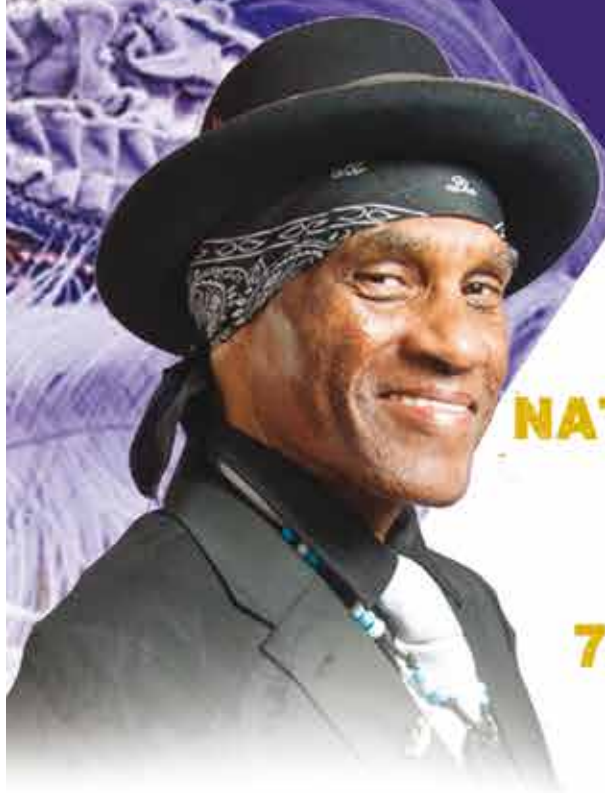
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