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**Downtown Super  
Sunday Highlights**

**Data Zone  
Page 6**

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# Anthony Bean Community Theater



## A Camp Where Stars are Born

*The Soul of New Orleans*

Page 2



**Newsmaker**  
**Four Mayor's  
Gather for  
Tricentennial**

Page 5

**Data Zone**  
**Freret Street  
Festival Fun**



Page 7



# Anthony Bean Community Theater

## *A Camp Where Stars Are Born*



The ABCT theater camp is an exciting 9-Week Developmental Theater Arts Program for children ages 7-17, under the Direction of the award-winning, highly acclaimed Actor, Director, & Playwright, Anthony Bean.

By: Edwin Buggage  
Data News Weekly Editor

### ABCT Summer Camp Inspires Greatness in Young People

Summer is swiftly approaching, and registration has begun for the Anthony Bean Community Theater

- ABCT Performing Arts Summer Camp. The ABCT Summer Program is more than a Camp...It's Culture! The theater camp is an exciting 9-Week Developmental Theater Arts Program for children ages 7-17, under the tutelage of the award-winning, highly acclaimed Actor, Director, & Playwright, Anthony Bean.

"One of things I enjoy most is working with children training them as actors are seeing them grow and de-

velop," says Bean. "Some even make it a career goal, I am proud when I see many of my former students that includes renowned actors such as Wendell Pierce and Gary Anthony Sturgis doing well and knowing that I was one of the bricks that set the foundation for them reaching their full potential."

The ABCT Summer Performance Arts Camp provides a sense of community and promotes self-aware-

Cover Story, Continued on page 4.

INSIDE DATA	
Cover Story . . . . .	2
Newsmaker . . . . .	5
Data Zone . . . . .	6
Commentary. . . . .	8
State & Local News . .	9
National News . . . .	11

### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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## Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

ness and personal development. The students are immersed in a theatrical experience that not only educates them about the arts but fosters cultural awareness, team work, and respect for one another. Additionally, it helps them understand how to use their emotions to create roles and learn about themselves. The program is all encompassing as it relates to theater arts, which includes acting, playwriting, rehearsal & production, performance, costuming, lighting and set building.

### Celebrating and Examining Community through the Arts

Beaming with pride of the success of his camp over the years Bean remarks, "I have been doing it for at least 45 years. The camp focuses on representation, self-pride, identity, communication skills all those things but most of all self-worth. All of those things fit into acting lessons."

Bean feels that it is important that African-Americans control the narrative when telling stories about their community. This has been something that is key to his work over the years as he's presented many stories onstage over the years that's explored many topics but told through an African-American lens. "Seeing yourself on stage and telling your own story is important especially today. For too long it's been told by other races and oftentimes it is distorted and plays to stereotypes and is a misrepresentation of who we are as a people," Bean says passionately. "I think it's very important for a Black child or a Black person in general to look at themselves onstage or on television and say yes that is my story. We do exist, and I am important."

The ABCT Performing Arts Summer Camp experience always culminates with a much-awaited production, showcasing the phenomenal ABCT kids. This year's end of the summer production will be the Tony-nominated and OBIE Award-Winning hit musical play, "The Me Nobody Knows". This production is highly celebrated, touching audiences throughout the world for generations. Within the span of a single day, the show poetically examines the aspirations and fears of a multi-racial cast of young people. Inspired by actual writings of students in the New York City Public Schools, the stories are universal, and can be shared by and with all races. The powerful and contemporary score carries and propels each individual journey. The size of the cast may vary according to the needs of each production.

Many of the young people who participate are with the camp for



The ABCT Performing Arts Summer Camp experience always culminates with a much-awaited production, showcasing the phenomenal ABCT kids. Last year's end of the summer production was the Tony Award Winning hit musical play Andrew Lloyd Webber's "CATS"



Pictured above surrounded by ABCT Summer students, Anthony Bean says "I have been blessed that the Black parents have always given me their children. I have always had at least 100 children in my summer program, they trust and believe in what I am doing"

many years and become stock players in his ensemble. Nyja White is a junior at McDonough 35 who has been part of ABCT since she was seven years old and has benefited from her experiences at ABCT. "ABCT has helped me with my communication skills, confidence and expanded my love of theater and because of ABCT I want to study theater in college."

### Empowering, Protecting and Respecting our Cultural Institutions

This year's camp will be taking place at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO), Bean feels this is a good fit where in addition to being exposed to theater the students

stitution. Whether it is a university or a church, we need those kinds of alliances if we are to prosper as a people."

### Art with A Purpose and the Rebuilding of a Human

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we have seen the City go through changes with some opinioned range of viewpoints; some for the better, worse or is it somewhere in between? New Orleans is a City that is a cultural jewel that's celebrating 300 years in 2018. Its heritage is that of living, breathing ever evolving culture. What Bean has done throughout his years in theater is tell our stories, who we are what we were, what we are and where we are going. He believes his and other Black owned and controlled institutions are important in telling our story?

Speaking about the importance of art and artists telling the story of a civilization Bean says, "I don't remember exactly what empire it was that was destroyed, but the king did not call on the architects he said send in the poets, send in the artists I want to see the writers we need to give the people hope."

Bean feels the creative arts are a way that Blacks have historically, made their cases and articulated their inclusion as part of the human family. "In the 60's we had Curtis Mayfield, we had James Brown we had it in music for ages. We had the Black Arts Movement in the 60's and 70's with Sonia Sanchez saying that we should love and understand each other. This is important we say these things through our art because we have been stripped of who we are. We have been stripped as a human being. In our history we had to rebuild a human being. We had to reconstruct what it meant to be human, because when this country first started we were looked at as 3/5ths a person. Even though we were out of slavery; laws, customs

and practices kept us as second-class citizens. We have become free, but many of the remnants of this still exist in our community. This is why is it important for ABCT, and any Black-Owned Enterprise must support each other so we can control and to tell our stories and give ourselves a spiritual lift. We must do this to also let the world know that we are human beings and that we deserve to be respected and protected as human beings."

### ABCT Building for the Future

Anthony Bean Theater has done amazing productions in its former uptown location, but today Bean is focused on securing the financing for a planned multi-purpose facility dedicated to the arts.

"We have the plans drawn up for the building that is the old St. Raymond Church and school on Paris Avenue that will house a recording studio, a dance studio, a media newsroom and of course a theater where we will be training kids. It is also important to note that this will be it Black owned," remarks Bean. Continuing he says, "We need to teach them the true techniques of acting but from our perspective. We can teach them to assimilate, but how to be your true self, how we walk, and talk, we have a whole new magic to bring forth and the world would love us for it. Because we already teach the world to sing and dance and we can continue that with acting if we understand who we are as a people and our stories have value that all people can relate to."

Over the years ABCT Productions and his camps continue to be successful by all measures. Bean is thankful for all the support he's gotten and says he will continue in his mission to inspire the community through the arts.

"I have been blessed that the Black parents have always given me their children. I have always had at least 100 children in my summer program, they trust and believe in what I am doing. Financially that is another story and I know a lot of us do not have the money, but for those who do can help sustain what I am trying to do we would love for your support. Because there's nothing like telling a Black child this was designed with you in mind, and really mean it. It is a beautiful thing to tell them I did it all for you."

The ABCT Performing Arts Summer Camp begins Monday, June 4 - Friday, August 5, 2018 for kids aged 7-17. No prior experience is needed. Camp hours are Monday - Friday: 8:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. Breakfast and lunch are provided daily, on site. Register now! \*For registration, please call 504-862-PLAY today\*



# Tricentennial Event Brings Four New Orleans Mayors Together

By Jade Myers  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

It's not often that you get four New Orleans mayors together in one sitting. But on April 5th, may-

elected feels great, but that it also comes with great responsibility. Cantrell said that she knows there is much work that needs to be done, and that her top priority is improving the Sewage and Water Board but hopes to have people in office

always trust your instinct," Barthelemy said as an encouragement to Cantrell. "We all need to come together for the goodness of the City," Barthelemy said.

The event was the Ninth Ed Ren-

wick Lecture Series hosted by the Institute of Politics and the Norman C. Francis Leadership Institute. The former Xavier University President said that the goal of the series was to engage in dialogue where

leaders could support the mayor-elect and come together for the City to progress into the next century.

"Cantrell is going to be a great mayor, we have to get behind her and work together," Francis said.



New Orleans Mayor-Elect LaToya Cantrell joins Mayor Mitch Landrieu and former mayors Sidney Barthelemy and Moon Landrieu for the Ninth Annual Ed Renwick Lecture at Loyola University on April 5th.



New Orleans Mayor-Elect LaToya Cantrell embraces Mayor Mitch Landrieu at a Tricentennial forum on April 5th. (Photos by Jade Myers)

ors: present-past-and-future, took a walk down memory lane in the City they served, for a New Orleans Tricentennial event hosted at Loyola University. Moon and Mitch Landrieu, Sidney Barthelemy and LaToya Cantrell comprised the group of City leaders who embarked on this exercise.

"In order for the City to move forward, we must make sure that everyone in the City has a chance to participate and we need to get people to know that diversity in New Orleans is a strength," said current New Orleans Mayor, Mitch Landrieu.

As the City turns 300-years old, it also made history when voters elected the first woman to win a mayoral seat in New Orleans in 2017. Mayor-elect LaToya Cantrell said that she is looking forward to her inauguration day in May. She said that being the first female to be

that are looking out for all individuals and not just certain groups.

"We need to address the needs of our children and families, and I believe that women bring a spirit of empathy and compassion being able to meet people where they are," Cantrell said. "I'm very excited for the future of our City," she said.

The former mayors gave Cantrell advice on how to handle situations she may face while in office. Mitch Landrieu told Cantrell that while serving his terms in office, many people did not agree with some of his decisions, like removing the Confederate monuments from the City.

Landrieu said that he hoped that people would eventually follow the spirit of what he was trying to do for the City.

"Don't be discouraged because everyone is rooting for you, but

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# Downtown Super Sunday Highlights

Photos by Kichea S. Burt  
Data News Weekly Contributor

The Annual Downtown Super Sunday parade and celebration took place last Sunday. People and tribes from all over came out to enjoy the festivities and of course Data was there!!!





# Freret Street Festival Delivers Fun, Food and Memories

Photos by Kichea S. Burt  
Data News Weekly Contributor

The Freret Street Festival featured live music, food, artwork and handi-crafts and fun activities for all ages – especially the kids. The event's features included a Kids' Activity Area with inflatables, a Petting Zoo, Insta-Gator, arts & crafts, clowns, parades and second- lines and African stilt walkers. It was a great way to spend the day with family and friends, and of course, Data was there!!!



Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events

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# MLK50: Fifty Years after Kerner and King, Racism Still Matters



**Derrick Johnson**  
President and CEO,  
National NAACP

Fifty years ago, the nation was rocked by the brutal and public assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Eerily echoing the title of King's final book "Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?", his murder sent a powerful shock wave through the soul of America resulting in urban rebellions springing up in over 100 cities and placing the nation at a political and social crossroads.

As cities burned with rage at King's murder, most of America had already dismissed and forgotten the damning and prophetic report published only a month earlier by the presidential commission chaired by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner. Officially called the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, the Kerner Commission identified systemic racism and poverty as the causes of the major Black rebellions in both Newark and Detroit the previous summer. The report warned that America was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal" and offered concrete suggestions for confronting immediately this "deepening racial division."

However, the Kerner Report's recommendations for reconciliation and progress were never

"Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans. What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."

- Report by the Kerner Commission, 1968

heeded; in fact, they were actively disregarded. Despite commissioning the report, President Lyndon B.

Johnson went out of his way to suppress the spread of its findings. The consequences have been severe:

"Whereas the Kerner Commission called for 'massive and sustained' investment in economic, employment and education initiatives, over the last 50 years America has pursued 'massive and sustained' incarceration framed as 'law and order,' while the 'war on drugs' has failed," says a new book, "Healing Our Divided Society," co-edited by former Sen. Fred Harris, the sole surviving member of the Kerner Commission.

Today, many of America's Black communities bear the sustained scars of physical and economic injuries. Even in Baltimore, the headquartered home of the NAACP, communities are still reeling from the police-custody death of Freddie Gray. The deaths of Black

**Commentary, Continued on page 9.**

## Will HUD Secretary Ben Carson Enforce the Fair Housing Act?



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

The Fair Housing Act was passed a week after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. President Lyndon Johnson encouraged Congress to pass the legislation as a tribute to the slain civil rights leader, who, along with several civil rights organizations (including the NAACP), strongly supported the act. African American veteran's organizations (including the American GI Forum) were especially passionate about the legislation, especially since Vietnam veterans were among those experiencing severe housing discrimination. Senator Ed Brooke (R-Mass.), the only African American in the Senate at the time, along with his Massachusetts colleague, Senator Ted Ken-

nedy (D-Mass.) was especially focused on the legislation.

The Fair Housing Act is also known as Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (which was later amended in 1988) prevents discrimination in the sale, rental, financing, and advertising of housing because of race, color, religion, disability, family status, and national origin. But with the severe wealth inequality in our nation, there are still major gaps between homeownership by race; African American households were more heavily impacted by the Great Recession than any other racial group. Between 2004 and 2016, every group experienced a decline in homeownership, but while Whites experienced a 4.1 percent decline, African American households experienced a 7 percent decline, dropping from nearly half (49 percent) of Black households owning homes to just 41.9 percent. Meanwhile, White homeownership remained over 70 percent. As much as a third of African American wealth was wiped out by the Great Recession, and this is partly due to discrimination in banking, including the ways that some banks aggressively

pushed subprime loans on African Americans, even those who qualified for traditional loans.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the federal agency that is responsible for enforcing the Fair Housing Act, as well as providing rental assistance, public housing, and housing vouchers for those who cannot afford housing on their incomes. Our 45th president had proposed deep cuts in the HUD budget, but the budget that was passed on March 23, 2018, just hours before the government was scheduled to shut down, actually adds money to the HUD budget, especially in the rental assistance and public housing capital funds program. Still, cuts are scheduled for the next fiscal year, and the issue of non-discriminatory and affordable housing remains a pressing one.

But will HUD Secretary Ben Carson enforce the Fair Housing Act and effectively administer an agency that can make a difference in the quality of life for low-income people? One has to raise the question, especially as Dr. Carson seems to want to spend more time looking for a \$30,000 dining table than administering his agency. Trump's

pick of Carson to administer the agency was a strange one, given that Carson's only qualification for running one of the government's largest agencies seems to be that his mom avoided public housing because of its "dangers." Trump does not seem to be high on finding qualified people to run HUD. For example, Lynne Patton, the HUD administrator for Region II, which includes New York and New Jersey, was Eric Trump's wedding planner.

It may seem snarky to point out things that some would call "minor," and both Patton and Carson will, perhaps, grow into their roles. They have to; their work makes a difference in the quality of life, and the quality of housing, for millions of Americans. And, there is no evidence that Carson has spearheaded innovative programs (wait – did I write Carson and "innovative programs" in the same sentence?) to close the homeownership gap or to help African American families recover from the ravages of the Great Recession.

Furthermore, while this has little to do with Carson, the effort to roll back Dodd-Frank reforms and the evisceration of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau strips

power from consumers, especially those of low and moderate incomes. By making it more difficult to file class action lawsuits, individuals who experience banking discrimination are handicapped in their ability to fight back. Carson, singing from the "45" playbook, when he opens up his mouth at all, is not likely to be an effective advocate for the people he has frequently disdained.

Indeed, though he has thrown his wife, Candy, under the bus on the matter of the dining table, he is no different from other cabinet officials who have a "let them eat cake" attitude toward those they serve. First class travel, high-end furniture, and chicanery are the name of the "45" cabinet game. Fifty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act as a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it is not clear that the current HUD Secretary will be a warrior in the fight against housing discrimination.

Julianne Malveaux is an author, economist and founder of Economic Education. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" is available to order at Amazon.com and at [www.juliannealveaux.com](http://www.juliannealveaux.com). Follow Dr. Malveaux on Twitter @drjlastword.



# Sports Journalist Jemele Hill Shares Her Journey to Success

By Temitayo Odulaja  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Acclaimed Sports Journalist Jemele Hill elaborated on the struggles and triumphs that eventually made her a prominent sports personality. She spoke at the Brain Food Series at Dillard University's Georges Auditorium on April 8th. Hill, who now works for ESPN's The Undeclared made national headlines when she denounced President Donald Trump on social media as a White Supremacist in 2017. President Trump responded that "ESPN is paying the price of its politics" after calling for Hill to lose her job. Hill said her upbringing prepared her for the tough year she had in the news and her journey to



Jemele Hill speaks to audience members after she delivered the Brain Food Series Lecture on April 7th at Dillard University. (Photos by Jade Myers)

this point in her career.

"I grew up in the hood of Detroit and my father and I were estranged," said Hill, a nominee of the 49th NAACP Image Awards. However, her separation from her father is what shaped her, not just as a sports expert, but as a woman.

"It helped me get through college," said Hill, who attended Michigan State University on a scholarship, and studied Mass Communication and Spanish. College led her to her career path, as it exposed her to an array of opportunities to explore her gifts and abilities.

"College made me critically think," she said. It was her start for questioning why certain things were happening in society.

She developed her enthusiasm

for sports at a very young age, she told the audience. She, like every sports zealot, would read sports columns to keep in touch with the latest statistics.

"I began my journalism career early and I did five internships before graduating," she said. "When I said I wanted to be a sports writer, everyone thought I was crazy, no one knows any sports writer," she said.

However, such criticism did not come from her "inner circle," so it was easy for her to dismiss the negative opinions.

"I never put myself in any situation where I did not have many choices," she said.

She encouraged the audience

Jamele Hill, Continued  
on page 10.

## Commentary, Continued from page 8.

Americans like Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, and, most recently, Stephon Clark—shot eight times by police in his own backyard—remind us we are still not seen as full-citizens by many in our nation.

In our recent Economic Inclusion Reports on Baltimore, Charlotte and St. Louis—three cities impacted by protests and revolts linked to police violence and misconduct—the NAACP noted "similarities between the past economic realities of African Americans during Reconstruction and legalized racism and the current economic realities more than 150 years after the abolition of slavery and promise of freedom."

Our reports expose that African Americans are "still living in highly segregated communities and school districts, comprising the lowest median household income, highest unemployment rate, highest poverty rate, and ongoing barriers to the creation of small businesses." For example, the mid-2000 housing crisis caused by Wall Street excesses led to trillions of dollars in bailouts and the decimation of major portions of African American wealth—wrapped up in their foreclosed homes. This recession removed huge swaths of intergenerational wealth and many families have yet to recover.

As the leader of the oldest and largest civil rights organization, I


recognize the temporal connection between America's past and present identities. Our country has let the pestilent wound caused by a continuing legacy of racism fester. This chronic condition is aggravated by the often-silent progressives who still cannot grasp the stark emotional reality of what partial freedom feels like to a full human being.

In his commencement address to Oberlin College in 1965, King said, "We must face the honest fact that we still have a long, long way to go before the problem of racial injustice is solved."




Half a century after Kerner's report and King's assassination, our government continues to perpetuate an unacceptable level of systemic and structural racism, which permeates our communities and fuels our protest.

As we remember King and Kerner, we will not do so in solemn reflection, but instead with resolve. We commit to making the social and political healing America has continued to defer become a reality. The progress for which NAACP members fight rings in harmony with the Kerner Commission's unapologetic condemnation of White America's failure to make democracy real for all of us.


Derrick Johnson is the President and CEO of the NAACP, America's largest civil rights organization. Follow him on Twitter @DerrickNAACP.



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# Gov. Edwards, LDH Unveil Economic Impact of Medicaid Expansion

*Program's Infusion Of \$1.85 Bill In Federal Funds Leveraged Into \$3.57 Billion Economic Activity For State*

## Data Staff Reports

On Tuesday, Gov. John Bel Edwards and Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Secretary Dr. Rebekah Gee touted a report from Dr. Jim Richardson of the Public Administration Institute at Louisiana State University (LSU) highlighting the economic impact of Medicaid expansion. The report, released today, shows that Medicaid expansion, the federal/state health care program that provides health coverage for individuals with income less than 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, is leveraging an infusion of \$1.85 billion in federal funds to create or retain nearly 19,200 jobs and support nearly \$3.6 billion in economic activity for the state of Louisiana.

"In Louisiana, Medicaid expansion is saving \$317 million that we are able to invest in other priorities, but most importantly, it is saving lives," said Gov. Edwards. "Improving health outcomes in Louisiana so we can have a productive workforce has been our goal, but this report further suggests that Medicaid expansion

gives a big boost to our economy. For too long, the people of Louisiana were sending their tax dollars to Washington without seeing any benefits here at home. Those days are over, and this report shows us what's possible when we make important investments like expansion in our people."

The report, Medicaid Expansion and the Louisiana Economy, shows that:

This large federal contribution, \$1.85 billion, represents an infusion of federal spending in Louisiana that would not have occurred if the state had not accepted Medicaid expansion.

This infusion of federal funds is creating or supporting 19,195 jobs across the state of Louisiana.

In addition to having a positive impact on Louisiana's job market, Medicaid expansion is leveraging the federal funds into \$3.57 billion of economic activity, which includes \$3.48 billion in business activity, \$103.2 million in state tax receipts, and \$74.6 million in local tax receipts.

"Two years ago, when we announced Medicaid expansion, we



Governor John Bel Edwards said "Improving health outcomes in Louisiana so we can have a productive workforce has been our goal, but this report further suggests that Medicaid expansion gives a big boost to our economy."

said this would give more people access to health care coverage; we said it would save the state money; and we said expansion would

boost the economy," said Dr. Gee. "We have fulfilled all three of these promises. I am proud of this news as it demonstrates how one

important policy change can have so many benefits. We will continue to build upon this work to improve both the financial health of the State and the physical health of our residents."

"Our analysis focused on net new dollars that would not have been spent in Louisiana were it not for Medicaid Expansion," said Dr. Richardson. "We found that new federal spending in Louisiana that would not have otherwise occurred has positively affected every region of the state. This is comparable to any other major injection of spending in the state that had not occurred in the past. This new spending is spread across all healthcare providers including hospitals, outpatient care, pharmaceuticals, physicians and other professionals, other medical services, and the administration of the program."

Prior to expanding Medicaid, the state of Louisiana would spend approximately 40 cents on the dollar for uninsured care. However, under expansion, the state of Louisiana will never spend more than 10 cents on the dollar.



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## Jamele Hill, Continued from page 9.

not to limit themselves, but rather explore several options. Hill said no one can truly realize what they are skilled in, unless they engage in it.

"I never wanted to work for ESPN, my dream job was to work for Sports Illustrated," she said. Eventually, at 22, she was offered a position at Sports Illustrated as a sports writer.

"A lot of things will happen that will take you down a different path, but that does not necessarily mean that it would take you to a bad path," she said.

She urged the students to continue to practice hard at what they are passionate about.

"Do what you would do even if you would not get paid, that comes later," she said. "What would you do for free, I would write for free," Hill said.

Her journey of overcoming tri-

als and reaching success was the reason Dillard University President Walter Kimbrough said he wanted Hill to speak to students and the community.

"There have been speakers who have made students here go on to grad school," Kimbrough said. "We are giving back to society," he said of the Brain Food Series.

The program exposes students to diverse prominent figures that would affect their academic journey positively, said Sheryl Haydel, Dillard's Director of Communications and Marketing.

"Brainfood allows students at this university to have a taste of what occurs in big schools," Haydel said.

"I think she is very relatable," Haydel said of Hill and her experiences. "Brainfood is very important because of the information the students can learn," she said.



# Costs Run High in Bill Cosby Sexual Assault Trial

*Costs Prosecuting Bill Cosby in Sexual Assault Trial Dwarfed by Costs to Defend Him*

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Judge Steven O'Neill has warned that the retrial in the criminal case of comedian Bill Cosby will likely last longer than the first trial.

For Pennsylvania taxpayers, that means shelling out more money on top of the more than \$220,000 spent on last year's trial.

"The cost of the Cosby trial did not adversely impact the 2017 budget, and we have planned for it in our 2018 budget," Montgomery County Chair of the Board of Commissioners Dr. Val Arkoosh told the NNPA Newswire. "Pennsylvania law gives the Montgomery County District Attorney, an independent elected official, sole legal authority for decisions relating to the prosecution of criminal activity, including the decision to move forward with a retrial of any case."

Arkoosh continued: "The operation of the court system is the responsibility of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas, an independent branch of government. The Montgomery County Commissioners are responsible for the cost of administering justice. We will, as always, fulfill those responsibilities to the justice system."

Cosby is charged with three counts of aggravated sexual assault, a case that stems from a 2004 encounter with former Temple University employee Andrea Constand.

The two had formed a relationship—he says romantic, she claims mentorship—in which they'd get together for dinner, cocktails and career discussions.

Sometimes they'd meet at Cosby's Elkins Parks, Pennsylvania



Bill Cosby will likely spend much more defending himself against the sexual assault charges in the Andrea Constand case, than Montgomery County will spend prosecuting him. Photo taken of Cosby spokesman Andrew Wyatt (left) leading the comedian into court during his trial last summer at the Montgomery County Courthouse on June 5, 2017 in Norristown, Pennsylvania. (POOL PHOTO)

home, other times the two would cozy up near a fire in a hotel room sipping cognac.

However, on the night that Constand believed to be in January 2004, Cosby offered his friend two blue pills which he said were Benadryl to help her relax.

Constand said the pills made her drowsy and eventually incapacitated her.

She awakened to find Cosby's hands in her pants; he had placed her hand was on his penis, Constand said. As night turned to morning, Cosby prepared breakfast—a muffin and Constand's favorite tea. He asked her to call him when she got home.

A year later, Constand reported

the incident to authorities.

During the two-week trial last year, a jury failed to unanimously agree on a verdict after more than 60 hours of deliberating which resulted in O'Neill declaring a mistrial.

Some believed the costs associated with the trial—which included shuttling a sequestered jury from Pittsburgh to and from hotels and assigning extra deputies for Cosby—would lead prosecutors to decide against a second trial.

Now, with O'Neill's declaration that the retrial should last at least one month and the judge allowing five other accusers to testify, the trial may spill over into summer.

With a more than \$410 million

budget that included a seven percent increase for the district attorney's office in 2017, the county can afford to continue its high-profile battle against Cosby, who's reportedly worth \$500 million.

It's been reported that Cosby paid his former attorneys, a firm led by Brian McMonagle, as much as \$1,500 per hour. He's now hired an even higher profile team headed by former Michael Jackson attorney Tom Mesereau.

"The costs of representation vary by jurisdiction, client and circumstance," said attorney Gregory Q. Carter of the G. Carter Law Firm, an African American-owned firm in New Orleans. "Considering the high-profile nature of Mr. Cosby, the numerous reports of secondary accusers, and the voluminous amount of discovery, it's likely the defense costs will dwarf that which the county reported."

Carter continued: "In a trial of this stature, it is typical for the defense firm to be solely dedicated to representing the individual client. In addition, it is likely the defense requires investigators, additional staff attorneys, and experts to be employed to fully vet and present the defense."

Unfortunately, money plays a major factor in most criminal trials, said Thaddeus Hoffmeister, a professor of law at the University of Dayton.

"It dictates many things that you can and cannot do. Our system is built on a plea-bargaining system that's stacked against the defense in that the government has a bottomless pit," Hoffmeister said. "They'll never run out of money."

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