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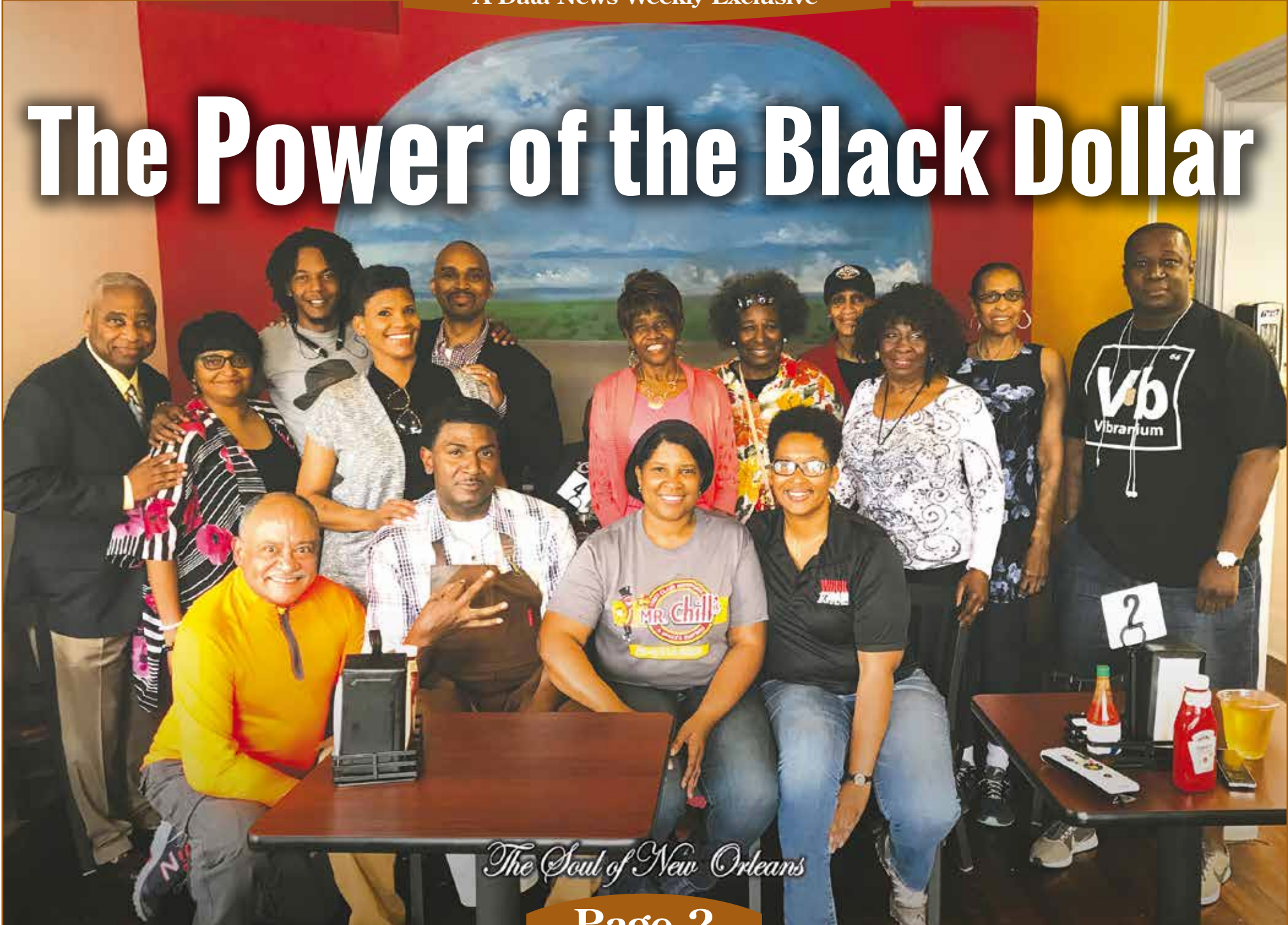
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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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The Power of the Black Dollar

Entrepreneur Wilbert “Mr. Chill” Wilson and WBOK Partner for Fundraiser and Meet and Greet with On Air Personalities



Veteran journalist and WBOK radio show host Warren Bell, co-owners of Mr. Chill’s First Class Hot Dogs and Sweet Pastries Joyce Wilson and Wilbert “Chill” Wilson, and Susan Henry, General Manager of WBOK 1230AM.

by Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly Editor

From the Slave Ship to the “Owner” Ship
WBOK 1230AM has become an important radio station in the City giving voice to African-American issues

in New Orleans. While there are a host of issues that face the Black Community, it is the loss of historical institutions and Black businesses that are one of the biggest threats post-Katrina.
On this Saturday afternoon at Mr. Chill’s First Class Hot Dogs and Sweet Pastries, Wilbert “Chill” Wilson, an African-American Entrepreneur, who since Hurricane Katrina has become someone who has been working for the cause; empowering and

inspiring a community has partnered with WBOK to do a fundraiser and meet and greet with several personalities from the station.
“I thought it was important to show that we can support each other as African-American businesses,” says Wilson. “I also would like to say that while we have made strides with people having more opportunities than ever we have neglected to continue our traditions of owning businesses. I think while we have leaders

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

P.O. Box 57347, New Orleans, LA 70157-7347 | Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622
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Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
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FRIENDS & FAMILY SALE PRICES IN EFFECT 4/27-5/7/2018.

Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

in other areas we must also focus on how to empower ourselves and build wealth by having more African-American owned businesses."

Finding a Voice

Oftentimes the voices of the African-American Community are muted and not heard. Therefore, when policies are made and the stories of the history of the City are being told, the Black perspective is absent or seen through a distorted lens. This is why WBOK is an important resource; it is like the underground railroad of today; helping in giving the road-map to freedom and the aspirations of a people.

"WBOK is vital to the community and is the only all talk Black radio station in the Gulf South Region that provides a platform for the African-American Community," says Susan Henry the station's general manager of its importance and relevance.

A Grand Slam: Supporting Our Own

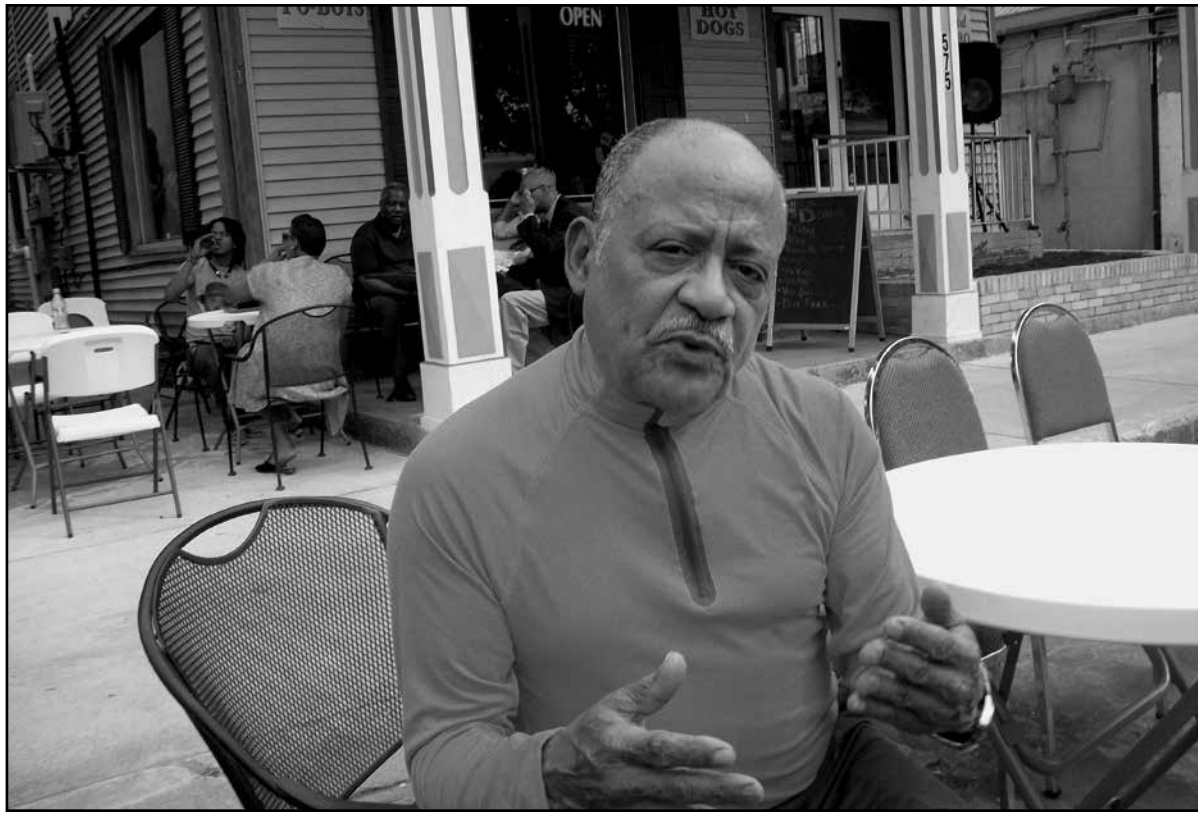
Wilbert "Chill" Wilson has two businesses located on S. Carrollton; a barbershop and a restaurant. "We have to support one another if we are going to not only survive but thrive in New Orleans," says former City Councilman and top rated WBOK Radio Host Oliver Thomas.

He believes with success one must reach back and do things for the community and he feels Wilson is a shining example of this, "Chill has been successful, and he gives so much back," states Thomas. "This young man has done so much post-Katrina, and in the last several years supports the station, but what he does for young folk and a lot of people in our community its simply amazing."

On this day people from around the City came and experienced great food; got to meet their favorite radio personalities and watched the New Orleans Pelicans sweep the Portland Trailblazers in the NBA Playoffs. Thomas called this day a 'Grand Slam' stating, "It was great to see people who call and come out to support as we watched the Pelicans win. It was a grand slam at a wonderful location at one of the few African-American owned businesses in that part of Carrollton on the



Wilbert "Chill" Wilson and Joyce Wilson being interviewed by local NBC affiliate WDSU-TV News Channel 6.



Veteran journalist and WBOK radio show host Warren Bell

Riverbend and supporting WBOK, another African-American business with our time and our dollars. We need to do more of this where we make sure our dollars stay in our community more than eight hours."

Remembering our Rich History and Building for the Future

It is an irrefutable fact that desegregation did great things by giving access to Blacks, but con-

versely, it reduced the number of African-American owned businesses. When we look around the City of New Orleans where there were once sprawling boulevards filled with Black owned

shops where Blacks could spend money that would stay in the community. Today many of these places are owned by non-African-Americans or have become part of a wave of gentrification sweeping across New Orleans with mixed results as we witness small numbers of African-American business participation in this boom.

This is a trend that is troubling to veteran journalist and present WBOK Radio Personality Warren Bell who hosts an early morning show called Morning Cup. "I am proud to say I have been a witness to 1/6th of our history," says Bell speaking of his frontline view of the history of New Orleans. "I have been doing radio and news since 1967 when I was in high school. Some things unfortunately do not change, the inequities in our community, but interestingly we had more Black businesses 50 years ago."

Speaking of the station and its partnership with Wilson he believes this is a step in the right direction. "I think WBOK's role in this community is to make sure African-Americans remember our history because even though we have advanced in many other ways post-segregation, but I feel we cannot forget those times where we owned businesses of all types inside our community, and where we did stick together and supported one and other and Mr. Chill, to say he is a younger man than me understands this history very well."

Wilson says of his work as a businessman, that he stands on the shoulders of those who came before him that includes his late father Willie "School Boy" Wilson. "I grew up in a generation where I was surrounded by people who were great entrepreneurs and did things to empower the community. And, what I want to do for this generation, is to be a leader in the arena of business. Where I can show that we can have our own and also support each other; this is how we not only honor and respect our history, but we build on our future."

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Eight Years Later

City Leaders Reflect on the Landrieu Years as We Prepare for the Inauguration of Incoming Mayor LaToya Cantrell

By Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly Editor

A Changing of the Guard

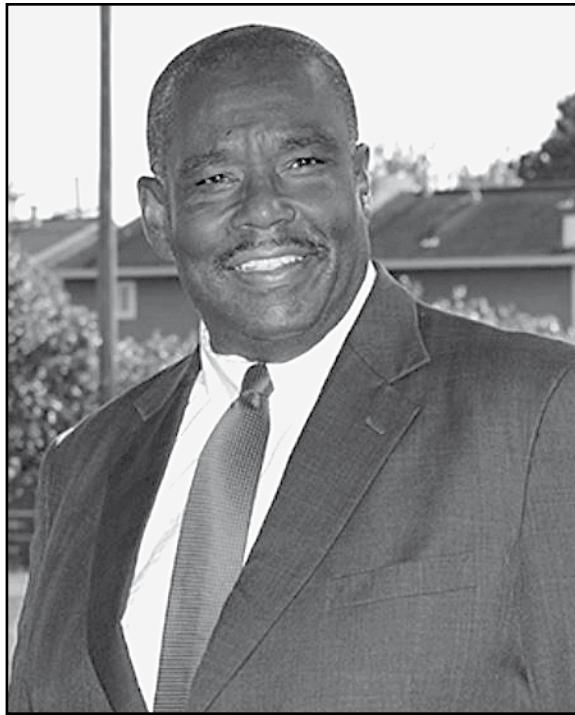
New Orleans is on the eve of the changing of the guard; seeing the ending of one administration and the beginning of another. It has been eight years where the Landrieu Administration took office taking the reigns of leadership when the City was still in recovery mode of what was nearly 5 years after Hurricane Katrina. At that time the direction of the City was in many ways still uncertain.

Additionally, Landrieu's predecessor, Ray Nagin, who is presently serving a jail sentence for bribery, fraud and money laundering. While this left a black eye on the City, many of the issues during his time in office came to the forefront, including: income inequality, lack of affordable housing and issues surround race and what the City would be moving forward became the ongoing debates the City would have until the present day. And as we move into the historical moment of the City celebrating 300 years and having our first female Mayor in LaToya Cantrell, many of these problems still persist and we will get to see how she captains the ship as she assumes the City's highest office.

A Tale of Two Cities

While it has become a cliché to call New Orleans a Tale of Two Cities, it rings an undeniable truth when you look around the City. "What have happened is there are too many disparities in segments of the community and it has gotten much wider. There has been a great amount of economic boom that has taken place, but there is a very large segment of our community that hasn't participated in any of that," says Jay Banks, the newly elected councilmember from District B.

These sentiments have also been echoed by members of past administrations. "It has still been a tale of two cities where we have seen great progress in some parts of the City while other parts of the City are still languishing and not enjoying those dollars that were supposed to be invested Citywide. So as I look back while we have made economic



City Councilmember-Elect Jay Banks

progress that has not been shared by all members of the community and that is something that has to be addressed not only by the Mayor's office but by all the stakeholders must make this a top priority," says Kenya Smith. He served in the Nagin Administration in various senior executive positions including Executive Counsel to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations and Deputy Mayor for Community Development.

Infrastructure and Making the City Whole

One can say that the Landrieu Administration was one that stayed clear of major scandals surrounding political corruption and that is a feat in itself given the history of politics in both the City and state. But the one thing that continued to be a problem on his watch was the crumbling infrastructure including the much-maligned Sewerage and Water Board where over a dozen years later a strong rain can devastate water pumps and streets are flooded. Can we imagine as we again are about to begin another hurricane season a City that is still not prepared even after the devastation of Katrina.

With a City that was 80% underwater after the storm and the levee failures that damaged so much of the City, looking back you see nearly billions of dollars earmarked for the City's recovery that nearly 13 years later we have experienced an uneven recovery. "Coming from




Erika McConduit, President and CEO of Urban League of Louisiana




Katrina you look where we were close to devastation. I think for a very long time after that we were in a triage state sort of mindset. That is the right mindset to be in post-disaster. Infrastructure, no schools ready to go, so when you make triage decisions that are not always the most thoughtful decisions," explains Jason Williams, City Councilmember-at-Large, of the reasons surrounding the uneven recover of the New Orleans.

He believes that this was the right direction to take but feels the City must begin to shift resources to help more people in need. "I don't think the City, or the executive branch has been able to pivot from a triage mindset to make decisions for the next 20 years or next 50 years. I think what has been


Newsmaker, Continued on page 10.



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Exhibit Celebrates Authentic Life of Seventh Ward Neighborhoods

Story and Photos By Ka'lya Ellis
Data News Weekly Contributor

It was a tribute to the “Year of the Camo 2: The Neighborhood,” an art exhibit put owned by Marigny Visual Artist and New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) Alumnus Jarrad McKay, also known as “Art by Jarrad.” The exhibit opening took place on April 21st and was displayed at 912 Julia St. The art showcased the essence of Black New Orleans Neighborhoods in the 1990s. This is also his second installment to his Camo Series that aims to represent the solider he sees in every New Orleanian, who battles through everyday adversities. McKay is also well-known as a tattoo artist and his live art shows at festivals such as Buku Fest.

“I just wanted to continue to bring a dope experience,” McKay said of his brand of creative work.

For this exhibit, McKay said the collection recalled memories he held of growing up and that any New Orleanian native would easily recognize as the culture of the inner-city neighborhoods. The paintings voiced the way a community can inspire its children, he said.

The inspiration to take on art came from his grandfather, who was a Mardi Gras Indian with the Seventh Ward Hard Headers tribe. From the age of 3, McKay had his first handcrafted suit and continues the tradition today. This heritage is expressed through one of his paintings named “Indian Suit” celebrating the legacy of the Mardi Gras Indians in the community. It is a painting of his eldest son, Vincent, who is now following in his father’s footsteps of becoming a Mardi Gras Indian.

“I gotta keep my kids informed about it, if we don’t carry the legacy it will be extinct, it will disappear,” McKay said.

The artwork also celebrated women in New Orleans, who are a significant part of the City’s heritage. Paintings like “Looka my Baby” and “Inspired by Solange” both displayed how grandmothers, mothers, and aunts looked in the nineties with big smiles and gold teeth. Another piece inspired by women of New Orleans was his “Mia X” painting, featuring Female Rapper Mia X from his neighborhood of the Seventh Ward, who is a notable part of female hip-hop in the 1990s.

Residents who attended the exhibit said they felt the nostalgia that McKay was portraying through his art. Ja’Vair Polk who went through adolescence at this time and grew up in the Inner-City of New Orleans said the work spoke to her childhood experiences.

“This show is a true depiction of my upbringing,” Polk said.

Kenneth Ellis who is also from the Marigny area agreed with Polk. “At the end of day culture is all we have and seeing my culture on full display makes me happy,” Ellis added.



Sierra McKay with artwork by Jarrad McKay.



Residents attend the “Year of the Camo 2: The Neighborhood” opening night of the art exhibit on April 21.



Artist Jarrad McKay featuring his work “Give Me My Flowers While I Can Smell Them.”



Ja’Vair Polk viewing “looka My Baby” painting.



Indian Suit” By Jarrad McKay

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

Top Apps to Make Fashionable Photos



Delaney George
Columnist

In fashion, sometimes, our best look is not our most photogenic look. Your shirt may need some color there, a shoe might need some focus and flare over here; All common issues that can be fixed by simply downloading an app on a smart device. Here are some of the top apps to make fashionable corrections:

Leica:

Do you ever have an outfit that takes you back in time? An outfit that requires an authentic presentation that can be enhanced by Leica. Leica offers over 10 unique filters with realistic film grain, light, and noise. Leica used on any fashionable photo is sure to get noticed by many. Consider Leica as your film camera developing process made simple and more stylish.

Lomograph:

For those fun, free fashion lovers, lomograph is the app for you. This colorful, high tech app provides a wide range of intense color and glitch affects to add to your photo. The filters on the app are really intense and high in saturation so it's perfect for that look that needs a little more flare. Lomograph turns the most casual of ensembles to a show stopping runway look.

VSCO:

For that look that would have been better with a yellow hat instead of blue, VSCO is the app to change that. This multipurpose soft editing app is phenomenal in all of the tools it used to make a great picture. Very helpful to the fashionista who wants to change their shoe color, tilt a look to a certain direction or create a defined texture on a garment. VSCO is the app for any and everyone, and Delaney Armoire would definitely recommend the download.

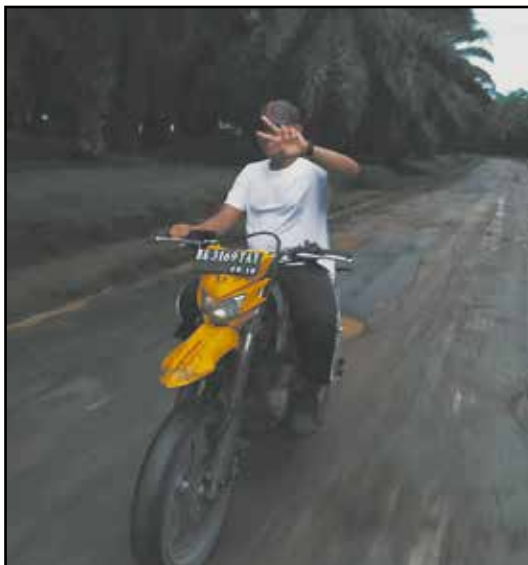
For more information on fashion-forward apps email Delaney@yahoo.com or dm @ Delannii via Instagram.



Film inspired app Leica lets in realistic light, leaks and grain for that authentic vintage feel.



Playful app Lomograph is perfect for color and movement in photos.



VSCO is great for all around shot, even movement and color correction.



VSCO helps enhance color and texture in shots, perfect for a designer shoot.

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Stop Being Stunned Already



John Slade
WBOK 1230AM

"The world is stunned to discover that prehistoric creatures exist in the Twentieth Century." That quote was uttered by a breathless news anchor in the American cut of the classic 1963 picture, *King Kong Vs. Godzilla* in the moments following *Godzilla's* reappearance in the film. After what happened at the Starbucks in Philadelphia and to a 14-year-old Black child in Detroit over the past week this should not stun us. But it does. We as Black people are like the characters in a

Japanese monster movie looking nervously at Tokyo Bay waiting for the next creature to rise up that we know is coming.

Two Black men minding their business were arrested because they were sitting while Black in a Starbucks. A Starbucks!! Starbucks, a company that likes to put on a progressive façade is now in the midst of a public relations nightmare and it will be interesting to see how they escape this debacle. Now it appears that an employee called the Police because the two Black men had sat down at a table and didn't order anything. Of course, not ordering anything is an offense that demands Police intervention. Now the Police could not have just figured out what was going on and just as *Frozen* would suggest, let it go? The Philadelphia Police Commissioner defended his men by saying that "It is important to emphasize and underscore that these officers had

legal standing to make this arrest." Now let's understand this, what the Commissioner said was not the point. A Police Officer has the legal standing to arrest Santa Clause for illegally entering a residence on Christmas Eve, but should he? I say no. The police didn't have to arrest anyone seeing that White people were sitting in the coffee shop for a much longer time without being arrested. If a purchase was required where was the signage? Couldn't a barista have simply gone to the table and asked nicely that you have to buy a cup of coffee to sit. Seems a better choice than having the men arrested.

In addition, we have the awful Detroit episode of Brennan Walker a teenager who missed a bus and was lost in a residential neighborhood. This Black child was looking for help to find his way to his school. Walker knocked on the wrong door and was met with gunfire as he

was chased by a 53-year-old armed White man who thought his fear was worth a child's life like George Zimmerman who didn't have to do what he did also.

The election of Donald Trump has emboldened these folks who seem to think it's open season on Black Americans. Add to that a national government that can't and won't protect Black people just like the ineffectual governments in those giant monster films who couldn't protect the populace; because our humanity doesn't seem to matter to it.

I understand the calls for a boycott but considering the intensity of the issue, what is the end game? Is it to make Starbucks better? Is it to get the employee who racially profiled the two men fired? Is it to get Black people to spend their money at Black owned coffee shops? Again, I'm not saying don't boycott but what is the goal?

Where's the Black political establishment? Out elected leadership should at least be irked, perturbed, and disconcerted.

Here's one thing for sure as far as I'm concerned, I no longer want to hear from any White person friend or foe about what Black people are supposed to do to avoid trouble with the Police or regular White people. Black people can't even sit quietly in a public establishment without some White person deciding to exert their Whiteness just because they can. It now appears to Black America there is nothing we can do to avoid trouble, so to White America could you just hush? Don't need to hear your suggestions anymore, thanks. As for Black America and our would be allies, it's time to be more than stunned that prehistoric people and attitudes exist in the Twenty First Century.

John Slade is Host Of WBOK's Up To Date.

State & Local News

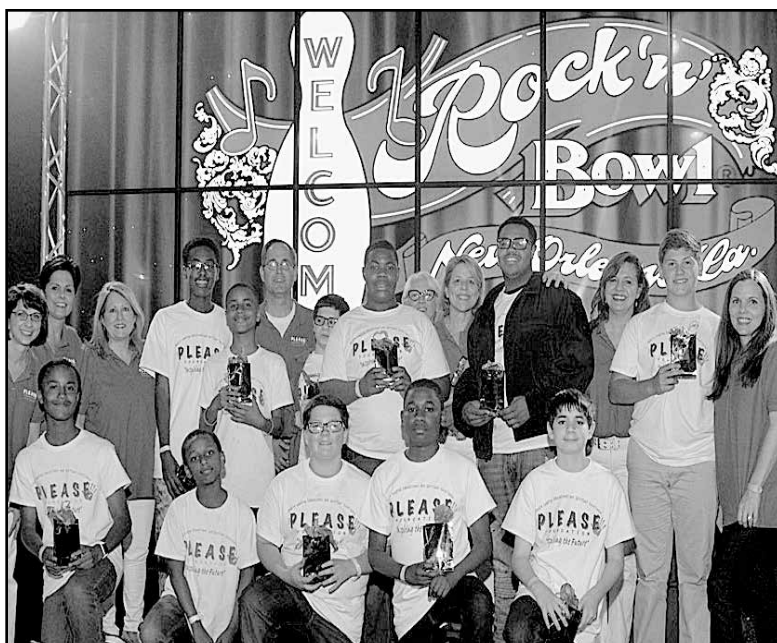
Foundation Raises Funds to Continue to Support Local Students through College

By Leland Johnson
Data News Contributor

The months of April and May mark the ending of the school year and high school careers for many students in New Orleans. The PLEASE Foundation (People Leading Educational and Spiritual Excellence), an organization located in Metairie, held a series of fundraising events to show their support for students who are making strides for their future, academically. The foundation provides mentoring and scholarships for low-income children from grades Kindergarten to 12th grade.

The foundation's events began in April with the program's Annual Bake and Bowl located at Rock 'n' Bowl on April 14th, followed by the Fourth Student Reunion Dinner at Irene's on April 20th. The organization will conclude with a picnic for the foundation's members on April 28th, and a Senior Student Dinner on May 7th.

The goal of the events is to raise money for scholarships and educa-



PLEASE Foundation students and Director, Yvette Endom on April 14 during the Annual Bake-N-Bowl hosted at Rock n' Bowl. (Photos by Leland Johnson)

tional programs in New Orleans, with the hopes of establishing an alumni base for the foundation through the Student Reunion Dinner. The student members of the foundation shared their apprecia-

tion for the cause during the student dinner such as:

"I love everything the PLEASE Foundation does," said Tyler Leblanc, a Dillard University student who benefited from the organiza-

tion's work. "It feels great to be a part of something that helps my community."

The Student Reunion Dinner marks the college graduation in May of the first students inducted into the foundation. This cohort included Mark Woods of the University of Louisiana Lafayette, Alexis Irvin of Dillard University, and Leblanc from Dillard. Each of the foundation's students, including current seniors, graduated from Catholic schools in New Orleans like St. Augustine High School, and St. Katharine Drexel High School among others.

The organization, founded by New Orleans native Yvette Endom in 2007, helps children from low-income families gain admission into Catholic High Schools in New Orleans and into colleges across the country. It provides the students with scholarships, mentoring, tutoring, among other resources. The program has a beneficial effect on the New Orleans Community, Endom said. It does this by addressing the failing

Public School System, violence, crime, and extreme poverty in New Orleans through moral and scholastic education of the youth.

"The organization has existed for 11 years and has grown and evolved with our students," Endom said. "We are now helping our students get into college and find scholarships. Once a student becomes part of the PLEASE Foundation, they are with the organization until they graduate high school and beyond," she said.

The parents of PLEASE are also crucial to the organization and their willingness to be part of it has helped it to grow.

"Most of our parents have not been to college and/or work more than one job. Therefore, family income is low making it impossible for them to afford a Catholic School Education and the resources needed to succeed once accepted," Endom said. The foundation is not only an opportunity for a better future for students,

State & Local, Continued on page 11.

Big Chief Jeremy "Black" Lacen Black Flame Hunters

By: Glenn Jones and
Oba Lorrius
Data News Weekly
Contributors

Tribal Timeline:
2018 – Big Chief Jeremy "Black"
Lacen

Coming home to the culture:

Although this was the first year Black Flame Hunters has hit the streets, their Chief is a Wiley Vet. Growing up, uptown at the age of six he and his friends started imitating the Wild Magnolias and Creole Wild West, Big Chief Jeremy "Black" was destined to have his own tribe. Playing Football successfully all the way to college pulled him away from his first love. Coming home, he started masking with Jeronimo Hunters and Big Chief Tom Landry for fourteen years where he honed his skills and love for this culture.

Q) When was the first time you saw an Indian?

A) Since I could remember. Where I'm from, Simon Bolivar between Jackson and Josephine. Apache Hunters and Wild Magnolias coming out of the same house. Indians coming out of each door. The Chief I masked with was Wild Magnolia. Next door to him his neighbor was one of the Apache Hunters. Creole Wild West was on Jackson.

Q) What's some of the rich history of Uptown Black Masking Culture?

A) Uptown Indians, we're kind of different from the downtown Indians. It's about half and half what we do. Other guys downtown they might do the flat beading like we do, they probably bead a bigger patch, but we bead ours in sections. We kind of jewelry our stuff up



Big Chief Jeremy "Black" Lacen Black Flame Hunters

because that's uptown, that's what I'm used to seeing from Creole Wild West and Wild Magnolia growing up, the richness of it.

Q) Uptown in your area the Tribes were so close. Were conversations about Black Masking Culture common?

A) Oh yea! As kids coming up I remember imitating. The newspaper was green and white and every weekend in the backyard of my Chiefs house making an Indian suit out of newspaper. We imitated our neighborhood Tribes to the fullest as little kids.

Q) Out of all aspects of this culture what attracts you most?

A) All of it. It's exciting and it's a real Spirit and you must really feel it. Some people say they want to mask but when they sit down and start beading everybody taps out. You got to be careful what you ask for.

Q) When did you pick up that needle and thread and say this is it?

A) You know the crazy part is that it took me a minute to come in from the streets. I al-

ways wanted to do it. When I was real young I wasn't really into it, my uncle and them was a Chief and they would say, "come on and mask", but I was always playing ball through high school up until college. Katrina came, and right before Katrina my uncle Tuba died. I was like you know what I'm just going to come on in. This literally saved my life. A lot of my friends were dying so I really came on in.

Q) Talk to me about footwork in this culture?

A) Man, they have some guys who really could put it down. From Chiefs to little kids. They probably can't dance in the club, so they hear them drums it's something totally different. I'm not a dancer but when I hear drums its different.

Q) What's the role of the tambourine in Black Masking Culture?

A) To be honest with you, when I first even went to Indian practice as a kid, there wasn't a drum it was all tambourines. Somebody probably had a little bucket or something in there, but it was all tambourines and

it was rockin, and it was rollin.

Q) Many Chiefs say they feel free when they put on their ceremonial suit, what does that mean for you?

A) This is freeing. You're free. Self-owned and self-made, you're Free. It's what we did before slavery. You're a different person. There's so much that you deal with in the year doing this. You lose so much, please believe me I've lost a lot. This destroys families. Sometimes either you accept it, or you just leave it alone. But this is free. No pain. I stick myself with a needle but it's no pain. Its gonna hurt but it's not pain because that end result is freeing. Literally like Freedom.

Q) The 1828 Webster 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. History shows that this culture and your ancestors to this land predate colonialism. Was this history ever passed down to you?

A) You know I've been seeing it on Facebook. They have Black Indians. My 2nd Chief use to tell me, "I think you should change your men to brown and make brown Indians." I respect what he was saying. Now is time to start. Since knowledge has been brought upon, now it's really time to make them Indians brown.

Q) In 300 years what do you want to be said about the Black Flame Hunters and yourself?

A) That we are well respected and that we respected everyone and that I did my thing. That I put my time on the street and I had fun doing it and I'm merry about it. Hopefully the culture will keep going.

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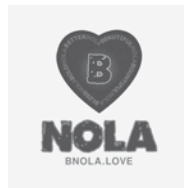
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Wages, Political Representation Explains Disparities for Black Families in New Orleans

By Chris Anders
Data News Weekly
Contributor

A group of local experts ranging from university professors to a former city councilman held a panel on April 19, 2018 focusing specifically on the welfare of the City of New Orleans' African-American Community. The panel sought to consider what people of color in the New Orleans Community can do to attempt to bring equality in America's cities.

The panel titled "State of Black America in New Orleans," attracted a room full of young students in the Convocation Annex of Xavier University's Campus, as the speakers touched on topics such as economics and politics.

"I chose these people because they are local, and they are competent, caring, and capable," said Brian Turner, a Clinical Psychology Assistant Professor at Xavier.

Turner, who hosted the event, explained the discussion was meant to bring people to action in the community while highlighting that the guest speakers were all passionate about bringing changes to better the lives of the African-American Community. The panel included insights from Silas Lee a Professor in Public Policy at Xavier, Oliver



Host Brian Turner joined Silas Lee, Oliver Thomas, Rachel Graham, and Alanah Odoms Hebert as speakers for the State of Black New Orleans forum on Thursday April 19th. (Photos by Chris Anders)

Thomas, the former City Council President, Rachel Graham, the President of the New Orleans Association of Black Journalists, and Alanah Odoms Hebert an Attorney and Head of the Division for Children and Families for the Louisiana Supreme Court.

In public policy, there is much to do to improve the quality of life for families in the City, according to Silas Lee. His work focuses on examining the social-economic status of African-Americans in New Orleans. In 2010, the per capita income rate for Blacks was \$15,000 a year compared to the \$42,000 a year

for Whites, he noted.

"That's a severe disparity and that disparity causes inter-generational consequences in institutionalized poverty," Lee said.

This data explains why the community has suffered erosion of economic mobility for African-Americans, according to Lee, because new data shows the average income per household for Blacks is down \$2,000 and up \$10,000 per household for Whites since 2010.

The speakers also exchanged thoughts on how the African-American Community could stop the trend of unequal wealth distribution

in the City.

"What's holding us back is the lack of political participation," said Alanah Odoms Hebert, an Attorney for the Louisiana Supreme Court. "A large part of the African-American Communities is not running or voting for office because they do not believe they can win," Hebert said.

The City of New Orleans and its people have seen firsthand the struggles poverty brings such as violence. Graham also noted why she thought poverty in the African-American Community was a major problem in the City.

"The majority of New Orleans is African-American and wages for African-American people are way underpaid," Graham said. "It sets the City up to fail."

There are so many things politicians can do, added Oliver Thomas, former President of the City-Council, who resigned his seat after pleading guilty to bribery charges in 2007. He still believes politicians must play a role to address economic disparities for African-Americans.

"Education and economics," Thomas said. "New Orleans is a poor City, but we get a lot of money through tourism, but we have to spend it in the right places and that starts by getting the right people in office."

The discussion raised awareness on how important it is for the African-American Community to vote. Xavier Psychology student Jayna Motley, who attended the event, said she really was intrigued about the discussion about how some people just aren't fit to serve in the government.

"The panel helped me understand more about how important elected officials are to the community," Motley said. "From now on I will always vote and pay very close attention to the policies of everyone running for office."

Newsmaker, Continued from page 5.

done was successful, but we must move to the next level and all people need to be part of that."

Moving forward Williams thinks more resources need to be invested in empowering local people who are natives often left out of many of the initiatives aimed at spurring growth in the City. "We must work harder to incentivize the growth of our own entrepreneurs and small businesses giving those owners opportunities and they will hire locals who will spend their money in the City. We must also have more local DBE participation not only as subcontractors on City contracts but as prime contractors as well, this can help build wealth for locals in our community."

Housing and Race

The Big Easy is not so easy to live in these days as post-Katrina has bared out becoming the sec-

ond most cost burdened City in the country after San Francisco. It is a sad state where once affordable housing existed now has seen a wave of gentrification that's pushed out longtime City residents and also has displaced some to never return.

Jay Banks is dismayed by what he sees happening across the City and inside his district as it relates to housing. "Over the past eight years I have seen the acceleration of people being forced out or losing their homes and not being able to afford to stay in the most special place in the City; which is uptown New Orleans and that is terrifying to me. We have got to address it. People who have lived here their entire lives should have the opportunity to live where they want."

Continuing Banks says speaking of his priorities once he is on the City Council, "It is not about blaming anyone, but it is about balancing the scales where everybody can benefit, that are economically able, have quality of life and having ac-

cess to services. And that they can live in clean, safe and affordable neighborhoods. It is my intention to be a councilman for the entire district. I fully understand the needs of the Garden District are very important, but they are no more important than the needs of Gert Town and we've got to have a balance that everybody in the district matters regardless of race or socioeconomic status.

Moving in the Right Direction

Some believe while there are problems with the Landrieu Administration that they have laid the groundwork for initiatives that can benefit the citizens of New Orleans, and where fairness and equity are the goals. "This administration has taken on getting to the root of understanding crime particularly murder, identifying putting reforms in place for young people that may be susceptible. They have developed a youth violence reduction strategy,

workforce development and support services and they partnered with community resource providers and non-profits with us being one of them," says Erika McConduit, outgoing President and CEO of Urban League of Louisiana.

"The Cease Fire Program to stop retaliatory violence, working on racial justice and healing, taking the lead to remove Confederate Monuments, The Welcome Table Initiative, and community circles. I feel even if some things haven't been as successful as others this administration, I can say they have put the time and resources in trying to dissect and understand the problems. I think this is something the next administration can build on."

First Female Mayor and Working with the New Administration

The New Administration is an historic one as New Orleans will have its first female mayor. And while it should not be an issue, a

woman in a leadership position must work harder than her male counterparts. "The reality is all women in leadership have to work harder to accomplish more with less, so I would encourage us all to provide as much support for women in leadership and not let that be an impediment to a successful administration. I think she is highly capable," McConduit, says of the incoming Mayor LaToya Cantrell.

"I think the City is at a critical time that not just for this administration but for any after this we need to be sure to lay the groundwork for what it means to be a successful mayor whether or not you are a woman or a man the playing field should be level. It is in all our best interest; her success is in all of our best interest."

Jay Banks, who has worked with the incoming mayor, sees this as a great opportunity to get things

Tricentennial Reception Honors First Lady of The Republic of Haiti

Story and Photo By
Monte' Lambert
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The local Haitian-American Community welcomed Martine Moïse, the First Lady of Haiti at a Tricentennial Reception on April 21st. The reception was held in the Administration Auditorium on Xavier University's Campus. The current President of Xavier, C. Reynold Verret, who is Haitian-American, welcomed the First Lady to the City and spoke on the historical ties between New Orleans and Haiti. The reception was organized by Joel Vilmenay, the President and General Manager of WDSU-TV, who welcomed the community to greet Moïse.

"This City's connection with Haiti is significant and it goes back to the beginning and the inception of New Orleans," Vilmenay said. "In celebration of its 300-Year Anniversary, it was wonderful for the City to invite the First Lady of Haiti to come to New Orleans and her accepting that invitation also gave of the opportunity as the Haitian Community here in New Orleans to host a reception with her and to meet



Xavier University President Dr. C. Reynold Verret speaks with Haitian First Lady Martine Moïse at a Tricentennial Event on April 21st on the university's campus. (Photo by Monte' Lambert)

her and to hear from her directly," Vilmenay said.

The First Lady spoke on current developments in Haiti, and the event featured musical selections by Jean Montès, the Director of Orchestral Studies and Coordinator of Strings at Loyola University New Orleans, who is also a member of the local Haitian-American Community in the City. Montes conducted the orchestra in the playing of the Haitian and

American Anthems and other classics from the country.

"This event is very special," Montes said. "I've been here for about a good 30 years in this country and we never had anybody from the government take the time and come out and really encourage the work of the Haitian Community, but also celebrate with us some things that we are a part of which is the culture of New Orleans," he added.

"I thank her for the effort that

she made to be here, it means a lot," Montes said.

The historical connections between Haiti and New Orleans was one of the reasons the organizers said they felt it was important to invite a Haitian official during the anniversary year.

"At one point in time in New Orleans History, the population was doubled when you had a migration of Haitians who came to New Orleans and this was not long after the Haitian Revolution," Vilmenay said. "So now you have generations of Haitians that are now identified as New Orleanians," he added.

The First Lady spoke briefly during the reception, addressing the audience and sharing plans on how the government of her husband President Jovenel Moïse was working to improve life in Haiti. Moïse said the country of Haiti is working to use more of its natural resources to better serve needs of the Haitian people.

"Everywhere I go I want to speak to my sons and daughters," Moïse said in Haitian Kreyol. "I'd be really hurt if I came to New Orleans and did not come and speak to you all today," she said as Xavier's President translated on her behalf.

Newsmaker, Continued from page 10.

done for those in need. "I think LaToya gets it. I think she will be a valuable asset because she understands the issues I am talking about and I feel we will be working very closely together to try to bring out some real substantive changes. I feel very good that she is committed to the community and balancing the scales. She has shown this in her work in the community and on the council and I am sure she will

continue this work as mayor.

The City's future is in the hands of a new mayor and mostly new City Council, but it is important that the shaping of our City moving forward is a partnership between our elected official and all the stakeholders, that includes citizens, advocacy groups and the business community and others that means the future of the City is in all our hands and we must work together to shape it where we can have a better City for all and move forward together.

State & Local, Continued from page 11.

but also for parents.

"My family views the PLEASE Foundation as a blessing from God," said PLEASE Foundation parent Frederica Perriott. "After Hurricane Katrina, our financial circumstances changed dramatically, dropping from a two-income family to a one income family. Without this foundation, we would not be able to afford to give our three children that type of Christian education we value so much."

The PLEASE Foundation has given 318 scholarships and has awarded over \$1,156,000.00 in scholarship money in the City of New Orleans. These scholarships are important to the community, said Chervonda Fortenberry, a PLEASE Foundation parent.

"The Please Foundation has helped a lot of families cover portions, if not all tuition, for selected children throughout the City," Fortenberry said. "Overall, The Please Foundation and the parents of these children want an excellent education and faith-based experi-

ence to develop and nurture our youth to become productive adults in our society," she said.

The foundation has set goals to provide more opportunities and greater resources to each of its students now and in the future. These goals include providing students with college scholarships, taking students on college tours and educational trips to Washington D.C. The organization also employs the foundation's college graduates in order to serve the New Orleans Community.

Many parents shared their appreciation for the foundation and its efforts at the Annual Bake and Bowl such as PLEASE Foundation parent Tanisha Johnson-White.

"I want to be a part of everything that this foundation does and to be perfectly honest it's still not enough," Johnson-White said. "I know that Yvette has stayed up at night and has experienced very long days for our children, her adopted children, and that is priceless," she said.

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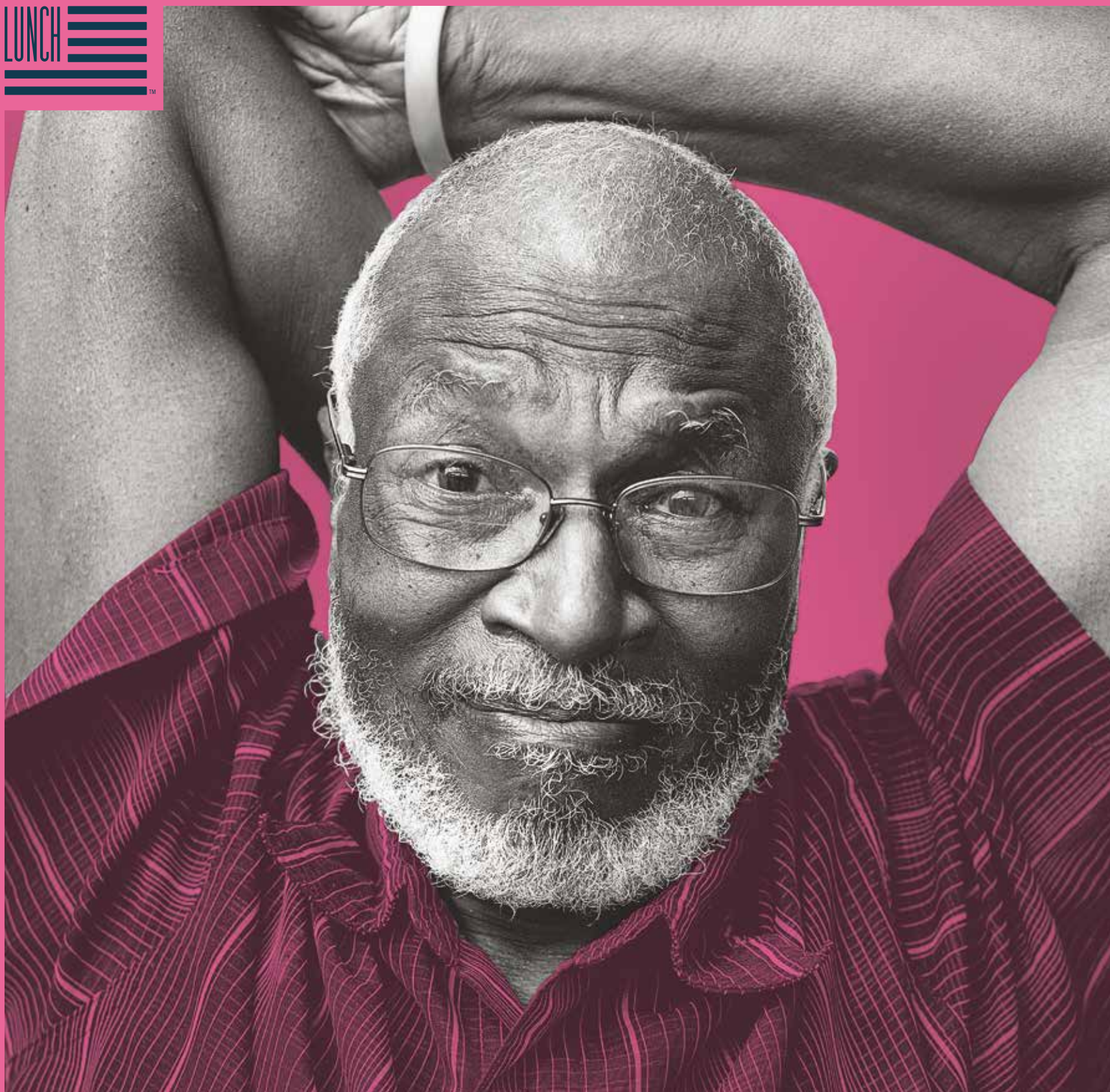
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