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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# Race in 21st Century America



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## THE POWER OF THE PRESS

The first African American newspaper, Frederick's Journal, was published in 1830. Ever since, African Americans have used the press to establish an independent voice for black communities and advance the struggle for freedom and equality. Publishers and journalists challenged racism by exposing injustice, reporting on civil rights actions, and presenting positive images of black identity and achievement. Publications also reflected the diversity of black people in the United States and throughout the diaspora.

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# 21st Century and Race in America



Take em down NOLA leaders Malcolm Suber, Angela Kinlaw and Michael “Quess” Moore (Pictured above) as they lead the protest in March, 2018 on a marched through the streets of New Orleans advocating for the removal of more monuments to slave owners and Confederate officials.

By Edwin Buggage  
Data News Weekly Editor

**America's Original Sin**

Racism in America is nothing new; from its inception it has played a part in shaping racial behavior and policies for centuries. Conversely, there's also been a

response where there have been those both Blacks and Whites who have been committed to fighting back this scourge that is a stain on a country founded on all people having the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We are again at a crossroads of where the U.S. will stand at this time in its history as issues of race and racism are once again in the forefront of conversations

around the nation. We have seen an escalation in all things racial since Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States. His rise some would argue has ridden on a wave of racially charged incidents and language that has not been seen in decades. If we were to examine some of the rhetoric it seems that we are in a time warp confused about whether it is 2018 or 1918; with the latter being a sad time in the nation's

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history where segregation and the lynching of Black bodies from trees were a way to keep Blacks in their place. This nadir in the history of the U.S. also saw some of the vilest racial rhetoric spewed by many Whites from those at the bottom rungs of society, to those who occupied positions of power, to the KKK, who were at their most powerful at the time.

Today America is in the midst of the un-civil war, where the gap of political polarization is widening. This is something that not only threatens racial relations, but democracy as we have come to know it in this country. It is in this time that the U.S. needs to re-examine a few of the words that appear in the Preamble to the Constitution "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union establish, justice, and insure domestic tranquility." We must ask ourselves what that means for America in the 21st Century.

### Trumpism is the New Normal

In recent times race and racism is a topic some would rather ignore than talk about in a frank and open way. This practice of avoidance hasn't gotten us any closer to solutions. Bart Everson is a founding member and past President of Friends of Lafitte Corridor, a columnist for Mid-City Messenger, and a participant in New Orleans Lamplight Circle. He is currently serving as chair for the Green Party of New Orleans.

"It seems at first blush racism is obviously worse with Trump's rhetoric. Since he's come into power it is bringing out the hardcore old-fashioned racist. The Nazi, White supremacist types; they are not trying to dress it up or hide. It seems he has given them the confidence to say what they want without fearing any repercussions," states Everson.

But he also believes that the recent rise in racism among Whites did not start with Trump's ascendance and was always there taking many different forms, "Some have pretend racism disappeared all of a sudden and was no longer an issue of importance especially among White Americans, maybe they have this luxury or fantasy because it does not impact their lives in a direct way; but I would assume people of color were a bit more cognizant of the hate mongering and racial bias that goes on in their everyday lives."

### Everyday Bias: Starbucks, Blacks and Boycotts

This everyday bias recently came to a head when two African-American men in Philadelphia were

arrested at a Starbucks when the store manager called the police on them while they were waiting to have a meeting with a business associate. This incident was captured on video and went viral. Starbucks in response decided to recently take a day closing its stores early to give the first of what they call sensitivity training so that these incidents would not happen again.

Dana Smith works in the mental health field and has lived in multiple states across the U.S. and regularly uses Starbucks as a satellite office space and to relax with friends. She has friends and associates of different races and feels the day of training is a good thing, but that the organization is not as much the problem as individuals who feel when they see Blacks they assume the worse and overreact. Making her point she says, "The employees of Starbucks spent a day to do this training; any training you can get is wonderful. As far as the boycott I disagree, and think the focus is misdirected. Starbucks in their official policy that discriminates against Blacks; it was the individual manager who made the decision to call the police. And while it is a good first step for the company as a public awareness piece and conversation starter, I don't believe it will change many of the White employees at Starbucks of who have prejudices and negative feelings about Blacks because they are so ingrained in American society."

### All Words Matter

Recently, Actress and Comedian Rosanne Barr had her hit TV show cancelled because of a tweet about former top Obama Aide Valerie Jarrett, likening her to if the Muslim Brotherhood and the Planet of the Apes had a baby. Much of this type of rhetoric online was also the case during much of the Obama Presidency where he and his wife were both attacked, called monkeys and other racial epithets. And the one with one of the largest bullhorns attacking the legitimacy of Barack Obama and the Birther Movement is oddly enough Donald Trump, who began his climb to the highest office in the land clinging to this falsehood that President Obama was not born in the U.S.

This sort of ignorance is something that is troubling to Xavier University Professor Robin Vander, where some of her work focuses on race. "I believe we are at a tipping point where a crisis is coming on. It is not just about language, some of this has led to violence," says Vander. "Look at what happened in Charlottesville. It is a clear reflection of the language, the discourse and the current administration that licensed and unleashed people's



Bart Everson (pictured) is a founding member and past President of Friends of Lafitte Corridor, a columnist for Mid-City Messenger, and a participant in New Orleans Lamplight Circle. He is currently serving as chair for the Green Party of New Orleans.



Dr. Robin G. Vander is an Associate Professor of English and African American & Diaspora Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana, and is co-founder of the university's Performance Studies Laboratory. Her research and teaching encompass ethnography, performance, and social justice issues in both New Orleans and throughout the African Diaspora

fear which is being acted out."

She says while some strides have been made there is still a long way to go to eradicate racism in America, "It is willful ignorance at play and is part of a pattern in this country that for every stride forward on the racial front there is a backlash." Continuing Vander says we must begin to fix the root causes of rac-

ism if the society is to move past it, "I would suggest people read Michelle Alexander's book The New Jim Crow, because I think we cannot any longer underestimate how deeply woven racism is in the fabric of society. These issues are not new, we have never addressed race in a way to move beyond this social construct once and for all."

### Confederates Closer to Home

During the past administration of Mayor Mitch Landrieu and the prior City Council made the decision to remove several Confederate Monuments. This was a flashpoint in racial relations in New Orleans as council meetings as well as in the media and online things got heated on both sides of the issue. So much so that the statues were removed it was not publicly announced and when it was done there was heavy security by NOPD.

Everson has been a grassroots activist for decades and published a piece in the Mid-City Messenger addressing this issue. "It is a great example of how true leadership comes from the grassroots, so it is my understanding this campaign started to remove the monuments started with grassroots activism take Em Down NOLA. Mitch then took their cue and it just so happen to be a political opportunity for him as well. But I think it took the momentum they had built and took it over the edge and the former Mayor and the City Council used their political power to make it happen.

Everson says he was surprised when he saw groups of people coming out waving confederate flags, led by former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke and other supporters of keeping the monuments. "It was shocking and troubling to see people in New Orleans and waving confederate flags. This is something I have not seen very much in New Orleans in the past 20 years. I didn't grow up here to have the same associations; I never got to talk to anyone pro monument until after they'd been taken down. I disagree with these people having an uncritical response to change. People I spoke to who have a fondness in my opinion had not thought through what they'd symbolized and the history of how the monuments were put up."

### Finding A Place of Peace in America

Slavery was America's Holocaust and alongside the genocide of the Native Americans, its greatest sin. Dana Smith who has traveled throughout Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean says the confederate monuments have no place in a City that's multi-racial and represents the worse time in America's history. These people in her mind were traitors and not patriots and should not be celebrated.

Speaking of her travels to Germany where Hitler and the Nazi's led a reign of terror during World War 2, that included the Holocaust



# A Tricentennial Salute to the Black Press in New Orleans

By Shearon Roberts  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Christopher Dylan Brown graduated with the Class of 2018 from Xavier University of Louisiana this May. The New Orleans native and mass communication major took my journalism and converged media courses as a student and will ultimately pursue a career in public relations. But on March 15, 2018 he paid his first visit to the African-American Museum in Washington, D.C. and he spotted an exhibit item dedicated to the African-American Press called "The Power of the Press." The exhibit text singled out 1827 when Freedom's Journal first published in New York City.

"Ever since, African-Americans have used the press to establish an independent voice for Black communities and advance the struggle for freedom and equality," the exhibit text noted of the significance of what is currently called today the Black Press. Brown immediately recalled his time in my classes where he got the opportunity to write and report for the Black Press in New Orleans, thanks to a partnership that is now in its fourth year. He texted me:

"I'm at the African-American Museum in D.C. Saw this and immediately thought of you...Thank you so much for all that you do and [have] done."

I want to take his thanks and hit forward and send over to the Black Press in New Orleans, the place where I first cut my teeth in journalism more than a decade ago when I was a sophomore at Dillard University. An editor at Data News Weekly took me personally in her car to cover the Black Circus when it visited the City. My eyes were open to stories about Black people, for Black people, produced by Black people. I went on to a career in mainstream media, but my first experience as a reporter for Data News Weekly years ago shaped my career in journalism. Now I get to play it forward as I provide my students with the same experience as a professor of mass communication.

As New Orleans marks its tricentennial year, the City's African-American newspapers are a much often overlooked fabric of the New Orleans story. It has been a tool for challenging historic wrongs for Black people in this City. The Black



Students in the 2018 multimedia reporting class meet with Haitian media professionals in February 2018 as they learn about covering stories of Black people in the Diaspora.



Xavier mass communication Professor Dr. Shearon Roberts at the 2018 Commencement with her former student Christopher Brown.

Press in New Orleans has challenged segregation, lynching, housing, education and social injustice. It is also a place of recording the notable firsts of African-Americans in New Orleans and the State of Louisiana, that don't make the headlines in the mainstream media.

Yet 300 years later, the Black Press in New Orleans is not just a bygone institution, it still lives and breathes and inspires the latest generation of millennials who will take up careers in the media. Four years ago, my colleague Dr. Sheryl Kennedy Haydel and I developed a partnership that allowed students at Xavier and at Dillard University to cover the community and have their reports published in the City's

African-American newspapers. To date, over 500 stories have been reported from mass communication students. Some now hold jobs in newsrooms and communications offices in the City and across the country. However, they first cut their teeth understanding the power and responsibility of the media in the City's Black Press. In marking the 300 years of this City, these millennial students speak for their generation to highlight what the Black Press still represents today. As contributors to this civic exercise of journalism, these students see that their work provides a rough cut to history that tells the stories of Black people as told from our own voices.

Reflections from the Spring 2018 Reporting Class:

"Instead of reading about my community or learning about it from a secondary source, I was able to interact with the African-American community firsthand," said Amyre Brandom Skinner, a mass communication major, who wants to one-day work in International Public Relations. "For once, our community was uplifted in the media and I played a role in highlighting Black excellence, service, and culture. I can only hope my future work allows me to do the same," said Brandom Skinner, a native of Detroit, Mich.

"As a young African-American woman, writing stories about people of color is an inspiration for me, because growing up I noticed that the media displayed more negative than positive stories about the Black community," said Jade Myers, a mass communication major who was born in New Orleans, but raised in Houston, Texas and who hopes to work one day as a broadcast reporter. "Currently writing for Black publications, I have been inspired to write about a broad range of stories in the Black community, from the importance of equity in the Black community to traditional New Orleans parades. While beginning my career journey, I observed that the Black community has so much more to offer than what is often displayed to audiences. As my journey towards my career continues, I hope to be the one to change the negative portrayal of African-

Americans in media and instead get the positive stories of the Black community heard."

Jared Braud, a New Orleans native in the class also wants to work in broadcasting. "The benefit for me publishing with the African-American newspapers was getting a sense of professionalism and it helped me to see that this is the field I want to go into," Braud said.

"My reporting experience this semester helped me prepare for my career in mass media by training my eyes and ears into noticing what's right for the story and what's not," he said of his experience.

"It's such an awarding experience because it allowed me to be in touch with the Black community and discuss things that involve the Black community," said Piper Thurman, a mass communication major at Xavier, and a Houston resident. "Reporting this semester gave me a lot of knowledge and insight into the world of the media. It's helped teach me numerous skills I can apply to my career in broadcast journalism."

"The benefit of being published in an African-American newspaper is that it shines a light on the good that our people are doing in our communities. It is a celebration of us," said Ka'lya Ellis, a New Orleans native, who attends Xavier. "My reporting experience helped me realize that I like other fields that come with reporting such as photography and filming. I've also learned to be self-sufficient and resourceful."

Dillard student and New Orleans native Glenn Rebert II, like Ellis, said through reporting in the class, he realized for sure where his strengths lied. "My reporting experience this semester helped me prepare for my career in mass media because it helped me solidify my decision to be behind the camera and how to properly do so by learning about the different types of shots needed for both photography and broll," Rebert said.

Precious Smith in the class said she wants to pursue public relations but working for the Black Press helped her with her communication skills. "My reporting experience has helped me prepare for my career in mass media through on-going communication and in-

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# The Opioid Crisis

## A Justice & Mercy Initiatives Program

By Bill Hill  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Opioid Addiction has become one of the greatest problems facing our nation, claiming as many as 120 lives each day. As part of a new "Justice & Mercy Initiatives" Program at Central St. Matthew UCC in New Orleans, on Saturday, May 12, 2018, the church held a forum on opioid addiction where members of the congregation and the community-at-large were invited to a breakfast presentation led by Special Agent Brian Singleton of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

A forty-minute DEA video entitled "Chasing the Dragon" ex-

plored the tragic lives of several opioid victims and revealed the real horrors of addiction. At the close of the video, Special Agent Singleton was joined by Trooper Troy Pichon of the Louisiana State Police Narcotics Bureau, United States Attorney's Office Community Outreach, Officer Quinn Smith, New Orleans FBI Community Outreach, Officer Lory Chauvin and Odyssey House Outreach Coordinator, Emily Loska. Each offered insight into the insidious nature of opioid addiction abuse and how law enforcement and recovery agencies are learning to work together to fight this growing epidemic.

Originally administered to relieve the pain suffered by patients



Special Agent Brian Singleton of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration gave a special presentation on opioid addiction as part of a new "Justice & Mercy Initiatives" Program at Central St. Matthew UCC in New Orleans, on Saturday, May 12, 2018.

afflicted with terminal diseases, opioids are now frequently prescribed by doctors for relief of chronic pain.

The group learned that these are now recognized as incredibly addictive drugs which can destroy

victims both physically and psychologically. The downward spiral of addiction often results in a long nightmare for the victim's family, friends, and community, often ending in incarceration and death. The presenters explained that while society tends to criminalize addiction, our first response should be providing better access to treatment and rehabilitation.

### HOW TO HELP

You can save a life. Go to any pharmacy. Fill out the paperwork to obtain a dose of the overdose drug Naloxone to have on hand if someone you know or someone in your

**Opioid, Continued on page 11.**

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where there was the murder and slaughter of six million European Jews. "There are no statues of Hitler in Germany, instead of them having statues of the Nazi's they have the survivors of the holocaust. I think that can create a different type of conversation among the country as opposed to having the oppressor and their symbols being showcased on public land. It can say as the Jews often say, 'Never Again' would we as a society accepts these atrocities."

### Moving toward Solutions

While it is important that we understand the problem of race, it is time to move towards solutions. One of the biggest two things that is important is overcoming the fear and ignorance that arguably are the two key ingredients that creates racial animus. "Educating people and putting them in safe spaces to have these conversations are important if we are to confront and combat racism," says Professor Vander.

To further illustrate her point she says, "I was in grad school as a teaching fellow in N.C. Chapel Hill. The first time I taught a class called 'The Black Experience in America,' students were silent. They were afraid, so I took a stack of index cards in the context of this class what is your greatest fear and the other side what is your greatest pleasure in this class? Many were afraid of upsetting others are things getting volatile. These are the White kids fearing saying



Recently, Actress and Comedian Rosanne Barr had her hit TV show "Rosanne" cancelled because of a tweet about former top Obama Aide Valerie Jarrett. In her tweet, Barr stated that Jarrett is the offspring of The Muslim Brotherhood and The Planet of the Apes. ABC, which is the network that produced "Rosanne" is headed by a Black woman, Channing Dungey released Barr within hours of her tweet and the backlash.

something stupid or being attacked or called racist."

Dana Smith agrees and says Blacks cannot always be offended because Whites do not know that some of the things they may say are racist. And while the outrage is justified that we must not always be emotional and irrational, but use these moments not only to teach individuals, but in the case of Rosanne Barr, but the society-at-large that certain types of language is not acceptable.

Vander, who was chosen last summer to facilitate a four-part series of conversations on race spon-

sored by the Louisiana Endowment of the Humanities, says more of these conversations need to take place. "I found these conversations as they went on to be very helpful, because these were places where all people could talk about their thoughts on race and at the end respect the different perspectives. For it is not very often that there are spaces people can have honest and open dialogs about race without it being overly emotional or people being afraid to be offensive. So, this was quite refreshing, and I feel should be something that continues."

### Black and White and the Future of New Orleans and America

As the City continues to reflect and look back on 300 years and say there are great things this City should celebrate. But as it relates to issues of race New Orleans continues to have problems surrounding equity, fairness and justice.

Bart Everson who has a daughter in elementary school and he and his wife live a very integrated life; is somewhat pessimistic about the future of the City unless there are systematic and struc-

tural changes to address the inequities. "I worry my daughter will not have a New Orleans to live in. The focus should not only be on the City 300 years of looking back; but can we even imagine will the City even be here 300 years from now. This question should be governing or at least informing everything we do; finding ways of living that we address issues of equity and social justice."

Today the City is at another historical moment electing its first female mayor LaToya Cantrell, and questions abound about how she will govern, and will she be able to in some ways bridge the wide divided that is race in New Orleans? "I supported LaToya and I endorsed her publicly and I have high hopes that she will do great things. She comes from the community activist background, so I would think that she would understand engaging the community" says Everson.

Much of what will happen in the areas of race on a local and national level remains to be seen. But solutions will begin with people seeing each other as fellow humans and that difference does not mean deficient. This is the true starting line if New Orleans and the world can get to the finish line of all people being treated equal. This does not simply lie at the doorstep of whoever is the president, mayor or any elected leaders. It begins with everyday people, ordinary people, listening to each other and respecting each other, and working together to become extraordinary.



# Upcoming Fashion Influencers



**Delaney George**  
Columnist

The world of Fashion is ever-changing and new trailblazers arise every day. From make-up to hair, or even the latest style of heels, Fashion is always innovating on a style. Here are three Fashion innovators to look out for.

**Brittany Byrd:** New York native and design artist brings an edgy street style with a Tokyo inspired flare. Many of her looks are laid-back, and dark toned but she always manages to rock the latest designer ensembles and more importantly, colored hair.

**Keleam:** Upcoming musical artist Keleam embodies contemporary art within her style. Using a lot of textures, a patterns Keleam gracefully rocks any style she wears. Although her closet may be full of many solids and patterns, she always finds a way to bring out the spark in her style.

**Teisha Jeanie:** Also known as the queen of "slay" incorporates over the top makeup to her style like no other. Jeanie, a California native takes pride in colored eyeshadows, and eye designs to match all her hot looks. Her style is a more modern day urban, funky, style with a vintage 70's feel.

For more information on these upcoming fashion innovators, email [Delinkey@yahoo.com](mailto:Delinkey@yahoo.com)

Right:  
Keleam  
strikes  
a fierce  
pose in a  
pinstriped  
dress



Above:  
Brittany Byrd  
sports red  
latex pants  
with a graphic  
tee and army  
jacket.



Above:  
Teisha Jeanie  
rocks a sheer  
top with silver  
metallic pants  
and colorful  
tiger platforms

(Photos courtesy of LanesLense)

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# Gabriel The Great, Turns 8

By Marion Hercyl  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

A big Happy Birthday to Gabriel Jones, otherwise known as Gabriel The Great, who turned 8 last week. A big celebration was in store for Gabe and his friends at Laser Tag, where the party goers took a spin on the whirlybirds and gobbled cake and ice cream. What a great day to turn 8! Happy Birthday Gabriel!



## Nicole's Traditional Hawaiian Luau Birthday Party

June Hazeur  
Data News Weekly Contributor

On Saturday, May 19th, it was Nicole Carter's Birthday and also our own Terry Jones. Since they share the same birthdate she included him on the cake. Every year Nicole has her Traditional Hawaiian Luau Birthday Party at The Prime Example, it is always a blast. She traditionally invites some of the Zulu Club Members to come and join in the festivities. It includes Hawaiian pineapple cups for your drinks and everyone is given a lei to wear. They were available in a variety of colors and styles. She goes all out to make this a great event. It is totally a luau. Everyone enjoyed delicious food and lots of booze to drink.

Photos by Jerry LaVigne



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



# When it Comes to Voting, We're Fighting a Second Civil War



By Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr  
Founder & President, Rainbow  
PUSH Coalition

The talk shows are filled with the latest rumor about WikiLeaks and Russian interference in our elections. What was done still remains a mystery. But Republican tricky leaks — the systematic efforts to suppress the vote — are an established fact, and a far greater threat to free elections.

The facts are not in dispute. A recent report by the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty notes that in addition to suffering the most extreme inequality in the industrial world, the U.S. ranks among the lowest for voter participation. Voter registration levels, for example, are 64 percent in the U.S., compared with 91 percent in Canada and the United Kingdom and 99 percent in Japan.

This isn't an accident. As The New York Times reports, conservatives have openly stated for years that they do better when fewer people vote. In the South under segregation, the power structure used any number of tricks — poll taxes, and special quizzes, intimidation and just plain murder — to keep blacks from voting. Now, Re-

publicans are clear that they must suppress the vote if they are to keep power. As professor Donald Jones stated at a Florida hearing of the National Commission for Voter Justice, "When it comes to the vote, we are in the Second Civil War."

The National Commission for Voter Justice was launched by RainbowPush early this year to undertake a 2-year mission of documenting the status of voting rights in the U.S., educating the public about ongoing threats and inspiring reforms to reaffirm the right to vote. The NCVJ has held hearings in four states — Michigan, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida — and produced research from six states.

The NCVJ found that systematic efforts are underway to make voting more difficult in state after state.

Voter purging and voter caging is being conducted on a much larger scale since 2016 than is popularly recognized.

In Georgia in 2017, 320,000 voters who had been purged from the voter rolls had to file a lawsuit to regain the right to vote. In Florida, black voters are being purged after being labeled "inactive," by not responding to a mail request for confirmation of address. The Interstate Crosscheck System, invented by Republican attorneys, is used by 27 states and is estimated to lead to the wrongful purging of hundreds of thousands of voters.

States also work to make voting harder. They limit the days of early voting, reduce the number of polling places, leading to long lines and frustrated voters, and relocate

polling places to distant communities. Georgia is notorious for moving polling sites from black communities to inaccessible locations with poor advance notice. Ex-felons who have served their sentence are still disenfranchised in Florida and other states; student face more and more barriers designed to keep them from voting.

Republican state legislators have pushed to pass voter ID laws across the country; 34 states now enforce these laws. Eleven percent of U.S. citizens — 21 million people — lack a governmental issued photo ID, the ACLU reports. One in four African-Americans lacks this form of ID. The Government Accountability Office found that strict photo

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on page 9.

## Black Women Are Changing the Tide of American Politics



Jeffrey L. Boney  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Last week, the world witnessed something that had never been done before in the history of politics in the United States.

Not only did Democratic voters in Georgia elect a 44-year-old African American candidate as the first-ever Black gubernatorial nominee in the state, they also made history by electing the first Black woman to be a major party nominee for governor in the United States.

That's right—former Georgia House Minority Leader and attorney Stacey Abrams soundly defeated her opponent, former State Rep. Stacey Evans, with an overwhelming 53 percent landslide victory; Abrams won 76.5 percent of the vote compared to Evans' 23.5 percent. Abrams will face off against the winner of the Republican primary runoff election that will be held in July between Georgia's Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and Sec-

retary of State Brian Kemp.

While much of the political conversation around the country has been focused on the success of women candidates as a whole, one of the primary reasons for Abrams' dominant showing in the Democratic primary was the high turnout of Black voters, particularly Black women voters.

The convincing victory by Abrams, a rising star in the Democratic Party, has created a significant amount of chatter in political circles about the growing success Black women candidates are having across the country, particularly in a deeply southern state like Georgia that hasn't had a Democratic governor since 2003.

"I am a proud daughter of the Deep South," Abrams stated during her victory speech after winning the Georgia Democratic gubernatorial nomination. "To claim our victory, to write that next chapter and live those best lives, we have a lot of work to do. We have to reach out to those who do not believe their voices matter. Who have been disappointed again and again by promises made and never kept...With your help, we will register every last person we know."

Abrams continued: "And we're going to search out those we don't know yet and prove they matter

to us, too...In the Book of Esther, there's a verse that reminds us that we were born for such a time as this. And now is a time to defend our values and protect the vulnerable — to stand in the gap and to lead the way...that is what we will continue to do—all the way to victory in November."

A victory by Abrams in November would truly be a game changer relative to politics, as we know it, in the Deep South and across the country.

Prior to 2003, no Republican had ever served as governor in Georgia since Reconstruction. Republican George "Sonny" Perdue III changed that after he was elected and then sworn in on January 13, 2003. Perdue served until 2011, and the governorship in Georgia has remained in Republican control ever since.

Then, if you take a look at the rest of the Deep South, which consists of states like Texas, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana, each of those states currently has a Republican governor at the helm, with the exception of Louisiana, where former Democratic state legislator John Bel Edwards was sworn in as governor in 2016.

Abrams has a chance to change the overall landscape of politics as

we know it, but it will take more than having her name on the ballot as the Democratic nominee in Georgia to make that a reality—it will require engaging existing Black voters and focusing on getting newly registered Black voters to the polls in November.

Abrams has adopted a strategy focused on registering new Black voters and engaging more Blacks to come out to the polls and vote in November 2018 than came out in 2014, when only 40 percent of African Americans went to the polls in Georgia, compared to roughly 48 percent of Whites.

If recent history is any indication, the only way the tides will turn in the favorable direction Democrats hope for relative to the key gubernatorial seats that are up for grabs in battleground states this November, is if there is a heavy Black voter turnout—something the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) has been focused on in 2018.

The NNPA, a trade group that represents over 200 Black-owned media companies across the U.S., recently launched an initiative to encourage 5 million new, Black voters to register to vote before the midterm elections, with the hopes of ensuring candidates like Abrams cross the finish line victoriously.

"The NNPA views the electoral victory of Stacey Abrams as the Democratic candidate for Governor of Georgia as one of the most important political advances for the interests of Black America, since President Barack H. Obama was elected," said Dr. Benjamin Chavis, Jr., president and CEO of the NNPA. "In particular, Black women are now the effective vanguard in statewide and local elections across the U.S. The win by Abrams in Georgia is also timely as the NNPA has called upon 5 million more Black Americans to register to vote before the November 2018 midterm elections."

Abrams will need that increase in Black voter turnout to add her name to the list of Black women, who are changing the landscape of politics across the country.

According to a recent report by the Higher Heights Leadership Fund and the Center for American Women and Politics titled "The Chisholm Effect: Black Women in American Politics 2018," Black women only make up 3.6 percent of the U.S. Congress and less than one percent of statewide elected executive officials. Only 38 other Black women have served in Congress since Shirley Chisholm's groundbreaking victory in 1968, when

Boney, Continued on page 11.



## Abstract Nola

# Nola's New Premiere Art Experience & Creative Platform

By Delaney George  
Data News Weekly Columnist

New Orleans is no stranger to art mediums like music, food, and visual arts. When seeking events and organizations that cater to all forms of art, one could say this type of event is impossible to find, until now. Creative Curators Kenneth & Antarah Leilani Hasan-Spears, have introduced a new and intriguing way to combine, music, live art, and a creative platform for artists. Founded in February 2016, Abstract Nola provides an art experience for attendees as well as a safe place for entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their work.

Abstract Nola produced over 50 events and has worked with popular, local brands such as Audubon Nature Institute, SMS Development, and Axiom Art Gallery. Aside



Abstract Nola also offers a number of creative services ranging from graphic & web design, as well as creative events and brand consulting for clients.

from their dedication to the betterment of artists and entrepreneurs, Abstract Nola also offers a number of creative services ranging from graphic & web design, as well as creative events and brand consulting for clients. Each Abstract event can host a range of artists such as comedians, poets, vocalist, and even live body or canvas art. Abstract events like their Art parties and concerts/market series are held bi-weekly and monthly.

The next Abstract event is the June Concert + Market Series located at Lot 1701 (1701 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd). Artists can participate by submitting inquiries to [info@abstractnola.com](mailto:info@abstractnola.com) and patrons can purchase tickets to Abstract events by visiting [www.AbstractNola.com/Tickets](http://www.AbstractNola.com/Tickets). For more information on Abstract Nola email [info@abstractnola.com](mailto:info@abstractnola.com).

## Jackson, Continued from page 8.

ID laws reduce turnout by 2 to 3 percent.

Open voter suppression laws had a far greater effect on the 2016 election than whatever the Russians did. Wisconsin's right-wing Gov. Scott Walker had previously signed into law new voter ID requirements, some of which a Federal District Court had found discriminated against minority voters. Conservative judges at the appellate level upheld the law.

Republicans openly bragged that this would make the difference in the election. The result, by the state's own records, was that 300,000 eligible voters lacked the proper ID. African-American turnout was down dramatically and Hillary Clinton lost the key state by only 22,700 votes.

We should take steps to ensure that no foreign power can interfere with our elections, but we should also act boldly to ensure that the right to vote is not undermined by zealous partisans at home. Voter registration should be automatic. Voting should be facilitated, not made harder. Early voting days should be extended; polling booths easily available; hours extended. No one should have to wait for hours in a line to cast a vote.

In the end, we should amend the Constitution to specifically establish the right to vote.

This basic democratic value is now contested. We have public officials openly bragging about their schemes to suppress the right to vote. There is no greater threat to a democracy. Now it is up to patriots to defend the most basic right of all.

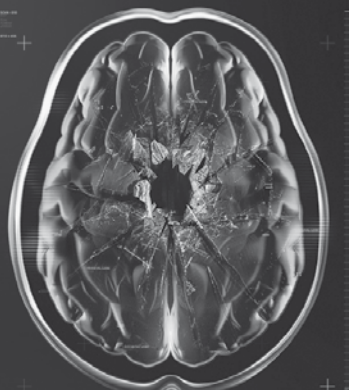
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# Tricentennial Exhibition Highlights Contributions of African Heritage to New Orleans

By Juliana Tomasoni  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

People in New Orleans have one more venue to celebrate the Tricentennial. The New Orleans Historic Collection on Chartres Street in the French Quarter held a reception to launch its exhibition titled "African Heritage of New Orleans: 300 Years in the Making" on June 1, 2018. The audience saw for the first time the collection that shows significant historical and contemporary occurrences and sites associated with people of African descent in New Orleans.

"New Orleans has such a huge history, but sometimes the heritage of African-Americans is mentioned last, and I think is important for us to understand and reflect on the tricentennial, just how important the contribution of Africans to the City is," said Zela Palmer, the Director of The Dillard University Ray Charles Program, one of the contributing institutions to the exhibition.

The African Heritage of New Orleans: 300 Years in the Making illustrates the African presence in New Orleans and the development of a



Audience watches the performance of "Le Code Noir" by Voices in the Dark

uniquely African Cultural Identity in the City. It celebrates the political power of African-Americans in New Orleans that has been progressively significant, with the most recent example being Mayor LaToya Cantrell. As an African-American woman, Cantrell became the first woman elected mayor of New Orleans and reflects how far people of African descent have come in New Orleans from the struggles and fights of enslaved Africans who strove for and achieved their own self-determination.

One of the goals is to attract the young and students to learn about this legacy, organizers said. "We want them to come to the exhibit and really learn about their history, because unfortunately a lot of our history is not in the curriculum," Palmer said. "They should not have to wait until they go to a Historically Black College and University to learn about African-American history," she said.

The exhibition is offered through the collections of The New Orleans Arts & Culture Coalition.



Art donated by The Amistad Research Center called "Mother and Child" (Photos by Juliana Tomasoni)

The NOACC is a collective of local arts, education, and cultural nonprofit organizations that serve as a coordinated voice for the recognition and promotion of civil and human arts, history, and culture in New Orleans.

Besides Dillard University, many other institutions are contributors

for the exhibition. Partners include Xavier University of Louisiana, the Amistad Research Center, the New Orleans Public Library, the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum, the New Orleans Jazz Museum, The Plessy and Ferguson Foundation and others.

People who attended the event at 400 Chartres Street enjoyed a presentation of the "Le Code Noir" by The Voices in The Dark Group and dinner was served with typical creole and Louisiana food. Besides the main exhibition, there will be eight citywide exhibitions in different institutions for the rest of the year, organizers said.

"The main exhibition is highlighted from slaves to the Civil Rights Movement, and it just gives kind of an idea of the main points, moments and people who really pushed to make this City great," Palmer said. The exhibition is free and open to the public.

## Newsmaker, Continued from page 4.



The African-American Museum in Washington, D.C. pays tribute to the Black Press in America. Xavier alumnus Christopher Brown '18 reflected on this in a March 2018 visit.

teractions with individuals of all backgrounds," said Smith, a Baton Rouge native. "It's also helped me come out of my shell and not be intimidated by someone of a higher status, because that could be me one day."

"The benefits I took from publishing with an African-American newspaper is that I am able to reach people of the same ethnicity as me directly in my community," said Monte Lambert, a New York native who attends Xavier. "My reporting experience this semester helped me because it was my first experience and the whole semester was a learning experience to give me the basic tools I need to start my journey towards my career."

"Publishing with an African-American newspaper was beneficial to me in many ways. It taught me how to appreciate, support and contribute to the African-American community in a small way," said Junine Goodison, a Xavier student who is from Jamaica.

Dr. Shearon Roberts is an Assistant Professor of Mass Communication at Xavier University of Louisiana. She first started her career in journalism writing for Data News Weekly as an undergraduate at Dillard University. She was awarded a JMJ Scholarship. She now continues this legacy as she trains students for careers in the media through a partnership with African-American newspapers in New Orleans, including Data News Weekly.

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**Boney, Continued from page 8.**

she became the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

Relative to statewide elected executive offices, only three (3) Black women currently serve in a statewide office—Jenean Hampton (R-Ky.), the Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky; Sheila Oliver (D-N.J.), the Lieutenant Governor of New Jersey; and Denise Nappier (D-Conn.), the State Treasurer of Connecticut. Together, these women represent 4.2 percent (3 of 71) of all women statewide elected executive officials and 0.96 percent (3 of 312) of all statewide elected executive officials in the entire country.

Going even further, only 12 Black women have ever held statewide elected executive office in just 11 out of the 50 states, and prior to Abrams' historic quest to become the next governor of Georgia, no Black woman has ever been elected governor, let alone become the gubernatorial nominee of a major political party. Abrams may be just the person to change things.

Abrams has become a major catalyst behind this exciting new trend of Black women running for office nationally, and a lot of her momentum should trickle down to other seats on a local level.

The nation will see how powerful this momentum has become

since Abrams' historic victory on next Tuesday, June 5, when London Breed, the current president of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, will face off against seven other challengers in her quest to become the city's first Black female mayor.

Still, many of these Black women who decide to run for office need the support of the Democratic Party, who historically has a pretty dismal track record of providing support for African American candidates nationwide and at the local level.

Maybe this time will be different. Time will tell. November to be exact. Stay tuned.

This article was originally published at BlackPressUSA.com.

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as Associate Editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. Jeffrey has been a frequent contributor on "The Nancy Grace Show" and "Crime & Justice with Ashleigh Banfield." Jeffrey is a radio personality and a dynamic, international speaker, experienced entrepreneur, business development strategist and Founder/CEO of the Texas Business Alliance. If you would like to request Jeffrey as a speaker, you can reach him at [jboney1@forward-times.com](mailto:jboney1@forward-times.com). Follow Jeffrey on Twitter @realtalkjunkies.

**Opioid, Continued from page 5.**

community is at risk. See <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/4497>.

You can report suspicious activity in your area to law enforcement. Ask specifically for the agency's Narcotics Division. Provide as many details as possible. See: <http://lsp.org/cid.html>

Write to your local, state and federal representatives to demand better funding for treatment of behavioral and addictive diseases.

When in pain, ask medical professionals for treatment options OTHER than addictive opioid medications. If prescribed to you or a family member, make sure all the medication is accounted for, kept in a safe location and taken only as instructed by that physician.

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Contact Special Agent Bryan Singleton, DEA to arrange for a showing of the video for your organization. 504-655-4662 or email him at [nofd.recruiter@usdoj.gov](mailto:nofd.recruiter@usdoj.gov).

The Justice & Mercy Initiatives Program at Central St. Matthew UCC will continue to identify and explore social topics to provide our citizens opportunities for education and action within our community and beyond. YOU are welcome to join us in this endeavor to help make a difference. Join our contact list! Upcoming events will be listed on our website at [www.centralst-matthewucc.com](http://www.centralst-matthewucc.com), on Facebook and Twitter @CSMUCCnola, or call us at 504-861-8196.

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