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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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# Treading Water

*Sewerage and Water Board Regroups and Moves Forward with Council Oversight*



Image of August 5, 2017 flood in NOLA

**By Calla Victoria**  
**Data News Weekly Contributor**

Unless you have been up at the North Pole helping Santa for the past year or so, you are well aware of the mounting problems at the New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board. Everything began to unravel for the

public utility during investigations after the August 5, 2017 flood that damaged many homes, cars, and business; had many motorists in a life and death situations as their cars flooded out and left many New Orleans streets completely underwater and impassable.

The resulting investigations uncovered numerous maintenance problems including the fact that many

pumps and turbines were offline and inoperable during the time of the heavy rains that caused the flood. As that damaging information came to light S&WB came under a federal audit concerning spending of the FEMA-Funded Public Assistance Grant in the tune of \$1 billion that was earmarked for repairing machinery and infrastructure damaged during Hurricane Katrina.

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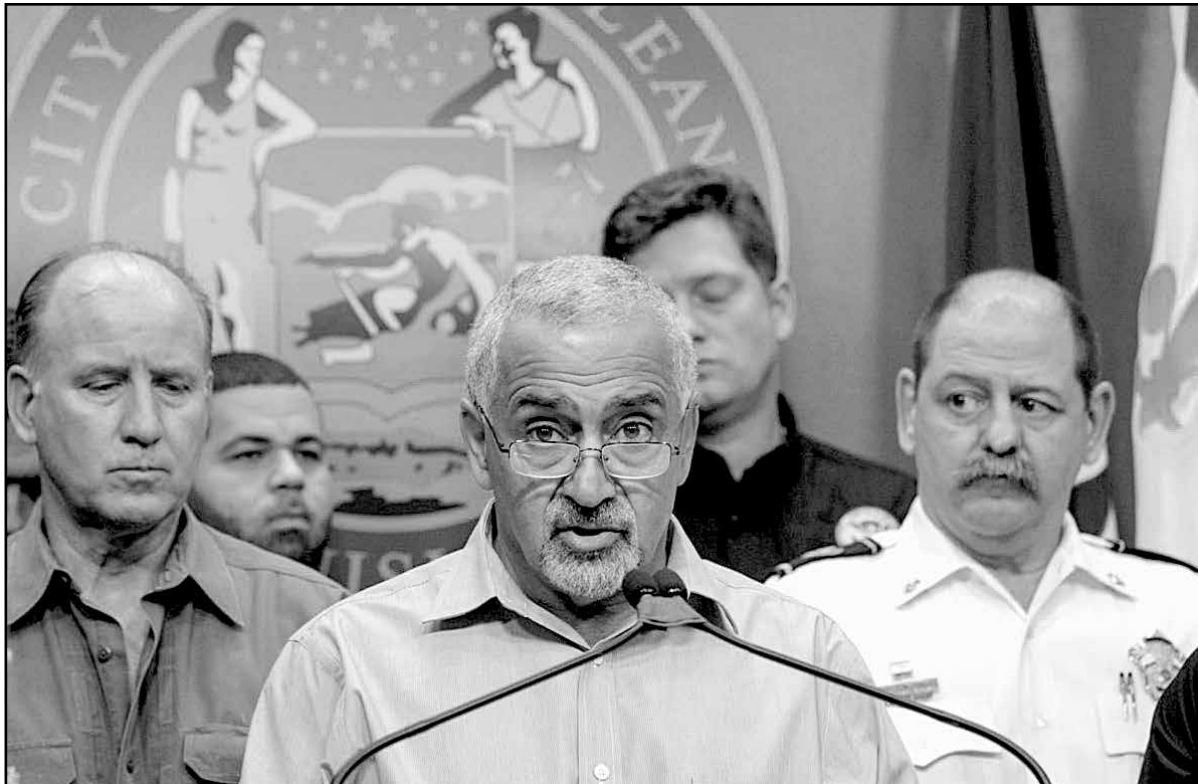
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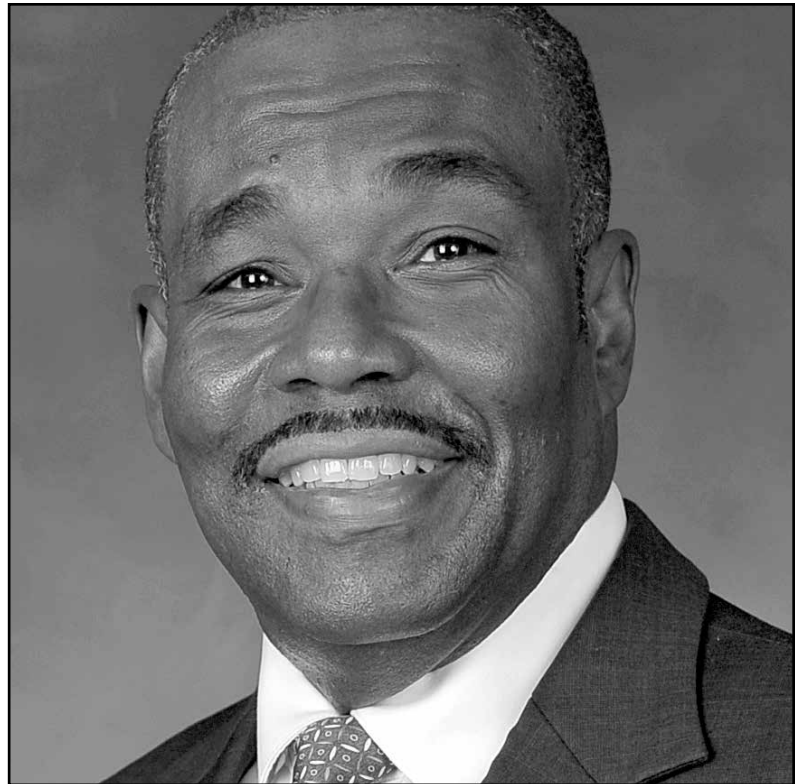
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Mr. Ghassan Korban New Executive Director of the Sewerage &amp; Water Board



Councilman J. H. Banks, appointed to occupying newly created City Council seat on New Orleans' Sewerage &amp; Water Board

Then, to add to the deluge of other problems facing Sewerage & Water Board, a plethora of customers began complaining to local media outlets of huge and inaccurate water bills. When those irregularities could not be explained away, officials at Sewerage & Water Board begrudgingly admitted that because of understaffing issues fostered by low salaries for meter readers and budgeting problems, many bills were mere estimates; while at the same time S&WB was threatening to shut off customers water for non-payment. Coinciding with those mounting allegations and community unrest, top level Sewerage & Water Board officials were getting huge bonuses...which had frustrated New Orleans residents begging the question, "Bonuses for what...

for jobs poorly done?" And for ALL of the aforementioned reasons there was a massive shake up in management at Sewerage & Water Board. The Executive Director and several high-level officials were forced out and a new Executive Director, Ghassan Korban, was chosen to lead the troubled agency. Mr. Ghassan Korban has pledged transparency as well as community outreach programs to address customer complaints and billing issues.

The voters of New Orleans voiced their growing concerns and disapproval with the Sewerage & Water Board at the polls on December 8th, 2018 by approving a City Charter change that would again place a City Councilmember on the board at Sewerage and Water Board. As Chairman of the

City Council's Public Works Committee, Councilman Joe Giarrusso could choose to occupy the newly created seat on the Sewerage & Water Board or appoint a liaison. He chose the latter and appointed Councilman Jay H. Banks to represent the New Orleans City Council on the Sewerage and Water Board, and paired Banks with a knowledgeable engineer who advises the council on Entergy matters and will now provide input in Sewerage and Water Board matters as well.

When Councilman Jay H. Banks was asked why he thought he was selected for the newly created City Council seat on Sewerage and Water Board by the Chairman of the City Council's Public Works Committee his response was, "My mantra has always been that if the city is under water, we cannot get

anything done." Councilman Banks stated that from the beginning he has been very vocal and passionate about the problems with Sewerage & Water Board and that utility's successful operation is fundamental and critical to him.

Of the many problems facing the Sewerage & Water Board Councilman Banks sees public image as S&WB's biggest hurdle. "Something has to be done now in order for the public to once again begin to trust the utility. It makes no sense to allow the bad feelings to fester and grow. The billing issues are paramount and if we can get the billing situation straight that would go a long way towards restoring the citizens trust in Sewerage & Water Board," Banks stated. This reporter asked Councilman Jay Banks what kinds of is-

suues would the engineer assigned to him be advising on? Councilman Banks was very candid in his response, "Technical engineering is a foreign language to me and I am not embarrassed to admit that. I am not an engineer and I don't speak engineering; therefore, the engineer will be my translator in many cases when technical terms are mentioned in board meetings that I don't understand."

Councilman Banks sees his role, in the newly created seat on the S&WB, as being the eyes and ears of the City Council as well as the eyes and ears of every citizen of New Orleans. "At the end of the day we are all in the same boat, we all live in the City of New Orleans and we all have to pay a water bill," were Councilman Jay H. Banks' last words at the end of our interview.

## State & Local

# City Council Announces Posting of Executive Counsel Position

NEW ORLEANS - The New Orleans City Council is accepting applications for its executive counsel. The job posting requires a highly responsible individual to assist in the legal representation of the Council and provide legal advice with regards to the Council's duties and obligations as the governing authority of the City of New Orleans. The position reports to the Council's Chief-of-Staff.

Job duties involve legal representation, legal research, the preparation of legal advice/opinions, and the rendering of general legal counsel

to the New Orleans City Council. Work includes advising the Council and defending legislation that may be challenged in court, preparing cases for trial/appeal, legally representing and appearing in court as requested/needed by the City Council.

Qualified candidates must be residents of Orleans Parish; possess a Juris Doctorate in Law from an accredited school - graduating in the top twenty percent of their class; be licensed to practice law in the State of Louisiana with admission to the Loui-

siana bar for at least five years, with at least five years' of public sector legal experience and/or government representation, and ten years' overall experience in the practice of law. Candidates must possess the following:

Experience representing or managing litigation in court, both at the district and appellate levels, in both state and federal courts;

Extensive knowledge of the New Orleans City Charter, City Code, Louisiana Constitution, Louisiana Open Meetings Laws, Louisiana's Code of Governmental Ethics, pro-

curement/public bid laws, Louisiana's Public Records Law, and governing Revised Statutes; and

A practical understanding of government organization processes, structure, functions, and legal obligations.

The complete job description is available on the Council's website, council.nola.gov or may be obtained from the Office of the Chief of Staff, Room 1E06, City Hall, 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA 70112 (504) 658-1101, e-mail dsgavlinski@nola.gov.

The City offers a competitive

salary (with a longevity increase program), retirement program and fringe benefits. Interested applicants should send or e-mail a cover letter and detailed résumé, complete with salary history and one writing sample to:

City Council Chief of Staff  
1E06, City Hall  
1300 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
dsgavlinski@nola.gov

The deadline for application is 3:00 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 18, 2018.



# Exhibit Uses Art to Challenge Idea of Black Masculinity

By Tylan Nash  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

In a year that brought strong Black male characters to the big screen in films like *Black Panther* and *BlacKkKlansman*, one collection of artwork seeks to broaden the notion of what is Black masculinity. The words black and men, when put together, often denotes physical strength, and lack of emotion, instead of vulnerability and empathy. Actress CCH Pounder hoped to celebrate the diversity that is true Black masculinity with a new exhibition from her collection of artworks that went on display at Xavier University's art gallery this fall and will be open to the public for viewing through February 28, 2019.

The goal of the exhibit: "ICONS: Ideals of Black Masculinity" is to re-examine how Black men are perceived, based on how they have been depicted in mainstream media: through photography, books, and films, for instance.

"The artwork challenges the viewer to re-examine both traditional gender stereotypes and contemporary stereotypes that are portrayed in the media," said Pounder, well-known for her roles in television series like *ER*, *The Shield*, *Sons of Anarchy* and now *NCIS: New Orleans*. Pounder included works of art that are part of her personal collection, from prominent artists such as Yinka Shonibare, Kehinde Wiley, Elizabeth Catlett, and Malick Sidibe.

"It's important that young Black men see that they are not only valuable, but also objects of beauty," said C. Reynold Verret, Xavier's President.

One piece in the art exhibit is by



Award-Winning Actress CCH Pounder discusses the works from her collection in the new exhibition, "ICONS: Ideals of Black Masculinity" with Sarah Clunis, Xavier Assistant Professor in Art, and Curator of the gallery.



Resident examinee different pieces from the exhibit on Black masculinity at its opening on Nov. 1st. The exhibit remains open up to Feb. 28, 2019. (Photos by Tylan Nash)

New York-based Artist, Kehinde Wiley, who was commissioned to create President Barack Obama's

portrait that was unveiled in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in 2017. Wiley uses Black

men in his art, and paints them as delicate beings, using items from nature, such as flowers, or having their faces painted with glitter. His artwork wants to show that Black men can keep their masculinity, but also can be soft and gentle at the same time.

It's a common experience for most Black men, taught to them, from members within the community, from under the age of five.

"Statistically, four out of every five Black men have experienced some type of bullying from their family members and or peers about how they act, dress, or choose to live their life," according to Shariah Moore, a Psychologist who works

at the Psychiatry Group in Memphis, Tenn.

During the November homecoming activities, Xavier students decided to break the stereotypes around gender with a "gender-swap" day. Overwhelmingly, female students wore men's clothing-wear, however, fewer males decided they would wear women's apparel.

"I don't know, I just feel like men really shouldn't wear dresses," said Justin Henderson, who didn't participate in the day's exercise, because he did not want his sexuality to be questioned.

The responses on social media to the "gender-swap" exercise also confirmed Henderson's beliefs.

The backlash was predictable, according to Brian Turner, an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Xavier because this still remains an aspect of the Black community that is passed down for generations and is not discussed.

"Black men are known for being very aggressive when something threatens their way of life," said Turner, who teaches a course in Black Psychology. "It's something that is one of those things where everybody knows it's happening in the Black community, but no one says anything about it," he said.

However, art, as it always does in the Black community, can start a conversation, said Sarah Clunis, an Assistant Professor of Art at Xavier, who is the Curator of the gallery and the exhibit. In one of the pieces in the exhibit by Detroit Social Justice Artist Mario Moore, he features a Black man, solely in his underwear, with his clothes standing in front of him. The clothes: a hoodie and jeans, are shown in vibrant colors, even his underwear. The subject embodies fragility by being completely stripped down to his underwear, or his bare soul, something that an average Black man in America is told not to do. This typically private moment in a person's life, shown in Moore's painting, is different than the portrayal in the media.

"To be a Black man, it's a lot of pressure to conform to society's idea of masculinity, especially Black male masculinity, so to see that these artists depicting men who look like me break those barriers, is just amazing to look at," said Barakah Hassell, a freshman Xavier student who visited the exhibit.

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# From New Orleans to Paris and Back

## *Local Designer Aims to Become a Fashion Mogul, Her Way*

By Kimani Hamilton  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

A passion for fashion, a dream, and determination was all this young designer, Daeja Richardson had when she was growing up.

"At the age of 14, I started my own fashion brand: Daej," Richardson said.

Her mom bought her, her very own sewing machine for Christmas when she was in eighth grade. She decided to put her gift to use and teach herself how to sew.

In high school, Richardson was doing something many people her age probably could not even imagine doing at such a young age. She held her very first fashion show at Nola Spaces in New Orleans during the summer of her freshman year at Isidore Newman School in 2015. Her next showcase was New Orleans Fashion Week in 2016, where she was the youngest participant in the Battle of the Decades Fashion Show.

"I remember watching television when I was eight years old, staring intently at the designer labels and products representing the fashion houses of Paris," Richardson said.

Richardson had no idea that her gift would turn into a reality for her and that she would win a spot in the Oxbridge Summer Program in Paris in 2016, and let alone study fashion with Pierre Antoine, a local Parisian Designer.

Through her fashion class, she met senior designers for Christian Dior and fashion designer, Romain Brau, she said. Traveling to Paris was not only a surprise to this young entrepreneur, it was a surprise to her family as well.

"Her traveling to Paris, really shocked me because it showed me how determined she was to get to where she wanted to be and looking at her now. I'm just so proud of her," said Aniah Newman, Richardson's younger cousin.

The young fashion designer isn't just an inspiration to her followers, she is an inspiration to those who are close to her.

"She's like a role model to me. She's one of the reasons I like traveling around the world taking pictures," Newman said.

Richardson reflected on a time when her entire fashion class took a trip to a thrift and fabric store



New Orleans Fashion Designer Daeja Richardson is building her empire, one creation at a time. (Photo courtesy Daeja Richardson)

and were given an assignment to make a piece of clothing look more expensive than it was and add to it with a newly found fabric.

"Instead of creating one piece, I hand sewed a bathing suit and added patches to an old thrift store jacket," Richardson said.

Her class then organized a fashion show. Before leaving New Orleans, she packed a two-piece cover up set that she created from upscaling an old nightgown from the 1980s.

"I was not even sure why I had packed it. During some free time in Paris, I remembered this garment and used it as a wardrobe to create my very first photoshoot in Luxembourg Gardens," Richardson said.

After leaving Paris, the young fashion designer was inspired to create her third swimwear collection, which debuted at her third fashion show.


"I have had many photoshoots with local models here in the City of New Orleans and have hosted multiple casting calls to meet new models," Richardson said.

In 2017, Richardson launched her extensive website featuring her sunglasses and swimwear collection (thedaejlifestyle.com). Customers were able to purchase their very own Daej product. The website also featured an events page to update viewers and a lifestyle fashion blog. Richardson started blogging for the high school newspaper at Isidore Newman during her junior

year. This motivated her to further her blogging skills for her very own website.

She now focuses fulltime on creating her lines of designs that range from swimwear to lipsticks, sunglasses and sweater sets. She said she draws her inspiration through artwork and even flowers.

While a junior in high school, she began to realize that her stubbornness about combining art and commerce could take her far. She loved the culture of Paris and felt a connection with the spirit of design, but she also wanted to learn more about what people wanted to wear. This made her feel as if she was more of an entrepreneur. It also motivated her to reach out to other local businesses such as Glitter Box Nola in hopes that they would sell her Zodiac Lip Gloss Collection.




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# Chelsey Richard Napoleon Investiture, Clerk of Civil District Court of Orleans Parish

Story & photos by Lawrence Martin, NOLA.Tv

On Tuesday, December 18, 2018, at Benjamin Franklin High School Auditorium, Louisiana Court Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson, administered the oath of office and swore in Chelsey Richard Napoleon as Clerk of Civil District Court of Orleans Parish. Chelsey was elected on November 6, 2018. Surrounded by family, friends, elected officials, colleagues, and staff, Chelsey received the distinctive honor of Honorable Madam Clerk. Chelsey told a packed audience attending her investiture how much she appreciated the citizens of New Orleans and those who gave their vote of confidence. The event was hosted by Master of Ceremony, James Carter, Esq., Remarks by Alvin Richard, Lynn Luker, Chandra McMillon and Norwood Richard, Jr. The presentation of the Bible was made by her mother Beverly Richard, The Presentation of Commission was made by her daughter Mary Napoleon. Her lead staff, Madeline Barkins, Madel Butler, Amber Darby, Brenda King, and Pierce Moore presented our next Clerk of Civil District Court to the anxiously awaiting audience. . Bishop Lester Love gave the Benediction, followed by a traditional Second Line procession, led by the Pinettes brass Band, the Satin's Eloquent Baby Dolls, and N'AWLINS D'awllins,



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

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# St. Stephen Catholic School's Annual Christmas Program

## Data News Weekly Staff Photos

The students of St. Stephen Catholic School, held their Annual Christmas Program on Thursday, December 20, 2018. Families were thrilled to watch their children perform Christmas musical numbers and a Nativity play, in celebration of the Christmas Holiday.



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# Will You Join the Crusade for Bennett?



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

Bennett College for Women is an oasis where we educate and celebrate women and develop them into twenty-first-century leaders and global thinkers. That was my elevator speech in the five years, from 2007 through 2012, when I led the college. It is still an oasis, a safe space for Black women and others who embrace our mission. It still educates and celebrates women. But now, in 2018-2019, my college has challenges. The accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, has said that Bennett College is fiscally unstable. If we can't raise a minimum of \$5

million by February 1, 2019, just a few weeks from now, the school will lose its accreditation!

How has it come to this? Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have had a tough row to hoe for a plethora of reasons. At Bennett, enrollment has dropped from the historic high I managed of 750 in 2009 to something under 500. Thanks to the efforts of the current president, Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, enrollment rose by 15 percent and by 26% with new students this year. That's good, but we've got to be great. What's great? Student enrollment of 800 or more. Great is, an endowment that is robust and unique academic programs. What's great is the preservation of an amazing Black women's history, a history that is too often swallowed.

History belongs to she who holds the pen. That was my mantra at Bennett. We need to tell Black women's stories, and this is a place that reflects them. For every woman who embraces #MeToo, there

must be another who embraces the swallowed aspects of Black women's history. We don't often hear, for example, of the fantastic legacy of Dr. Willa Player, the first woman President of Bennett College, and the first African American woman to become president of a four-year fully accredited Liberal Arts College. Dr. Player was an amazing grace, a woman who was both a civil rights leader and an excellent educator. She had the audacity to invite Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to the Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel when no one else in Greensboro would have him. She supported the Bennett students who took part in the Woolworth's sit-ins (a chapter of history not much elevated as the A&T Greensboro Four were the more prominent leaders). Make no mistake. Bennett women were jailed. Bennett women stood up. And Dr. Player stood with them.

Bennett College has a unique history, and it is a history that must be preserved. It will only be maintained if folks who love women,

women's history, and the elevation of Black women's voices come together to find five million dollars in just a few weeks. I am writing this column to appeal to those who will help. Here's how:

You can make a contribution to the College. Check out our website, [bennett.edu/donate](http://bennett.edu/donate).

You can tell your friends to contribute. Let's take this column and make it viral. Take it to your church, to your sorority or fraternity, to your club, to your friends. Black folks have more than \$1.3 trillion in annual income. Bennett College needs less than four-tenths of one percent of that. Come on, Y'all. We can do this. If just 5000 of the high net worth black woman gave a grand, we could do this! I'm asking my sisters to join the crusade for Bennett.

You can help us find an angel to help, not only with the \$5 million that must be raised but also with a long-term contribution. If you have an angel that you'd like me, President Worthy Dawkins, or President

Emerita Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole to talk with, please reach out to me at [dr.j@julianmalveaux.com](mailto:dr.j@julianmalveaux.com). At this time, we only need unrestricted dollars by February 1, 2019. Please help.

Year after year we hear stories of HBCUs that are facing financial challenges. Why is this one different and special, and what will Bennett do to ensure that it does not reenounter some of these challenges?

Bennett College is prepared to engage in a strategic planning initiative to move us from surviving to thriving. We are prepared to engage in 21st-century technology to make our campus work. We need resources to move to the next step, and we are ready to raise those funds with just a little help. Are you in?

Bennett College President Dr. Phyllis Worthy Dawkins has been bold, firm, and strategic, as she has faced these challenges. She

**Commentary, Continued  
on page 9.**

## Donald Trump's Border Wall Demand is Dressed Up with More Lies about Immigrants



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

"Yes, if we don't get what we want, one way or the other ... I will shut down the government," said President Trump to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker-designate Nancy Pelosi, referring to his demand for \$5 billion to build his border wall.

By Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

If Trump insists, a good portion of the government will be shut down on Friday over his wall.

Trump festooned his demand with his customary lies, claiming

that much of the wall has already been built (it hasn't), that immigrants are spreading disease (they aren't), that border agents recently detained "10 terrorists in a short period of time" (they didn't). In reality, illegal immigration has been declining, not rising.

This isn't a crisis; it's a political ploy designed to fan fear and division.

The Bible teaches us to "love your neighbor as yourself." We will be judged by how we treat the least of these. In Luke, chapter 10, Jesus tells the story of the stranger on the Jericho Road, who was robbed, stripped and beaten by a band of thieves. He is ignored by a priest and a religious official. He is saved by a Samaritan — a people who were widely despised at the time — who binds his wounds, takes him to an inn and pays his fare. "Go and do likewise," Jesus instructs.

In contrast, Trump slanders the strangers. His administration has ripped babies from their parents,

shackled pregnant women, locked up thousands indefinitely. He has constricted legal immigration, even as employers seek new workers as the baby boomers age and retire. And now he threatens to shut down a good part of our own government unless he can waste billions on the wall that Mexico won't pay for.

In the midterm elections, Trump, worried about mobilizing his base, descended into hysteria, threatening to revoke the citizenship of those born here — a direct violation of the Constitution — rousing fears about a supposed invading army of migrants, eventually dispatching 7,000 troops to the border, an insult to our military and to our border patrols.

He succeeded in raising the importance of the issue, but he lost the argument. Democrats swept to a majority in the House. Polls showed most Americans still believe that immigrants benefit this nation, as opposed to costing it. The percentage of Americans supporting lower

levels of immigration has fallen from a high of nearly two-thirds in the mid-1990s to an all-time low of less than 30 percent in June.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, who immigrated from India at 16 and is the first Indian-American woman elected to the House of Representatives and one of 12 naturalized citizens, notes that a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill exists — one that once got 68 votes in the U.S. Senate.

It paid for more border security, while providing a clear road map to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented, including the Dreamers, and fixed many of the problems of our system: outdated family visa caps, cruel immigration backlogs, and a failure to address pressing needs of employers.

Trump, however, doesn't seek a solution; he seeks the preservation of an issue — one that he believes can help him divide and conquer.

What's needed instead, as Rep. Jayapal wrote, is a moral imagina-

tion about immigration. This is not about "open borders," as Trump slanders Democrats. It is about creating a humane, sensible, smart system to deal with legal immigration, cut down on illegal entry and address those desperately seeking asylum.

We would also be wise to seek to assist rather than destabilize our neighbors so that their economies thrive. People don't want to leave their homes. Only desperation for their families leads them to venture into the unknown.

As we head into this holiday season, it is a good time for each of us to look into our hearts, to see our neighbors without blinders. They aren't seeking to invade America. They aren't longing to leave their families, their homes, their communities. They are struggling to survive. They are strangers on the Jericho Road.

We should meet them with an open heart, not a closed mind.



# The New Orleans Health Department's Fit NOLA Initiative Announces the September to December Healthy Heroes

NEW ORLEANS —The New Orleans Health Department's Fit NOLA initiative, Whole Foods Market New Orleans, Humana and Athleta are proud to announce the Fit NOLA Healthy Heroes! They are:

Khater Salomon — September 2018 Healthy Hero

Denali Lander — October 2018 Healthy Hero

Sean Tate — November 2018 Healthy Hero

Coretta LaGarde — December 2018 Healthy Hero

A Healthy Hero is a New Orleansian dedicated to improving the physical and nutritional wellness of their community.

September 2018 Healthy Hero "Coach" Khater Solomon brings miracles every time he volunteers with the senior citizens at the Kinship Center (formerly Uptown Shepherd's Center). For example, people who previously hadn't thrown or kicked a ball in years are setting their walkers aside to play volleyball! His kind demeanor and dynamic program have made real changes for our seniors' health. Former Kinship Center director Kimberly VanWagner states, "Salomon's program teaching sports helps everyone 'unstuck' the plaque from their brains, makes us all laugh, and improves our joints and body functions!" His work getting seniors up and moving makes Coach Khater Solomon Fit NOLA's September Healthy Hero.

October 2018 Healthy Hero Denali Lander is Executive Director and founder of Youth Run NOLA (YRN). YRN was founded in 2010 as an after-school club in St. Bernard Parish and has flourished as an organization that serves more than 1,000 students at 35 public schools and six neighborhood parks. The youth in the program have



Coretta LaGarde, American Heart Association Senior Community Impact Director - December, 2018 Healthy Hero

run more than 30,000 miles and logged more than 40,000 wellness and health event volunteer hours. Lander states, "Youth Run NOLA was created in order to get the kids, families and communities involved in running or fitness." The program offers youth a positive, structured environment to build healthy habits, set and achieve goals, and work in the community through an intensive eight-month training program.

November 2018 Healthy Hero Sean Tate is the Executive Director of DiscoveryFEST and spent his formative years in New Orleans, which fostered a love for play that has continued into his adulthood. From Playworks Louisiana to DiscoveryFest, Sean continues to uplift the mission that every child should have access to physical activity, and every adult should embrace their inner child and join in. DiscoveryFEST aims to provide quality after-school, recess, summer and winter programs from experienced providers and staff through culinary arts, dance, music, visual arts, sports, nutrition and so much more. Sean's

work continues the mission of fostering self-esteem, confidence and social skills through play for the next generation of NOLA movers and shakers. For more information about DiscoveryFest go to <https://discoveryfestnola.com/>.

December 2018 Healthy Hero Coretta LaGarde is the Senior Community Impact Director for the American Heart Association. Coretta



Sean Tate, DiscoveryFest Executive Director - November, 2018 Healthy Hero

ta is a quiet force behind creating a culture of health where we live, work, learn, play, pray and heal. To improve the lives in our community, the American Heart Association provides public health education in a variety of ways. Whether she's training the next generation of lifesavers in CPR, collaborating with city leadership to provide healthier food in all public spaces or bringing awareness to equity for

walkable, bike-able and accessible communities, her work is changing the health of the people in New Orleans.

August 2018 Healthy Hero Update


Boxing Coach Matt Nussbaum is living his dream and has opened his own gym, Boxing in the Park. Please visit [www.boxinginthepark.com](http://www.boxinginthepark.com) for more information.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

says, "We look forward to working with partners who understand that their investment supports the education of deserving young women whose potential is only limited by the opportunities we give them. Our challenge is great. Our time is short. Our resolve is mighty."

I #StandwithBennett at [www.bennett.edu/donate](http://www.bennett.edu/donate) Will you? Please send your dollars and your ideas. Please help us water the oasis!


Julianne Malveaux is an Author and Economist. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" is available via [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for booking, wholesale inquiries or for more info visit [www.julianne-malveaux.com](http://www.julianne-malveaux.com)




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# Forgiving the Forgetful

## *Libraries Encourage Delinquent Returns with Charitable Alternatives*

By Brandon Brown  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Almost everyone has been there. Days turn into weeks, and weeks turn into months. Eventually, failure to return one borrowed book from a library means that resource is no longer available to the average resident. Now, libraries across the United States have begun to change the policies that punish forgetful or unfortunate borrowers.

"It's also in a way geared towards helping with retention as well. You know 'hey we don't have to pay fines over there!' that's a plus," said Ashaki Haroon, the User Services Supervisor at Xavier University's library, which offered a "food for fines" alternative to encourage delinquent borrowers to return overdue check outs.

In the past, penalties resulted in suspensions of the library card of the offender, or libraries completely block these individuals from using any of its resources which can range from access to the internet to catalogues of recent and classic movies and records. In some cases, public libraries are concerned that fines may alienate segments of the population who need the free educational resources the most, but simply cannot afford the late fee



Librarian and User Services Supervisor Ashaki Haroon collects food for fines from delinquent borrowers at Xavier University's library. (Photo by Brandon Brown)

that is owed, no matter how small the price is. These policies affect low-income families and students who rely on these public places for educational resources the most, and libraries want to change that.

The implementation of "fine free" policies is meant to be a solution for those in the community who may be prevented from using their local library resources due to outstanding fines. The campaign also has been trending under the hashtag #FineFreeLibraries. The message is for libraries to consider alternatives for fines imposed upon

delinquent borrowers. Some have suggested having public reading or poetry days for kids to engage in learning, in exchange for removing their fines. Proponents of fine free libraries say that a \$10 fine is sometimes the difference between groceries or gas for some family households.

Here in the city, on college campuses, many students return home at the end of the school year, ashamed or unable to pay a fine. Xavier's librarians say the option is offering their students an opportunity to feed the community as well

as clear their debt with the library for a fraction of the price.

"The students are benefitting from the drive by having their fines alleviated, but they're also helping families who may not have enough food or money for food around the holiday season. It's a win-win situation for students and the community," Haroon said. This campaign is one of the first steps Xavier University's library is taking towards a "fine free" library.

The library resource team thinks the campaign, Food for Fines, would be a better way for Xavier

students with outstanding fees to affordably pay their debt. Their "food for fines" campaign allow library fees that students accumulate to be paid with canned goods.

Some students also carry excess points on their meal plans or have left over shelf food at the end of the school term. With "food for fines," they can use a resource they already have at their disposal to ensure access to a resource they need for their education, Haroon explained.

For residents who use public libraries, they too can use leftover or shelf goods in exchange for eliminating their fines and fees, according to proponents of the #FineFreeLibraries campaign.

The canned goods used to clear students' library fees are then donated to local food drives in the area such as the Second Harvest Food Bank. These food banks can always use the extra donations, particularly around Christmas time, when these families are especially in need of any help provided, according to Second Harvest staff.

"It is a good idea because instead of giving to Xavier, I can give to those in need," said Sarena Witherspoon, a communications senior at Xavier. "A few bucks is a drop in the bucket for a university, but a meal can make all the difference for someone who needs it."

## Senators Harris and Booker Lead Historic Passage of Federal Anti-Lynching Legislation

NNPA Newswire

This week, U.S. Senators Kamala D. Harris (D-CA) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) took to the Senate floor to ask for unanimous consent to pass the bipartisan Justice for Victims of Lynching Act of 2018, historic legislation that would criminalize lynching, attempts to lynch, and conspiracy to lynch for the first time in American history. The motion passed, marking the first time in American history that federal anti-lynching legislation has been passed by the Senate.

"Lynchings were needless and horrendous acts of violence that were motivated by racism. And we

must acknowledge that fact, lest we repeat it," said Senator Harris. "From 1882 to 1986, Congress failed to pass anti-lynching legislation when it had an opportunity 200 times. Today, by passing this bill we have offered some long overdue justice and recognition to the victims of lynching crimes."

"Today is an emotional and historic day. For over a century, members of Congress have attempted



to pass some version of a bill that would recognize lynching for what it is: a bias-motivated act of terror. And for more than a century, and more than 200 attempts, this body has failed. Today, we have righted that wrong and taken corrective

action that recognizes this stain on our country's history," said Senator Booker. "This bill will not undo the damage, the terror, and the violence that has been already done, nor will it bring back the lives that have been brutally taken. It will not reverse the irrevocable harm that lynching as a tool of oppression and suppression has caused. But it will acknowledge the wrongs in our history. It will honor the memories of those so brutally killed. And it will leave a legacy that future generations can look back on – that on this day, in this time, we did the right thing."

The Justice for Victims of Lynching Act of 2018 amends the United States Code to specify that lynching

is a crime under existing federal civil rights statutes. The legislation was originally introduced in June 2018 by U.S. Senators Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Tim Scott (R-SC), and unanimously passed the Senate Judiciary Committee in October 2018.

Lynching was used as an instrument of terror and intimidation 4,084 times during the late 19th and 20th centuries, according to data from the Equal Justice Initiative.

The Justice for Victims of Lynching Act is supported by the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Equal Justice Initiative, and has companion legislation in the House of Representatives.



# Members of Congress Introduce Bill to Award Aretha Franklin with Congressional Gold Medal

By Lauren Victoria Burke  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

In the wake of the August 16th death of the "Queen of Soul," Aretha Franklin, Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT), along with Representatives Brenda Lawrence (D-MI) and Doug Collins (R-GA) have introduced legislation to posthumously award Franklin the Congressional Gold Medal.

The legendary artist died of pancreatic cancer at the age of 76.

"Aretha was simply a legend. Her work and impact will be felt for generations to come, and it's long past time Congress honor her with the Congressional Gold Medal," said Senator Harris in an August 21 release.

The legislation will be called, "The Aretha Franklin Congressional Gold Medal Act" and, should it become law, it will honor Franklin's role in "shaping the nation's culturally and socially relevant discography and highlight how she was an example to all people in how one person's talents can make a difference in the lives of millions of people across the globe."

Many of the tributes to Franklin since her passing have emphasized not only her musical talent but her role in shaping and empowering the role of women with songs that gave voice to life experiences from a decidedly female perspective.

Aretha Franklin's involvement in civil rights is also noted in the legislation. Her music often served as a call to action that inspired thousands to join civil rights movements and still maintains a social context that resonates across events even in present day.

"I am proud to join Senator Harris in introducing a bill to award



a Congressional Gold Medal to honor an American music legend, Aretha Franklin, for her contributions to American music culture," said Rep. Lawrence.

"Aretha Franklin was soul personified and she gave us the gift of her voice, her truth and her unapologetic passion to demand compassion, love and R-E-S-P-E-C-T for women everywhere. An iconic entertainer, powerful civil rights leader, history maker and a beau-

tiful spirit I was privileged to call friend; we honor this Detroit native, the true Queen of Soul. She will be dearly missed, never forgotten and always treasured," Lawrence added.

"Aretha Franklin's legacy, like her voice, will sing through the generations," said Senator Hatch. "Through her talent, she touched the hearts of millions, lifting all of us with songs of hope and humanity. Aretha brought light, laughter,

and love to all who would hear. I'm grateful to play a small role in honoring the life of this remarkable artist."

The legislation is expected to pass and be signed into law.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and writer for NNPA as well as a political analyst and communications strategist. She may be contacted at [LBurke007@gmail.com](mailto:LBurke007@gmail.com) and on twitter at @LVBurke

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