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New Orleans

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News Weekly

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Jazz Fest to Celebrate 50th Anniversary

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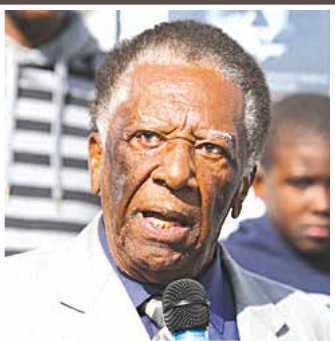
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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Elected Black Women Rise Above Political Disparity



Michelle Obama

Kaelin Maloid
Data News Editor

As of 2017 Black women are 7.3 percent of the U.S Population, but they make up less than 5 percent of officeholders in Congress, statewide offices and state legislatures, according to chicagotribune.com. Twenty-two of the 127 women serving in Congress are

Black, including Maxine Waters from California, who became a meme in May 2018 with her “Reclaiming my time” catchphrase. There is one Black woman who holds a seat in the Senate, Democratic Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris.

In order to combat the disparity between Black women voters and Black women officeholders, Higher Heights for America, an organization co-founded by

Glynda Carr and Kimberly Peeler-Allen, seek to elevate Black women’s voices to shape and advance progressive policies and politics. By doing so, HHFA will create the environment in which more Black women, and other candidates who are committed to advance policies that affect Black women, can be elected to public office.

Here are some Black women at the national, local,

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and state level that are proving that no political disparity can stop them.

Michelle Obama

Michelle Obama is most notable for her stint as First Lady from 2009-2017. However, the former First Lady (or, the Forever First Lady to some) is much more than her marriage to former President Barack Obama. Raised on the South Side of Chicago, Ill., Obama is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, who worked at the Sidley Austin Law Firm in her early career, for various non-profits, as Associate Dean of Student Services at the University of Chicago, the Vice-President for Community and External Affairs of the University of Chicago Medical Center; she is also a writer, role model, and advocate for poverty awareness, education, nutrition, physical activity and healthy eating. Some even consider her a fashion icon.

“Your story is what you have, what you will always have,” said Obama in her book, *Becoming Michelle Obama*. “It is something to own.”

Despite success in her own career, in 2007 Obama scaled her own career back in order to attend to supporting her husband and family during his presidential campaign. During her husband’s two-terms as President, Obama led and supported at least seven education-related initiatives—including, but not limited to The Reach Higher initiative, which encourages high school graduates to attend post-secondary school, whether it be a four year university, community college, or professional training program—the Let’s Move Initiative, which promoted healthy eating and living, and more. Now, Obama is on a book tour, which includes other celebrity moderators, such as Oprah.

“For me, becoming isn’t about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as a forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self,” Obama said. “The journey doesn’t end.”

Judy Reese Morse

In September 2018, Judy Reese Morse was elected as the President of the Urban League of Louisiana, an organization dedicated to assisting underserved communities in securing economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. While ULLA used to serve the Greater New Orleans area, it expanded into a statewide entity in 2016.

Morse used to be a top official in former Mayor Mitch Landrieu’s administration (going from Deputy Mayor for Citywide Initiatives to Chief Administrative Officer). She also had a long history in politics



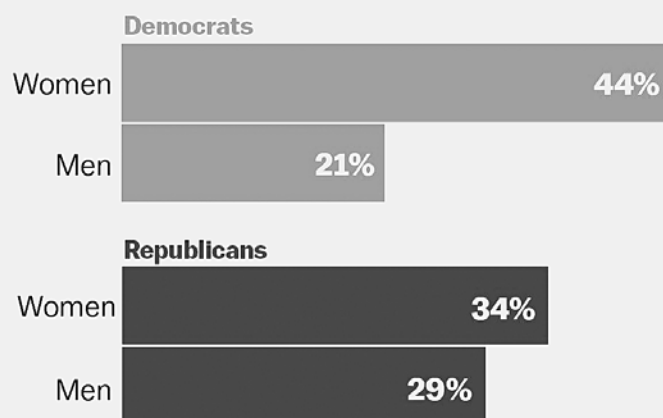
Mayor LaToya Cantrell

to unite the citizenry around the common goals of equality in education, economic development, justice, housing and other quality ways of life.

Prior to becoming mayor, Broome served as a Baton Rouge Metro Council Member; Louisiana State Representative (District 29); and Louisiana State Senator (District 15), as well as receiving many awards for her service and leadership, including but not limited to: Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Louisiana Health Freedom Coalition, American Heart Association, Every Child Matters, and Baton Rouge NAACP Lifetime Achievement Award. She was also a reporter for five years for WBRZ-TV, the Baton Rouge ABC affiliate.

Broome accomplished much within the first 100 days in office, thanks to her transition team, a group of 200 diverse residents who represented various races, education levels, and socio-economic statuses. They covered communi-

Women challengers have outperformed men



Source: NBC News

and the non-profit sector.

Morse is also the daughter of Freedom Rider and Local Civil Rights Icon Claude Reese, who played a vital role in the New Orleans Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality in 1961. Before becoming President of the ULLA, Morse had two decades of service, including eight years in city government. Prior to that, she worked in the state level as Chief of Staff for the Lieutenant Governor from 2004 to 2010. She also spent over a decade working in Washington DC before her return to Louisiana.

As President and CEO, Morse leads and oversees the work of three Centers of Excellence: equality, justice; economic and workforce development; and education and youth development. In a prior interview with Data News Weekly, Morse said, “The work this organization does is very impactful, and I plan to build on that.”

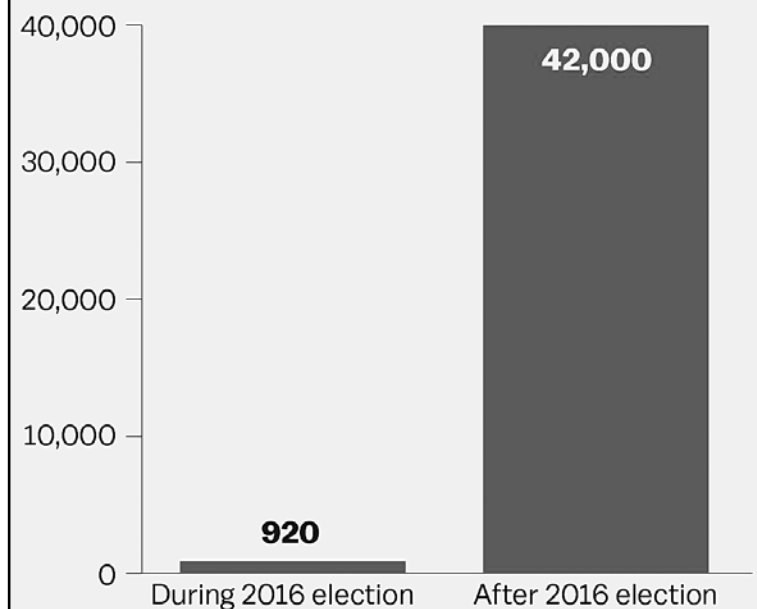
Morse went on to say that today’s Civil Rights Movement is about “equity.”

LaToya Cantrell and Sharon Weston Broome

Cantrell was sworn in as the first Female Mayor of New Orleans May 7, 2018. Prior to becoming mayor, she was a member of the New Orleans City Council; and, prior to that, she worked as a non-profit management executive. She also headed the Broadmoor Improvement Effort after Hurricane Katrina and spearheaded the famous smoking ban.

As a child, Cantrell’s life was steeped in community service. Her grandmother would bring her to neighborhood meetings. She was serving as Secretary for the local Chamber of Commerce by the age of 13. She arrived in New Orleans in 1990 to attend Xavier University of Louisiana, which is where Cantrell, who is originally from Los Angeles,

Women’s interest in running for office surged after 2016 election



Source: Emily’s List

says her soul “found its home.”

Cantrell encourages civic engagement and putting the people of New Orleans first. Her 2019 budget prioritizes inclusion and addresses the issues of inequality and quality of life. She also plans to address issues such as affordable housing,

On the day of her swearing-in, Cantrell told the audience, “I vow to each one of you standing here today, before God Almighty, I’ll spend every breath and every moment of the next four years proving that you made the right choice.”

A few miles down the river, Broome was elected Mayor of Baton Rouge and President of the City January 2, 2017. She is the first woman to be elected Mayor of Louisiana’s Capital. Since the campaign trail, her focus has been

ty-police relations, education, economic development, race relations and more. Because of this team, Broome was able to take immediate action, such as: updating the Baton Rouge Police Department’s Use of Force Policy to align with national practices; launching the Equity in Business initiative, which aims to increase contract opportunities and entrepreneurial activity in all neighborhoods; entering into an agreement with the Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce that now includes a focus on small businesses, and those owned by minorities and women and more.

During her swearing-in speech, Broome told the audience, “Allow me to put you on notice. I will not be perfect, but I will always be honest and give my best effort.”

Rev. Samson "Skip" Alexander, New Orleans Civil Rights Leader, Passes Away

Data News Staff Edited Report

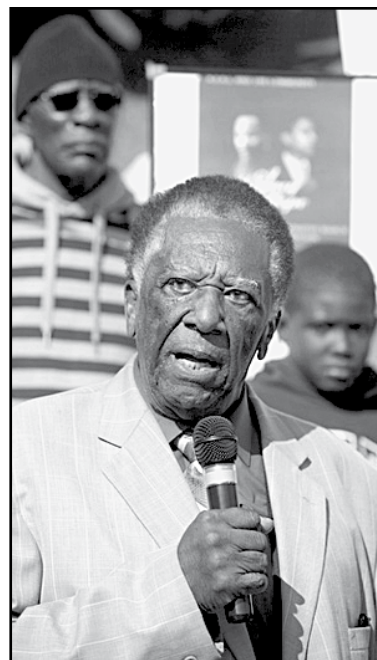
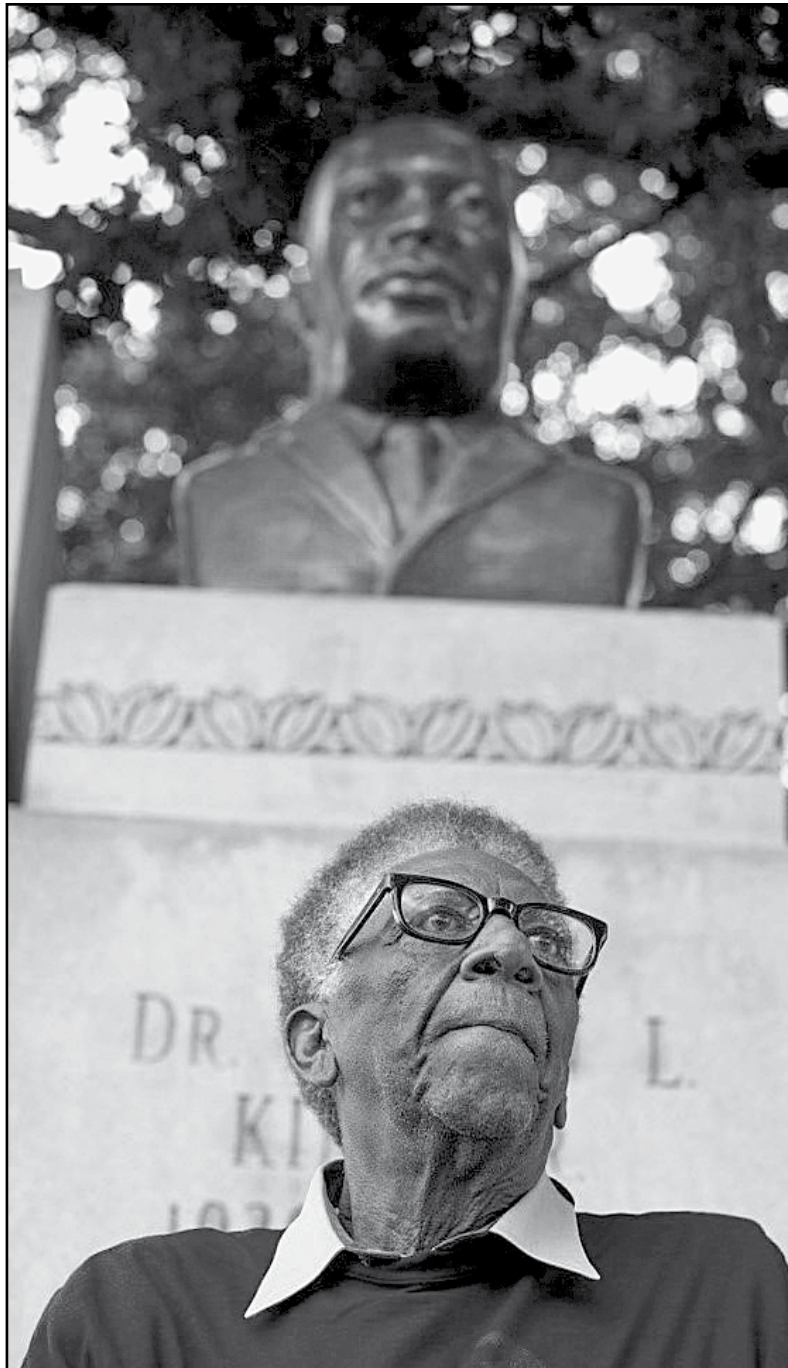
Reverend Samson "Skip" Alexander's life started with doubt: his mother was a fifteen-year-old girl from Gert Town who gave birth to a fifteen-pound baby. Doctors didn't think either of the two would live, but his mother lived into her 80s, and Alexander grew up to become a prominent New Orleans Civil Rights Leader.

However, on March 24th, Alexander passed away in his home at the age of 89.

Amongst his accomplishments, Alexander was present at the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in New Orleans in 1957 at New Zion Baptist Church in Central City. He also worked for the American Federation of the State County and Municipal Employees AFI-CIO. Alexander is also responsible for the treasured photos capturing Coretta Scott King, sitting in the front row with her children mourning her husband's death.

"We lived in struggle, but kept our eyes on the prize," Alexander said during this 2010 discussion at the New Orleans Public Library. "No one gave us freedom. We earned our place."

Reverend Alexander passionately recounted the importance of the struggles for freedom that made up the Civil Rights Movement, and the very real dangers Black folks lived with during Jim Crow. "When you didn't have the law on your side, you



didn't have anything," Alexander said. Black people at this time were not free to travel even small distances, he added. "Going to Baton Rouge might cost you your life. The Klan might run you off the road."

During this discussion, Alexander also described some of the inspiring figures he has met, from Louis Armstrong to national and local civil rights leaders. He discussed desegregation struggles in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the fight over the burial place of Louisiana's Black Governor P.B.S. Pinchback, who remains buried in Metairie Cemetery, which had been previously reserved for Whites only.

Alexander was a leader of the Memphis Sanitation Strike and worked with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Coincidentally, Alexander was staying at the Lorraine Hotel and working on getting sanitation cards signed when King was assassinated. His goal was short-lived by the incident, and Alexander remembers that many people were uncertain if the Civil Rights Movement would go on without King.

"I thought so," Alexander said. "No other man in the world was as spontaneous as he was. He could rally up a crowd. He could bring together good men and bad men."

Prior to his death, Alexander marched with King during many of the marches from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., to seek voting rights for African-Americans.

Funeral services for Alexander are set for April 6th at Christian Unity Church on Conti Street.

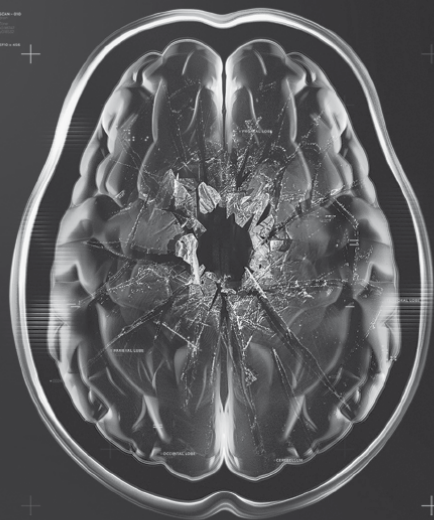
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Activist Talks Women Empowerment and the Power of the Vote.

Desmond Goodwin
Data News Weekly
Contributors

National activists have called for more millennials to participate in the 2020 election—and this includes the Woke Vote Organization in the South, a group working toward getting more young people involved, informed, and interested about politics.

“Woke Vote is to ensure that people of color realize the power of their political voice, as well as the power of our community to shift policy and changes,” said Dejuana Thompson, the Director of Woke Vote, who spoke on leadership and activism for a Women’s History Month Event at Xavier University of Louisiana on March 22, 2019.

Thompson discussed the importance of women’s roles in society and politics as part of a community talk on “Conversations on Leadership & Activism.” Woke Vote was founded in 2017 and is based in Birmingham, Ala. It was primarily designed to engage and bring out unprecedented numbers of African-American millennials and faith-voters for key elections in Alabama. The program made over 100,000 connections that helped to advance the first ever Democrat elected from the South to the U.S. Senate for the first time in 25 years. Doug Jones’ 2018 winner of the Senate seat in Alabama came, in part, thanks to African-American women voters and the work of organizations like Woke Vote.

Thompson shared how it is the work of many influential women in activism today who served as role models for her, and who have led the way in the fight for representation. She referenced her contemporaries like Carmen Perez, Angela Rye, Linda Sarsour, and Symone Sanders, as examples of other women engaging their communities in the political process in recent times. She shared how none of these women had an easy path to get to where they are today in their work across the country.

“Be bold and know that you have value, and that you have worth,” Thomson said. “Anything you can think of, you can do it. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes, and to a



Photos by Desmond Goodwin

young Black girl in the world, know that you can do anything.”

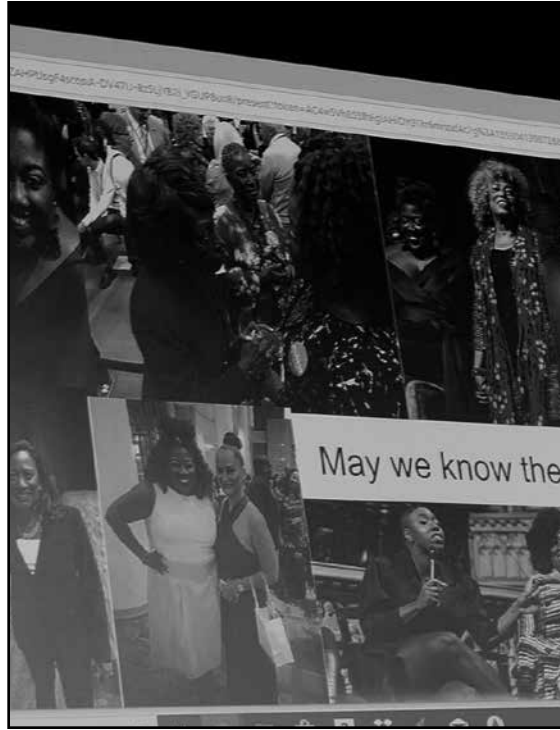
Thompson reflected on her experiences with racism and what it was like growing up in the birthplace of Civil Rights: Birmingham, Ala. She shared the battles she faced with racism, sexism, and her long journey to national politics.

She has spent more than 15 years working as a community activist, political strategist, and consultant. She has served as a National Deputy Director for Community Engagement and was the National African-American Engagement Director for the Democratic National Committee, where she managed relationships with national allied organizations on key strategies to engage various constituency groups. She was also appointed by the White House to serve as a Senior Advisor in the U.S. Small Business Administration.

“Make sure you give yourself opportunities and connect with people who can actually challenge you to help you advance,” Thompson said.

Woke Vote aims to bring its message to as many colleges and universities to inspire activism among students, Thompson explained.

“I think that students need to be educated outside the classroom,” said Amber Davis-Prince, the Senior Associate Director for Center of Student Involvement. “For me this means bringing in speakers



and other programs that go beyond what you can learn in a book in order to stimulate your mind in a different manner.”

For Thompson having these conversations with younger voters has always been important. She believes that the more young people are confident and able to talk about politics and social issues, the more change can be created.

“The sooner we are able to plant the seeds of change in individuals, we understand that later we will be able to the harvest of growth from this,” said Deanna Reed, a Birmingham, Ala, Resident and Coordinator of Woke Vote. “These will be the same people that will begin to change their local communities and by leading campaigns, running for offices, and be the change we ultimately need in the country,” she said.

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Jazz Festival has Pulled out all the Stops for the 50th Anniversary.

Along with new deals for New Orleanians, organizers have put together a line-up featuring some of the best. From Thursday, April 25-28 and Thursday, May 2-5, festival goers can see some of their favorite artists perform on the big stages, such as Al Green, Chaka Khan, Gladys Knight and more.



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Halfway to Dawn' is a vibrant dance-theatre work by David Rousséve and his nine-member company REALITY that illuminates the life of jazz composer Billy Strayhorn who collaborated with Duke Ellington writing such classics as "Satin Doll", "Take the 'A' Train" and others. Gay, out, and living in Harlem in the 1940's-60's, Halfway to Dawn explores Strayhorn's life through movement, music and multi-media.

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photo: Rose Eichenbaum

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French Quarter Fest Patron Party and Gala at Fillmore

An Evening with Nicholas Payton at The Fillmore New Orleans

The French Quarter Festival's 36th Annual Fall Fundraiser took place at a new location this year: The Fillmore New Orleans. This Private Patron Pre-Party, "An Evening with Nicholas Payton," had guests come together for a night of reception-style dinner, drinks, silent auction, and Mardi Gras Indian drumming by A Tribe Called Gumbolia.



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

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Press the Pause Button on College Admissions Outrage



Armstrong Williams
NNPA Columnist

The media is baring its rancid teeth again. We have more people whose lives we can now rip apart. In the latest frenzy of outrage and recrimination, the collective disdain and finger-pointing and “how could they-ism” of the media establishment has new, fresh meat: the wealthy and sometimes famous and sometimes powerful parents who were involved in a scheme to bribe and cheat to get their children into college.

Let me be clear: what these parents did is wrong. What the coaches did is wrong. What the test-proctor cheaters did is wrong.

But let's also consider this: the whole college admissions system

is rigged, and wrong, and instead of simply tsk-tsking these people who allegedly illegally paid to help their kids, maybe we should also consider why what seem to be otherwise good and upstanding people would be driven to engage in this kind of behavior.

The fact is, the whole college admissions system is rigged in one way or another to give unfair advantages. It is rigged to give preferences to black students, even if their parents are wealthy, their schools comfortable, and their lives privileged. It is rigged to give preferences to athletes.

It is rigged to give preferences to Hispanic students who write admissions essays (read by liberal college admissions officers) arguing that their family has been oppressed. It is rigged to give preferences to people who can donate \$20 million to a school, have a building named after their family and have “helpful” calls made on behalf of their children when they apply.

Is any of that fair?

Parents love their children. The want to do right by them. Most par-

ents would gladly give their lives for their children. Believing that admission to a particular college is crucial for their child's success or imagining that it is the fulfillment of a dream—these parents looked at a system that is, by any fair account, rigged to favor a few, and they tried to make their children one of those few.

Now here's where this gets hard: my bet is that 98% of the people involved in this scheme are upper middle-class white people. Their children, I bet, are mostly good people: involved in the community, good students. And the fact is, college admissions is rigged against white and Asian students, who often have to have better test scores and better qualifications, simply to gain admittance to a college.

The reality in many of these universities is that by the time you subtract preferences for minorities, the spots reserved for athletes, the preferences given to the children of donors, the places taken by children of the well-connected, college admissions is a process where the only people seemingly ‘guaranteed’

a spot, are people who have the system rigged in their favor. It's clear, from reading some of the emails, that many of these parents were trying to ‘rig’ a guaranteed spot for their kid.

Think about this. Being on the Board of Trustees of a college and giving \$20 million and talking to the college admissions officer about your kid or a friend's kid, is legal. Being a black student with lower test scores than other applicants, but getting a special preference, is legal. Being Hispanic and having lower test scores than the average applicant but writing an essay about the prejudice your family faced and playing to the sympathies of the admissions committee, is legal. All of it plays to getting a special advantage in admissions. And all of it is legal.

What these parents did was clearly illegal. It is not justifiable. It is wrong. But for anyone who has ever loved their child—it is understandable. I'm not justifying their behavior, but I understand it. If you love your kid, wouldn't you do anything for them? And when you look

at a system that is so clearly rigged, why wouldn't you try to rig it in your kid's favor?

It's easy to blame the parents. And, they should be blamed. But let's also not let the colleges off the hook completely.

Everyone knows that the system they've set up is rigged. So, let's unrig it. Make all admissions blind. Instead of names on applications, substitute an anonymous number. No information should be included about race or gender. No contact should be allowed between rich, well-connected donors and college admissions officers. Applications should be graded in the way that some law school classes are graded—blindly—based on the quality of the application.

Let's have blind admissions. Let's unrig the way that America admits young people to colleges. What these parents did is wrong. But the system itself is wrong. Let's see if the liberal media, the celebrities, and the college admissions officers are willing to ask hard questions about the very system they all support.

Dollars & Sense

Attention Louisiana Entrepreneurs:

Walmart Is Now Accepting Applications for 2019 Open Call for American Products

If you've ever dreamed of potentially reaching thousands of customers with your American products, now is the time to act: Walmart is accepting applications for its 6th Annual Open Call, scheduled for June 18th and 19th at the company's Home Office campus in Bentonville, Arkansas. Apply today by visiting Walmart-jump.com for the opportunity to secure a face-to-face pitch meeting with a Walmart buyer. The application deadline is April 30th.

“Open Call is an incredible experience, especially for a smaller company like Geaux Creole,” said Chris Freret, owner of Mandeville, Louisiana-based company, Geaux Creole, LLC. “The opportunity to present our products to the world's largest



retailer in a one-on-one setting was invaluable and we are thrilled that Geaux Creole seasoning and Creole Dust products will be on Walmart shelves soon.”

This year's Open Call attendees could secure deals ranging from a handful of stores in local markets, to supplying hundreds, even thousands of stores, Sam's Clubs and Walmart.com. The two-day event informs, empowers and encourages attendees while providing effective networking opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

“Our customers tell us that products made, sourced or grown in the U.S. are

important to them and we work year-round to identify local suppliers and source products that our customers are proud to buy,” said Cindi Marsiglio, Walmart's Vice-President of Merchandise Services and U.S. Manufacturing. “Walmart's Annual Open Call gives us a unique opportunity to meet entrepreneurs from across the country and discover new, niche and innovative products that fill a need for our customers and support jobs right here in America.”

During the 2018 Walmart Open Call, nearly 600 meetings were held with product pitches including toys, apparel, natural health and beauty aids, and food. Prospective suppliers traveled from 46 states, the

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. More than half of the attending businesses self-identified as diverse, including nearly 25 percent identifying as women-owned.

In January 2013, Walmart announced its commitment to help boost job creation and U.S. Manufacturing through buying an additional \$250 billion in products supporting American jobs by 2023. Walmart's Open Call is one way in which the company continues to invest in this commitment. Last year, Walmart spent \$474.6 million with Louisiana suppliers, supporting 53,908 local jobs.

Apply for Open Call today and join the conversation on your social channels by using #WalmartOpenCall.

Pfizer, Sickle Cell Advocates Address Disease During Black Press Week

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire
Correspondent

National Sickle Cell Advocacy Day 2019 is a great time to focus on key legislative issues that are important to individuals and their families who are living with the blood cell disorder, including promoting stable funding for research, better healthcare access, expanded programs and increased education and awareness for the Sickle Cell Disease community and programs throughout the country.

Lori Luck, the global medical director for Pfizer Rare Disease, joined Beverley Frances-Gibson, the president and CEO of the SCD Association of America; and Angie Snyder, a professor at Georgia State University, to discuss the latest in Sickle Cell Disease advocacy during Black Press Week in Washington, D.C.

The discussion came ahead of National Sickle Cell Advocacy Day, which is actually held over two days on April 8 and April 9 at the Kellogg Conference Hotel at Gallaudet University in Washington.

The event features advocacy training and meetings with legislative champions and a collaboration of federal partners, as advocates attempt to raise awareness to the disease which affects about 100,000 Americans and occurs among nearly 1 out of every 365 black or African American births.

According to researchers, the illness occurs among about 1 out of every 16,300 Hispanic American births and about 1 in 13 black or African American babies are born with sickle cell trait, meaning that the individual has inherited the sickle cell gene from one of his or her parents.

"We're educators and we're not only educating internal clients but external as well," said Luck, who noted that Pfizer has partnerships with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as other organizations.

The company also has a partnership with the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a trade association of more than 200 African-American-owned community newspapers



Lori Luck, the Global Medical Director for Pfizer Rare Disease, joined Beverley Frances-Gibson, the President and CEO of the SCD Association of America; and Angie Snyder, a Professor at Georgia State University, to discuss the latest in Sickle Cell Disease Advocacy during Black Press Week in Washington, D.C.

from around the United States.

The partnership is a collaboration to raise awareness of sickle cell disease, a lifelong and debilitating genetic disorder that affects red blood cells.

People with rare diseases, like sickle cell disease, have unique and complex challenges and the Pfizer partnership provides an opportunity for NNPA to inform and educate readers of Black-owned newspapers in more than 70 markets across the country on sickle cell disease, which NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., said is an often misunderstood disease that has a profound impact on the health and well-being of those affected.

"Together with Pfizer, we look forward to providing sickle cell disease education that can underscore the importance of improving quality of care in the community," Chavis said.

Snyder, whose work at Georgia State University includes researching and advocating for the sickle cell disease community, said it's important that everyone is educated. "We have to continue to study on what works and doesn't work for people," she said.

Francis-Gibson said conversations must take place in and outside the home. "Sickle Cell Disease is personal for me because I have a

family member who died from sickle cell disease when I was in high school," Francis-Gibson said.

"We never discussed it and when I was offered my current position I knew it was my calling because if my own family isn't discussing sickle cell disease, I knew that

other families weren't discussing it either," she said.

In December, a bi-partisan bill aimed at fighting sickle disease was signed into law by President Donald Trump.

The Sickle Cell Disease and Other Heritable Blood Disorders

Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2018 was introduced by Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Tim Scott, R-S.C., in February 2018 and passed in the Senate in October. The bill also reauthorizes a current sickle cell disease prevention and treatment program for nearly \$5 million each year over the next five years.

"Even though sickle cell disease is the most common inherited blood disorder in our country, research and treatment lags behind that of other chronic illnesses," Booker said in a statement.

"Our legislation will help find new ways to improve the lives of people suffering from sickle cell disease. It's time we start treating sickle cell disease as a serious and debilitating illness and allocate adequate resources to monitoring, researching, and treating it," he said.

Francis-Gibson said advocacy for funding the bill is still needed.

"It's important everyone comes out during National Sickle Cell Advocacy Day and join me on Capitol Hill because when I'm speaking to the legislators, it's much better when they look and see all of the people behind me," she said.

Jazz Fest Announces Extra Day, Festival Lineup



Kathleen Turner, President of the Board of Directors of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.



Julius Feltus, Senior Advisor for Community Relations New Orleans Mayor's Office



Mark Romig, President/CEO of the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation.

places and things that have helped make the event part of the culture it presents. Fans can look forward to seeing footage from the first Jazz Fest, images of Festival favorites through the years and much more. Look for Jazz Fest Memories and #JazzFest50 social media posts on most social media platforms.

Shell is the Presenting Sponsor of the Festival. Major Jazz Fest Sponsors are Acura, Miller Lite, and the Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots (A Churchill Downs Company). IBERIA BANK, Peoples Health, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, Coca-Cola and WWOZ are all also Official Jazz Fest Sponsors.



Producers of the 50th Anniversary Jazz Fest have decided to mark the milestone event with something special: the addition of another day of the signature festival celebrating New Orleans music and culture. Thursday, April 25th will now be the opening day of the 2019 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival presented by Shell. Both of the event's weekends will run Thursday through Sunday, April 25th – 28th and May 2nd – 5th.

The Festival also announced that

the new day will be “Locals Thursday,” which allows anyone with a valid Louisiana ID to purchase up to two discount tickets at the gate on that day. “Locals Thursday” discount tickets will again be only \$50.

While music fans have known the Jazz Festival line-up, they have not been able to precisely plan their festival, due to the day-by-day, hour-by-hour schedules not yet being released. However, March 26th, the “cubes” were announced, and now fans can see the schedule in an

easy-to-read, color coded grid.

The first weekend's line-up sees stars such as Ciara, Earth, Wind, and Fire, Katy Perry, Al Green, and Logic; while the second weekend's line-up gives fans a chance to see The Rolling Stones, Ziggy Marley, Gladys Knight, Diana Ross, and Dave Matthews Band.

However, two significant changes have been made to the

schedule since the line-up was announced. Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band cancelled their May 4th performance due to a scheduling conflict, and Jerry Lee Lewis was replaced by Johnny “Secret Agent Man” Rivers after suffering a stroke.

In celebration of the 50 Years of Jazz Fest, today the Festival begins a weekly look back at the people,

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. is the non-profit organization that owns the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival presented by Shell. The Foundation uses the proceeds from Jazz Fest, and other raised funds, for year-round activities in the areas of education, economic development and cultural enrichment.

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Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans Presents the Louisiana Premiere of David Roussève/REALITY's Halfway to Dawn

Illuminating the Life of Gay, African-American Jazz Composer Billy Strayhorn through Dance, Music, Projected Text and Video Art
Friday, April 5th through Sunday, April 7, 2019



David Roussève during a Halfway to Dawn rehearsal. Image: Rose Eichenbaum



Halfway to Dawn illuminates the story of African-American Jazz Composer Billy "Sweet Pea" Strayhorn.

Data Staff Edited Report

The Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans is proud to present the Louisiana Premiere of Herb Alpert Award-winning Choreographer David Roussève's newest work, *Halfway to Dawn*, for a limited engagement over three consecutive dates Friday, April 5th and Saturday, April 6th at 7:30 pm and a 2:00 pm matinee on Sunday, April 7th, 2019.

Written, choreographed and directed by Roussève, this vibrant dance-theatre work will be performed by his wonderfully diverse nine-member company REALITY. *Halfway to Dawn* illuminates the story of African-American Jazz Composer Billy "Sweet Pea" Strayhorn.

Relatively unknown, Strayhorn was Duke Ellington's main arranger/writing partner, instrumental to the creation of a vastly important body of work in American Music

History. Gay, out, and living in Harlem in the 1940's-60's, Strayhorn chose to lead a remarkably private life, allowing Ellington to take the spotlight and much of the credit for their joint oeuvre. The arranger/composer was also a passionate activist involved in Civil Rights causes (and a committed friend of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.).

The core of *Halfway to Dawn* is Strayhorn's music as interpreted through a dynamic dance vocabulary melding jazz, modern/post-modern, and social dance forms. A surreal sonic design by D. Sabala grimes surrounds vintage recordings of Strayhorn's songs, while video art by Cari Ann Shim Sham gives the production a rich visual dynamic.

The opening night performance on Friday, April 5, 2019 will be followed by a reception hosted by Xavier University of Louisiana in honor of David's grandfather, Charles Roussève, and his grandfather's brother, Ferdinand, who was the first African-American architect in Louisiana. The family started the Roussève Scholarship Fund at Xavier for upper-classmen. This year, 34 students were the recipients of these full tuition scholarships.

Halfway to Dawn's General admission tickets are \$30; CAC members \$25. Tickets are on sale here. For additional information, visit www.cacno.org or call 504-528-3805.

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Job Opportunity

Freelance Writers Wanted

Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. We want to hear from you if you are a working journalist, or an aspiring journalist who has 2 years or more of newspaper or PR writing experience. We need writers who can cover New Orleans news stories, ranging from local high school sports, community events, City Hall and entertainment. Experience in print is necessary, experience in digital and social media are encouraged.

Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net and datanewseditor@bellsouth.net.

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Sonequa Martin-Green, SU2C Ambassador

Photo Credit: Matt Sayles
Stand Up To Cancer is a division of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

