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ESSENCE FESTIVAL

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Essence Festival Entertains, Enlightens and Elevates in its 25th Year



By Renetta Burrell Perry

The epic and now historic Essence Music Festival is 25 years old, and it's safe to say that it's all grown-up and it's *so New Orleans!* When then-Mayor Marc H. Morial helped seal the deal to bring the then intended one-time celebration to the city, he couldn't have imagined it would evolve into a 25-year-long courtship between the City of New Orleans and Essence, separated only once by an act of nature we know as Hurricane

Katrina. And throughout its evolution, the Festival has faithfully lived up to its original Mission Statement which was to emerge as more than just a party (which we are fully able to execute here), but as a "Party with a Purpose." More than a Festival, Essence Fest is an experience so deeply engrained into the new Black existence and lexicon that it has been enshrined with its own movie, "Girls Trip" depicting the endearment it has formed amongst Black women.

But aside from being a cultural phenomenon, the

party and purpose-driven event has garnered massive financial dividends - millions upon millions of dollars are spent over the course of the three-day 4th of July weekend - and yearly boasts a staggering list of Black America's who's who in music, fashion, sports, arts, cuisine and more. It is America's largest gathering of African American women bringing some 500,000+ visitors directly into the downtown district of the City of New Orleans and literally bringing the iconic fashion sense and melanin-infused beauty of the Essence

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

Magazine's pages to life. National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial said of the Festival's inauguration, "As the leading African-American Publication, they were looking for a city with a strong African American cultural heritage and an African American Mayor. No other city had - or has - such a strong musical tradition and the unique versatile construction of the Superdome made it the perfect venue."

"The Essence Festival helped solidify New Orleans as the quintessential destination for multicultural and African American gatherings," he says. As he recalls his efforts to bring the event to the city he continues, "Bringing Essence to New Orleans remains my proudest achievement as mayor, and I have been overwhelmed by the cultural significance it has attained."

Local Impact - Global Appeal

The Essence Music Festival is the premier event of the summer in New Orleans and its impact can be felt throughout the economy in many diverse and unique ways.



National Urban League President and CEO, and Founding Essence Music Festival Mayor Marc H. Morial

While seminars aim at educating, informing, improving lifestyles and uplifting spirits, the charitable contributions from big named sponsors and from Essence have helped create unparalleled opportunities for local non-profit agencies and private citizens, minority businesses and other entities.

Essence says its aim is to "serve the unmet needs of Black women across the globe and bring the pag-

es of the magazine and online content to life as never before across arts, entertainment, music, beauty, fashion, technology, film, food, wellness, advocacy, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment." While local and national artists are in the limelight, international musicians, artists and cuisine all share in the multicultural event. "For 25 years, the ESSENCE Festival has embodied the power and purpose of our culture - bringing a total of more than \$4 billion in economic impact to the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana and most importantly, serving as a sacred ground for millions of Black women to engage each other in community, sisterhood, service, family, love, laughter, joy, hope and empowerment," said Michelle Ebanks, CEO of ESSENCE Communications.

Political Power

The focus early-on was to use the Festival to position African American issues in the forefront of the seminar component of the Festival. Twenty-five years ago, Morial brought in keynote speaker President Bill Clinton who launched his

"mend it, don't end it" Initiative focusing on affirmative action. The 2019 Festival will focus politically on the 2020 Presidential Election with five Presidential Spotlight Segments taking place Saturday, July 6th and Sunday, July 7th on the ESSENCE Power Stage at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Senator Cory Booker, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, Senator Kamala Harris, Former Representative Beto O'Rourke and Senator Elizabeth Warren will be the focus of conversations and question-and-answer sessions moderated by Rev. Al Sharpton. "As we look towards the 2020 Presidential Election, the importance of Black women and their decisive role in the pathway to victory is undeniable," said Ebanks.

Let's Party!

The 25th Anniversary Party will spare no details as it brings over 80 performers to the Superdome, including: Mary J. Blige, Nas, Missy Elliot, H.E.R., Big Freedia, Davido, Frankie Beverly, Jermaine Dupri, MC Lyte, Pharrell Williams, Ronnie, Bobby, Ricky & Mike (RBRM), Sheila E., Teddy Riley, Teyana

Taylor, Timbaland and more. In addition, a 25th Anniversary Celebration of 1994's most culturally impactful and transformative albums that redefined pop culture will be curated and performed by the original artists. These will include Mary J. Blige's "My Life," Nas' "Illmatic," Brandy's "Brandy," Method Man's "Tical," Scarface's "Diary," Big Daddy Kane's "Daddy's Home," Da Brat's "Funkdafied," Slick Rick's "Behind Bars" and Brownstone's "From the Bottom Up."

The 25th Anniversary will also span more than 10 venues across New Orleans and encamps several new and enhanced, curated experiences, including: The Global Black Economic Forum, Fashion House, Wellness House, ESSENCE Black Excellence Awards, ESSENCE Food & Wine Festival, Beauty Carnival, ESSENCE Film & TV Festival, Power Stage, Day of Service/Girls United, and more.

For more information on tickets and events surrounding the Festival, log onto www.essence.com



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ESSENCE Hosts 2020 Presidential Candidates

Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, Kamala Harris, Beto O'Rourke and Elizabeth Warren to Speak at the 25th Anniversary ESSENCE Festival in New Orleans



Senator Elizabeth Warren



Senator Cory Booker



Senator Kamala Harris



Former Representative Beto O'Rourke



Mayor Pete Buttigieg

Edited by Data
Staff Writers

ESSENCE Communications, Inc. announced that the 2019 ESSENCE Festival presented by Coca-Cola will host exclusive key-

note conversations with five of the leading Democratic contenders in the 2020 Presidential race, including Senator Cory Booker, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, Senator Kamala Harris, Former Representative Beto O'Rourke and Senator Elizabeth Warren. These live 'Presidential Spotlight' segments will take place on Saturday, July 6 and Sunday, July 7, 2019 on the ESSENCE Power Stage at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA. Following the candidates' remarks, a question-and answer session with each will be led by Rev. Al Sharpton, CEO of ESSENCE, Michelle Ebanks and Founder and Chair of Essence Ventures, Richelieu Dennis and will be aired on MSNBC's PoliticsNation with Al Sharpton.

Attracting an audience of 500,000-plus attendees over July 4th weekend and a total economic impact of roughly \$4 billion over 25 years, the ESSENCE Festival has created a "home" for Black communities as the world's largest cultural, entertainment and empowerment experience. Beyond its ongoing coverage of key civic participation and political news, ESSENCE utilizes its Festival Platform to go even deeper in its delivery of engagement and content that informs, enlightens and provides an open forum to discuss the issues of most importance to Black women, who represent a critical voting bloc wielding increased electoral influence.

"As we look towards the 2020 Presidential Election, the importance of Black women and their

decisive role in the pathway to victory is undeniable," said Michelle Ebanks, Chief Executive Officer of ESSENCE Communications. "We are thrilled to offer an opportunity at our 25th Anniversary ESSENCE Festival for our community to hear directly from some of the top candidates in the 2020 Presidential field as they discuss issues that matter most to our community – and how their individual visions and policies align with those issues. As the largest annual gathering of Black women in the country, the ESSENCE Festival is a powerful platform to engage this critically influential and diverse segment of voters, who have had historically high turnout in recent years. It is clearer today than ever that engaging with Black women in a meaningful way isn't optional. It is necessary."

Each candidate will appear individually to outline his or her platform, addressing a live audience from the Power Stage at the ESSENCE Festival's daytime experience. Candidates will then field questions generated directly from the ESSENCE community, which includes more than 24 million Black women. The 'Presidential Spotlight' Segments will take place throughout the day, with each candidate appearing for 20 minutes.

Attendance is free and open to the public at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. For more information, download the ESSENCE Festival app or visit essence.com/festival.

2ND ANNUAL

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Pipeline To People

The Essence Factor

By Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

The Essence Festival has successfully brought its brand of Female Empowerment to the City of New Orleans year-after-year. In honor of its 25th Year Celebration, what are your reflections on its importance and impact to the community and how has it inspired Black women?



Timolynn Sams Sumter

"I grew into womanhood on the Essence Music Fest! I was 20 years old when it first came to the city. Initially, my sole interest was the concerts. The idea of seeing so many of my favorite artists in my city at one time was AMAZING. Later in the timeline, I grew my advocacy and activist chops while working in tobacco control. This was Post-Master Settlement with the tobacco industry and I along with other activists were advocating for Essence to no longer accept money for the festival from Big Tobacco.

"During those years a dose of life hit me. I learned the value of community through the community center at the Convention Center. It was during this time that I learned about the various movements that were taking place around the country. I was introduced to other advocates and issues that aligned with my values."

Timolynn Sams Sumter
Director of Community
Engagement & Impact
(InspireNOLA Charter
Schools)



Essence Banks

"Last year the ESSENCE Festival Concert Series sold out all three nights in the Superdome for the first time ever and engaged over half a million attendees with its unique blend of concerts, conferences and expos and volunteer opportunities. The growth of this Festival, over a 24-year period, has turned the previous summer doldrums in New Orleans into a vibrant summertime draw for visitors, particularly the Black women who comprise the ESSENCE community. New Orleans traditionally had been a difficult time to attract visitors. Thanks to the ESSENCE Festival and its core community, the summer season in New Orleans has become a lucrative time for businesses in the tourism economy.

"The Essence Festival has proven with its tremendous growth and economic impact on the city that its diversity is a perfect match for the diversity for which New Orleans is famous."

Essence Banks
NOMTN



Zakenya Perry Neely

"For 25 years, Essence Music Festival has uplifted our community, inspiring us to celebrate our Black excellence through education on the most salient issues that affect us. We must continue to celebrate and support the economic impact Essence has brought to the City of New Orleans. The Essence Festival experience is a sophisticated showcase of who we are and what we strive to be."

Zakenya Perry Neely
Organizational Management
and Special Projects
Consultant
The Core Element Consulting
Group and Director of Events
and Special Projects for the
100 Black Men of Metro
New Orleans



Joyce Wilson

"The Essence Music Festival is a great time for people to come together and display Black excellence at every level. As a business owner, it is my hope that the people who come into the city support more African American businesses. As an African American woman, I commend the Essence brand for celebrating Black women and bringing the Essence Music Festival to New Orleans."

Joyce Wilson
Co-Owner of Mr. Chill's Hot
Dogs and Sweet Pastries



Dr. Jerrelida Sanders

"The Essence Music Festival is an annual event, which has graced our city for the past 25 years. This "party with a purpose" is a true experience. The festival continues to empower and educate festival goers, particularly the African American woman. The profound impact that Essence offers can be attributed to its holistic approach, which nourishes the mind, body, and spirit. Looking forward to this 25th Essence Fest."

Dr. Jerrelida Sanders



Alexis Sakari

"I appreciate Essence Festival's 25th Anniversary because its platform allows people of color to unite for music and education. The workshops are always informative and helpful. Essence Festival has done an amazing job of keeping its prices affordable so couples, friends, and family can continue to support it.

"Essence Festival brings thousands of visitors to the city which boosts the New Orleans area economy because these visitors usually spend a significant amount of money. Essence Festival creates jobs for many New Orleans area residents, and I pray it's around another 25 years."

Alexis Sakari



Robin Vander, Ph.D.

"Congratulations to the Essence Festival, the City of New Orleans, and all those who've participated in one way or another over the last two and half decades to make this annual event an ongoing success. The festival is honestly a gathering where folks are saturated with opportunities to be intellectually, culturally, and spiritually nourished by those who are leaders in their respective fields and understand our experiences. The daytime sessions run the gamut and the night concerts are exhaustive with talent. You come away with a sense of fullness having absorbed so much that meaningfully reflects us in all our diversity and complexity. And the fact that Essence and New Orleans have done this together, and that the event has grown and evolved is a testament to visionary leadership on the parts of all those involved in bringing this to fruition with such quality each year.

It is a testament to the stewardship we show ourselves by participating in those sessions meant to help us live better lives. And it also reminds us of our economic power as a community when we support the artists and vendors who setup shop and the tourism and hospitality industry. We need to be mindful of those things year-round. So, I hope that what happens in New Orleans during the Essence Festival doesn't just stay in New Orleans. That folks take a bit of the experience home with them and encourage others to join them next year!"

Robin Vander, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of African
American & Diaspora Studies

Karen Carter Richards - Publisher of the Houston Forward Times Elected New NNPA Chair

By Renetta Burrell Perry

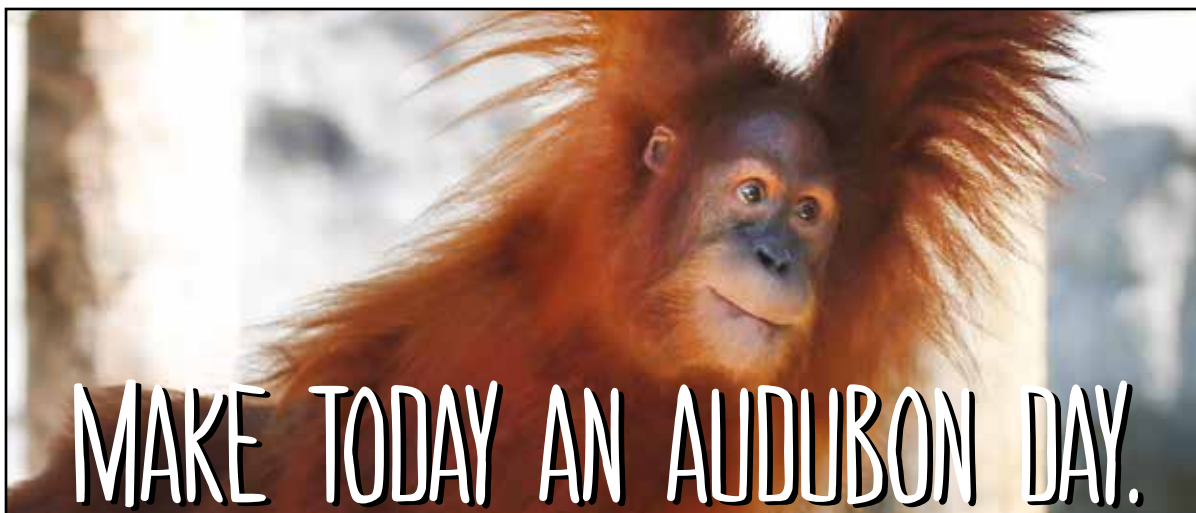
The NNPA (National Newspaper Association) held its National Convention last week in Cincinnati, Ohio. Houston Forward Times Publisher Karen Carter Richards was named the historic organization's new Chair after winning the election held on June 28th. In her address she told the organization, "We are the Black Press of America, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, so when I ask are you down with O.B.P., I am talking about letting people know that we are the Original Black Press, and we aren't going anywhere."



Newly elected NNPA Board Members following the ceremonial swearing in of new officers. (Pictured left to right:) Treasurer Brenda Andrews, Publisher of the New Journal and Guide; 1st Vice Chair Janis Ware, Publisher of The Atlanta Voice; Judge Tyrone K. Yates, who officiated the swearing in of officers; 2nd Vice Chair, Fran Farrer, Publisher of The County News; Chair of the NNPA, Karen Carter Richards, Publisher of the Houston Forward Times; Secretary: Jackie Hampton, Publisher of The Mississippi Link.



Karen Carter Richards, NNPA Chair and publisher of the Houston Forward Times.



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NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis and newly elected Chair, Karen Carter Richards, Publisher, Houston Forward Times.



(Pictured left to right:) Judge Tyrone K. Yates, who officiated the swearing in of officers; Karen Carter Richards, NNPA Chair and Publisher of the Houston Forward Times; and Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., NNPA President and CEO).

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

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She-Too

The Essence of a Community

An Open Letter to Black Women

This year Essence Fest turns 25. It is a watershed moment for our city and the "Party with A Purpose". Today our City and our nation are living in historical times in so many ways. We as a city are in the middle of an historical time with our first Woman Mayor, LaToya Cantrell, who is showing every little girl that they can achieve and lead at every level.

As a nation we are experiencing a moment where women are making amazing strides and African American women are leading the way; something that should make our entire community proud. Black women today are achieving at levels unimaginable just 50 years ago.

My beautiful sisters have come a long way and Essence Magazine

has been on the frontline since it began publishing in 1970, chronicling the journey of African American women and putting them on the cover and in their pages, giving them a voice. I can say as a reader of Essence I have learned a great deal and have become an enlightened male because of it.

Additionally, as a New Orleansian it makes me proud that our

city is home for the festival. It has been great for our historic city to be part of an event that celebrates Black excellence for what is now a quarter of a century.

I, as so many other men who love and admire Black women as a son, father to a Black daughter, a husband, lover and friend, continue to look in awe at your resilience and perseverance; that you



By Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief



**ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN
MISSION STATEMENTS.**

This weekend at the ESSENCE Festival you'll be hearing a lot about equity and inclusion and they are more than just words. The soul reason for the existence of the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network is to build and nurture unique partnerships and inventive programming that ensure diverse suppliers get the opportunities they deserve in New Orleans' multi-billion-dollar tourism industry.

**There's room for everyone under the second line umbrella.
Come learn more and join us at soulofneworleans.com.**



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can be so strong and yet a delicate flower has shown me and so many other men that your love can inspire us to reach for the stars and be better men. These phenomenal women continue to show us as Black men what unconditional love looks like. In my view there are no other women who can do this like the Black women.

Looking back and reflecting, I must note that I have participated in Essence Fest every year, in addition to working at an HBCU. This has a special meaning to me, for I have found myself in my everyday life seeing so many women of all ages pursuing excellence.

It is something that makes me beam with pride, but while this is great, I believe we as Black men must step up to the plate and do more to honor and support our sisters. It is we who have to become better examples for our children, and we must become better husbands and mates to our sisters.

In this the Silver Anniversary of the "Party with a Purpose" I am asking my brothers to begin down a new path and not just respect but honor our sisters. Let us begin to re-think manhood and what it entails to become better partners and parents. We as Black men must move back into a place where we can provide safety, security and stability to the women in our lives and excellence is the standard and mediocrity is unacceptable.

Then we can be in a place where we can be the men our sisters rightfully deserve, and our community can be proud of.



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68-Year-Old Swimmer Competes in National Senior Olympics

By Jannelle Walker
Special to The New Tri-State Defender

Last week, 68-year-old Loretta Griffin became the first African American Memphian to compete in the National Senior Olympics for Swimming, coming full circle from her days of doing water aerobics at the Davis YMCA in Whitehaven.

The New Tri-State Defender talked to Griffin before she left for Albuquerque, N.M., where the swimming competitions were being held. Griffin, a retired teacher, began swimming five years ago. She had been taking water aerobics classes at the YMCA for about three years and when she became comfortable with the water, she decided it was time to learn how to swim. "I would always see other swimmers doing laps. They looked like they were really enjoying themselves. That made me want to learn how to swim," she said.

That's when she started swimming lessons and learning the basics that she practiced every day. One day Griffin was at home watching television and a feature for men in their 90s participating in the National Senior Olympics appeared, but it wasn't until "the next day I saw a news item about local games, and they were about to start. It was



Loretta Griffin, 68 and her coach Cynthia Dickerson, 65. Griffin is the first African-American Memphian to compete in the National Senior Olympics for Swimming.

time to register, so I went on and signed up for those."

Once she became a contestant for the local games, Griffin was told that she would need to participate in the state level and place in the top four to attend the Nationals, as well as qualify the year before the actual Olympics. Griffin completed all her requirements, including coming in third place last year in a 500 free-style that consisted of 20 laps and four strokes to qualify her for the Nationals.

In college, Griffin took swim-

ming lessons to complete her degree. "So, I did take it, but the lady felt sorry for me and gave me a C because you had to make a C in order not to take it again. I was terrible at it." Many times, Griffin was the only African American participating in the swimming competitions leading up the Olympics. She encourages more African American children to swim, specifically girls because she feels "everybody should know how to swim."

Her strategy for being proficient

is to focus on the game and doing the best to her ability.

"I want to get there and do my technique. Get my technique correct, then my strategy is: Do the best I can do. If that results in a win, that is even better," Griffin said. "That is like icing on the cake."

Griffin trained at the Bickford Aquatic Center for the National Senior Olympics at least three to four times each week. She would start with 10 minutes of warm-ups, then 20 laps and then begin on her backstrokes. Her coach was Cyn-

thia Dickerson, whom she met as a coordinator for the local games. She was the one who suggested if I was interested in going into the state or to the Nationals, I needed to get with her," said Griffin, "and that made a world of a difference..."

"She is the bravest person I know. I can mess up really bad and she will find something good in it. When I'm swimming, I'm thinking about her, I'd think about her words."

Dickerson, 65, has been a swimming coach for 20 years, coaching both adults and children. A former coach at Central High School, Dickerson said her own son inspired her to be a coach.

What makes a good swimmer? According to Dickerson, it is both attitude and technique.

"Somebody that can do all four strokes, butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke. Somebody who can do the continuous laps. Somebody who is consistently trying to improve."

Dickerson sums up Griffin with one word: Persistent. "(She) does whatever I tell her to do, to correct her structure, to improve her stroke, and she is right there doing it to the best of her ability. I just think she is a winner. You don't find that in many people."

Entertainment

2nd Annual Black Masking Cultural Festival

By Glenn Jones

BlackMasking.org in conjunction with Beulah Productions in affiliation with Fractured Atlas a 501-c3, presents: The 2nd Annual Black Masking Cultural Festival. This year's festival is sponsored by Stallings Park - Gentilly NORDC Booster Club, New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network, Data News Weekly, New Orleans Marketing and Tourism Corporation and endorsed by the City of New Orleans Cultural Economy Division.

The Black Masking Cultural Festival will take place in Gentilly on July 5th, 2019 from 11am-5pm at Stallings Park on 1600 Gentilly Blvd, New Orleans. Hosted by Big Chief Honey of the Golden

Sioux and Chayil Jones of BlackMasking.org. This FREE cultural festival will feature both local and international arts & crafts, live music performances, local food trucks, film screenings, dance, workshops and more.

The 2019 Black Masking Cultural Festival brings to light the gifts and tremendous talents of New Orleans finest artists. From the local Injun Tribes, to our international performing artists, to the cultural education provided, there is virtually something for everyone to enjoy at the festival. Featuring Mestre Curtis Pierre: the only Percussion Master and Capoeira Master in the Western Hemisphere, as well as 2-time Grammy Award Winning Irving Mayfield, and Trumpet



Legend James Andrews. Headlining is Big Chief Kevin Goodman of the "Flaming Arrows". Featuring Big Chief Gerard "Bo" Dollis of the "Wild Magnolias" and New Orleans Sweetheart Iris P. Make way for True Love Movement and lets welcome international Hebrew recording artists Peezee and Ari Amunah. We will honor New Orleans own Jerome "Big Duck" Smith owner of "Tamborine and Fan" for over half a century his outstanding and priceless dedication to our Civil Rights and Black Masking culture.

The New Orleans community is invited to celebrate the giant historic and cultural contribution of our Chiefs, Queens, and Native New Orleans Black Masking Tribes.

Mayor of New Orleans Launches Mentorship Program to Empower Next Generation of Women Climate Leaders

New Orleans becomes first U.S. City to Participate in the Groundbreaking C40 Women4Climate Mentorship Program

City of New Orleans

The City of New Orleans, in partnership with C40 and the Greater New Orleans Foundation, announced the launch of a new Mentorship Scheme to support the next generation of Women Climate Leaders. New Orleans will become the latest city globally and the first city in the United States to participate in the C40 Women4Climate Mentorship Program, which will match 10 promising young New Orleans women from diverse fields with established women leaders from across the city.

"As the first woman to be elected Mayor of New Orleans, I am proud to announce that our city will be the first from the U.S. to participate in the Women4Climate Mentorship Program," said LaToya Cantrell,

Mayor of New Orleans. "Women are effective leaders, critical problem solvers, and passionate champions for the strong and sustainable future we all want. I look forward to working with the determined and forward-thinking women of tomorrow."

For New Orleans, climate change is not a future scenario, but a current reality. The environment of South Louisiana is changing rapidly, from eroding coastal marshes, to subsiding land in urban neighborhoods. The City of New Orleans' resilience and sustainability strategy includes a commitment to create a culture of environmental awareness at every stage of life, while making sure residents can become part of climate solutions.

The Women4Climate Mentorship Program matches mayors,

committed leaders from the business, science and technology, education, and community activism sectors with emerging women leaders. Each participant will receive training that will help them develop the necessary skills, address barriers, and inspire effective climate action. Mentors share their own experiences, knowledge and perspectives, enabling mentees to become powerful leaders in their chosen field, including energy, transportation, waste and culture.

"We have met and supported many women who are delivering climate adaptation and mitigation solutions in their neighborhoods and professions, helping to reduce the threats of sea level rise and storm intensity," said Ella Delio, Director of Environmental Programs of the Greater New Or-

leans Foundation. "This program will help advance this important work by growing capacity and growing the movement of leaders working to protect and sustain the city and region we love."

"Investments in women yield powerful returns when it comes to critical global issues - particularly climate change. The first Women4Climate Mentorship Scheme launched in North America will create opportunities to cultivate impactful female leadership," said Antha Williams, Head of Environmental Programs at Bloomberg Philanthropies.

The Women4Climate Initiative brings together mayors of the world's leading cities, CEOs, climate experts and inspiring young women leaders to demonstrate and accelerate the power of women who

are committed to creating a healthier, greener and more economically prosperous future.

Currently, there are active Women4Climate Mentorship Programmes in Paris, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Mexico City, London, Quito, Montreal and Vancouver, and the Mayors of Auckland, Barcelona and Sydney announced their own Mentorship Schemes at the Third Annual Women4Climate Conference earlier this year.

L'Oréal and ELLE Magazine are the founding partners of the Women4Climate Initiative, with many of their own top managers participating in the scheme.

Applications for this 10-Month Mentorship Program are due on July 21. For more information, including how to apply, visit <https://w4c.org/mentorship>.

Mtumishi St. Julien presented "Silverback" Award for Outstanding Service to Young People and Families

By Vincent Sylvain

On Sunday June 23, 2019, Mtumishi St. Julien was presented the 2nd Annual "Silverback" Award for outstanding service to young people and the families that support them. Mtumishi St. Julien recently retired from the Executive Director position at the New Orleans Finance Authority, and as such was responsible for financing innovations which allowed thousands of families in New Orleans being able to own homes, most for the first time.

Upon his retirement, St. Julien assumed total responsibility for establishing and maintaining relationships and communications with the Silverback Society's Partner Schools (17 in 2019). In doing so he supported the expansion of the mentoring program from a handful of schools when he stepped in to



Silverback Society Executive Director Lloyd Dennis (left) and Deputy Director Gregory Rattler Jr (right) present the 2nd Annual Silverback Award to Mtumishi St. Julien, accompanied by his wife Shawishi St. Julien.

soon to be over twenty campuses. The Silverback Society manages and supports over 130 volunteers who work with children at the partner schools where St. Julien serves as Campus Liaison. Lloyd Dennis, Executive Director of the Silverback Society presented the award telling the other volunteers and their guests, "Our growth and scalability have only been possible due to having Mtumishi St. Julien's consummate executive skills and total commitment in place to ensure that schools support our work by holding up their end of the deal."

On Friday, June 14th, St. Julien was announced as recipient of the award at the Favorite Father's Award Ceremony at ASHE Powerhouse Theater. The Silverback Award was created and is sponsored by ASHE Community Arts Center. Designation of this year's recipient was by the Silverback Society.

Black-Owned Businesses Are Part of the Fabric of New Orleans

New Orleans welcomes millions of visitors every year who come for the city's food, music, architecture, and world-renowned culture.

Throughout history, the contributions of our African American citizens and businesses have helped make New Orleans one of the top destinations in the world.

Whether you're a visitor or a local, we encourage you to support one of the many Black-owned businesses across the Crescent City that make New Orleans special.

For a list, scan below or visit NewOrleans.com/blackbusiness.



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