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New Orleans

# Data

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## Essence Festival Ignites in its 25th Year!

## Data Zone Page 6

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# THE ESSENCE OF BLACK EXCELLENCE



Page 2



## Newsmaker

Ernest "Dutch" Morial Honored with Exhibit at Convention Center

Page 4

## State & Local

McDonald's Franchisee Henry Coaxum Helped Host McDonald's Black & Positively Golden



Page 5

# The Essence of Black Excellence



Rapper Trina brings down the house during the Essence Festival's 25th Anniversary celebration.



Singer Anthony Hamilton serenades the crowd on night two of the Essence Festival.



Rapper Da Brat strolls down memory lane with her 1990s classics at the 25th Essence Festival.

By Edwin Buggage  
Editor-in-Chief

### Epic Year for Essence Fest

It was truly historic and epic as a sea of ebony faces came to the Crescent City for the "Party with a Pur-

pose". This year did not disappoint as the Essence Festival celebrated 25 years. The 2019 ESSENCE Festival presented by Coca-Cola® attracted more than half a million attendees to New Orleans last weekend for an historic 25th Anniversary Celebration representing one of the largest gatherings in the event's history.

"The 25th Anniversary ESSENCE Festival rep-

resented a truly transformative global homecoming celebration for Black women and the Black community," said ESSENCE Chief Executive Officer Michelle Ebanks. "This year's extraordinary turnout reflects ESSENCE's uniquely powerful engagement of Black women around personal empowerment, community, and culture as only ESSENCE can. With the debut of

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.

## INSIDE DATA

Cover Story . . . . .	2	Commentary . . . . .	8
Newsmaker . . . . .	4	Film Review . . . . .	9
State & Local News . . .	5	Book Review . . . . .	10
Data Zone . . . . .	6	National News . . . . .	11

## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

10 new Festival experiences, activations at more than 40 venues across New Orleans, and engagement with more than 300 small businesses and local vendors, we have redefined the Festival as the largest and most impactful destination at the epicenter of Black culture.”



Big Freedia



Teyana Taylor

**Inspiration and Aspiration of a Community**

This weekend had so much going on and Data News Weekly was on the front lines for many of the events.

Saturday night was sold-out. As we walked toward the venue people were scrambling to get tickets to enter the Superdome. Forever First Lady Michelle Obama who made her first-time headline appearance was inspirational and aspirational as she spoke to the audience. While there were thousands gathered, it felt intimate as the former First Lady being interviewed by Gayle King, spoke on a host of subjects from her life as a mother, daughter, wife and First Lady trying to balance life and career and living with a sense of purpose.

Over the course of three days, 100 performing artists took the stage at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome and the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Many of the biggest names in the entertainment industry headlined, including Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliott, H.E.R, Nas, Pharrell, Patti LaBelle, Doug E. Fresh, Teyana Taylor, Big Freedia and the return of Frankie Beverly

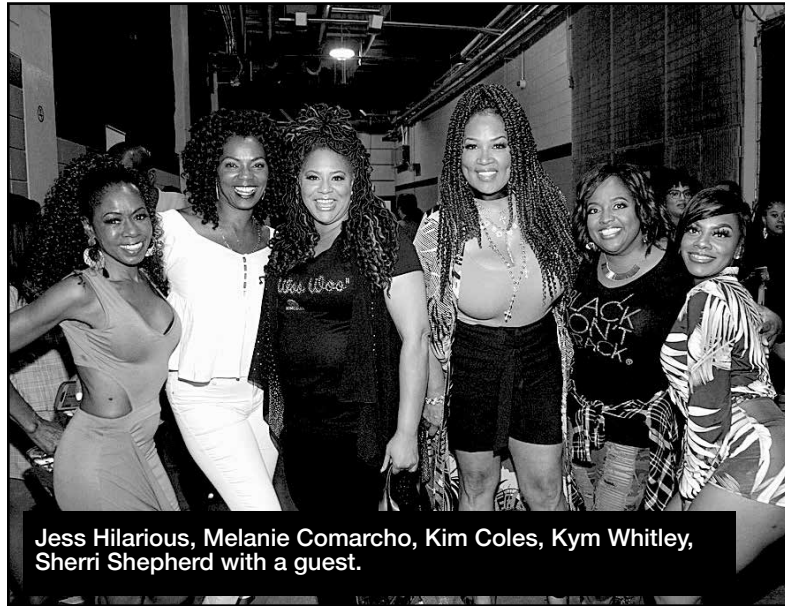
and Maze to close out the festival.

**Essence: The Voice of a Community**

Since Essence Fest is a “Party with a Purpose”, the Ernest Morial Convention Center held seminars on a range of topics that affect



Sheila E.



Jess Hilarious, Melanie Comarcho, Kim Coles, Kym Whitley, Sherri Shepherd with a guest.



Michelle Obama and Gayle King



MusiQ

the African American community and speakers and guests included: more than 300 influencers, leaders, creators and celebrities participating in the Festival’s daytime experience. Featured powerhouse speakers included Rev. Al Sharpton, Ava Duvernay, Yara Shahidi, Tyler Perry, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Marsai Martin, Valerie Jarrett, Iman, Common, Mona Scott-Young, Miles Brown and Iyanla Vanzant, among many others.

As we are entering the political season, seven presidential hopefuls took the stage making their case as to why they should occupy the highest office in the land. With two African American candidates, Sen. Corey Booker and Kamala Harris speaking to the largest gathering of Black Women in the nation.

Expanding its Footprint: The Essence Festival of Culture...Black and Global



Morris Day

This year it was announced that the Festival is going through a re-branding and is now called the Essence Festival of Culture. Reflecting the vision of Essence Publisher Richelieu Dennis, to grow Essence’s footprint globally.

This was evident as the festival’s debut of the ESSENCE Global Black Economic Forum connected attendees with accomplished leaders and chief executives including Walmart CEO Doug McMillon, Chase Consumer Banking CEO Thasunda Duckett, Kaiser Permanente Chairman and CEO Bernard Tyson, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Twitter and Square CEO



Teddy Riley

we offer and deliver Black culture in every way.”

**New Orleans, Tourism and the Black Dollars**

Tourism is the heartbeat of the city’s economy and while many events come into the city including the Essence Fest (which left behind an estimated 300 million dollars of economic impact), many of those dollars do not end up benefiting the City of New Orleans. Historic Mayor LaToya Cantrell took center stage to speak on this issue informing the audience at the first Global Economic Forum that only 9 cents of every tourism dollar stay in the City of New Orleans. Mayor Cantrell continues to sup-



Estelle

port the Essence Festival and tourism in general and has prioritized getting more tourism dollars back to New Orleans as one of her own signature issues. Recently, Cantrell took the fight directly to the State Capitol and won \$50 million upfront dollars for the City, approved to be received from tourism, with an additional \$26 plus million being approved for subsequent years.

She also spoke of how the Essence footprint can expand to more places in the City that can benefit more local and Black-owned businesses. Dennis agreed and planned to work with the Cantrell Administration on this issue.

**New Orleans and Essence - An Example of Black Excellence**

Today the Essence Brand is strong, viable and visionary, shining the light on the excellence that is the Black Experience both here and abroad. From the early days of Ed Lewis, the founder to Richelieu Dennis, its present owner and from former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial who bought the festival to New Orleans a quarter of a century ago to present Mayor LaToya Cantrell; Essence continues to be an example of Black Excellence on full display in America’s most international and African City.

Jack Dorsey, and TDJ Enterprises CEO TD Jakes, among others.

Today the Essence Brand stands as the example of a company that continues to shine the light on the best of what the African American community represents at all levels. This sentiment was summed up by Michelle Ebanks. “In honor of us embodying all that Black excellence and culture represent – beyond entertainment and beauty, we were thrilled to reveal the Festival’s official rebrand to the ‘ESSENCE Festival of Culture,’ with a mission to inform, inspire and uplift Black women and provide a holistic approach to how

## Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority, Morial Family Unveil Interactive Exhibit Showcasing New Orleans' 300-year History and Legacy of Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial

*The Exhibition Hall Authority Also Announces plans for annual Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial Award*

### Edited By Data Staff Writers

Family members of former New Orleans Mayor Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial joined Commissioners of the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority and a long list of state and local dignitaries on Wednesday to unveil The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center Tricentennial History Exhibit, a state-of-the-art interactive digital wall honoring the legacy of the former Mayor and celebrating the city's more than 300 years of existence.

The permanent digital display, activated by motion-sensing cameras, is 28 feet wide and 13.5 feet tall made up of 42, 55" video screens. The exhibit is designed to showcase the city's rich cultural and historic heritage dating back to its founding days through a timeline that explores the people, moments and places that shaped the city and made it the unique and diverse "gumbo pot" it is today. Through touch, visitors navigate a series of descriptions, factoids, photographs and suggested cultural destinations that offer interesting and uniquely New Orleans experiences to explore beyond the Convention Center.

Joining the former late Mayor's wife, Mrs. Sybil Morial, former Mayor Marc Morial and other family members in commemorating the occasion were Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, current Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Exhibition Hall Authority President Melvin Rodrigue, and Convention Center President Michael Sawaya.

"Dutch Morial was a fierce defender of equal rights and led successful court challenges that brought an end to many segregation policies in Louisiana," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. "We owe him a debt of gratitude. He recognized the importance of young people and the need for them to participate in the political process. As a result of his fight, the voting age in Loui-



The family of former Mayor Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial, including his wife, Sybil H. Morial, and son, former Mayor Marc Morial, celebrates the unveiling of the interactive exhibit honoring the legacy of the former Mayor and celebrating the city's more than 300 years of existence.



Emcee Norman Robinson announces the unveiling of the interactive exhibit at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

siana today is 18. Last year, I was happy to join the Morial family and state lawmakers in celebrating the 50 years since he was a member of the Louisiana Legislature. I know this new exhibit will be an excellent

opportunity to learn more about his contributions to our state and how they are still impacting us for the better today."

According to Exhibition Hall Authority President Rodrigue, "The

digital experience is designed to give visitors a taste of New Orleans' history through moving images which highlight key themes and moments that have made New Orleans the treasure it is. A primary

theme reflects on the important African American experience over three centuries, including the Morial family's civic legacy and leadership as the visionary behind making our Convention Center the economic driver it is for our city and state today."

One of New Orleans' most accomplished and determined Mayors, Dutch Morial, secured the funding needed to develop a Convention Center that supports economic development and the creation of jobs for the City of New Orleans. Through its 35-year history, the Convention Center has created over \$86 billion in economic impact, \$5.6 billion in new tax revenue for the state and local governments and supports more than 22,690 jobs annually.

"On behalf of my entire family, I want to thank the Exhibition Authority for its extraordinary efforts to bring this beautiful and thoughtful exhibit to fruition," said Sybil Morial. "Highlighting the passion and vision that Dutch had for the Convention Center project and the City's future economic development, makes it exponentially more special. The iconic New Orleans Morial Convention Center is a fitting location for a permanent tricentennial exhibit that demonstrates to the world the unique culture, history and civic and business life of our 300-year-old city."

The digital wall was commissioned by the Authority in 2018 and was created by world-renowned design studio Gallagher & Associates, whose work is featured at the National World War II Museum, International Spy Museum in Washington, DC and other prestigious museums around the world.

In addition to the interactive exhibit, the Exhibition Hall Authority announced the creation of The Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial Award in honor of Dutch's legacy advancing economic development and small business growth for the City of New Orleans.

# McDonald's Franchisee Henry Coaxum Helped Host McDonald's Black & Positively Golden

Edited By Data Staff Writers

McDonald's Black & Positively Golden movement was lit at the 25th Essence Festival! The (em) power-packed weekend was full of activities to uplift and inspire up-and-coming entrepreneurs everywhere. With appearances by actress/businesswoman La La Anthony, entertainer Luke James, reality television stars Cynthia Bailey, Tamar Braxton and Trina Braxton, vocal powerhouses Jazmine Sullivan and Kierra Sheard, the always-suave actor/host Terrence J and more, some of the culture's brightest stars came out to support the Black & Positively Golden movement, which celebrates Black

excellence through empowerment, entrepreneurship and education.

**BLACK & POSITIVELY GOLDEN WELCOME BREAKFAST:** McDonald's kicked off the explosive weekend with an exclusive Black & Positively Golden Welcome Breakfast. The intimate event was hosted by McDonald's Head of Cultural Engagement and Experiences Lizette Williams — the spearhead behind the brand's largest African American-focused campaign in 16 years — and New Orleans franchisee Henry Coaxum.

**BLACK & POSITIVELY GOLDEN LATE NIGHT PARTY:** After a long day of empowerment, McDonald's hosted its Black & Positively Golden Late Night Party — the of-



New Orleans McDonald's franchisee Henry Coaxum and McDonald's Head of Cultural Engagement and Experiences Lizette Williams kick off the brand's Black & Positively Golden Experience at the 25th Essence Festival with an exclusive Welcome Breakfast. McDonald's Essence Festival activities are an extension of its Black & Positively Golden movement, which celebrates Black excellence through empowerment, entrepreneurship and education.

ficial Essence After Party. Celebs, such as actor/singer Luke James; reality television stars Cynthia Bailey, Tamar Braxton and Trina Braxton; actor Tyler Lepley; and social media star Karlton "@notkarltonbanks" Humes, sparked at Club XLIV as attendees and Hiplet-style dancers showed off their best moves to the sounds of DJ Rashida and DJ B-Hen.

**BLACK & POSITIVELY GOLDEN SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATIONS:** To close out the weekend, McDonald's empowered the next generation of leaders by supporting college education. In partnership with Thurgood Marshall College Fund and the organization's national ambassador and HBCU alum Terrence J, McDonald's presented two, \$10,000 Black & Positively Golden Scholarships to well-deserving incoming HBCU freshmen.

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# Data at Essence!

By Data Staff Writers  
Photos by Glenn Summers

The Essence Festival's 25th Anniversary celebration ascended into the stratosphere, reaching the stars with its dizzying array of celebrities, rock star famous politicians, the local who's who and everyday melanin poppin' sisters who came ready to party with a purpose. And Data News Weekly was there to take in all of that Black excellence!



Data Publisher Terry Jones and Essence Publisher Richelieu Dennis.



New Orleans District E City Councilwoman Cyndi Nguyen and Data News Weekly Editor-In-Chief Edwin Buggage.



Data Publisher Terry Jones with U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (CA), and her husband, Sidney Williams.



Data News Weekly Publisher Terry Jones, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell and Essence Magazine Co-Founder Ed Lewis.



# 2nd Annual Black Masking Cultural Festival

By Glenn Jones  
Photos by @thegoldfra.me

BlackMasking.org in conjunction with Beulah Productions in affiliation with Fractured Atlas, a 501-c3, presented the 2nd Annual Black Masking Cultural Festival on July 5th at Stallings Park. This year's event featured both local and international arts & crafts, live music performances, local food trucks, film screenings, dance workshops and more, as well as performances by local and international artists.



# First Democratic Debate of the 2020 Race Features Almost No Questions on the Black Agenda



**Lauren Victoria Burke**  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

The first presidential debate for the 2020 campaign in the race for the White House featured five moderators, ten candidates, two hours and only one question on the voting block that comprises the base vote for the Democratic party: African American voters.

The one question came an hour and thirty minutes into the debate and was delivered by MSNBC's Rachel Maddow to candidate Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota. But even that question, which started out focused on the Democratic party's reliance on African American voters, pivoted over to a question on Latino voters.

Hispanic voters continue to underperform at the ballot box as compared to other demographics. Additionally, exit polls and other data demonstrated that 25 to 30 percent of Hispanic voters supported Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

In 2016, numerous reports on Russian interference demonstrated that Black voters were targeted for voter suppression, one of many obvious signs of the importance of Black voter support. According to PEW research, in 2016, the Black voter turnout rate declined for the first time in 20 years in a presidential election. The turnout rate for African American voters was 59.6% in 2016 after reaching a record-high 66.6% in 2012. For Hispanics it was 47 percent.

One of two African American candidates for President in 2020, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, refocused the discussion on African Americans several times during the debate. Much of the two hours of debate discussion focused on immigration policy. President Trump's



The second of the first two debates of the 2020 campaign took place on June 27th in Miami. Sen. Kamala Harris of California, was featured. Photo Courtesy NNPA.

obsessive focus on a wall at the Mexican border and keeping Mexican immigrants out of the United States was revealed from the moment he announced his candidacy for president in 2015 to his first month in office in early 2017.

There were ten Democratic candidates on stage for the first of two debates in two nights. They were:

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro of Texas, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), former Rep. Beto O'Rourke of Texas, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, Ohio Congressman Tim Ryan, former Maryland Rep. Tim Delaney and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii.

Typically, moderators and subject focus for each debate controls what the topics will be. Even though Lester Holt was a moderator for the first debate on June 26, corporate media largely ignores issues disproportionately impacting African Americans, unless there is a pre-planned structured debate where specific subject matter is to be focused on.

Sen. Warren and former Housing Secretary Castro were viewed as winners of the first debate as they focused on middle class issues and social economic parity.

"From a candidate's perspective, it's about who comes to the game ready to play the game. The only person, in my view, who came to the game last night and ready to play it was Julian Castro," said former Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele on MSNBC on June 27.

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

## Entertainment

# Halle Bailey To Play Ariel in "Little Mermaid" Live Action Movie

By Katherine Lewin  
DiversityInc

Chloe x Halle member Halle Bailey has been tapped to play Ariel in the upcoming 'Little Mermaid' live action movie. The Disney (No. 20 on the DiversityInc Top 50 Companies list) classic will be brought back to life with Bailey. After months of searching, director Rob Marshall said that Bailey appeared as the clear winner.

"After an extensive search, it was abundantly clear that Halle possesses that rare combination of spirit, heart, youth, innocence, and substance — plus a glorious singing voice — all intrinsic qualities

necessary to play this iconic role," Marshall said in a statement.

Actress Halle Berry quickly took to Twitter to congratulate Bailey.

"In case you needed a reminder... Halles get it DONE. Congratulations @chloexhalle on this amazing opportunity, we can't wait to see what you do!" Berry tweeted. "This means the world. happy to share names with you love you lots," Bailey replied.

Berry wasn't the only one to reach out to Bailey to congratulate her on taking on such an iconic role. Mariah Carey also took to Twitter. "Congratulations Halle! My kids and I are so excited for the emancipation of Ariel," she said.

A #NotMyAriel hashtag popped



Halle Bailey, former member of Chloe x Halle has been cast by Disney to play Ariel in the upcoming "Little Mermaid" Live Action Movie. Photo by [indiewire.com](http://indiewire.com).

up after the announcement — but Twitter took to defending Bailey in hilarious ways.

Ariel will be Bailey's first role ever on the big screen. Bailey formed Chloe x Halle in 2015 with her sister and they quickly rose to fame. Since their discovery, the sisters have signed a record deal with Parkwood Entertainment and opened for Beyoncé on her "Lemonade" tour. Bailey also stars in the Freeform series "Grown-ish." The film, which will begin production in early 2020, will feature songs from the 1989 animated classic by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, as well as new songs by Menken and Miranda.



## FILM REVIEW

**Toni Morrison***The Pieces I Am*

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA News Wire Film Critic

She's a literary icon whose accolades include a 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature. For the African American reader who has been glued to her books since 1970, starting with her poignant debut novel *The Bluest Eye*, this documentary is an opportunity to see how the pieces of Toni Morrison's life have made her whole.

For those who came to the party late, this recounting of her evolution explains why, when you see a photo of this amazingly young looking 88-year-old, you can discern a certain brilliance hiding in her eyes, an extreme intelligence behind her disarming smile and a stately aura that is somewhere between that of queen and goddess.

One of the most interesting facts in this bio is that Morrison grew up in Lorain, Ohio, a multicultural immigrant town. Even if people didn't fraternize much with each other in their homes (and that's only a guess), shopping, town activities and education threw everyone into the same mix. It's no surprise that when Morrison entered Howard University and confronted segregation in the South that her perspective on life and race changed dramatically. Her evolution on the subject matter is as interesting to watch as her development as a writer.

When she helped school her White editors on the power of her works and viewpoints on African American culture and experiences, she faced the same challenge that many African Americans encounter when dealing with their White counterparts in business, education, politics, etc. Resistance. As she recounts her experiences, Morrison is poised, resolved and reflective. Somewhat akin to an intelligent philosopher or an academic who patiently teaches a class of inquisitive but slow-learning freshmen.

You discover that she started her editing career as a divorced woman with two young boys, but that is about as deep as the footage goes into exploring her personal life. There are glimpses of Morrison behind closed doors, but nothing explicit, controversial or negative. In that way, this doc feels a bit like a promotional reel, which isn't a detriment, as any details about Morrison are better than none.



Iconic, influential and award-winning writer/author Toni Morrison's life comes to the screen in a documentary entitled, "Toni Morrison: The Pieces I am." Photo Courtesy NNPA.

Many of her books come up for discussion: *Sula* (1973), about a deep female friendship, *Song of Solomon* (1977), perhaps her best piece of storytelling and certainly her most accessible novel and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. The '80s brought *Tar Baby* (1981), then the somewhat controversial *Beloved* (1987), which was turned into a film by Oprah Winfrey, whose Book Club and TV show catapulted Morrison into the consciousness of middle America, or at least those who liked to read.

Still, some of her most illuminating thoughts on race were established in *The Bluest Eye*. This profound novel chronicle the indoctrination of Blacks into a White society to the point that self-esteem is tied to White characteristics that Blacks don't have, like blue eyes. Among other revelations in the book, her astute analysis of cultural manipulation that results in low self-esteem is enlightening.

One source of inspiration for the book came from a jarring encounter with an African American friend. Friend: "I don't believe in God," Morrison: "Why?" Friend: "Because I've been praying for blues eyes for two years and he didn't give me his." If that doesn't rip your heart out and send a clear message about the cruelty of systematic or unintended racism, nothing will.

There are other incidents reported by Morrison that underline the shaping of her values, views

and desire to write books that could change social mores: Her mother made her erase the word FU— off a sidewalk. Why? "Because words have power." Rather than keep this and other life lessons to herself, Morrison has shared them consistently in novels, essays, lectures

at universities, on TV—wherever a platform could assist her: "The only way I can own what I know is to write."

The writer-turned-editor-turned-novelist stood up to anyone who had a misconception about Black literature and who it was written

for or how it should be received. She ripped preconceived notions and fallacies apart by revealing the problem: "The assumption is that the reader is a White person." She put that misguided viewpoint to bed.

Morrison seems at peace with the battles she's fought—or that were fought for her. Her history growing up in an integrated city undoubtedly forged her persona. Even with that multicultural background raising her consciousness, she had to disavow some of the misconceptions she was getting from home, to become the person she is today: "My father thought all White people were unredeemable."

Throughout her career, she has been championed and loved by both Blacks and Whites.

Director Timothy Greenfield-Sanders (*The Black List: Volumes One to Three*) pulls together an interesting group of fans and friends who have witnessed Morrison's rise and have praised her: Decades-long editor Robert Gottlieb; fellow novelist Walter Mosley; activist

Film Review,  
Continued on page 10.




# CUMULUS

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# Legendary Black Arts Movement Author Horace Mungin Celebrates 50 Year Career Anniversary With Re-Release of 10 Literary Works

By Jazzmyne PR

Ridgeville, SC - It was 1968 when literary giant Horace Mungin penned his first published work, "Dope Hustler's Jazz," part one of a two volume set of anti-drug poetry. "Dope Hustler's Jazz" was the beginning of a writing career that started in the Black Arts Movement and would extend over five decades of literary contributions. Horace Mungin Books is celebrating 50 years of intellectual success with the re-release of ten books, written between 1968 through to 2018 including his latest, "Swing, Hard Bop, Bop & Bebop." The full collection of Mungin's work provides a distinct and insightful perspective into the heart of African American culture and world views.

Mungin's full collection includes a dozen titles: "Dope Hustler's Jazz" 1968; "Now, See Here Homes" 1969; "How Many N\*\*\*\* Make Half a Dozen" 1970; "Sleepy Willie Talks About Life" 1991; "Sleepy Willie Sings the Blues" 2001; "San Juan Hill" 2006; "Subway: After the Irish" 2008, "Poetic Portraits: The African People of San Juan Hill" 2010; "A Different Point of View" 2013; "The Devil Beats His Wife" 2013; "Truth & Absurdities: Social and Political Commentary" 2014; "Or Does It Explode, 2016 and "Swing, Hard Bop, Bop & Bebop" 2018. The author is offering a free shipping special on autographed copies purchased directly at Horace Mungin Books and all titles are available in paperback



Horace Mungin Books is celebrating 50 years of intellectual success with the re-release of ten books, written between 1968 through to 2018 including his latest, "Swing, Hard Bop, Bop & Bebop." The full collection of Mungin's work provides a distinct and insightful perspective into the heart of African American culture and world views.

and eBook at Amazon.com.

"It is my hope that the re-release of my past works incites, instigates and awakens a deep yearning for true freedom that I feel is lost with today's hustle and bustle," expresses Mungin, a former New Yorker now living in Ridgeville, SC in the Charleston, Lowcountry area. "I consider my books, whether poetry or prose, lyrical Afrocentricity. I

have always given voice to the oppressed, providing what I consider a liberation patois where freedom is the goal. My books are written in that universal dialect which is the weapon of the powerless that annuls one's ability to feign ignorance. These books were written to satisfy the desire for an indisputable African American presence and greater knowledge of that existence in lit-

erature and in American life."

The ten re-released titles traverse timelines, characters and plots. In 1980, Mungin started a syndicated column called "Sleepy Willie." These columns gave birth to two Sleepy Willie books. Sleepy Willie, the protagonist in both "Sleepy Willie Talks About Life" and "Sleepy Willie Sings the Blues" is a seemingly whimsical old man whose wisdom derives by way of his longevity and experience.

Mungin's works range from the African American transformation of the New York City Transit work force in the 1960's in "Subway: After the Irish," to the fictional "... Or Does It Explode", a cautionary look at where injustice could lead Black Americans. On the other hand, "The Devil Beats His Wife" is a series of shorts set in the New South, chronicling the first and second generation of Black and White people pushing against old racial barriers as they establish the new norm in attitudes.

"San Juan Hill" presents the coming-of-age memoir of a young boy growing up in the Amsterdam projects in mid-town Manhattan during the 1950's on the crest of the Civil Right Movement. With "Truth & Absurdities," Mungin presents essays that chronicle his family history in South Carolina and New York City while intertwining defense of the Barack Obama Presidency.

A companion book to "San Juan Hill," "Poetic Portrait: The African People of San Juan Hill," provides

sketches of the author's neighbors who lived in the Lincoln Square community, from the famed Thelonious Monk to William Walker, the prototype for Sleepy Willie. "A Different Point of View" presents fifty years of Mungin's Black Liberation era poetry arranged in a manner that allows the reader to trace racial progress from the 1960's to 2015.

"Swing, Hard Bop, Bop & Bebop," Mungin's most recent title, and the pinnacle of his vast library of work, is a celebration of the bebop era of jazz music with a collection of biographical prose and poetry, exploring over 60 of the greatest jazz artists of swing and bebop music ever assembled. The Music Department at Allen University, in Columbia, SC, produced "Manteca" a Bebop Jazz Revue based on the book! Mungin's Magazine, Black Forum, which he started in 1970 and published for twelve years, is also part of a permanent exhibition at the National Museum for African American History and Culture about the Black Arts Movement.

Mungin's vast catalogue of writing paints a vivid scenario of Black life in America spanning several decades. Get educated and inspired by reading along at [www.horacemunginbooks.com](http://www.horacemunginbooks.com) and at Amazon.com ([https://www.amazon.com/s?k=horace+mungin&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=horace+mungin&ref=nb_sb_noss_1)).

Watch the Horace Mungin Books' trailer at <https://youtu.be/5vLNjiPZPM>

Film Review,  
Continued from page 10.

Angela Davis; and essayist Fran Lebowitz. There are also glimpses of legendary poet Sonia Sanchez, Winfrey and others.

The archival footage, photos and newly shot interviews on-view look clear (Graham Willoughby cinematographer), neatly pulled together (Johanna Giebelhaus, editor) and are properly highlighted by a beguiling score (Kathryn Bostic, composer).

The first documentary to genuinely explore Toni Morrison's ascendance into the upper pantheon of the literary world does a nice job revealing her wonderful persona, uncovering her backstory and establishing her firm place in American history in a way her followers will appreciate, and others will admire.

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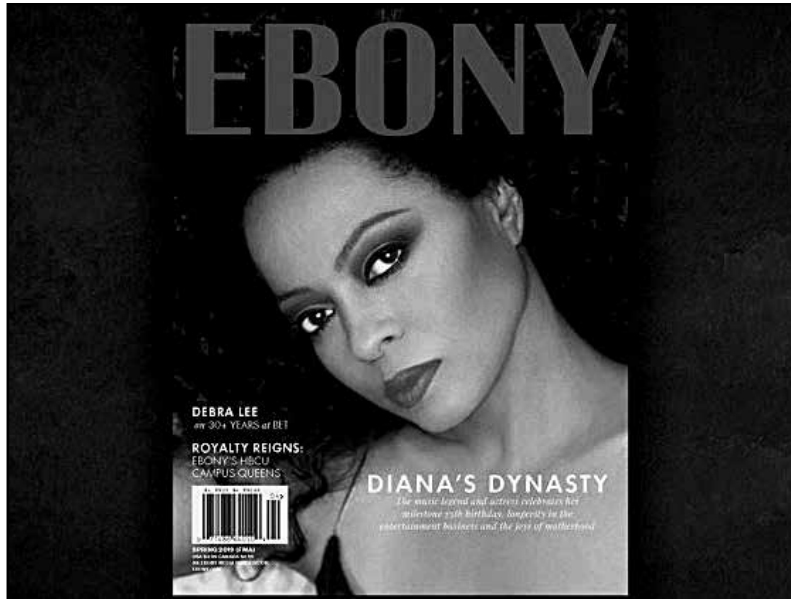
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# Ebony, Jet Fire Remainder of Staff, May Close its Doors for Good



Diana Ross graces the cover of an anniversary issue of Ebony Magazine. The iconic publication featured ongoing issues regarding race relations and was a pioneering entity in the championing of Black beauty and excellence.

By Miana Massey  
Chevrolet DTU Fellow | The  
Atlanta Voice

It's official, Ebony Magazine—along with its sister publication Jet Magazine—has potentially closed its doors for good. Former employees of the company took to Twitter last week using the hashtag #EbonyOwes to air out their frustrations with the company, as it has fired all of its employees with little to no notice.

According to USA Today, members of Ebony magazine's digital team say they've been fired and haven't received their final paychecks in the latest controversy to hit the struggling publication that has chronicled Black life in America for decades. Michael Gibson, co-chairman and founder of Austin, Texas-based Clear View Group, which owns Ebony, declined to comment to USA TODAY on the digital team's dismissal, citing a "policy of not commenting on any employment practices or issues."

The Chicago Tribune previously reported how Ebony was being pressed by the National Writers Union to pay more than \$200,000 it alleged the magazine owed to freelance writers who contributed stories back in 2017. The drama sparked the hashtag #EbonyOwes on Twitter. According to a report on Ebony.com, the magazine's previous owner, Johnson Publishing Co., filed for bankruptcy liquidation in April, which Ebony said would not affect its operations.

"EBONY Media Operations, LLC brands, which include EBONY magazine, EBONY.com, digital magazine JET and jetmag.com and its related businesses, have viably operated independently of Johnson Publishing Company dba/ Fashion Fair Cosmetics (JPC) since Black-owned Ebony Media Operations, LLC (EMO) purchased the media assets of JPC in 2016. Black-owned investment firm CVG Group LLC assisted in the formation of EMO," a statement read. "EMO is unaffected by the Chapter 7 bankruptcy announcement regarding the dissolution of JPC. EMO is not able to comment further and is not familiar with the facts or events of the JPC business."

The first issue of the iconic magazine hit stands 74 years ago and took the industry by storm. Founded by John H. Johnson in November 1945, the Black-owned publication has striven always to address African-American issues, personalities and interests in a positive and self-affirming manner. Timeless editions of Ebony featured some of the biggest stars in Black America, including issues covered by Diana Ross, Sidney Poitier, as well as President & first lady Barack & Michelle Obama.

Despite the possibility that the world may lose this national treasure, fans of Ebony Magazine and its lasting impact believe it will remain a staple of the Black community and an ultimate expression of Black excellence.

# NNPA Publishers Honor Marjorie Parham, a Living Legend of the Black Press

By Stacy M. Brown,  
NNPA Newswire  
Correspondent

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) honored Majorie B. Parham with the organization's Legacy Award during its Annual Convention in Cincinnati on Friday, June 29.

The NNPA is a trade association that represents African American-owned newspapers and media companies in the United States.

Parham, who turned 101 in February, spent more than three decades as publisher of the Cincinnati Herald, which was established in 1955 and counts as the longest running African American newspaper in the city.

"She was a real radical," said Dorothy Leavell, the publisher of the Chicago and Gary Crusader newspapers. "Marjorie Parham was something else and she was straight forward with her words and you didn't have to guess what she meant ... she made it very clear. She is a wonderful human being and she was a great asset to the Black Press of America," Leavell said.

Parham was unable to attend the ceremony but was represented by the husband of her granddaughter Rhonda Spillers, and Parham was feted with proclamations and commendations from Ohio State Sen. Cecil Thomas, State Reps. Sedrick Denson and Catherine Ingram; Cincinnati City Councilman Wendell Young; and Hamilton County Commissioner Stephanie Dumas.

Former Ohio State Sen. Eric Kearney served as master of ceremonies and co-chair of the convention.

Kearney's wife, Cincinnati Herald Publisher Jan Michele Lemon Kearney, served as the host for the annual convention which this year celebrates 192 years of the Black Press of America.

The convention's partner and sponsors included Macy's; AARP; Procter & Gamble; Ford; General Motors; Chevrolet; RAI American Services Company; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; American Petroleum Institute (API); Volkswagen; MillerCoors; Fifth Third Bank; Ascension; AmeriHealth Carita; Wells Fargo; and Pfizer Rare Disease.



Parham, who turned 101 in February, spent more than three decades as Publisher of the Cincinnati Herald, which was established in 1955 and counts as the longest running African American newspaper in the city.

Born in 1918 in Clement County, Ohio, Parham graduated from Batavia High School and attended Wilberforce University, a Historically Black College, according to her bio. Later, she took classes at the University of Cincinnati before working as a clerk for the U.S. Veterans Administration. In 1954, Parham married Gerald Porter and one year later he founded the Cincinnati Herald.

Within six years, Parham would retire from the Veterans Administration and take over as publisher of the Dayton Tribune, which her son ran until he was drafted in the military, her bio said. In 1963, Parham also became publisher of the Cincinnati Herald, where she became a legend and often noted for her work at the newspaper and in the community through her involvement in numerous civic organizations.

In 1982, Parham became the second African American to serve as a trustee for the University of Cincinnati, and she also chaired the board of the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio. Active in the Urban League, the American Red Cross and various scouting groups, Parham also was known for her work as a member of NNPA where she served on the organization's board as treasurer. "I know [NNPA leadership] will continue their high standards of excellence," Denson said.

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