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October 7 - October 13, 2017 52nd Year Volume 24 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

The 10th Annual Gentilly Festival Shows the Resilience of New Orleanians



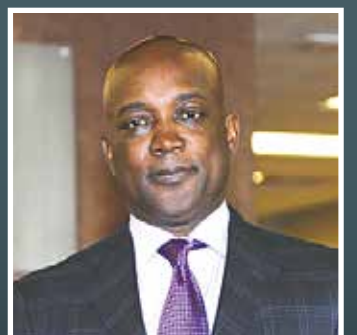
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The 10th Annual Gentilly Festival Shows the Resilience of New Orleanians

How One Festival Brought A Community Back Together



The 10th Annual Gentilly Festival will take place at Pontchartrain Park during October 6th, 7th, and 8th. The Event is free and open to the public.

By Eric Craig
Data News Weekly Contributor

Nearly 12 years ago, Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, devastating Gentilly, one of the City's central Black neighborhoods. Despite the life-changing impact, residents banded together to revive their community. How? A local festival.

On October 6th, 7th, and 8th, organizers will host the 10th Annual Gentilly Festival at Pontchartrain Park. The annual event will feature over 50 restaur-

rants, 20 craft vendors, and several local and national artists.

Expecting to top last year's attendance of 25,000 people, this event is free and open to the public.

The Festival

The first Gentilly Festival started in 2007, attracting roughly 500 people. The Festival's board pledged to donate proceeds of the Festival to first responders in the community, supplying them with furniture and funds for structural repairs. As the Festival grew, it became a

platform to bring awareness to Gentilly and its array of local businesses.

"It's such a family-friendly event," said Gretchen Bradford, President of the Gentilly Festival Committee and life-long resident of Gentilly. "It has a great vibe to it."

Bradford said that over the past decade, the Festival has brought attention to the Gentilly Community. It has, in many instances, increased the morale to people returning home, Bradford said. For many, this Festival serves as a reunion for neighbors, relatives, and

friends displaced by Katrina.

"It's a local and wonderful event, but it's catching on," Bradford said, recognizing that the number of attendees has steadily risen over the past decade.

After operating for 10 years, the Gentilly Festival Committee continues to donate funds to first responders and neighborhood non-profits such as Roots of Music. This year's Festival will extend its reach, promoting a Hurricane Relief Charity Onsite to benefit victims of recent summer hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Data News Weekly Presents

Meet The 2016 - 2017 Trailblazers of the Month

Highlighting the Best of New Orleans' Community Servants

JULY 2, 2016

CHARLES L RICE, JR.

Giving Fuel to the Next Generation



Charles L. Rice Jr. is President and CEO of Entergy New Orleans, Inc., a post he's held since 2010. What many do not know is that he is committed to serving the New Orleans community in many ways, working hard to inspire the next generation.

Outside of his work at Entergy, he serves on several boards that are business and civic related aimed at helping the City and its citizens. "I sit on a number of boards including the Boy Scouts, Greater New Orleans Foundation, New Orleans Business Alliance and I am also involved in

the Silver Backs, in addition to many others. I do this because I feel that it's important to give back to the community that produced me and give back to those who are not as fortunate and have not had the same opportunities," says Rice.

Charles Rice, is a native of the Crescent City and has a record of excellence in many areas. He is a Howard University graduate. Additionally, he served as a Commissioned Officer in United States Army, serving as a Military Intelligence Officer with the 101st Airborne Division (Air

Assault) at Fort Campbell, KY. While in the Army, he earned the Airborne Badge, Air Assault Badge and was awarded the Army Commendation and the Army Achievement Medals. Mr. Rice also holds a Juris Doctorate from Loyola University's School of Law and Master's Degree in Business Administration from Tulane University. While Rice has reached amazing heights in business, he proudly states he is a product of New Orleans and that all the people who raised and inspired him on his journey to success deserves a share of the credit.

AUGUST 13, 2016

JUAN LAFONTA

Man child in the Promised Land



Juan LaFonta, is a life-long and die-hard advocate for the City of New Orleans. Describing himself he says, "I am a community oriented guy with a huge heart. I've spent much of my life in the 7th Ward going to school on Elysian Fields Avenue at St. Raphael, Brother Martin and the University of New Orleans (UNO) and now my law office is located there. Speaking of his community and its impact on his life he says, "Throughout my life I've honored all those people who have helped shape me into the person I am today; and long ago I made a promise to myself to remain in my community and influence the lives of the people

around me."

His work of serving others extends in many areas, but is centered on the youth. Something he feels is important is expanding their horizons and encouraging them to dream big and know that with hard work it can become a reality. "I do a lot of things with the kids in my neighborhood and around the City," says LaFonta. "I sometimes rent a suite for the New Orleans Pelicans Basketball Games and take kids from the neighborhood. I've done back to school events giving away school supplies and many other things for the youth of our City. My goal is giving them experiences that can enrich their lives."

LaFonta once served as an elected official as a Louisiana State Representative in District 96, while he still has a love for politics he is involved with it in a different way. Today as opposed to voting on bills in Baton Rouge, he's merged his political and business skills into empowering citizens in addition to small businesses in New Orleans. "I enjoyed my time in politics serving my community, but I think I grew up from politics to a full-time law practice and in my role now as a private citizen I can help more people out. I feel in this way I can impact more people's lives positively without constraints."

Special/ Continued from previous page.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2016

SHEDRICK ROY

*Inspiring the Drum
Major Instinct*



Shedrick Roy is a man whose commitment to serving others runs deep through his veins and is part of a tradition started by his grandfather Carlton Roy Sr., "My grandfather owned multiple businesses and was a Civil Rights Activist with the late Rev. Avery Alexander, A.L. Davis, Oretha Castle Haley and Dorothy Mae Taylor," states Roy of why he is civically active. "Just growing up around those people I had no choice but to be conscientious of the issues going on around me as it relates to poor people, but Black people in particular."

Speaking of his work to empower his community he says he is only a vessel that is being used to deliver the message that his community so desperately needs, "I'm interested in finding a way to spark Black people to vote, to start sticking together; because it seems in 2016 we are regressing instead of pro-

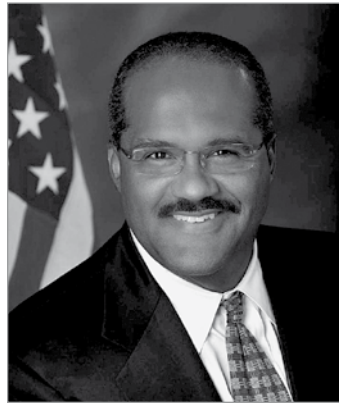
gressing.

When it comes to his life's meaning and purpose; Roy speaks of the "Drum Major Instinct" a speech made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Where he spoke against the need for glory of those seeking to be in the front of the line, but telling his audience the Drum Major Instinct can be used for good if one desires to be first in the line loving their fellow human beings and serving others. "When my life on earth is done I want people to remember I was a dude from the 3rd Ward on Baronne Street who possessed the Drum Major Instinct. I have a personal plea to make a difference. If I don't say something or do something, then it doesn't sit well in my soul. Therefore, I must do something, I must say something because my ancestors said something, so I feel my life can be one lived not in vain but with a purpose."

NOVEMBER 26, 2016

TROY CARTER

A Life Dedicated to Building Bridges in our Community



Selfless and service are two words that describe Troy Carter; a man who has dedicated his life as both a public servant and private citizen to helping others. "To whom much is given much is required and I grew up in a

household with a mother who instilled in us the importance of giving back and the passing on of life's lessons," says Carter of the origins of his will to give back. "From a young age, I have enjoyed volunteering, helping people, so it was natural for me to live a life that is centered on serving my community."

In addition to his work as an elected official, Carter serves on several boards most notably the Police Athletic League and Boys and Girls Club where he was the Chairman of the Southeastern Region. While he is passionate about helping young people, Carter is also concerned with helping all that are in need. He

is the type of elected leader who when the cameras are off he is still doing the work of serving others. Several times a year this is on display as he hosts an Annual Thanksgiving Dinner that is in its 24th Year. Additionally, he gives away gifts for Christmas and school supplies to children at the beginning of the school year.

Throughout his political career, he has been a bridge builder bringing diverse populations together. In the various offices, he's held as a State Representative, City Councilman and now State Senator, Carter is the first African-American elected in the districts he's represented.

DECEMBER 31, 2016

LERROY CRAWFORD JR.

Creating Change from the Inside Out



Leroy Crawford Jr. is a passionate advocate who is committed to helping young people out of the darkness of hopelessness and strife giving them the tools to envision and navigate their way to brighter futures for themselves. A New Orleans native and St. Augustine graduate, he is one of the nation's most sought after motivational speakers,

specializing in cultural competency and working with at-risk youth. He has two decades of experience working with at-risk youth and is founder/owner of "InsideOut Behavior Consulting Services." Crawford believes that change begins from within and that we all must frequently or as needed do a self-checkup/triage about changing our lives from the "Inside Out."

Speaking about his commitment to service he says, "Basically, it comes from my humble beginnings growing up in the St. Bernard Housing Development where we didn't have a lot of money but the people around me were rich in their service to their community," says Crawford. Continuing he says of the person who influenced him the most in the spirit of giving is his late

father Leroy Crawford Sr., who taught him and his brother Wayne Crawford valuable life lessons. "We were in church and he was an usher and an altar boy and anything he did we did. In doing these and so many other things my father did was that we learned if you do right by people that you will be rewarded in the end. He was also a man who was the true definition of love, selflessness and compassion. I remember watching my dad take care of my mom Diana Crawford, who had an aneurysm for 18 years; I watched a man wash, clean and feed her for 18 years."

He believes that exposing young people to a world beyond their immediate environment is important in them dreaming big dreams for their lives and then taking the steps to make them a reality.

NOTFORSALENOLA.com PAC Unfairly Attacks Black Leadership in New Orleans

Why We Cannot Let Dark Money Get in the Way of Our Bright Future

Data News Weekly Editorial

When Politics Goes Too Far

In a recent mailer from a PAC (Political Action Committee) calling itself NOTFORSALENOLA.com, has been attacking not only mayoral candidate Desiree Charbonnet, but Black leadership in general, categorizing them as corrupt and criminal. While this assertion is far from true, it has not stopped them from spreading falsehoods and more recently distributing ones of the most disturbing mailers featuring a cartoon image of candidate Charbonnet holding a gun.

While most understand politics as a full contact sport, this goes too far. This demonizing of a Black woman who is a former judge, who has no criminal record; putting a gun in her hand, sends the wrong message to residents of our city. New Orleanians, like residents of all other major American cities, have suffered far too much from gun violence in our communities. Secondly, it seems that their intent is to paint Black leadership as corrupt and not to be trusted, with the goal being to divide and distract our



No You Wont! This offensive imagery sent out by NOTFORSALENOLA.com, is an attempt to divide the people of the City of New Orleans, and we cannot stand for this type of manipulation.

community, while the issues that truly matter to the people of our city in this election are being ignored. This political slight-of-hand funded by anonymous individuals, is an attempt to smear independent Black leadership. And we as concerned citizens that care for our city must ask ourselves, who is behind this

dark money, where is it coming from and what is their agenda for our city?

Dark Money Sowing the Seeds of Racial Division

As we approach New Orleans' 300th Anniversary, we must consider how important this election is for



Desiree Charbonnet, candidate for Mayor of New Orleans, is a longstanding civil servant. We cannot allow for our Black representatives to be depicted in such an offensive manner.

the future of our city in determining what direction it will be steered. It seems that this dark money group is attempting to contaminate our election process with a campaign of misinformation. Having witnessed this in the 2016 Presidential race, we cannot allow this to happen in our local elections. We want an election that is fair and where all candidates and interest groups can be identified and held to the same standards. In this scenario, the citizens of New Orleans can go to the polls armed with the accurate information when they make their choice at the ballot box.

But this does not seem to be the goal of NOTFORSALENOLA.com as they have only distributed their printed mailers attacking Charbon-


net and Black leaders in certain neighborhoods. This is a tactic that seems to attempt to polarize our community in a time where we all need to come together; finding solutions to the problems that plague our city.

Building Bridges and a Brighter Future for New Orleans

We must ask ourselves why this group is targeting Black leadership and the Charbonnet campaign? And, with this recent stunt of placing a gun in her hand, we must let them know this is unacceptable and some in our community are outraged. Charbonnet is now spending time responding via one of her latest campaign commercials, and we feel it is time for Jesse Gilmore, a campaign consultant who is listed on the Louisiana Ethics Administration Program website as the Chairperson of NOTFORSALENOLA.com to make a public statement as to why they chose to do something that is inappropriate, unethical, unnecessary and playing to the worst racial stereotypes and prejudices.

We must reject the tactics of those who are taking the low road to smear someone running for the city's highest office. It is a time where our city needs to build bridges of understanding and decide that all races and zip codes matter in New Orleans. In closing, we would like to say in more ways than one this is an historical election and we cannot let dark money get in the way of our bright future.


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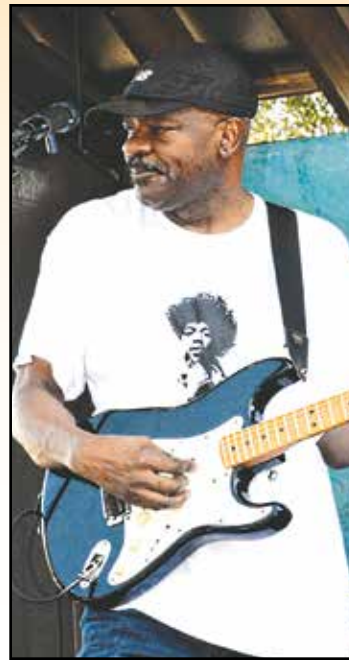
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The 6th Annual Bogalusa Blues & Heritage Fest

Photos by Kichea S. Burt
Data News Weekly
Contributor

For the 6th year Bogalusa hosted the Bogalusa Blues & Heritage Festival in beautiful Cassidy Park. Bogalusa is home to Professor Longhair and the Legendary Studio in The Country as well as many well noted world renowned artists who paint, write, and perform. About an hour and a half outside of New Orleans, the festival has been voted best festival outside of New Orleans and provides a great environment for camping and family friendly fun with a very reasonable entrance fee.



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

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

Now that the Festival has become a staple of the Gentilly Community, it can more easily empower local businesses in the community. While it often highlights local entertainers, the Festival's Committee buys supplies from local businesses, employs local laborers, and invites many local businesses to set up shop during the Festival.

"We've grown quite a bit. We weren't able to do that at one time. But now we're able to help out others and grow their businesses," Bradford said.

The committee has announced that it would add new festivities to the Festival. Local Artist Harold Bradford will unveil a 10th Anniversary Poster (the first poster in five years) for the Festival. Other highlights include a parade that will kick off the Saturday festivities, starting on Chef Highway near Walmart; Fireworks at the end of the Saturday festivities; and a Second-Line that will close out Sunday.

This year also marks the Inaugural 5k Race, held at 6500 Press Drive, taking place from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Impact on Gentilly

"Pontchartrain Park is very important. We have a lot of history behind our community," Bradford said, reminiscing the powerful history the neighborhood holds.

Gentilly, which encompasses over 21 smaller neighborhoods, was one of the first communities developed for middle-class



Over 50 restaurants and 20 craft vendors will be in attendance during this year's festival.

African-American homeowners. Many of those first-time home owners were WWII Veterans.

And that's what made Hurricane Katrina especially devastating to residents of Gentilly.

"It was a nightmare after Katrina," says Jimmy Stokes, the Secretary-Treasurer and Resident of Edgewood Park. "That's why we started the Festival, to help the policeman, firemen, playgrounds, and Roots of music."

Both Bradford and Stokes note that

while the neighborhood has improved over the last few years, the neighborhood still has some concerns.

"We still have issues with blight—all of Gentilly struggled with blight, abandoned lots, overgrown grass, and streets that need repair," Bradford said.

Many residents remain concerned about business and restaurant access. Bradford said that Gentilly holds several fast food restaurants, but fewer sit-down restaurants. She wants the neighborhoods to have more places to shop instead of people constantly having to leave their community for leisure and errands.

"We still have a long way to go," Bradford says, looking forward. But she remains positive of the outcome. "The neighborhood was as an unknown jewel until Gentilly Fest put it on the mark," she says.

An Honor to Play at This Festival On Saturday, October 7th, Electric Violinist Michael Ward will return to Gentilly Festival after performing in 2016 alongside Singer Philip Manuel, and Leo Nocentelli of The Meters. He describes his upcoming

performance as an honor.

"Gentilly Festival is a great thing because people lost their homes after Hurricane Katrina. This festival brings this community back together," Ward said, mentioning that his mother-in-law is from Gentilly.

"No matter what happens in a community, music is always the healer for the environment," he adds.

Recently, Ward performed in Texas roughly two weeks after Hurricane Harvey made landfall. He said that people wanted to get out and enjoy themselves, briefly taking their mind off the troubles of the natural disasters.

"Musicians can give you a peace of mind. If it's for one night or for a moment, I can give you piece of mind where you can get away," he says.

This festival also hits home for the performer. Ward served as a first responder, a Deputy under the Orleans Parish Sheriff Department, for over 17 years.

Performing Artists

The 2017 Gentilly Festival will have its Main Stage, Gospel Tent, and a Public Stage in its Kid's Village. Highlighted performers include: John Pierre, James Andrews, and Charmaine Neville on Friday; Michael Ward, Tonya Boyd Cannon, and Kevin Styles on Saturday; and PJ Morton, Rebirth Brass Band, and Zena Moses on Sunday.

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Capital One Bank

Special, Continued from page 5

FEBRUARY 24, 2017

MICHELE BRIERRE JEAN-PIERRE

A Holistic Prescription to Saving a Community



Michele Briere Jean-Pierre, is the Executive Director of the Ellis Marsalis Center, located in the Lower Ninth Ward, named for the patriarch of the first family of Jazz and co-founded by musicians Brandford Marsalis and Harry Connick Jr. Since opening its doors in 2011, it is changing the lives of children using music education by engaging them and giving them the skills to lead fulfilling and successful lives.

Prior to coming to the Ellis Marsalis Center, Jean-Pierre was working in Public Health but always found time to volunteer in the community. "I have been giving back for a long time; I feel it is my duty. Throughout the years

I have worked with kids as a tutor. I volunteered to help first time homebuyers and I also served as a parent advocate with the school system." She uses her experience in Public Health to approach how she runs the center, focusing on the children in a holistic way. Speaking of this she says, "Community health and what makes a community healthy are things I have tried to incorporate into the programming and planning of the center. We support the kids academically and socially, there is a component where they have access to good nutrition and healthy eating, so we provide healthy snacks for them when they come after school and they also can get

a hot healthy balanced meal. We also provide homework help and we have certified teachers helping with that."

In the center, the kids are getting the tools and developing their full potential, but Jean-Pierre says the center serves another purpose by passing on and preserving the important musical and cultural legacy of New Orleans. "I see the impact in the growth of my students, they are getting wiser and growing and becoming focused young people." Continuing she says, "I feel our young people are ambassadors of our culture and our program helps in preserving our musical heritage and its growth and development."

Special/Continued on next page..

- BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE OF NEW ORLEANS & VICINITY - PROUDLY ENDORSES THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES



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Special/ Continued from previous page.

MARCH 11, 2017

KEITH HART

*Living and Giving
in the Key of Life*

There is an old adage that states, 'music is a universal language.' In the case of Music Educator Keith Hart, it is a bridge that connects young people to overcoming obstacles and achieving their dreams, hopes and aspirations. "It started with middle school in seventh grade where I was privileged to have great teachers. Mr. Jones in middle school and Mr. Harris in high school; these were transformative teachers who taught music that had ways of engaging your morality and helping you make good choices. I was inspired by them and I now take those lessons and pass them onto the students I teach," remarks Hart, who has been in the classroom for two decades speaking of these early influences that inspired him in what has become his life's work of teaching young people.

There are many qualities Hart says that can make young people successful, but the one he feels is most essential is developing good habits, something he feels that would cause them to make better choices as they navigate their way through

life. Speaking of this recipe for success, he remarks, "I impart on my students that habits defines your choices and these ideas of excellence and virtues become the integrity and perseverance that will define your destiny."

In his two decades of teaching he's been instrumental in helping change the lives of many young people. He says what gives him the most joy is when he sees the 'aha' moment when the light bulb comes on and the young people get the concepts he is teaching them." Continuing he says, "I love to see when a kid goes from saying 'I can't' to saying and believing 'I can do anything' this is the most rewarding part of the work I do as a teacher." Recently, for his work with young people he was nominated for a Grammy in the category for Music Educator making it to the final round of 10, being chosen from several hundred nominees. For a man who is armed with an impressive list of accomplishments under his belt, Keith Hart is a humble man with a large heart filled to capacity in the spirit of giving back.

APRIL 29, 2017

JEROME "DJ
JUBILEE" TEMPLE*All About "Serving" the 5-0-4*

Many know Jerome "DJ Jubilee" Temple as the King of Bounce, but what some may not know is that Temple is committed to serving his community and has for several decades been giving back.

He is an advocate of education and serves as a

mentor to young people across the City. Speaking of this work he says, "I graduated from Walter L. Cohen Senior High School and Grambling State University. I worked for the City of New Orleans as a supervisor at A.L. Davis and two other playgrounds coaching little league sports. I have also been in education for over 20 years at West Jefferson High School working with special need kids, something that is my passion and I not only like but love it. I just want to give something back to the youth and provide them with alternatives to getting in with the wrong crowd and let them know through hard work their dreams can become a reality."

From these communities

and many like them comes the best of what New Orleans has to offer and Temple feels New Orleans is an amazing City and believes you can be successful in spite of some of the obstacles you may face in your climb to shine.

"We have a lot of creativity, we are known for creating things like the Second-Line, Mardi Gras, our Bounce Music, our Jazz music, our food, there is so much in New Orleans. I want to show them you don't have to be a gangster or join a gang to be successful. In New Orleans, you can live in a City with a rich history, have fun, party and just be yourself, but also get an education and reach your full potential."

DECEMBER 31, 2016

MIA X

No Limits to Giving Back to the Community

Mia X is a Hip-Hop Legend most notably known for her work with Master P and No Limit Records; where earned two Gold records. But what many do not know is that offstage Mia has a heart of gold; touching the lives of people with her selfless spirit and is dedicated to giving

back to those in need and is an advocate for social causes in the community. "From the beginning of my career in the early 90's I have been on the frontlines fighting against injustice since Adolph Archie was murdered while in police custody. I have also worked with schools speaking to kids, giving money and bringing things like toiletries because a lot of people don't have the basic necessities; so, I go to schools and bring things like soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary napkins and deodorant."

Born Mia Young in New Orleans Seventh Ward, she says her dedication to giving back began with her late grandmother "Mamaw"

who was an early example of someone who was a selfless giver. "My grandmother cooked 10 pounds of red beans every day of my life and she fed everybody who was hungry in our community every day of my life. She was always doing stuff like that. It's the normal and natural thing to do. I don't feel right if something is going wrong with someone and I don't do anything; it's just in me."

Speaking of the important life lessons taught to her by her grandmother and her own recipe for a successful life she says, "The recipe for a successful life is work hard, be honest, be humble and have integrity. I feel if you are honest and humble the sky is the limit."

Fun for All Fall Fashion



Delaney George
Fashion Columnist

Your favorite stars and celebs, old and new, have worn a wig or two in their day. The popularity of wigs fluctuates decade after decade. Once upon a time, wigs were considered something you kept private if you were wearing one. Today, the wig disguise is up and out. More teens, millennials, even tweens are catching on to the wig trend and being open and honest about it. Wigs are the latest handbag, stiletto, and girls fashion BFF, it's all about wigs.

Kylie James, a local 20-year-old artist, said she intends to buy a wig or having one made very soon. "I love my hair, but I also love being colorful and fun. Sometimes I want green hair to go with my shoes or purple to match my purse. I need variety and it's easy with a wig" James said.

Many women prefer wigs because of their convenience. With a wig, there's no more dying your hair, spending hours on styling, plus, you have as many options in styles and colors with



Laced short and curly 4B styled wig worn on model.



Afros, white (left) and neon orange (right) worn on two models.



Multi colored wigs displayed in a wig store.

a wig to match the styles in your closet. Wigs and fashion go to-

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Big Chief Tyrone Casby Mohawk Hunters

By: Glenn Jones
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Timeline:

1980 - Present - Big Chief Tyrone Casby
1972 - 1979 – Big Chief Frank “Summy” Jones
1971 - 1967 – Big Chief Rayfield Parker
1956 - 1966 – Big Chief Mosquito Blue
Big Chief Buck
Big Chief Wardell Harris

The Principle Chief:

As the rain fell profusely on the early morning of October 2nd, I made my way to the 1.5. Big Chief of the Mohawk Hunters territory, known to others as Algiers Point, albeit late. Big Chief Tyrone Casby was gracious to extend his time for me. Unknowingly at the time, I was making the Principle of Blue and Gold Landry- Walker High, late for school. Instead, I took the place of a student this morning, getting an 80 year old history lesson of a family's lineage and its Great Tribe.

As protocol, I don't do pre-interview research on chiefs. I do post research to complete the picture of that chief. The oddity of this chief is that his life outside the tribe is just as compelling as being 3rd generation tribal chief which his great uncle Frank Casby Sr. started in 1947 (two years after WWL II) out of Oakdale, an old community of Algiers before the Fisher Projects. Casby has been masking for 50 years, serving as chief for 27 years and has raised two generations of his own in the culture. Respected Uptown and Downtown Mowhawk Hunters is the only tribe to represent the entire West bank. As well as bringing the Super Sunday Culture yearly to Algiers/Harvey since the 80's. As chief says “I wasn't blew here, I grew here.” Indeed, at the age of 4 Chief would sneak and follow his



Big Chief Tyrone Casby Mohawk Hunters

older brother Ralph “Tickle Man” Casby the “Wild Man” for the Mohawk Hunters to Fox Park in Algiers where the tribe gathered to sing and play the drums with the tambourine. That seemed to ignite his DNA and he became hooked on the beat of the drum. Chief says “tambourine and drums, I like the music, it touched my spirit.”

From there, still sneaking, but not to hear the Indians but this time to join in. At the age of 13, he along with a friend, broke down an old suit and created his own from the parts. 50 years later, with two sons and grandchildren raised in the culture, along with touching hundreds if not thousands of youth as an educator and coach, Big Chief Casby is a confident, poised culture bearer and community leader. Preserving our culture for the next Tricentennial.

Q) Every Chief has a different opinion of the effect of “Pretty” in this culture. What are yours?

A) When you talk about pretty you're talking about competition now you're talking conflict. Folks didn't want this culture to prosper as it has. Because, if I put pretty in it, I put

competition in it. You get conflict. When you get conflict you get confusion. Pretty is just a word used to enhance someone's own ego. That's where I'm at with it. What pretty did for the culture was made guys realize I can't come out any kinda way? It gave standards but didn't help the spirit of the culture.

Q) With the economic crunch our community is under, as well as being under the siege of exploitation, does this culture revolve around materialism?

A) It does not, because with me I can sew one patch and put it on my butt and run around the street and do the dance and sing the song I sang and I'm Pretty! Because I'm expressing me; I'm expressing what my ancestors brought here. It doesn't matter what you put on, it's what's in you. My great grandfather, Frank Casby's dad lived to be a 118 years old right here in Algiers. He was born in slavery. He was too young for the Civil War and too old for WWI. When I say that, I say that to say my family came through slavery.

This is not something I do to say I'm pretty or do because I want to be like the children say “the Ish”, that ain't me. I do it because that's the spirit I have. That's what I try to in instill in my kids and my tribe.

Q) What is the spirit of your tribe?

A) Well it's a Conscience spirit, because at the end of the day, if you ever look at our suits, they all say something different. Everybody expresses their own being. There is no one person, everybody is different, everybody sews different, everybody thinks and reacts different, so therefore for me the theme would be do you.

Q) What aspects of black masking culture helped you become the man you are?

A) The leadership. The role of a leader in that culture. The fact the people are going to look up to me. So when I put that Indian suit on, I represent hundreds and hundreds of years of people and our struggles. What I represent in Algiers is that leader, that person that says I'm from Algiers, I represent you guys. I have to represent you right. I can't come out there half stepping, drunk, fighting acting crazy. No, can't do that because my children are looking, other children are looking. So I'm that role model. When I put that suite on I'm that role model. When I put this suite (shirt and tie principle) on, I'm that role model. No matter what suit I put on with the upbringing of my parents and siblings, there were fifteen of us that grew up in a two room house and from that I was able to say you know what I'm that guy. And now people in this community will tell you I'm that guy. Because from a youth to this day, I have been the guy to do what is right. Now I've done wrong but God has blessed me.

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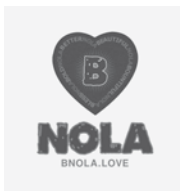
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Special/ Continued from page 11.

JULY 29, 2017

AMEER BARAKA

The Rose that Grew from Concrete



Ameer Baraka, is an Author, Activist, Actor and Educator. Many know of him as the guy who's appeared in countless films and television shows including HBO's *Treme*, Fox TV, America's *Horror Story*, *Blackboard Wars* on Oprah Winfrey's *OWN* and many others, but behind the glory is a story of inspiration proving that anyone can turn their lives around and with hard work and determination anything is possible. Baraka,

whose name means "blessed prince", grew up in the Calliope Housing Projects, where oftentimes dreams died before they are birthed.

Early in life he found himself living in a broken home feeling alone and misunderstood. This led to him being a troubled youth being arrested multiple times soon finding himself incarcerated facing a six decades long prison sentence as a young adult, completely illiterate, dyslexic, and totally ill equipped for anything but the bleakest of futures behind bars. In this moment, he took control of his life and changing its direction forever.

Baraka has become the face of Dyslexia, recently testifying before Congress. Also, he has been part of a movement to remove the stigma as part of

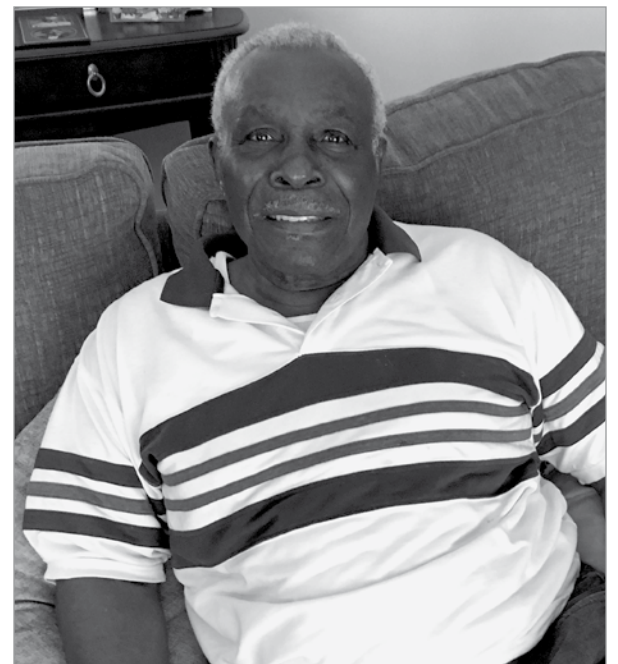
a campaign, *Dyslexia Is Sexy (DIS)*, as he is called the *Sexy Dyslexic*, bringing attention and working to get people diagnosed early. "Growing up I was dyslexic and didn't know what it was, my mother didn't know and my brothers and sister did extremely well in school. I failed miserably; I hated school. But to tease and whip children is not the answer, get them tested and then get them the one on one help they need. Because people can go through life not knowing they have dyslexia; I found out while I was in prison, I was 23 years old, when I was tested and was reading on a 3rd grade level."

Today Baraka is an example of triumph over tragedy and an example of the power of learning to read and how it empowered him. Now it's his mission

OCTOBER 14, 2017

DR. ALVIN WILLIAMS, PH.D.

A Life Dedicated to Adding Value to the Lives of the Young People



He is the definition of a man dedicated to giving back to his community. Dr. Alvin Williams, Ph.D. was a Mathematics Teacher for over four decades instructing and serving as a mentor inspiring young people to be the best they can be. "My will to give back comes from my family and all the people that sacrificed so I could become successful" says Williams.

Through his work at his church and his fraternity Omega Psi Phi Chapter over the years has raised money for scholarships to help college students achieve the successes they so richly deserve. It is this kind of dedication that sets Dr. Williams apart

from the crowd. "Through my church and fraternity, we are committed to helping students and giving them opportunities to advance in their lives and be those who will lead us in the future."

At the root of his will to give back is his Christian faith where he says if you believe then all things are possible. "God has seen me through a lot of tough times in my life and also touched my heart to live my life to help solve the problems in our community through educating youth. Looking back this has given my life meaning and purpose; one that I've dedicated to inspiring others."

AUGUST 19, 2017

TONY BRUAL

Fighting the Good Fight



Young people today face many obstacles to achieve greatness and reaching their full potential. Oftentimes this is because of a lack of role models. Brandon Okpalobi, a New Orleans native who now calls Miami, Florida home is a shining example of

someone that's spent his life committed to reaching greatness as an individual in addition to being a community servant, inspiring and encouraging people across the globe in making their dreams a reality.

He is a graduate of St. Augustine High School. While a student there, Brandon played on the basketball team, he says of his experience as an athlete and the lessons he learned there, he has applied to other areas of his life. An example of his fortitude, perseverance, and persistence is after applying to five colleges the University of Miami offered him a partial academic scholarship. Determined to play basketball he tried out for the team and received a full scholarship, eventually, becoming the captain of the team in his senior year. Not only did he stand out on the court, but

also as a student earning a degree in Computer Information Systems.

Brandon Okpalobi's story exemplifies that with hard work anything is possible. It is the motivation behind his company, DIBIA Athletic Program, that he describes as "Providing elite sports training for athletes to develop fundamental skills through detailed analysis of individual skills, innovative drills and dynamic instruction. Our intense training program is designed for boys and girls, ranging from age 7 to professional athletes. DIBIA trains athletes worldwide and hosts camps/clinics in Miami, New Orleans, LA, Bermuda, Bahamas, Latin America and Nigeria."

He speaks passionately about DREAM which is DIBIA's Community Outreach Initiative.

DESIRÉE CHARBONNET ENDORSED BY CONGRESSMAN CEDRIC RICHMOND



In the campaign for mayor of New Orleans, Desirée Charbonnet has landed a major new endorsement: Congressman Cedric Richmond. Richmond, who serves as Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, is a prominent national voice among Democrats. He praised Charbonnet's experience and ideas.

“Desirée Charbonnet is the right choice to be the next mayor of New Orleans. Throughout her 20 years of public service, Desirée has built a strong track record as a reformer and she has a vision for the future of New Orleans. Desirée has impressive new ideas and plans for fighting crime, creating jobs, and building up the city's infrastructure. She'll be the mayor we need in New Orleans.

Reacting to the endorsement, Charbonnet said, “I am proud to have Congressman Richmond's strong support. The big challenges we face in New Orleans require innovation and teamwork. Congressman Richmond's leadership continues to be a great benefit to our city and state, and I look forward to working with him to move New Orleans forward.”



DESIRÉE #37
CHARBONNET
MAYOR

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Election Day: October 14, 2017
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DISCOVER MORE OF THEIR STORIES AT NNPA.ORG/DTU