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The Race for Juvenile Court Heats Up



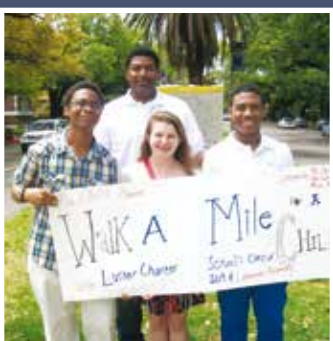
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The Race for Juvenile Court Heats Up



Doug Hammel



Yolanda King

By Edwin Buggage

Voters will go to the polls on May 4th to vote in a runoff election that will determine who will occupy one of the six seats in the New Orleans Juvenile Court. Doug Hammel, who won the primary with 43% of the votes, will face Yolanda King, who placed second with 25% of the vote. Data News Weekly spoke with both candidates about their campaigns.

Doug Hammel

He is a young candidate who is running for office for the first time. He says his campaign is less about being a choice, but a calling. As we talked he harkens back to his days at American University as an undergraduate student speaking of the idea of justice for all he says, "I majored in Justice, at our school, that is social justice, environmental justice as well as criminal justice and my thesis was on the effects of incarceration has on a community," says Hammel of one of the reasons why he is running for Juvenile Court Judge.

Describing himself he says he is tough, but fair and compassionate and has both

the legal and administrative background to serve on the court, "I believe in rules, but it is about fairness, there is more discretion that a judge has in Juvenile Court, we spend more time with the family. It is about having a court that is effective and efficient and someone who has both the legal background and the administrative skills to do the job. I believe that if I send someone to a program, that it is not evidence based as being effective, we need to evaluate programs we are using and ask ourselves do they work, that is something that is a big part of my platform finding things that work for our young people and keeping our communities safe."

Fiscal responsibility by those in government is a concern of many of the citizens of New Orleans; Hammel says he wants to bring a level of transparency to the courts. "I would bring transparency in budgeting, so the citizens see that we are using the resources in the most effective way. Also I would like to find new and innovative ways for the court to be more efficient and not simply rely on this is the way we did it for the last 20 years and not care whether it's the best way to run the court."

As we know crime is a problem for our City, but most realizes we cannot simply jail people and expect overall or juvenile crime to cease. Hammel says the problem needs to be addressed in a holistic way. He speaks of outreach efforts he's made to those working in education to help keep young people stay on the right track, "I want to take the court into schools, one of the ideas that I've presented and its been received in a positive way by those on the school board whether their charter, public, or Renew, is to do mock trials in the school. I feel I can help to educate the children of our schools about what could happen when they make bad decisions, so it can serve as an educational piece as well as a deterrent. And I also want them to know that once you've become part of the Criminal Justice System it can be problematic later, so I want to try to prevent that."

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Hammel says there are models of courts that run more efficiently that we must begin to look at and adopt in Juvenile Court, "I am impact and results driven. I believe the courts should be streamlined and information shared that could help the court run more efficiently in Orleans Parish. This is something that is being done in states around the nation and right here in Jefferson Parish One Family court, it is called Project One." He also, speaks of getting cases through the courts quicker, "I will have scheduling orders which will help speed up the times of cases, if elected I pledge that in six months I would have one of the lowest docket in the building."

In a recent move by Mayor Landrieu to shrink the number of Juvenile Court Judges from 6 to 3 is something Hammel disagrees with and feels that a smaller court with fewer justices will not make the court run more efficiently, "I am against reducing the Juvenile Court down to 3 judges, what I believe should be done is that the court hours should be made to accommodate our citizens needs even if that means having court in the evenings when people are off from work or in instances where kids do not have to miss school that can be a way to more effectively meet the needs of the people of our City."

Hammel says if elected he will be an advocate for reform as well as understanding that his job does not start and end in the courtroom. "This seat is about doing what's best for our children and being on the bench is only one part of the job I will do if elected. I plan on being involved in and engaged in the various communities of our City. I believe our job as adults is to give our kids hope and educate them to make better decisions so that they never have to appear inside a courtroom facing a judge. And this is all our responsibility and I am willing to work with the citizens of New Orleans to solve the problems of our youth and hope on May 4th I receive their votes."

Yolanda King

Yolanda King is making her third run for Juvenile Court having run in 2002 and 2004. After finishing second in the primary race in April garnering 25 percent of the vote she feels she is the best candidate to fill the seat and feels that she can bring, experience, competence and compassion to the bench. She touts her experience working in criminal,

civil and appellate courts, "My 19 years of criminal, civil and appellate experience have uniquely prepared and qualified me for the bench. I have the requisite experiences, and compassion to be a fair, efficient, effective and proactive Judge in Juvenile Court Section E. I have the temperament, wisdom and knowledge to serve wisely and I have the independence to serve fairly and with integrity," says King.

While her opponent has racked up endorsements from almost the entire City Council, District Attorney Leon Cannizaro, many civic groups and fourth place finisher George "Gino" Gates. She says her campaign is less about endorsements and lets her record of service speak to why she is best suited for the bench, "I have been a public servant for the past 19 years as a Former Assistant District Attorney with both District Attorneys Harry Connick and Eddie Jordan, as a Judicial Law Clerk in Civil District Court with Judge Lloyd Medley and as a Judicial Law Clerk the Second Circuit Court of Appeal with Judge Carl E. Stewart. I have also served as a Senior Research Attorney with Judge Dennis R. Bagneris, Sr. at the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal, and a Research Attorney with Justice Bernette J. Johnson at the Louisiana Supreme Court."

She says if elected she will make the court more efficient and bring about initiatives that will bring about positive change in Juvenile Court. "I will review and evaluate the entire docket within the first sixty days of taking the bench. I will schedule mandatory pre-trial status conferences to insure the efficient flow of cases and to avoid unnecessary delays. Require Juvenile Offenders to obtain GED or stay in school as a condition probation; require the juvenile offender to make restitution to their victim. Incorporate community service into sentencing whenever possible in order to provide the Juvenile Offender the opportunity to develop a skill in order to become gainfully employed and remain visible, and available to the Community for education to the Public on Juvenile Court. Work and communicate with New Orleans Police Department, District Attorney Office, and other law enforcement, other agencies to development a more cohesive Criminal Justice System. I am committed to the fair, the proper interpretation of the law, and the equal application of our laws. Start court on time; work a full day, review and handle

all pre-trial motions and conduct hearings and trials in a timely manner; schedule pre-trial conferences, and status conferences, and prepare all judgments timely and in an efficient manner."

King says that being inside the courtroom is not enough, that this is a post that requires passion and compassion. "I am running for this seat because I care about our youth and their future, and there are those who do not

understand our kids and believe that we can just lock kids up and that will solve the problem and we need a judge who understands the children and their circumstances when they come to court. Over the years I have through my church and sorority worked with young people to find alternatives to lives of crime." Continuing she says if elected she will advocate for the development of a task force to help combat the prob-

lem that affect the youth of New Orleans that sometimes leads to criminal behavior, "I will work to develop a Multi-disciplinary Task Force of the District Attorney Office, Judges, New Orleans Police Department, other Law Enforcement Agencies, Probation Officers, Social Workers, and Mental Health Professionals with Community involvement to help to im-

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Rep. Richmond Introduces Legislation to Combat Tax Preparer Fraud



Congressman Cedric Richmond D(LA-02)

Congressman Cedric Richmond (LA-02) introduced the Taxpayer Protection and Preparer Fraud Prevention Act of 2013, which implements and enforces policy that would allow the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to certify paid tax preparers and ensure they are competent, of good character and able to render services.

"In these challenging economic times, the last thing hardworking Americans need is to be made vulnerable by a tax preparer that is unfit to do the job," said Rep. Richmond. "This common sense bill would provide the IRS with tools to ensure consumers are choosing from

only the most competent pool of preparers when it is time to file their return."

The Taxpayer Protection and Preparer Fraud Prevention Act would also allow the IRS to create penalties for tax preparers who have been found to be disreputable, incompetent or fraudulent.

Key provisions of the legislation include:

- Giving the IRS the authority to license or certify tax preparers
- Requiring tax preparers to be competent, of good character and able to render services
- Allowing penalties for tax preparers that have been found to be disreputable, incompetent or fraudulent

In January of 2013, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that the IRS did not have the authority to regulate paid tax preparers, removing key requirements such as compliance testing. This, in turn, left taxpayers vulnerable to possible dishonesty, negligence or fraud with little recourse.

"I am hopeful that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can come together and recognize the need to institute basic IRS protections," said Rep. Richmond. "This bill is a long overdue step towards protecting average Americans who shouldn't have to worry about being defrauded."

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New Orleans Loses a Giant in the Faith-Based Community *Bishop Robert C. Blakes, Sr. Died at Age 74*



Bishop Robert C. Blakes, Sr.,
Pastor and Founder of New Home Ministries

Bishop Robert C. Blakes, Sr., better known by many as the "Prophet", passed away on Thursday, April 11, 2013.

Bishop Blakes was the Pastor

and founder of New Home Ministries, a Family of Churches. He was a dedicated pastor as well as a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

He was a man of much love and great faith who believed strongly that "with faith, all things are possible." He not only preached love and faith, but lived a life that demonstrated compassion and conviction to his mission of serving God's people.

Funeral services for Bishop Blakes were held on Tuesday at the Pontchartrain Center in Kenner, with Bishop Paul S. Morton, Co-Pastor of St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church officiating. He was interred at Lake Lawn Mausoleum in Metairie.

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Dillard to Host Encore Performance of "Dreamgirls" Featuring Special Guest Jennifer Holliday

Pre-Commencement Scholarship Benefit Set for May 9

Dillard University's 2013 Pre-Commencement Scholarship Benefit will be a one-night encore performance of the Dillard theater production of Dreamgirls featuring special guest Jennifer Holliday at 8 p.m. on May 9 in Lawless Memorial Chapel. All proceeds will go toward student scholarships. The show will also serve as a celebration of the completion of the \$70 million Advantage Dillard! Capital Campaign.



Jennifer Holliday

Holliday's performance as Effie "Melody" White in the original Broadway production of Dreamgirls earned her a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical and her first Grammy Award for Best R&B Female Vocalist. Holliday's recording of the Dreamgirls torch song "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" hit No. 1 on the Billboard R&B chart.

Dillard's production of Dream-

girls, directed by Troy R. Poplous from Tom Eyrn's original book and Harry Krieger's timeless music, played to sellout crowds from April 5-14. Dillard Theatre, now in its 77th season, took home the Big Easy Theater Award for Best University Production in March for its 2012 production of Two Trains Running.

In previous years, Dillard's Pre-Commencement Scholarship

Benefit has featured performances by Nancy Wilson, Roberta Flack, the Four Tops, the Chi-Lites, and more.

Tickets for the encore performance of Dreamgirls featuring Jennifer Holliday are \$25. To purchase tickets, go to Dillard.edu or visit the university cashier in Rosenwald Hall, room 108E, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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French Quarter Festival Highlights

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

The largest FREE music festival in the South French Quarter Festival's 30th Anniversary featured over 800 local musicians, more than 65 of New Orleans finest restaurants, free special events, family fun with two exciting kids areas , and fireworks on the Mississippi River. Another great year for a great New Orleans event. And, Data was there!



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Kermit Ruffins and James Witfield



Rockin Dopsie



James Rivers and Lucien Barbarin



The Original Pinettes Brass Band Trumpets



The Original Pinettes Brass Band Bone Section



Nakia Javon



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Glenn David Andrews



The Next Generation with Pinettes Brass Band



All For One Brass Band



Davell Crawford



Kaylin Orleans Ruffins

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Mike Epps Comes to NOLA

Photos by Polo

Recently, Comedian Mike Epps along with the legendary Doug E. Fresh came and rocked the Big Easy and Data News Weekly was there and at several of the after parties.



Walk a Mile for a Child

Photos by Eric Connerly

In the spirit of building for the next generation Wilbert "Chill" Wilson held another one of his Walk-A-Mile For A Child events, where he partnered with the Lusher Charter School Senior Class. It was a day in which people representing a cross section of the City gathered to create awareness that children are important and that they are the key to the future of our City.



May 4,
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"Obama" as a Prefix



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

The right wing seems determined to associate President Obama with any government program that helps people on the bottom. Thus, the term Obamacare was used to attack the health care program that President Obama fashioned and worked with Congress to approve. While Obamacare is not perfect, it brings more people into the health care system, and further solidifies the safety net that many have attempted to fray.

Now these folks are running with the term "Obamaphone," which speaks to the fact that President Obama has simply extended

a Lifeline plan that was authorized by Republican President Ronald Reagan when it was clear that those who were either isolated by poverty or by their rural status needed telephones to connect themselves to the world.

The Reagan program used taxes on some of us to provide telephones for the rest of us. People were able to get a telephone that offered basic service for a basic fee. With the onset of technology, Lifeline customers had the option of getting a landline phone or a cellular phone. This is not an Obama initiative. It began in 1996.

Those who get a subsidized telephone have numerous restrictions. They don't get to choose their phone, but are offered whatever is available, usually a refurbished phone. They get 250 minutes a month if they get a cell phone. The 250 minutes is about four hours a month, or an hour a week. Is this really some kind of rip off, or is it a reasonable way to bring people on the periphery to the center? What do you do with

no phone when there is a medical emergency or even a job call? Absent Lifeline, you are yet again a peripheral citizen.

Obamaphone? Give me a break. Until the Tea Party began to hold sway on our national consciousness, Republicans were among those who embraced the notion that every American should have basic telephone service. Now, anything associated with government assistance is associated with President Obama, despite the fact that both Democratic and Republican presidents have attempted to assist people at the bottom, albeit with different levels of energy.

Let's not forget that it was Democratic President Bill Clinton who pushed the "welfare reform" that limited government assistance to 60 months or five years. When President Clinton, long a favorite among African Americans, proffered a 1996 reform that I described as "welfare deform," several of his African American supporters excoriated him. He

weathered the storm, as did the public assistance program. Still, nobody describes it as Clinton-welfare. It was an ill-conceived and pandering policy change that allowed President Clinton to brag that he'd gotten "tough" on public assistance.

Associating President Obama with government support to the poor is a subtle way of associating people of African descent with public assistance, and with the pejorative term "welfare." This is a most understated form of racial coding, a coding that enabled former Congressman Newt Gingrich to describe President Obama as a "food stamps" president and to falsely assert that President Obama "put" more people on food stamps than any other president in history. Does Mr. Gingrich remember the Great Recession that the scion of his party, former President George W. Bush, enabled, or is he too busy purchasing jewelry for his blushing bride of a decade to pay attention to our nation's economic situation?

One in six Americans lives in poverty. More than one in four African Americans and Latinos live in poverty. One in 10 of all Whites live in poverty. The Great Recession and economic restructuring have kicked these diverse groups of poor people, many who are grateful for food assistance, to the curb. President Obama has been responsive to this group of people to the extent that a hostile Congress has allowed it.

If I were President Obama, I'd be flattered by descriptions of Obamacare and Obamaphones. I would not even mind having food stamps being described as Obamafood. Would we prefer to describe poverty as Romney starve, or sequester starve? Make it plain. Associating President Obama with health care, Lifeline telephones and healthy eating is to his credit, not his detriment.

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.

Integrated Inequality A Tale of Two Americas, Part 2



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

NEW YORK, NY - This week, during the National Urban Leagues 10th annual Legislative Policy Conference in Washington, DC, we released the 37th edition of the State of Black America, Redeem the Dream: Jobs Rebuild America. This year's report commemorates the racial milestones that have occurred in the 50 years since the height of the civil rights movement and shines a sobering light on the unfinished business of achieving full equality and em-

powerment for every citizen.

One of the most encouraging signs in the report is the progress African Americans have made in fulfilling Whitney Young's vision of preparing ourselves for real and hoped-for opportunities through education.

Since 1963, the high school completion gap has closed by 57 percentage points. There are more than triple the number of Blacks enrolled in college. And for every college graduate in 1963, there are now 5.

Anti-poverty measures have also improved our living standard since 1963. The percentage of Blacks living in poverty has declined by 23 points. And the percentage of Blacks who own their homes has grown by 14 points.

But these numbers don't tell the full story. While Black America has achieved double-digit gains in educational attainment, employment, and wealth over the past 50 years, we still

have made only single-digit gains against Whites. With an Equality Index of 71.7%, African Americans enjoy less than three-fourths of the well-being and economic status of White

March unemployment figures showing African American joblessness now at 13.3% and Hispanic unemployment at 9.2%, compared to an overall rate of 7.6%, we still see a tale of two Americas that

“ It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared.

– The late National Urban League and civil rights leader, Whitney M. Young, Jr. ”

Americans. Similarly, Hispanic Americans, with an index of 75.4%, are experiencing only three-quarters of the full opportunity America has to offer.

For example, in the past 50 years, the Black-White income gap has only closed by 7 points (now at 60%). The unemployment rate gap has only closed by 6 points (now at 52%). And with

continues to break down along the color line.

But rather than bemoan these problems, the National Urban League is using these findings to sharpen our focus on meaningful solutions. Earlier this year, we launched a ground-breaking endeavor Jobs Rebuild America, a \$70 million series of public/private

investments to create pathways to jobs and put urban America back to work.

But Washington must also be part of the solution. During our visit to Capitol Hill this week, we reiterated our support of the Urban Jobs Act and the Project Ready STEM Act, a bill sponsored by Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman, Marcia Fudge. We also support the stated goal in the Presidents 2014 budget released this week: to invest in the things needed to grow our economy and create jobs while reducing the deficit in a way that does not unfairly impact the most vulnerable communities.

Again, while much progress has been made over the past 50 years, The State of Black America remains a tale of two Americas. The National Urban League has put some real solutions on the table. Its time for Washington to put them to work.

Pipeline to the People

By Corey Anderson

Question: How do you feel about the re-voting of the Crescent City Connection tolls on May 4th? Join us on Facebook for a discussion.

By Corey Anderson
Data News Weekly Columnist

Officially Named the Crescent City Connection in 1989, a major bridge, also known to some as the Greater New Orleans Bridge, is going to be voted on again on May 4th, 2013, to continue to suspend the tolls for those who commute daily across it. Some citizens feel the toll is needed to pay for repairs and maintenance, etc. Some feel it is completely unnecessary and think businesses are lining their pockets. Others really have no stance on the current situation.

This would mean an immense increase or decrease of people's dispensable income. Many don't want the renewal of the tolls because the bridge is supposedly paid for after years of collecting from the public. Data News Weekly took to the streets of New Orleans to get an authentic opinion about the race and how it might affect metro citizens.



David Hardy

"I think they should keep it like it is. Close it down. Or at least show where the money is going."



Brandi Semien

"For as long as I can remember, there has always been the toll on the Crescent City Connection Bridge. Many citizens complain about having to pay the toll or getting a toll tag, but that money is used to maintain the upkeep of the bridge and roads leading up to and from it. Since the toll has been lifted, not only has the City lost money that was used to put back into it, but also the traffic is worse now more than ever. I am not up-to-date with all of the legal issues regarding the re-voting on the tolls for the Crescent City Connection Bridge, but in my opinion I think the City and the citizens of the City would benefit from the re-voting in hopes that the toll is voted back in place."



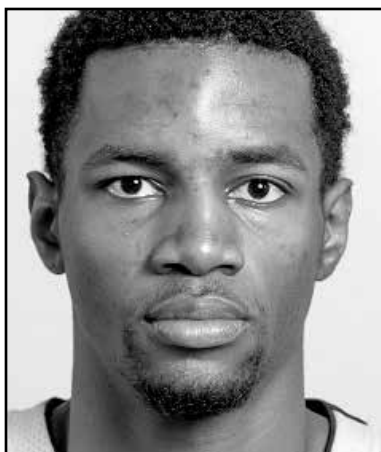
Eugene Foy

"My thoughts on the re-voting on the voting of the tolls is neutral. The idea of having tolls brings jobs as well as money for hopefully funding for better bridge support and lights, etc. Although, having no tolls saves the people money and decreases traffic as far as I have seen. Either decision is fine with me, because there can be positive outcomes out of both situations."

Erves, Joseph Receive All-Louisiana Honorable Mention

Xavier University of Louisiana seniors Denzell Erves and Wanto Joseph received honorable mention on the All-Louisiana collegiate men's basketball team announced late Saturday.

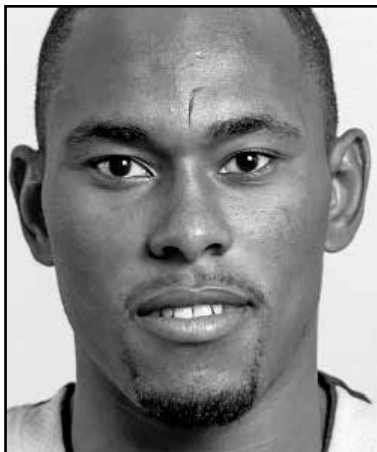
Erves, a 6-foot-7 forward from Vicksburg, Miss., and a graduate of Vicksburg High School, averaged 13.7 points, 9.3 rebounds and 1.3 blocked shots per game this season and ranked third in NAIA Division I with 17 double-doubles. He became XU's career leader with 132 blocked shots — Louis Williams (1979-82) held the previous mark of 130 — and was No. 4 with 762 career rebounds. Erves was a third-team NAIA Division I All-American this season and was All-Gulf Coast



Denzell Erves

Athletic Conference twice.

Joseph, a 5-9 guard from New Orleans a graduate of O. Perry Walker High School, averaged 16.2 points, 3.6 rebounds, six assists and 1.9 steals per game



Wanto Joseph

and was All-GCAC. He was one of four NAIA Division I players this season, one of three Louisiana men's players in the last 10 seasons and the second in Xavier history to reach 500 points and

175 assists in a season.

Both Erves and Joseph reached 1,000 career points in the regular-season finale against city rival Dillard. Joseph finished with 1,041 points, and Erves scored 1,031.

Xavier had no representatives on the All-Louisiana women's basketball team, but the Gold Nuggets' Bo Browder was the runner-up to LSU's Nikki Caldwell in voting for Coach of the Year. Out of 32 votes cast, Caldwell received 12 and Browder eight. Nicholls State's DoBee Plaisance was third with four votes.

A Louisiana Sports Writers Association panel of sports information directors and media members selected the All-Louisiana teams.



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Great Cars Do Not Happen Without Great People

By Yvonne Coleman
Special from the Louisville
Defender

Toyota recently unveiled their 2013 Avalon at a press junket in Cincinnati. The event not only provided the media in attendance with a look at the newly designed vehicle, but also an inside look at the company who makes it and their strong commitment to diversity.

Billed a luxury car without the luxury price tag, the Avalon is sure to be a favorite among the African American consumer market. Members of the press got the chance to drive the impressive vehicle and see it being made at the Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. (TMMK) Plant. The plant sits on 1,300 acres and employs about 6,600 people with a payroll of about \$492 million. Their annual production capacity is an impressive 500,000 vehicles and 600,000 engines. In addition to the Avalon, the plant produces Camry, Camry Hybrid, Avalon Hybrid, Venza, 4-cylinder and V6 engines, axles steering components, machined blocks, cylinder heads, crankshafts, camshafts, rods and axles assemblies/dies.

James S. Colon, Vice President Toyota Product Communications, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. said, "Great Cars do not happen without Great People." Although he was not referring to himself when he made the statement, Colon is truly one of the great people at Toyota. He was just one of the great people from Toyota in attendance at the Press event. Toyota has a diversity strategy that is working. According to Colon, 30 percent of the workforce is people of color.

Colon is responsible for gathering and managing information and promotion initiatives for Toyota brand vehicles in addition to product and sales training. He began his career in 1980 and he has held various roles at Toyota regional offices and at TMS headquarters in Torrance, California, that include general manager for the Portland Region and the Chicago Region. He was also vice president of sales and dealer development for the Lexus Division. Most recently, he served as vice president for sales for the Toyota Division where he was responsible for sales support for Toyota's



Toyota's Rob McConnell (principal engineer), Latondra Newton (Group VP, Toyota Motor North America), Wil James (President, Toyota Motor Company Manufacturing/Kentucky) and Jim Colon (Vice President of Product Communications, Toyota Motor Sales/USA).

regional offices, public companies and private distributors.

His education background includes a bachelor's degree in economics and business from Manchester College in North Manchester, Ind., where he currently serves on the Board of Trustees along with Clark University in Atlanta, GA. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from Martin University in Indianapolis in May, 2011.

Colon serves on the Board of Directors for the Black Star Project, The First Tee of South Los Angeles, California State University - Los Angeles and others. Most recently, he was appointed to the board of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, where he supports its mission by contributing to developing leaders, informing policy and educating the public.

Another great person of Toyota is Wilbert W. (Wil) James, Jr. James is President of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. When he gave an overview of the facility, he talked with great pride. He said, "We are proud of the way we do business."

James became the seventh president of TMMK in July 2010. It is the largest plant in North America. His first position at Toyota was actually at TMMK in 1987. Over a 20 year period, he served in various positions including General Manager of Assembly and General Manager of Production Administration. He served as vice president of Manufacturing from 2003-2006. He has also served in positions at other facili-

ties including Toyota's Princeton, Indiana facility as Senior Vice President for Manufacturing and Quality. He also worked in Long Beach, California as President of TABC Inc.

He was educated at Old Dominion University where he received his Associate's degree (1976) and Bachelors of Science degree (1978) in Mechanical Engineering Technology.

James believes in diversity. A Diversity of Champion for TEMA, he leads company-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives across North America. He is an active member of the Community, serving on the Board of Directors for the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Bluegrass Economic Advancement Movement. He is also involved with the Executive Leadership Conference and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

When asked how he has been successful in making Diversity Work at his facility, James said he is involved at the grassroots level. He said he believes that everyone is an integral part of the team and makes that known to everyone. "That is the Toyota Way," he said. James also said they work to set up programs where the employees can also work together going out and helping people in the community. He said in addition, Toyota donates money for a variety of causes in the community.

The company has received numerous awards in the area of diversity that include:

- "Top 50 Company for Diversity" by DiversityInc for six years. In 2012, in addition to the being

included in the list of Top 50 Companies for Diversity overall, Toyota also ranked seventh in DiversityInc's Top 10 Companies for LGBT Employees.

- "40 Best Companies for Diversity" by Black Enterprise Magazine for the past seven years.
- Hispanic Business Magazine's "Top 60 Company for Diversity" for the past three years.
- 2011 "Corporation of the Year" by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC).
- Proud member of the "Billion Dollar Roundtable", recognizing more than \$1 billion in annual spending with certified ethnic and women-owned suppliers.

Another great person at Toyota, Latondra Newton, was promoted to Group Vice President at TMA in 2013. She began her career at Toyota in 1991. She has held a variety of positions including general manager of the Team Member Development Center (TDC) at Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing North America, Inc. (TEMA). As assistant general manager of Human Resources, Newton started the corporate diversity function for North American manufacturing. She was also responsible for state and federal legislative/regulatory activity, media relations and community relations in her role as assistant general manager of Corporate Affairs.

Newton received her bachelor's degree in management systems from Kettering University in Michigan. She was named as

of the 100 Leading Women in the North American Automotive Industry in 2010 and she was recognized as a Rising Star under 35 in 2000. As a member of the Board of directors for the Manufacturing Institute, she chairs a new initiative focused on enhancing opportunities for women to enter and grow in professional careers in the manufacturing industry.

It was Rob McConnell, Sr. Design Engineer at the Toyota Technical Center in Michigan, however, that brought the focus on the Avalon. McConnell is the Principal Engineer having worked on the design team for the 2013 Avalon.

A member of the Michigan Design Team, McConnell is just 35 years old and is moving up the ladder fast. He has been with Toyota for his entire professional career. A graduate of the University of Michigan, he interned at Toyota while attending college. After graduating in 2001 with a degree in mechanical engineering, he remained at the Technical Center and began his employment in the Body Design Department, which he now leads the team of 10 plus. He said his team is unique in there are a lot of young people on his team. According to McConnell, on a typical day he and his team members can be seen with their headphones on rocking to The Roots or Common as they are getting inspired.

McConnell's team has taken the lead in seven different Toyota vehicles including the Venza, Solara and Tundra, however, the Avalon was the first car that was totally designed and built outside of Japan. He said the Avalon has completely been re-styled and it has been eight years in the making.

The sleek design and body style of the 2013 Avalon makes it "Sexy." The vehicle makes a bold statement with the larger grill, the larger standard rim sizes and the innovative headlamps. The car has been designed to attract the African American and Urban markets. Actor Idris Elba is the vehicle's new spokesperson.

McConnell is making the imaginary possible at Toyota. He takes a design on a piece of paper and puts it on the road. He is truly one of the Great People at Toyota making Great Cars.

Irises In Bloom

By MG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly
Columnist

Louisiana Irises are in bloom right now and they are making a stunning showing. It was my pleasure to volunteer at the Greater New Orleans Iris Society's Iris Show held a couple of weeks ago at the New Orleans Museum of Art, an appropriately selected venue as blooming Irises are a work of art with intricate markings, unusual shapes, and a spectrum of vibrant colors.

As a novice to Irises, it was quite a learning experience to observe the judging process for the Iris show. All of the entries for the show had to be placed at floor level so that the judges could look down into the Irises to see all of their beautiful markings. It was my job to help place all of the entries and their labels on the mat on the floor so I got in a lot of squats that day. Also the judges look at the number of positions (or branchings) of each entry, an



entry has to have at least three positions to even be considered prize worthy.

There were two segments of judging for the Irises. There were the cultivars or named Irises, and there were the seedlings which were Irises that have not yet been named. In the seedling category were the small, medium, and tall groupings. Irises in the small grouping were less than 24 inches tall, mediums were 24-36 inches in height, while the large seedlings were over 36 inches in height. All of the members of the



Iris Society were also allowed to vote on the cultivars and seedlings categories, while all visitors to the Iris Show were allowed to vote for their favorite seedling and favorite cultivar. The Best-in-Show ribbon went to Iris Society president and my sister Master Gardener Eileen Hollan, who is dedicated to educating the public on the Iris culture and she spearheads the Iris project at the Sculpture Garden.

Iris experts say now is a good time to view Irises but not to buy Irises, as they have such a short

bloom time. If you purchased Irises now the bloom will be gone shortly after you plant it, and will not bloom again until next April. Unlike most blooming plants, after you cut the bloom off of your Iris it will not send out another bloom. Irises are now in bloom so it is a perfect time to visit Longue Vue House and Garden and take their Iris walk, or visit the Sculpture Garden at City Park to view the Irises and take down the names of the ones you like, then in October buy your Irises and plant them. You will start to see their foliage sprouting in late February or March and then they bloom in April, which is what happens with the Iris giganteaeurlea blooming in my garden.

Check out my "Gardening Tips of the Week" on my website at www.thegardeningdiva.com.

Remember, never get too busy to stop and smell the beautiful flowers!

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

prove the Juvenile System in Orleans Parish." New Orleans is a City where access to drugs and guns are easily accessible. King wants to implement a Gun Court, "I will implement a Gun Court based upon the model outlined by the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants Program. The Gun Court will be a type of problem solving court that intervenes with youth who have committed gun offenses that have not resulted in a violent offense(s). The Gun Court will include several principal elements including: (1) Early Intervention and Prevention ; (2) Short-Term Intensive Family and Group Counseling; (3) An Intensive Educational focus to educate juveniles on the consequences that follows from the unlawful gun usage."

If elected King says that her focus will be on reducing recidivism rates through more effective rehabilitation programs, "Research has shown that incarceration without rehabilitation doesn't work. It doesn't reduce the recidivism rate; it only adds to it. This does not imply that correctional facilities are failing; only that many of the rehabilitation programs they are using simply are not working as effectively as they should. Intervention programs that showed the strongest, most consistent impact on recidivism rates for non-institutionalized serious offenders were interpersonal skills training, individual counseling and behavioral programs and these are some of things I would like to put in place if elected."

She says if elected she will be a fair, transparent, accountable and responsible judge that has integrity and compassion. "I am asking people who want a candidate that is competent and caring who's invested in our community and our young people to come out and support my campaign."

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