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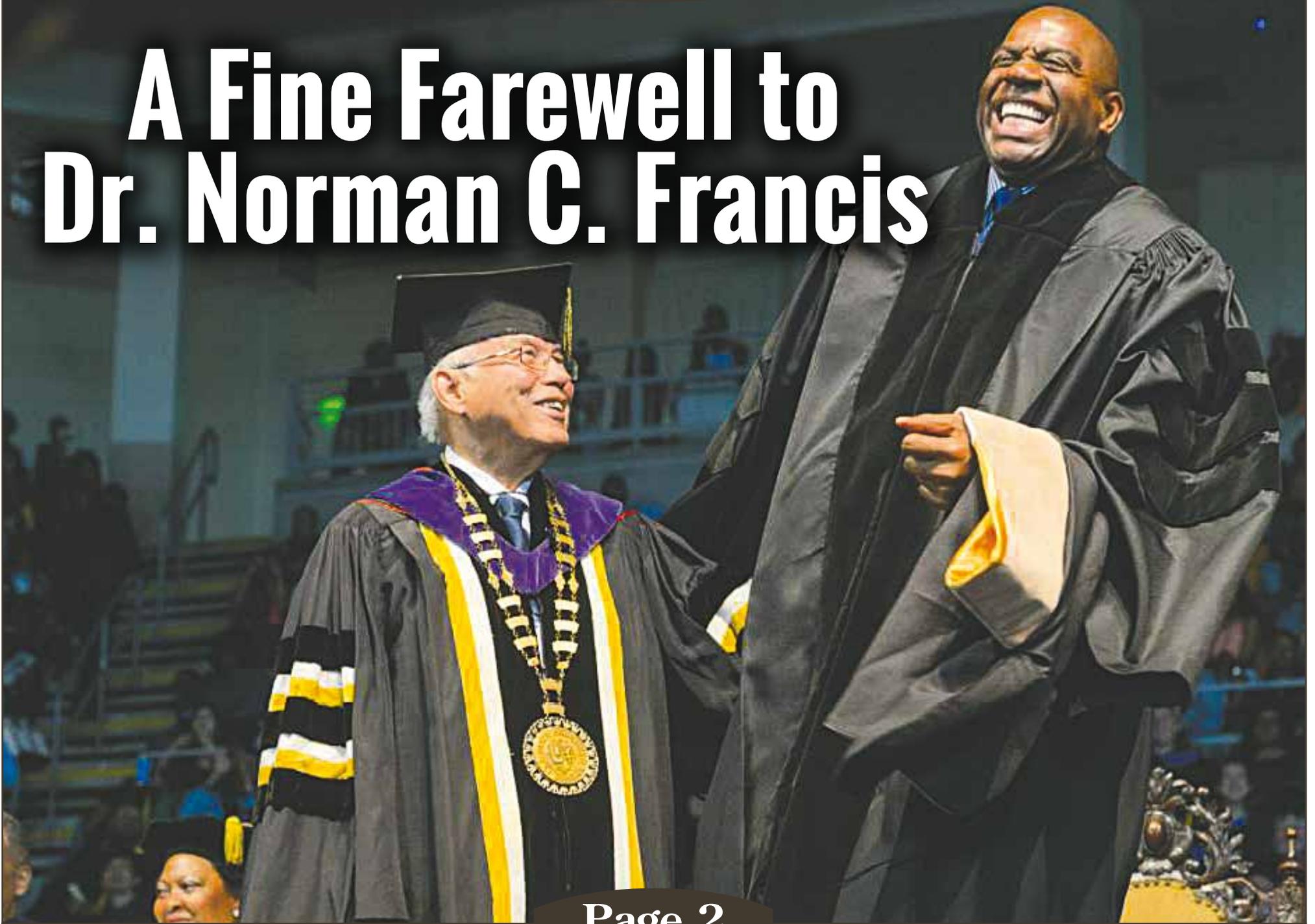
Wendell Pierce, Stars in New Play Brothers from the Bottom

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May 30 - June 5 2015 50th Year Volume 5 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# A Fine Farewell to Dr. Norman C. Francis



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# A Fine Farewell to Dr. Norman C. Francis



Above, The Class of 2015 give their full attention to Earvin "Magic" Johnson as delivers his remarks after his Honorary PhD hooding. Photo courtesy of Matthew Hinton for The Advocate.

By Data News Weekly Staff

As the 2015 academic Xavier University year came to a close, the day drew near when Retiring Xavier University President Norman C. Francis would preside over his final commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 9, 2015. The moment was bittersweet for the students, the faculty, the city of New Orleans and for Dr.

Francis himself.

As is his tradition, Francis shook hands with all 550 graduates Saturday, which marked his final commencement as Xavier's president. Francis has often said graduation is the high point of his year. He told Saturday's audience that he had dealt with many high-profile celebrities and high officials over the last half-

century. "But that experience pales in comparison to the deep joy I feel each year as I hand out diplomas," he said.

Francis also conferred honorary doctorate degrees on all four of the ceremony's guest speakers: former U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, Carnegie Foundation President Vartan Gregorian, former U.S. Attorney General

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## DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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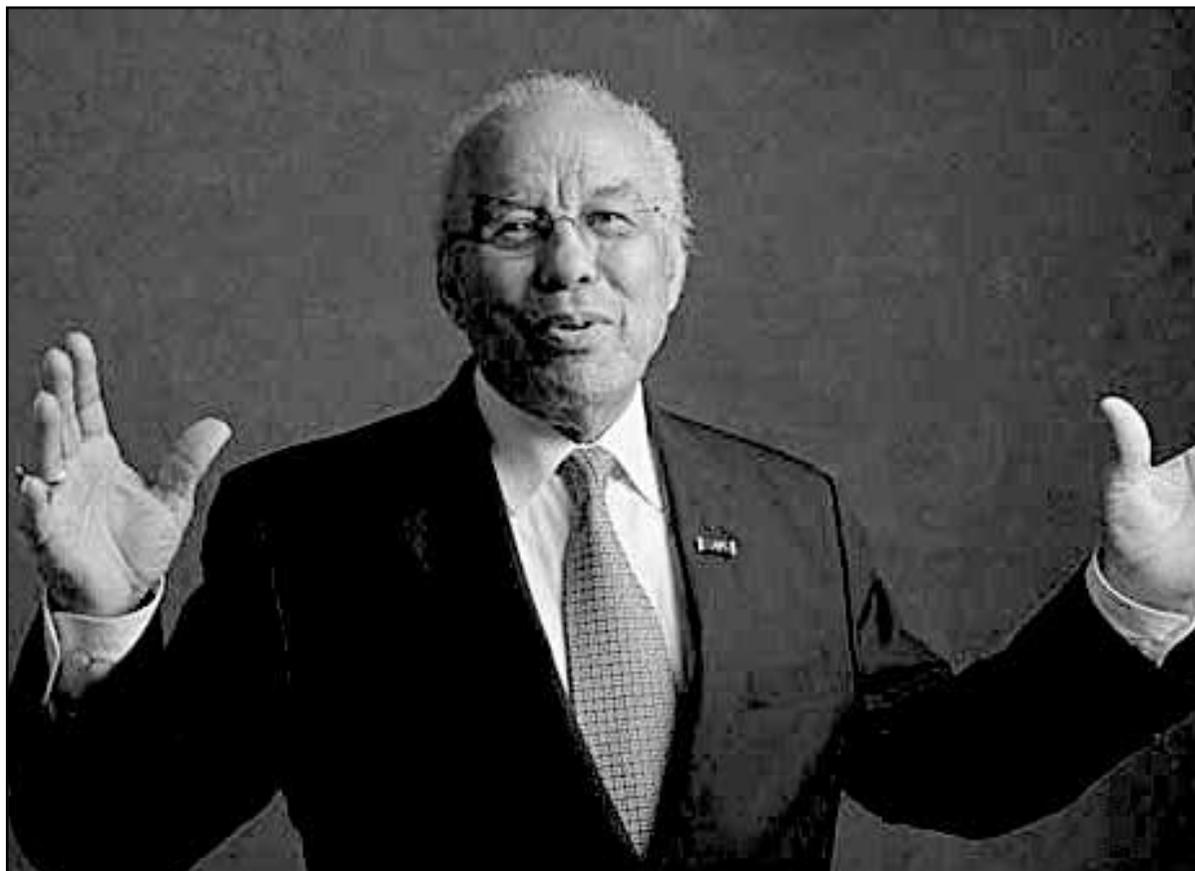
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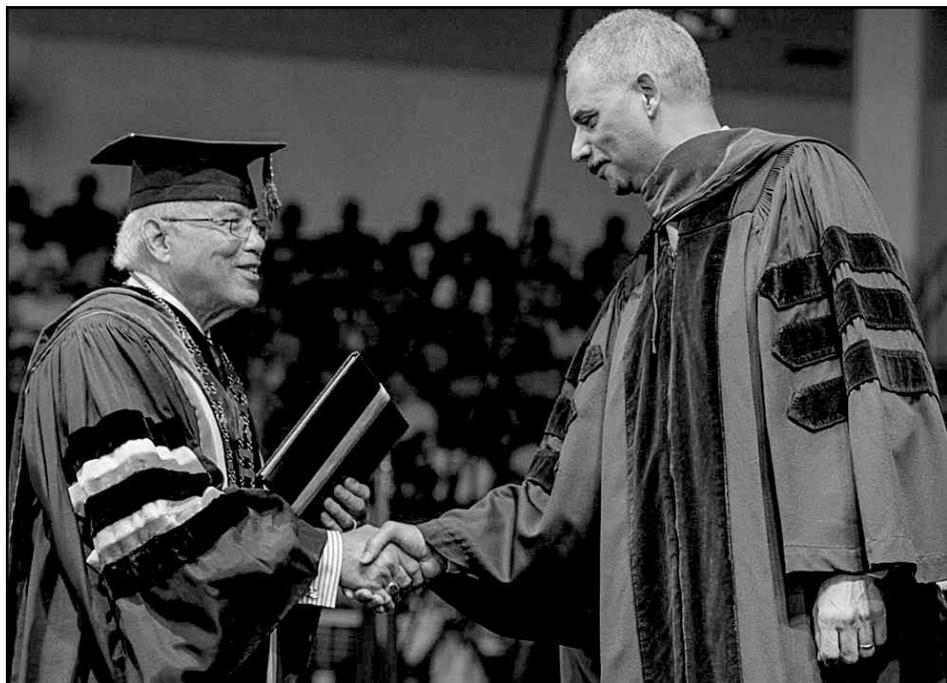
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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Dr. Norman C. Francis enters into his retirement after 47 years as it's president and a total of 60 years of service to the school. The ceremony marked the last time Dr. Francis will present the diplomas as he has now retired from his duties.



Dr. Norman C. Francis bestows an Honorary Doctorate on Former United States Attorney General Eric Holder. Holder was the first African-American to hold the position of U.S. Attorney General.

Eric Holder and basketball superstar Earvin "Magic" Johnson, who called himself "Dr. Magic" once he received the honorary Xavier doctoral hood.

Landrieu, called it "the highlight of my professional life" to receive an honorary degree from a man she has known and admired since she was in grade school. "I don't know where New Orleans would be without him," she said.

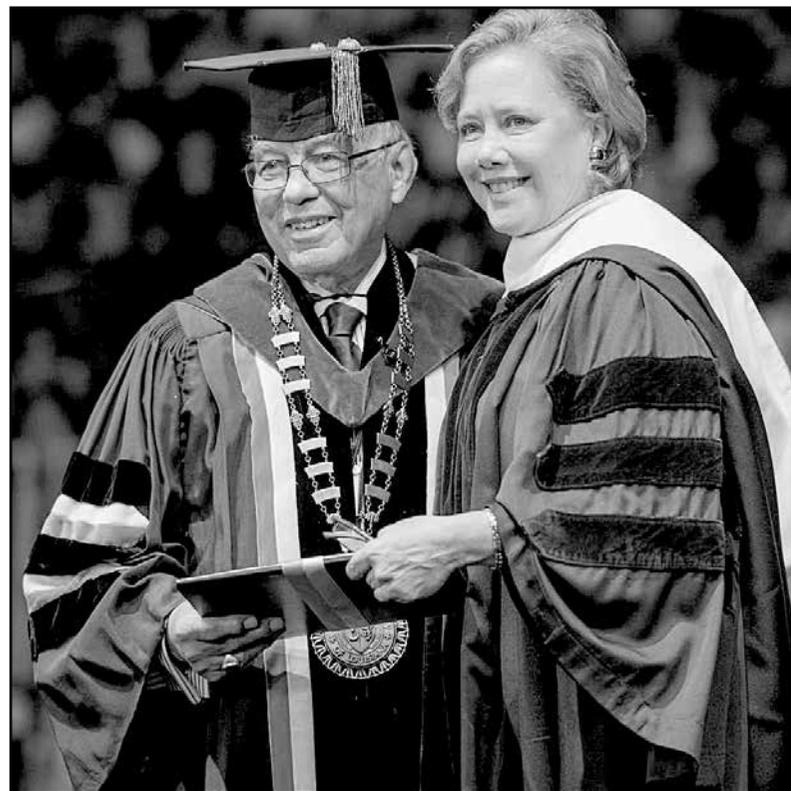
Holder, the nation's first black attorney general, praised Francis as "a man who has influenced millions of people by fighting for civil

rights, building up Xavier and other majority-black educational institutions and helping to rebuild New Orleans and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina, all with an eye to what's equitable and fair".

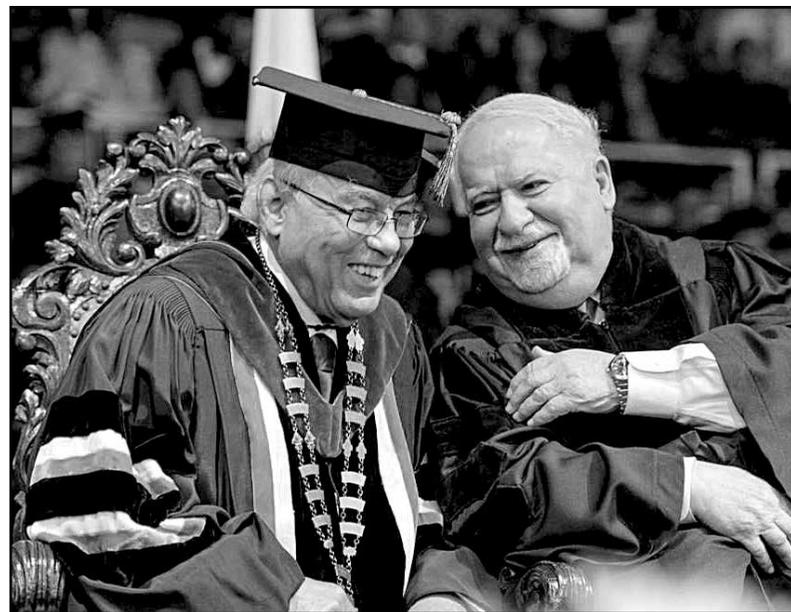
Holder said he felt the influence personally. "Without you, Dr. Francis, there would be no me," he said.

As part of Dr. Francis' farewell address, he took time to mention one of his passionate concerns, which is assisting students, who otherwise would not be able to attend and graduate from Xavier without financial assistance. "Noth-

ing takes the place of such financial help", Francis said after the ceremony as he talked about the endowed scholarship fund that has been established in his honor. Across the nation, a series of Tribute Events have been held in honor of Dr. Francis. Funds raised will be dedicated to the Norman C. Francis Endowed Scholarship Fund. The Fund will help young people, who may not otherwise have the means to, attend Xavier University and expand the opportunity for students to achieve their dreams of success and excellence.



Senator Mary Landrieu is pictured as she receives an Honorary PhD from Dr. Norman Francis and Xavier University. Photo courtesy of Matthew Hinton for The Advocate.



Pictured are Dr. Norman Francis and Vartan Gregorian, head of the philanthropic Carnegie Corporation in New York. Gregorian was bestowed with an Honorary PhD during the 2015 Commencement Ceremony. Gregorian, also received the same honor from Tulane University in 2014.

A Tribute to Norman C. Francis  
Dr. Francis's life has been dedicated to service, and he has had a profound impact on Xavier, New Orleans, and the nation.

Under Dr. Francis's leadership, Xavier has soared to higher levels of achievement and excellence. Amongst its many accolades, the historically Black university ranks first in the nation in awarding bachelors degrees to African American students in biology, chemistry, physics, and the physical sciences and in the number of African American graduates who go on to com-

plete medical school.

Members of the Xavier University and the Norman C. Francis Endowed Scholarship Fund would like to extend an invitation to all who have been touched by Dr. Francis' work and who support the legacy of Xavier University to join in celebrating Dr. Francis and ensuring his legacy carries on far into the future, improving the lives of many more generations of students.

To purchase tickets or for more information you can visit [www.franclsgacy.com](http://www.franclsgacy.com) or [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu)

# New Orleans Renters and Homeowners Invited to Launch of Ten-Year Housing Plan

Housing NOLA Summit Combines Festival Atmosphere with Resource Fair and Listening Session for Local Families, Housing Experts

NEW ORLEANS – On Saturday, May 30th, between 11 am and 4 pm, A. L. Davis Park in Central City will be transformed by familiar sights – barbecue grills and food tents, a bounce house, DJ RQaway spinning music into the air, but the occasion won't be an ordinary festival or birthday party. Rather, it is a family-friendly listening session where New Orleans residents of all ages and backgrounds can share their perspectives on a need that affects everyone: housing.

Participants will be able to weigh in on what makes their neighborhood great and not-so-great, dreams for how to make it better, or goals of moving to neighborhoods that are better for them. There will



also be information sessions where residents can learn more about HousingNOLA, a process to create a ten-year housing plan for New Orleans that can help guide develop-

ment in alignment with the needs of New Orleans' diverse community. Translators will be on hand to assist Spanish and Vietnamese speakers. Young Men Olympians Social Aide & Pleasure Club has partnered with Housing NOLA to provide food and transportation, and space in its club house for related focus groups.

Timolynn Sams-Sumter, who co-chairs HousingNOLA's community engagement team, states, "Residents are resourceful and knowledgeable about the conditions in which they live; they have to be, to get by. Housing is no different. They have many ideas for improvements in practices and policies, but they are rarely asked. Spending their Saturday with us, even if it's only 30 minutes, ensures that we get it right – that we know what New Orleans needs and how to serve her greatest asset... her people."

Housing NOLA was seeded last

spring when Foundation for Louisiana (FFL) convened a working group of community residents, housing advocates, developers, and staff members for elected officials and city agencies. After several strategy sessions, the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) emerged as the lead agency to coordinate the project with funding from FFL's TOGETHER Initiative. Additional funding came from the Ford Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation and the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

"This time, all of the right players are at the table," says Flozell Daniels, Jr., CEO & President of Foundation for Louisiana. "HousingNOLA is a multi-sector project with commitments both from the community, nonprofits, philanthropy and the city government to see this through." Feedback gathered during the summit will play a key

role as working group members assemble the plan contents in next few months.

The housing summit is just one of several opportunities the general public will have to provide input to the HousingNOLA team before the final plan is unveiled in late 2015. Plan ambassadors have already been visiting neighborhood associations, festivals and other community gatherings to solicit feedback on the plan, and a special housing edition of the Trumpet newspaper has been distributed across the city in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Residents can visit [www.housingnola.org](http://www.housingnola.org) to stay updated on the plan's progress. To find out more about the Housing Summit, or to get involved in the housing planning process, contact Lindsey Lewis at [lindsey.lewis@gnoha.org](mailto:lindsey.lewis@gnoha.org) or 208-699-5510.

## DSEF Announces its Music and Cultural Education Program



Dinerral Shavers

The Dinerral Shavers Educational Fund (DSEF) is pleased to announce the launch of its Music and Cultural Education Program. Thanks to the generous funding of the Jazz and Heritage Foundation and the Threadheads Foundation, this summer DSEF will partner with McDonogh #32 Literacy Charter School to bring music and cultural education to the classroom. This project has been created to not only teach the musical and cultural history of New Orleans, but to utilize artistic, hands-on, and educational approaches to help impact lives in an effort to counter the culture of violence. DSEF believes that, in order to effectively compete within

society and in the global economy, we must produce erudite youth who are creative, collaborative, and innovative thinkers.

There is much to gain by strategically implementing quality integrated arts education programming in high poverty, chronically underperforming schools and communities. There is also an inequality of access of such rewarding educational opportunities due to lack of funding and the disenfranchisement of low income schools and communities. In that, this program will allow more students the opportunity to benefit from an arts rich historical education despite the social class status of their homes, schools, or communities. Each week the program will focus on a different aspect of our culture and will include a number of influential cultural icons as guest instructors. On the final day of camp, Thursday June 25, 2015 from 11:00am – 12:00pm, there will be a special showcase performance starring Luther Gray and Bamboula 2000, the White Cloud Hunters Mardi Gras Indians, Single Men Social Aid & Pleasure Club, brass bands, and the students of McDonogh #32 Charter School.

## USPS is Deferring All Activities in Louisiana Until 2016

*Including Consolidation of the New Orleans Processing & Distribution Center*

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has decided to defer plant consolidations in Louisiana that were scheduled to take place this summer. In a letter sent to Postmaster General Megan Brennan earlier this month, Rep. Richmond (LA-02) expressed his disappointment in the United States Postal Service (USPS) for their failure to provide clear and coherent data justifying the decision to consolidate processing activities at the New Orleans Processing and Distribution Center to the Baton Rouge facility. A move that would have eliminated hundreds of jobs and stagnated mail service in New Orleans:

"I am pleased with USPS's decision to defer consolidations in Louisiana," said Rep. Richmond. "Consolidating the New Orleans Processing Center hurts small business, delays service to households, and would put hundreds of hard working people out of work. At no point did USPS provide any credible justification for making this move and their decision to defer proves that to be the case."

"I will continue to hold USPS accountable until we find a permanent solution that both protects jobs and provides the most efficient service to households and businesses throughout the 2nd District."

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# trailblazer

## Willie “Brother Will” Muhammad

### *Helping People Tap Into Their Inner Greatness*

by: Edwin Buggage  
Photo by Gus Bennett

Brother Willie Muhammad is known around the city as the student minister and head of the Nation of Islam Mosque No. 46 in New Orleans; that under the national leadership of the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan. In addition to his duties as a minister he is a professional educator, who has used his voice to empower and enlighten people to tap into the power within them to better their situation.

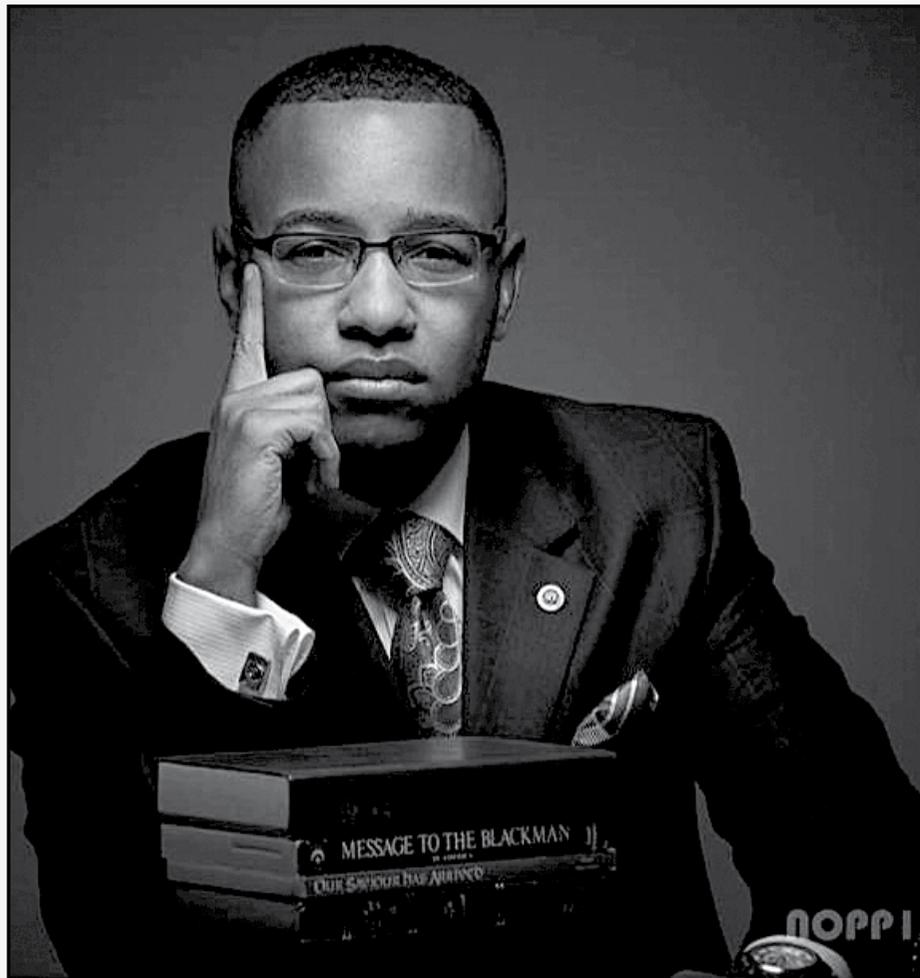
He is a native of New Orleans and knows firsthand many of the pitfalls many of our youth encounters that lead them to making bad decisions. Speaking of what influenced him to become an educator and to serve others he says, “It was in high school when I was enrolled at Walter L. Cohen and I had this teacher Ms. Jeff the wife of Morris F.X. Jeff Jr. In her class where I began to start reading in her American History class started my thirst for wanting to know more about Black history. It grew my love for our people and all humanity so I have dedicated my life to helping others.”

Many lives have been touched by “Brother Will” he says that he is a servant of the people and that his goal is to leave his impact on his community. “What

I do is try to inspire the young people I come in contact with to know that greatness lies within them and they can tap into that and become a person of value to themselves and the community.”

Last year Muhammad led the Man Up March that brought out men from across the city in a show of unity to present a different face of Black men in New Orleans. “The march was inspired by the historic Million Man March in 1995. So I reached out to many different brothers doing great things in the community because we wanted to give our city a different view of black men. We wanted to give our city a group of black men who are doing things positive,” says Muhammad of the march and its goals.

While the march was a success, many times in our community after the event is over there is not a lot of follow-up. Muhammad says that while the cameras are off the work goes on that continues to empower the community. “Since then we have been having programs such the daddy daughter dance, a black business bus tour and a host of other events that empower and celebrate that which we are



doing that is positive.”

As a teacher and student of history “Brother Will” understands that the problems in the African American community did not just happen yesterday and that much work still needs to be done to correct the ills that afflict it. “Our community did not get in this condition overnight

and the conditions will not change overnight. This is not a sprint but it is a marathon. I can’t do

everything; I can only do my part and that is what I remind others to do. Just do something consistent-

ly whether big or small and it will help make changes in our city.”

He believes that while there are obvious structural and historical problems that some of the solutions start from within. Muhammad feels the key is people beginning to make changes themselves to better their community. He says, “Practical simple things such as men being fathers to our children and women be mothers to our children and keeping the family intact is only one thing we can do” Continuing he says, “There is an African Proverb that says ‘the ruin of a nation begins in the homes of its people,’ that’s why I stress the importance of family as the key to rebuilding our community. We must work harder to get our people to believe that they can make a difference. We must also connect them back to the divinity within themselves. And believe that God given us a part of himself and with God all things are possible.”

**JMJ**  
Joseph M. Jones  
Continuing Education Fund



at&t

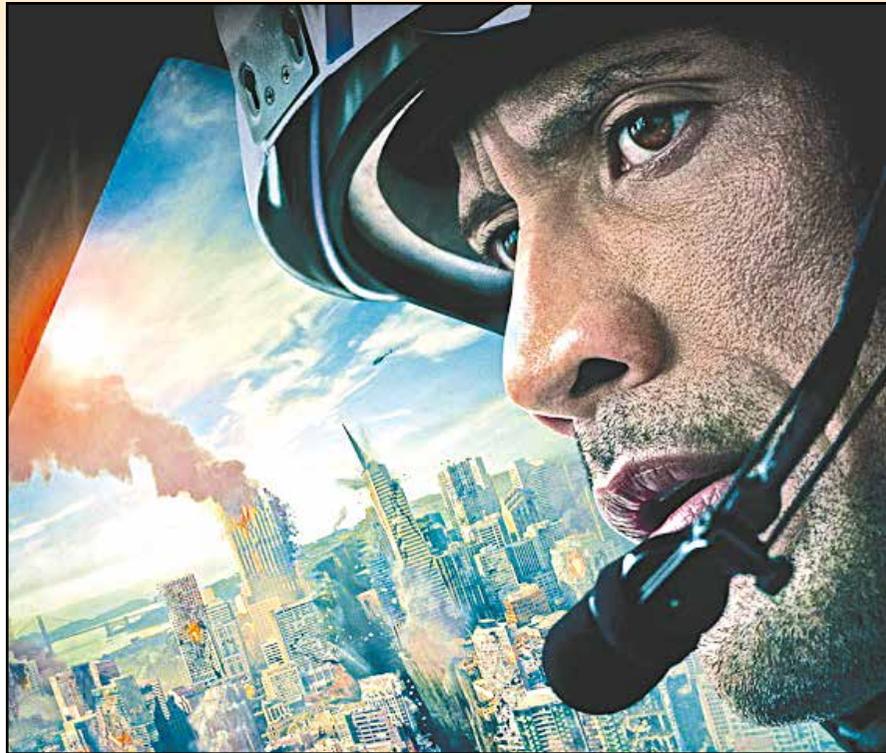
# San Andreas Will Leave You "Quaking" in Your Boots

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

If you live in California, a major earthquake is your worst nightmare. The thought of a 9.5 quake is almost unimaginable and terrifying. Quick, stand under a doorway or hide under a desk, it's coming and the aftermath is not all that pretty in San Andreas. This adrenaline-pumping movie turns a nightmare into big screen reality as it takes the disaster film genre (The Poseidon Adventure, Towering Inferno, Earthquake, Twister) to a whole new level.

In the past, films of this kind often skipped on character development, realistic dialogue and viable plotting and concentrated on the spectacle. Instead, TV writer Carlton (Nash Bridges, Lost, Bates Motel), working from a story by Andre Fabrizio and Jeremy Passmore (Red Dawn), has created three parallel storylines that add a human story to this worst-case natural disaster:

1. A Caltech seismologist, Lawrence Hayes (Paul Giamatti), and his research partner Dr. Kim Park (Will Yun Lee, Hawaii Five-O), have found a way to predict earthquakes. "Mass destruction. It's not a matter of if, but when," says Hayes. 2. A Los Angeles Fire Department and Rescue helicopter pilot, Chief Ray Gaines (Dwayne Johnson), is dealing with the impending divorce from his wife, Emma (Carla Gugino, Spy Kids), and the break-up of his family after the death of his youngest daughter. 3. Gaines' surviving daughter Blake (Alexandra Daddario) is



visiting San Francisco with Emma's new wealthy, duplicitous boyfriend, Daniel (Ioan Gruffudd, Horrible Bosses). Cue the tremors.

The task of weaving the storylines into a viable drama as unfathomable carnage and chaos unfold is up to director Brad Peyton, who worked with Dwayne Johnson and producer Beau Flynn on Journey 2: The Mysterious Island. That film, however, left no indication that Peyton was perfectly capable of unleashing this monster. The moment-by-moment, never-stop-moving, continually astonishing 107 minutes of perfectly edited

(Bob Ducsay, Godzilla), amazingly shot (Steve Yedlin, Carrie), well adorned (production designer Barry Chusid, The Day After Tomorrow) footage features 1,300 visual effects: Collapsing city skylines, a tsunami, the destruction of the Hoover Dam, farmland shifting like a deck of cards and bridges snapping like bread sticks. With Peyton at the helm, there is little time to breathe. And the few moments of respite, are reserved for fleshing out the characters and their dynamics.

The seismologist and his partner are the first to track the tremors that turn into huge shakes and his task is trying

to get the word out there that a nine-plus earthquake is about to rattle and destroy California, from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Gaines first task is to rescue his wife from the top of a crumbling building in downtown L.A. And their joint assignment is to find their daughter in San Francisco, after her soon-to-be new stepfather has abandoned her. Says a very irked Emma as she screams into a phone leaving a voice message for Daniel: "You left my daughter? If you are not already dead, I'm gonna kill you!"

Paul Giamatti and Will Yun Lee don't overplay their serious roles. Alexandra Daddario as Blake, a fitting young heroine, is believable as the young woman stranded in S.F. looking for higher ground and a rescue. Ioan Gruffudd as the cad who leaves her is suitably deceptive and cowardly; you want to witness his demise. Carla Gugino shows a feistiness that makes her character credibly brave. However, the weight of the film rests on Dwayne Johnson's shoulders, and brother-man is up to the heavy lifting. His portrayal of Gaines is humorous, vulnerable and courageous, all at the right times. He is a far better actor than most of his movies would reveal. He's solid.

San Andreas starts with an action scene, ends with an action scene, and in-between the pace is almost as relentless as the wave of destruction. It just doesn't stop.

Visit NNPA Syndication Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrownInk.com](http://DwightBrownInk.com).

Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events

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## New Orleans Native Wendell Pierce, Stars in New Play Brothers from the Bottom.



Left Kevin Mambo and Wendell Pierce star in Brothers from the Bottom by Jackie Alexander to mark Hurricane Katrina's 10th Anniversary. June 2015 in NoLA.



Cast and director of "Brothers From The Bottom." From left to right: Kevin Mambo, Megan Robinson, Wendell Franklin, Toccarra Cash, Wendell Pierce, Jackie Alexander (Writer and Director) and Thaddeus Daniels

Following their acclaimed Brooklyn run, the award-winning Billie Holiday Theater (BHT) at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) Stage Company join forces to present the Post-Katrina play set in New Orleans, Brothers from the Bottom, starring Wendell Pierce who also joins this team, as a producer.

The limited engagement, in commemoration of the 10th year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, will run from June 5 – 28, 2015 at the Lupin Hall at NOCCA. Brothers from the Bottom, written and directed by BHT Artistic Director, Jackie Alexander, deals with the hot button topic of gentrification. In the play, a real estate project threatens the fabric of a New Orleans neighborhood, and unravels the bond between brothers. In this "naturalistic play," "the acting stands way above the flood line."

With a "terrific" performance by Mr. Pierce and a "particularly exuberant"

performance by Kevin Mambo, the play is "grounded by the actor's sensitivity and verve. The neighborhood may need renewal and repair. These performances don't." - New York Times Wendell Pierce, an accomplished Julliard trained actor, has conquered all realms of media with critically praised performances in theater, film, television and broadcast radio. The TONY, Emmy, Obie and Peabody winning actor and producer is best known for his portrayals on HBO's ground breaking television series' The Wire and Treme. Pierce was also in this year's Oscar nominee for Best Picture, SELMA.

Pierce will also soon be releasing a personal memoir, THE WIND IN THE REEDS, an insightful and poignant portrait of family, New Orleans and the transforming power of art (RIVERHEAD BOOKS / Sept. 8th, 2015).

Pierce states, "The 10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina is a significant moment in the recent history of our coun-

try. Brothers from the Bottom does what art does best: challenge, elevate and illuminate the conversation."

The cast includes two-time Emmy Award winner Kevin Mambo, who played the title role in Fela! on Broadway, as well as Toccarra Cash, Thaddeus Daniels, Wendell Franklin and Megan Robinson. Brothers from the Bottom, writer and director, Alexander, is a prolific award winning actor, writer, producer and director for theater and film. With: Original Music: Edward Anderson and Darrell Lavigne (Bleu Orleans); Set Design: Felix Cochran (Broadway credits: Amen Corner, Inacent Black, Home); Assistant Set Designer: Patrice Davidson; Costume Design: Helen Simmons-Collen; Lighting Design: Joyce Liao; Sound Design: Douglas Forbes; Stage Manager: Norman Smalls.

NOCCA Stage Company is excited to provide this once in a lifetime chance for NOCCA students to work directly with

these incredible artists that are part of Brothers from the Bottom. Work on set building and staging, masterclass rehearsals begun in mid-May has provided the perfect big picture insight to the students in the Theatre Arts Department at NOCCA. NOCCA is proud to be part of this incredible moment that will shape the local theatre scene for many years to come.

### TICKETS AND SHOWTIMES

**Show Times:** June 5 – 28, 2015; Fridays at 8 pm | Saturdays at 3 & 8 pm | Sundays at 2 & 7pm  
Lupin Hall at NOCCA  
2800 Chartres St., New Orleans, Louisiana

**TICKETS:** General Admission: \$30.00 / Seniors and Students with ID: \$25.00 Buy tickets online at [www.the-billieholiday.org](http://www.the-billieholiday.org) or call: 504.940.2800 .

# Should African Americans Endorse Whites over Blacks?



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

By Julianne Malveaux  
NNPA Columnist

Two prominent Black Maryland officials – Montgomery County Executive Issiah Leggett and Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker III – have endorsed Congressman Chris Van Hollen, a White, over Black Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards in the race to replace retiring Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski.

So far, Edwards is the only African American in the race and faces the prospect of joining California Attorney General Kamala Harris, an announced candidate for the California Senate seat that will be vacated by Senator Barbara Boxer. Another African American, Rep. Elijah E. Cummings of Baltimore,

is considering running for the seat that will become vacant in 2017 when Mikulski retires.

This may seem like a local story, but it has national implications. Both Edwards and Van Hollen are likely to seek contributions from all over the country. Furthermore, the possibility of having an African American woman in the Senate is an opportunity for African American women's issues to be raised on the Senate floor. Finally, Edwards' presence on committees dealing with work, health care, and banking will bring a much-needed perspective to a Senate that is 96 percent White.

With an African American female Senator, would Loretta Lynch's confirmation for U.S. Attorney General still be languishing? Or, would Edwards remind fellow senators that their treatment of African American women has hardly been fair? Senator Edwards might also raise issues that impact all women, but African American women especially, given the fact that we have lower incomes, and a higher rate of single motherhood. African American women have also been the targets of disparaging remarks about pub-

lic assistance and food stamps, as if no Caucasian's participate in these programs. An African American woman senator would likely raise objections and stop senatorial trash talk about African American women in its tracks.

Why, then, have the highest-ranking elective officers at the county level in Maryland, both African American men, chosen the Caucasian Van Hollen over Edwards? And if they don't like Edwards for the post, why couldn't they wait until Cummings decides whether to run?

Baker, who served with Van Hollen in the Maryland General Assembly during the 1990s, says he knows Van Hollen and has worked well with him. He says he has made this endorsement "in the interest of the county." It has nothing to do with race, he says, but everything to do with familiarity.

In his endorsement, Leggett said, "As we look ahead to build a strong Maryland, we need a proven leader like Congressman Chris Van Hollen, whose reputation for leadership, deep intellect and courage is unrivaled. His swift rise through the ranks in the U.S. House of Representatives attests to the respect

and esteem he commands from his colleagues, and from other leaders around this country."

Neither Baker nor Leggett has explained what makes Van Hollen a better candidate than Edwards. I won't speculate about whether their choice has something more to do with gender than politics, but I do think their actions raises national questions about race and endorsements.

When all else is equal, I choose to vote for the African American candidate instead of the Caucasian one. The truth is both Edwards and Van Hollen are likely to vote much the way that the liberal Barbara Mikulski did. However, I expect that Edwards will be far more aggressive in advocating for the African American community than Van Hollen.

Further, in light of the recent killing of Walter Scott in South Carolina, Eric Gardner in New York and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., among others, it seems specious to say that race doesn't matter. In light of the double-digit unemployment rates African Americans experience (twice those of Whites), race still matters and the need to target em-

ployment programs have not been raised in this Senate, even when Democrats held it. Edwards would be forceful in pushing these programs. Baker especially owes his county an explanation both because it is majority African American (65 percent) and also because his county was critical in electing Edwards to Congress four times.

There has been a blurring of racial lines in our nation and in politics. Increasing numbers of Americans are biracial or multi-racial, and identify with every aspect of their background. Many choose to check the "biracial" on census forms, an option that was unavailable two decades ago. Apparently the "one drop" rule is obsolete, unless a mixed race person collides with the wrong officer of the law. Still, I think that race should matter in endorsements, especially when history is about to be made. Rushern Baker and Isiah Leggett owe their constituents a more substantive explanation than the ones they have offered.

Julianne Malveaux is an economist, writer, and President Emerita of Bennett College. She can be reached at [juliannealveaux.com](http://juliannealveaux.com).

## Living Life with a Calling and a Passion



**Keisha Knight Pulliam**  
Guest Columnist

I think every person that walks the face of the earth has a calling and passion that they are meant to maximize to make our world a better place. For me, my passion and calling comes through acting, but it also shows up through my nonprofit Kamp Kizzy.

Kamp Kizzy gives young people the opportunity to learn,

share, explore and expand their horizons through workshops, candid discussions and the opportunity to meet and "pick" the brains of some of the top individuals in their given professions. Now that we have been doing Kamp Kizzy for nearly a decade now, there are some undeniable Truths that have been reinforced through this work.

The first truth is that when children are exposed to careers, opportunities and people that inspire, they become more determined about pursuing their life's work. The second great truth that has been cemented through this work is that education is the great equalizer for children who might come from underserved commu-

nities and cities and because the second truth is so near and dear to my heart, I have joined forces with a great organization, American Federation for Children, and its mission is to make sure that all children have access to a quality education.

An unfortunate reality for far too many families in our great country is that they are limited in their ability to access the best education for their children. Oftentimes, these barriers are due to lack of financial resources or their zip code and/or address is in a part of town that relegates them to inferior educational opportunities.

Our country is founded and thrives on opportunity and the

mere fact that so many of our children are not getting the educational opportunities that they so richly deserve is one of the reasons that I unabashedly lend my name and voice to the issue of school choice.

Disproportionately, children of color and lesser financial means are the ones who are subjected to poor schools that have been underperforming for decades and giving their families more quality options when it comes to their children's education is one of the ways that we can proactively solve this mammoth of an issue.

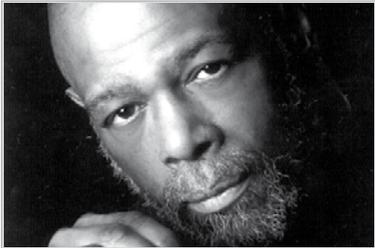
Finally, I just want to explicitly and emphatically state that, for me, the issue of school choice

is about children. It is not about political party, affiliation or any other motive that does not derive itself from doing what is best for our children. I will humbly ask that you, like I, add your voice and support to American Federation for Children and the work that it continues to do for our children especially those who are low-income and working-class and deserving the opportunity to access great schools.

For more information on American Federation for Children, please visit: [www.federationforchildren.org](http://www.federationforchildren.org) or [www.championsforchoice.com](http://www.championsforchoice.com)

## Spiritually Speaking

## Get Lost



**James Washington**  
Guest Columnist

accordingly, when you know you're dealing with the truth as opposed to a lie. My example would be a child's knowledge of Santa Claus. As the truth becomes known, instantly the child acts with the knowledge that he knows that he knows that he knows. The perspective I am trying to get you to see and react to here is the truth of lost and found.

I submit to you that the subject of this scenario is us, you and me. Are you lost? Are you found? And who determines which answer is correct? Biblically speaking, we lost it all in Eden and had it restored via the cross. In this instance, the it is us. Can you be found without first being lost? In my case, I know what lost is because once I found Christ, I found me. This may sound somewhat trite to you but finding myself

in relationship with God was and is an eye opening experience, the likes of which I would wish on every one of you. You see, being lost in this world is being vulnerable to it. The world will see to it that you lose yourself to its entanglements, its temptations, its so called pleasures, known as whatever your weaknesses are i.e., greed, ambition, pride, sex, drugs and power. Pick your poison. But know that being lost allows your poison to pick you.

Now when you make an honest effort to find yourself spiritually, like the addict who must first admit his or her addiction, the effort is defined by an acknowledgment that you are indeed lost and in need of divine guidance to ultimately get this thing called life in order. In the Parable of the Lost Son that

acknowledgement sounds like this. "...Father I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of you hired men." Luke 15: 18-19. His truth he could not deny. He was lost. He had to become lost. He went looking for lost and found it. It enabled him to "find" himself and find his way home. And you know what he found? A waiting father, who had to explain it to his other son who never left, "But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Luke 15:32.

All I'm trying to say is when you finally get it, there's only one place to go; home. And in this case home is where God is. The way was prepared by Christ who, like a hom-

ing beacon, shows us all how to find ourselves and thus be found. If you've ever been truly lost, you know the exhilaration you feel when you finally figure it out and get going in the right direction. My point is simple. As the kids say, you better recognize! Being lost is not the issue. Having enough sense to know it and do something about it is. I promise you the moment you begin to look for the Lord He will find you. It's not like God lost you. It kind of gives new meaning to Lost & Found.

May God bless and keep you always.

James A. Washington is President & Publisher of the Dallas Weekly Newspaper and General Manager of the Atlanta Voice Newspaper. He can be reached at jaws@dallasweekly.com

# Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

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## Former Model, B. Smith, Seeks Greater Awareness of Alzheimer's Among Minorities

By Ajoya Long  
NNPA Newswire

Smith, the first African American woman to appear on the cover of *Mademoiselle* magazine in 1976, is reaching out to minorities who are battling Alzheimer's disease.

The model, born Barbara Smith, revealed her struggle with the disease in a CBS interview last July. Since then, she has teamed up with her husband and caregiver, Dan Gasby, along with the organization Brain Health Registry to encourage more minorities to enroll in clinical trials for cognitive diseases.

African Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities are underrepresented in medical research. A study published in *Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders* found that more than 95 percent of subjects in a typical Alzheimer's dis-



ease clinical trial are White.

Gasby noted that many African-

Americans view medical practices as distrustful and equated their

leeriness to the dissatisfaction of policing in America's Black communities.

"This is a 21st century civil rights issue in terms of understanding that Alzheimer's have to be dealt with, and that we have to find a way to work with pharmaceutical companies and research companies to get involved so that the data that they collect is going to help us," Gasby told *The Huffington Post*.

Some issues hindering recruitment of minorities in Alzheimer's clinical trials include primary care physicians' lack of capacity and resources to assess cognition and refer patients to research; barriers to participation for underrepresented communities, such as lack of cultural sensitivity; the requirement for a study partner (someone who can report on cognitive changes) for most Alzheimer's trials; and the use of invasive procedures, such as

lumbar punctures or brain imaging with an injected tracer agent, according to a 2014 *Health Affairs* article.

"I suffer from Alzheimer's myself – and know how critical clinical trials are to accelerating cures for brain disease," Smith said in a statement. "It's important that we hear from people of all communities in order to find the best treatments and cures, especially for specific populations."

A cabaret show and fundraiser held May 11 and entitled "Voices Remembered" honored Smith, who is now a New York restaurateur. Noted Broadway stars and voice-over actors performed during the show to help spread awareness to Alzheimer's disease. Funds raised by the show benefitted Alzheimer's patients and caregivers.

## Prepping for Pregnancy to Avoid Complications

by Shantella Y. Sherman  
NNPA Newswire

Even before a woman decides to become pregnant, a thorough health assessment should be undertaken. This should determine how well she can manage a pregnancy as underlying health concerns may be negatively impacted or exacerbated by the work of growing a new life. Dr. Caryl Mussenden, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Institutes of Health offer recommendations for increasing positive pregnancy outcomes.

Be sure to properly manage existing health conditions. "Make sure these young women see a physician and, if necessary, a high-risk specialist that can outline a consistent plan of proper health," Mussenden said. "It is critical that women follow all rules set by their doctors,



including all lab work, exercise, and consistency with medication. [Not] following those rules will be detrimental to both the health of the mother and the unborn child."

Before pregnancy, if a pre-existing condition is managed by drug therapy [medication], women should work with a physician to

determine if their current medications could potentially cause them adverse effects during pregnancy or fetal anomalies or defects in the unborn child. Mussenden points to some hypertension medications, including diuretics, that can be detrimental to a pregnancy.

"These are very commonly used

in treating Black folks with hypertension and are known to have adverse effects on pregnancies. Women should be taken off of these medications, ultimately, before getting pregnant," she said.

Seek the proper level of professional help. Too often Black women are treated by family practitioners and general obstetricians and gynecologists instead of specialists trained in high-risk pregnancies and medical problems that can cause complications during birth. E

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at properly and maintain a healthy pre-pregnancy weight. Obesity and hypertension are the major contributors to the Black maternal mortality rates, leading to death from strokes, renal failure and other complications associated with being overweight.



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# A Call to Curb Expansion of Charter Schools in Black Communities

By Freddie Allen  
NNPA Washington  
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Parents, students and advocates for strong neighborhood schools continue to pressure civic leaders to end the expansion of charter and contract schools in Black and Latino communities across the nation.

Jitu Brown, the national director of Journey for Justice Alliance, a coalition of community, youth and parent-led grassroots organizations in 21 cities, said that the fight for public education – which suffers with the expansion of charter and contract schools – is a human and a civil rights issue.

As voices from the community were increasingly drowned out by philanthropic groups seeking wholesale educational reform, the state takeover of schools, corporate charters and appointed school boards have become the status quo, Brown said.

According to Education Week, a magazine published by Editorial Projects in Education, a nonprofit that produces K-12 educational content in print and online, more than 60 percent of philanthropic donations funneled into education young people in the United States went to charter and contract schools in 2010. Less than 25 percent of funding went to those programs about 15 years ago.

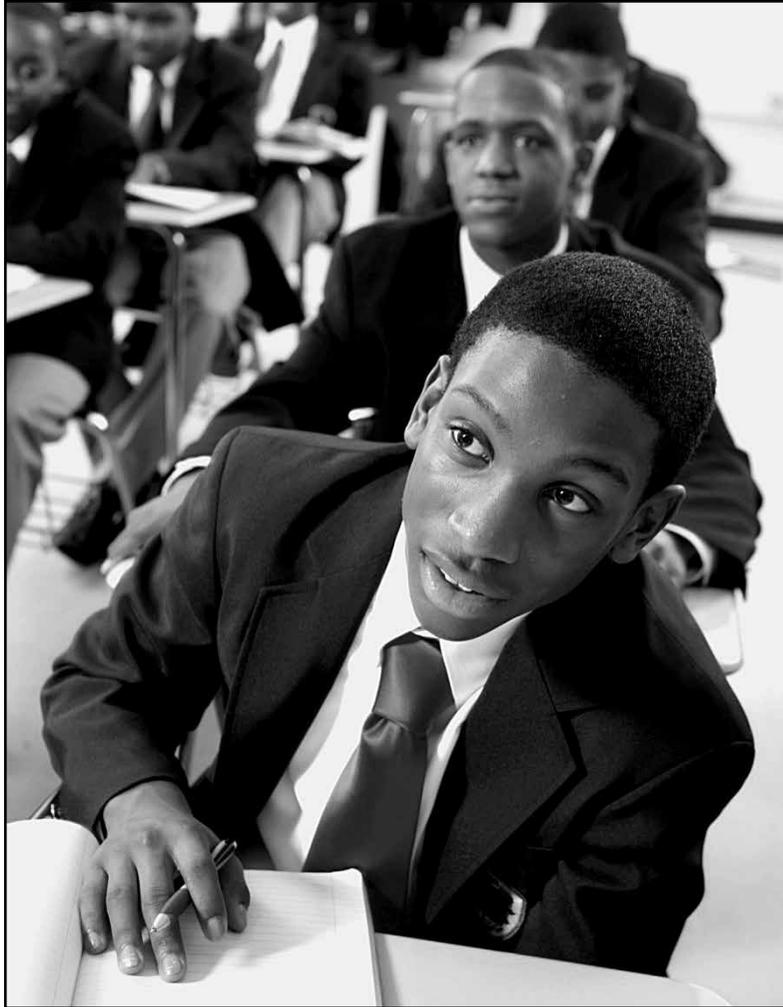
“What would actually be revolutionary, brand new, and fresh is if community wisdom was listened to and [corporations] worked with the people who are directly impacted by the institutions that they have to live with everyday,” said Brown.

Brown described two separate and unequal sets of expectations, one for White and middle class children and another, lower set of expectations for Black and Latino children that often influence education policy. Those disparities will continue until society finds the courage to confront them.

“We want what our friends in other communities have, said Brown. “They don’t have contract schools, they don’t have charter schools in middle class White communities they have world-class neighborhood schools.”

Daniel del Pielago of Empower DC agreed.

As the education organizer for Empower DC, a grassroots group



that supports low- and moderate-income District residents living in the nation’s capital, said that when communities work together, and when they’re given the chance to put together solutions that work, they find success that doesn’t require corporate intervention.

That success is embodied by the community school model championed by groups such as the Alliance.

According to the Coalition for Community Schools, a network of educational groups that provide support for youth development family and health services, community schools feature an “integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement” that promotes “student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.”

Helen Moore, the co-chairperson of the Keep the Vote/No Takeover Coalition in Detroit, Mich., said that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), currently working its way through a Republican-led Congress still at odds with President Barack Obama, should give communities the power to control the destinies of

their children.

Moore said that neither “No Child Left Behind” Act, George W. Bush’s education initiative, nor President Obama’s “Race to Top” fulfilled what was supposed to really happen: giving Black and Brown school systems the power and resources they needed to implement high-quality educational programs for their children.

“What’s lost in the minutiae of school closures is the dismantling of good neighborhood schools,” said Brown. “There were actually solid well-performing schools in our community that were receiving schools for students that lost their schools due to closures.”

Two years later, Brown said, those schools often saw their test scores plummet, creating a cascading effect. Overcrowded classrooms make it harder for teachers to do their jobs lowering morale and have a negative impact on an already stressful learning environment.

“One of the casualties of corporate education interventions is the removal of Black teachers a significant part of the Black middle class. And who are they replaced by? They are replaced by newer,

younger, Whiter and more transient teachers,” said Brown. “We are all for teaching diversity, but we also know that that is a civil rights issue. Children have the right to look at their teachers and dream that they can be that they should be able to see themselves.”

Earlier this month, the Alliance hosted a conference in Newark, N.J. in an effort to strengthen national networks and equip activists, parents and other community stakeholders with the tools to organize and combat myriad inequities that exist in public school systems nationwide.

The group also advocates for more penalties for schools that lean too heavily on zero tolerance policies that disproportionately suspend and expel students of color for minor infractions. It favors more federal support for schools that implement restorative justice and student leadership development programs.

“We know that these attacks on our schools and our public education system is an attack on our communities,” said del Pielago.

Brown said, “We should have positive student development and discipline policies. That doesn’t mean that if a student brings a knife or a gun, we’re going to throw rose petals at the child. We need to treat our young people like discipline is supposed to teach a lesson and suspending children is not teaching them anything. What teaches them something is creating a culture where they learn how to be accountable for their actions.”

Although Brown said that he supports parents who seek innovative educational alternatives for their children, he called for a federal moratorium on all charter and contract school programs.

“What’s lost in the minutiae of school closures is the dismantling of good neighborhood schools that they were actually solid well-performing schools in our community that were receiving schools for students of school closings and you look two years later and their scores plummet,” said Brown.

“The prerequisite to choice is stability,” said Brown. “You can’t anchor a community with schools where people have contracts to run them. [School] privatization and community schools cannot coexist. They are like oil and water.”

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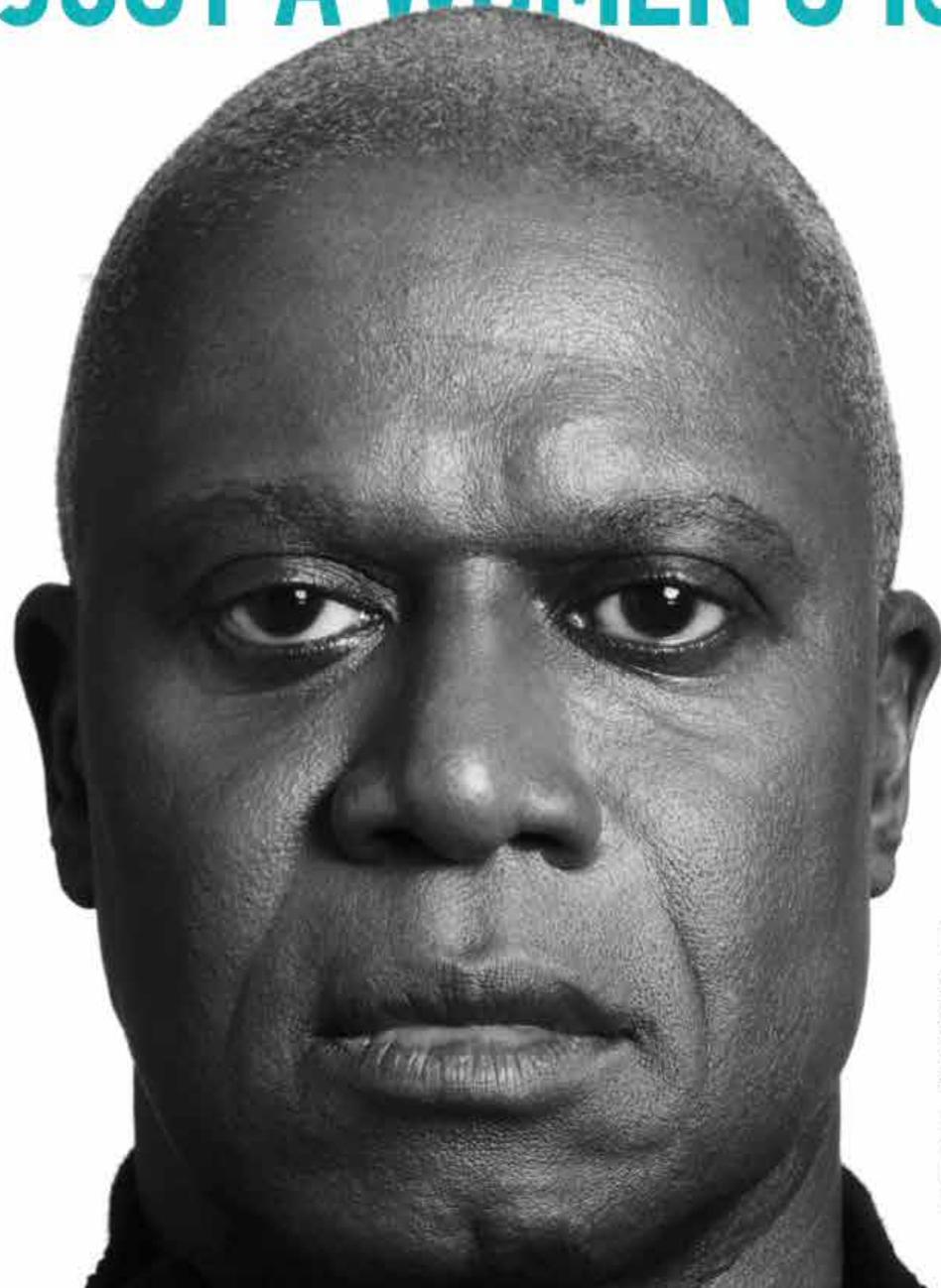
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