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An All White Affair?**

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Suiting up for Success

The Blessed 26 Prepares Today's Young Men for Manhood



Above and on the cover are (left to right) David Johnson, Councilman Mark Spears, Blessed 26 Founder Kendal Francis, Helen Cox Football Coach Derek "Skip" LaMothe and WBOK Radio Host Oliver Thomas.

By Ed Marshall
Data News Weekly Contributor

It's 8:30 on a Friday morning. A yellow school bus pulls up in front of a shopping center in Harvey. Exiting the bus are excited, yet nervous teenagers. They walk single file to the door of a men's clothing store. The teens are greeted by local businessmen standing on

either side of what seemed to them an endless aisle of suits. They shake hands with the likes of prominent local community members Michael Wolfe, Ed Marshall, Bernard Robertson III, Dr. Eric Jones, Glenn Jones, and Coach Derek "Skip" LeMothe, Kevin Stylez, Torrance Taylor, Rik Bos, Larry McDaniel, Mark Spears and Oliver Thomas. The leader of this gathering bel-

lows to the crowd "Welcome young men. I've told you many times, show me your friends and I'll show you your future. You just meet some of my friends who are here today because they've heard so many positive things about each of you."

The voice was that of Blessed 26 Mentoring Organization Founder Kendal E. Francis. On this day, the young men were brought to the store to select, along with the help of Kendal's friends, brand new suits as

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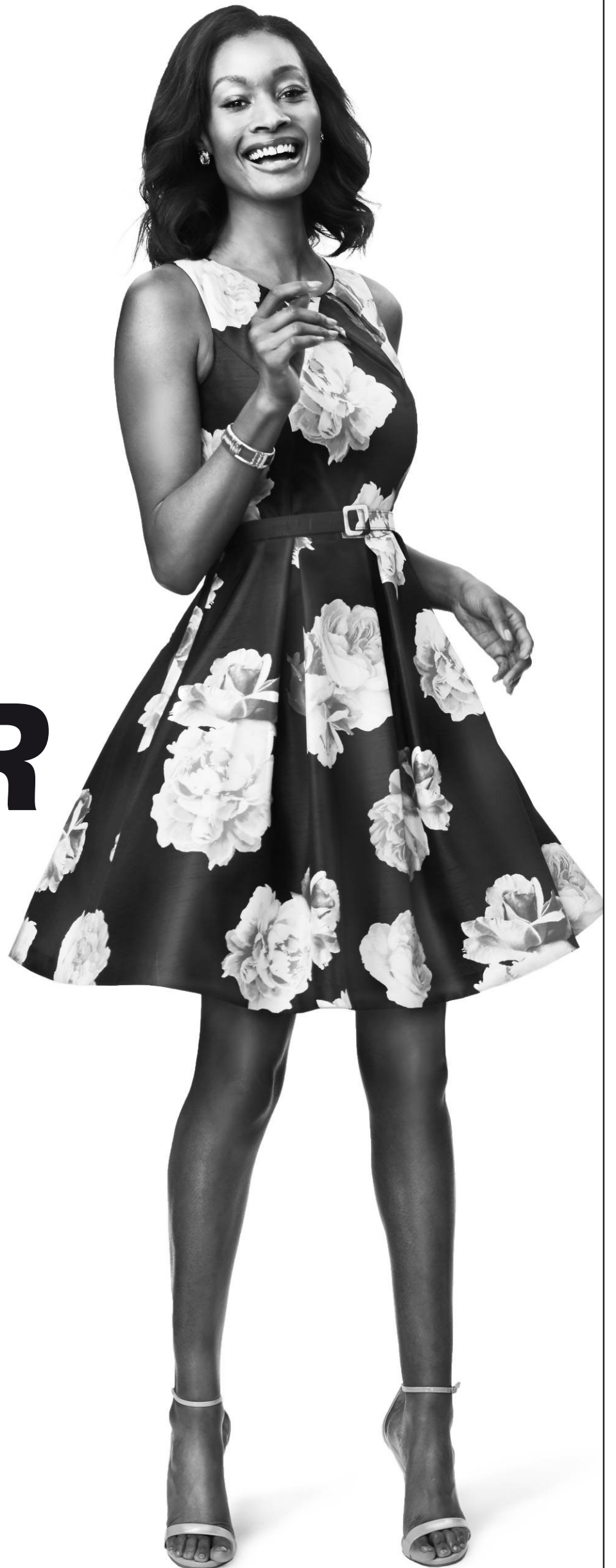
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part of the Blessed 26's Suited for Success Program. More on that but first we need to digress.

How Blessed 26 came to be:

In 2004 Francis's occupation brought him face to face each day with the escalating number of African-American males who become part of the City of New Orleans' criminal history.

"I said I've been blessed with too much to be idle and not be a part of the solution, it's time to do what was done for me when growing up in Green Cove Springs Florida. Growing up in Green Cove, everyone knew my parents and grandparents. If an elder saw you getting out of line, they would step in and contact your parents. That was the beauty of living in a small community but that was also a different day and time and there were different values. I often hear people say that it takes an entire village to raise a child, but what happens when the village is messed up? As I witnessed issues with young people



Robertson Wealth Advisors' Bernard Robertson III.

or became aware of the same social ills affecting more and more young people I just stepped in to do my part and here I am."

Blessed 26 Program Director and often referred to as "Mama Pam," says "Blessed 26 targets young men that can best be described as "determined to be successful despite their circum-

stances." We do not pre-stigmatize our students with all the program terms that are usually used to describe our children. We have to be accountable to someone that can provide them the discipline and direction that they are unconsciously looking for. One of the many special things about Blessed 26 is that Kendal creates a family



Student Jakobi Douglas gets suited with Blessed 26 Mentor Micheal Wolfe.

atmosphere. You don't graduate from Blessed 26. Our students are part of our forever family.

"We as adults regularly talk about our youth but rarely do we talk to our youth. Blessed 26 Mentoring Program works with primarily African-American young men who are in need of male role models. The role models (whose back grounds are checked and screened) are charged with not only lending guidance to the young men, but to create a trusting relationship, help them overcome obstacles, and illuminate any fears they face," he added.

The Programs Mission is: To provide a practical road map for young people in the Metropolitan New Orleans area to follow toward becoming high-functioning successful community members. Its outreach initiative uses a three-pronged approach for engaging young people: Family Breakfast, Board Room, and Suited for Success.

The Family Breakfast is an annual introduction and recruitment invitational event that brings together approximately 200 young men in high school accompanied by school personnel to learn about Blessed 26. An elegant and communal setting for the event includes a well-balanced breakfast featuring highly respected motivational speakers seated at each table to guide discussions about education, positive civic participation, career choices, networking, self-esteem, and image. Applications are distributed and the young people are invited to pursue acceptance into one of the Board Room Mentoring Sessions that last between 10 and 20 weeks.

In the Board Room, approximately 120 male participants experience life-skills lessons through the creative lens of media literacy (how to analyze and manage real life situations by dissecting local news coverage and other

forms of popular media), wellness education (how to develop and maintain good nutrition, healthy lifestyle choices, and consumer practices for overall well-being), entrepreneurship (how to market personal skills, talents, and knowledge that can be sold) and goal setting (how to chart day-to-day activities that encourage time and money management, career choices, ethics and professional etiquette). The Board Room Sessions in Orleans Parish are held through a partnership with Xavier University Business School Entrepreneur Institute. Students have the opportunity to interact with business school students, professors, Blessed 26 Board Members and individuals in the organization's network.

Most recently, the Blessed 26 Mentoring Model was expanded to Jefferson Parish with the help of Jefferson Parish Councilman Mark Spears, who saw the positive results the program had on African-American males in Orleans Parish and solicited Francis' program to help Jefferson Parish youth. Some 35 males completed the program meeting for classes at the Woodmere Community Center in Harvey.

Suited for Success Back to Friday morning:

The third and culminating phase of the Blessed 26 Program is Suited for Success. After participants completing the Board Room classes and has excelled and demonstrated their determination to be successful despite overwhelming and challenging circumstances are invited for a private shopping experience with Blessed 26 Mentors and program supporters. Each participant is purchased professional attire to match their new

Cover Story, Continued
on page 5.



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Blue Lion Karate Academy Celebrates Grand Opening

By Eric Craig
Data News Weekly
Multimedia Editor

Grandmaster Eric O'Neal is back in New Orleans with the Blue Lion Karate Academy. Before Hurricane Katrina, O'Neal had 37 Blue Lion Karate Academy locations with over 30,000 students in New Orleans. After Hurricane Katrina, he lost much of his membership. After 11 years of traveling, and continuing his mission to help youth, O'Neal has opened the first Blue Lion Academy since Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans East. To celebrate, O'Neal hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony, music, food and live demonstration of the talents of his current students.



(L-R) Ivy Rouzan, Grandmaster Eric O'Neal, Elijah Rouzan, Isiaiah Rouzan, Aminah Rouzan and Don Rouzan take a tour of the new Blue Lion Karate Academy facility.



Students, and contributors of the Blue Lion Karate Academy recite their principles of karate before cutting the ribbon, recognizing the opening of the new academy.



Students participate in a demonstration with Bamby Baby Productions, promising to use their thinking caps before using their karate talents outside of the dojo.



Family, friends, and parents of students toast to the grand opening of Blue Lion Karate Academy in New Orleans East.



Students demonstrate karate moves for the attendees of the grand opening.

Cover Story, Continued from page 4.

professional mindset. After the clothing is purchased and tailored, the students attend the Suited for Success Dinner or Blessed 26 Brunch. The private dining experience is held in an elegant setting with some of the communities most distinguished citizens. We host the dining experience so that the community members that do not have the opportunity to see young men at their best have the opportunity to engage them without blurred

lines. Our students also have the opportunity to introduce themselves to people that they may rarely have access to. We do this to change both sides' experiences with one another.

Over the twenty weeks of sessions we continued to combat to the subject of image and taught the students that people should not address you by the way that you look but they do and always will...deal with it. Kendal also made the promise that if they invested in them-

selves by participating on voluntary personal development that he would make an investment in them by purchasing suits.

When Kendal was asked the very question that he asked the students in the beginning and the end of the program "What's your why?" He said because God has been so good. He went on to say that when he reached the point where his imagination would not even allow him to imagine what it was like to be in one of his stu-

dents' situation, he just had to get creative to maintain student's attention so they would not focus on their problems. Kendal is a difficult guy to catch up with and if you do catch up with him and ask "where have you been?" you will probably hear him say "why do ask where I have been, I have been about my father's business".

Blessed 26 continues to expand its outreach. In 2015, it began the Blessed 26 Character Enrichment and Personal Development

Program for Athletes. Francis said, "The program is in partnership with the Warren Easton High School Football Program. Young men in the program have access to the Blessed 26 network of mentors that they can call on for support and advice. We also provide instructions on how to convert the energy they use in the athletic arena to being better students, gentleman and productive citizens."

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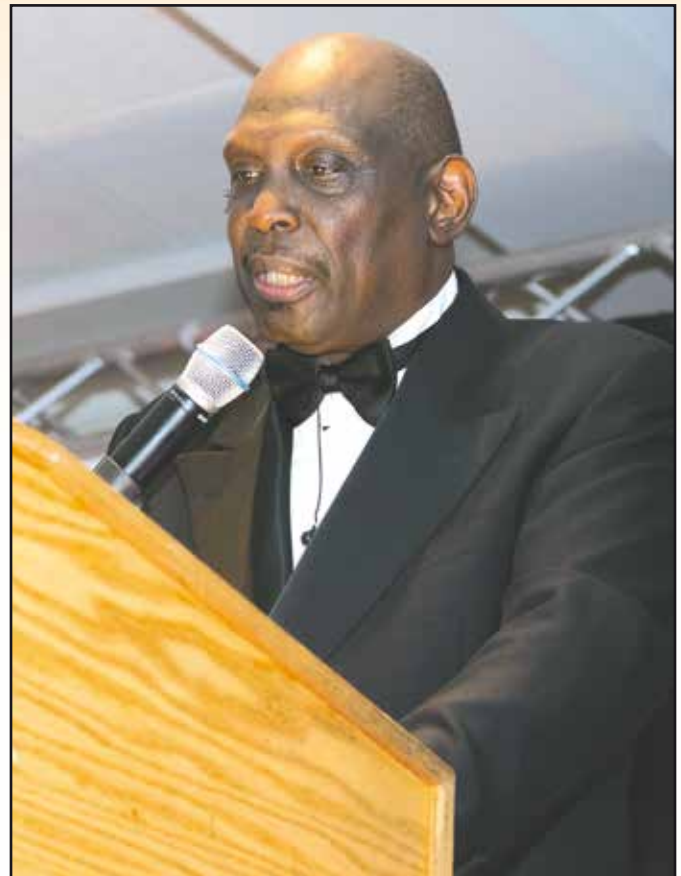
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Asante Foundation - Asante is Saying Thank You

Eric Craig
Multimedia Editor

On Sunday, May 29, The Asante Foundation hosted its Ninth Annual Asante Awards in New Orleans. This year's ceremony took place in New Orleans's City Park Pavilion of the Two Sisters. The word Asante is Swahili for thank you, which aligns with the foundation's goal to recognize Black excellence in the community. There were over two-hundred people in attendance, and over 20 people recognized for their achievements and contributions within the Black community. Each of the honorees were recognized for their qualities that uphold the values of teaching, community and service above all else.



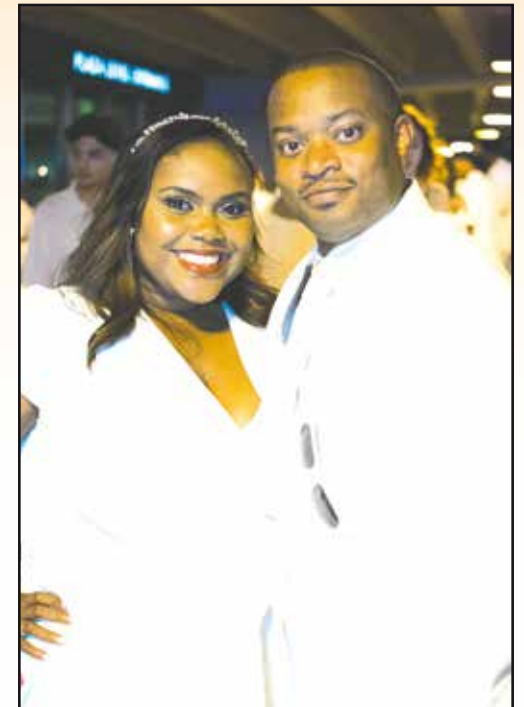
Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Dinner En Blanc - An All White Affair?

Eric Craig
Data News Weekly
Multimedia Editor

On Saturday, May 28, 2016, The Spears Consulting Group hosted the Fourth Annual Dinner En Blanc. The Picnic-Esque Event was hosted at the Mercedes Superdome from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. with more than 1500 people were in attendance. Dinner En Blanc is a pop-up event where attendees are taken to a secret location to have a picnic. Attendees bring their tables, chairs, and food while celebrating with an original atmosphere and exciting entertainment. This year's guest attended wearing all white. Singer Nayo Jones and her band were the opening performance for this year's Dinner En Blanc.



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Killing Dylan Roof Won't Kill White Supremacy



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

Dylann Roof, the unrepentant racist who killed nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. is, without question, a monster. He prayed with people before reciting racist cants and annihilating people. After his heinous acts, it was discovered that he was a rabid racist who had wrapped himself in the Confederate flag. Does he deserve the death penalty? No.

The death penalty is the kindest thing that could happen to Dylann Roof, and he does not deserve our

kindness. The death penalty provides some of us with immediate satisfaction, a sense of revenge. And it lets him off the hook. Imagine, instead, that this slug is sentenced to life in prison and forced to live with the consequences of his action. Imagine that he is incarcerated with people who look just like the folks he killed. Imagine that, daily, he has to negotiate the racial realities of our nation's prison system, a system that disproportionately incarcerates African American men. Imagine that he is vilified as a symbol of our nation's ingrained racism. Imagine that he, perhaps, has a "come to Jesus" moment where he renounces the racism that caused him to act. Or, imagine that he simmers in his evil and reminds others how heinous he is.

The death penalty is inhumane no matter how it is applied. African Americans are disproportionately sentenced to death more than others are, and that is part, but not all,

of the point. The rest of the point is that "an eye for an eye" leaves us all blind. The good people of Mother Emanuel AME Church were overflowing in their forgiveness of Roof. Do these forgiving, God-fearing people now oppose the commandment that says, "thou shall not kill"?

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, nearly 3000 people sit on death row. While African Americans are just 13 percent of the population, we are 43 percent of the death row inmates. Most people don't believe that the death penalty deters crime, and many believe that enforcing the death penalty is a waste of taxpayer money. Most prefer alternatives – life sentences without parole, and perhaps with restitution. Dylann Roof can turn into a Confederate martyr if he is killed. Instead, imagine him as a decrepit old man living his life out in prison, constantly faced with his crimes, constantly reminded of his heinous acts. His life, not his death,

will constantly remind us of the hate that hate produced. Because, make no mistake, Dylann Roof is not an isolated phenomenon. He is the product of the Confederate flag, the product of the Ku Klux Klan, the product of the ugly, repugnant, vicious hate that produces a flawed and crippled white supremacy.

We don't kill White supremacist hate by killing Dylann Roof. We don't eliminate the ugly sentiments that propelled this extremely sick young man into a church with a gun by taking his life. Instead, it seems to me, the sole purpose of his life might be to serve as a symbol of hate, to remind us that there will be no peace without justice. Justice does not mean extracting a death penalty that is, inherently, unfair to African Americans. Justice means abolishing the death penalty that is still upheld in 31 states.

The friends and relatives of the Emanuel AME Church murdered were exceptional in their rapid ex-

pressions of forgiveness for Dylann Roof. They understood the brokenness that caused him to kill and, even as they mourned their loss, they offered their forgiveness as evidence of their faith. Can we do anything less?

I say that Dylann Roof ought to be put under somebody's jail, allowed only a Bible and minimal bland food. I say that he needs to be deprived of every pleasure his victims have been deprived of. I say he needs to be surrounded by Black folks just like the ones he killed. I'm not wishing him violence or harassment, just reflection. Killing Roof won't kill White supremacy. Keeping him miserably alive may, in fact, deter others from imitating him.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race Obama and Public Policy" is available for purchase at juliannealmalveaux.com or amazon.com. Follow Dr. Malveaux on Twitter @drjlastword.

Cop Killings Bear Strange Fruit for the Families of Black Victims



Jeffrey L. Boney
NNPA News Wire Columnist

I'm about to be extremely facetious!

We're Black, right? We all like a "hook-up" on something every now and then, don't we?

Well, it seems as if Black people have found a way to instantaneously enhance their lives, and all it takes is the sacrifice of one of our loved ones in order for us to come up.

Wanna hear more about this exciting new phenomenon that's sweeping the nation? Glad you said YES!

I want to introduce every Black family in America to an innovative

new way to lucratively bless your family for years to come – it's called "The New Black Benefit Package."

That's right y'all. Forget about school. Forget about college. Forget about athletics. Forget about entertainment. Forget about learning a trade. Forget about life insurance.

Forget about investing.

Why the hell should we pursue any of that stuff, when all we have to do is send our Black men, women, boys and girls out here to get killed by members of law enforcement?

I mean, with the rate at which cities across America are breaking the bank to pay off Black families after the death of their unarmed loved ones, it seems as if these cities have seemingly come to the conclusion that this is the best way for Black families to become financially free and then remain quiet about the lack of law enforcement accountability in this country.

Let's just look at examples, some as recent as last year.

I know you remember Freddie Gray, right? He was the 25-year old Black man who was murdered in police custody after suffering a severe spinal injury. Well, in September of last year, the city of Baltimore settled a lawsuit with his family for \$6.4 million. I know what you're saying. There were six officers who were indicted for Gray's death, right? Well guess what? Gray is still dead and the city of Baltimore never acknowledged the Baltimore police were wrong.

Just last month, the family of Tamir Rice, who was 12-years old when cops rolled up on him in 2014 and shot him to death in less than 2 seconds for having a toy gun, settled their lawsuit out of court with the city of Cleveland for \$6 million. Guess what? This Black family got a huge settlement and the officer who shot Rice got away with murder. No accountability whatsoever.

What about Eric Garner, the 43-year-old Black man who was choked to death on camera by an officer in July 2014? In July of 2015, New York City settled a lawsuit with Garner's family to the tune of \$5.9 million and as usual, the officer who killed him got away with murder.

Then you have 50-year-old Walter Scott, who was shot down from the back in cold-blood by a police officer in South Carolina. Starting to see a pattern? The city of North Charleston agreed to settle a lawsuit with Scott's family for \$6.5 million in October 2015. Although the officer, Michael Slager has been charged and was terminated, the city refused to acknowledge that the officer or the police department did anything wrong.

Shall I keep going?

What about Oscar Grant III, the 22-year old Black man and father, who was fatally shot in the back by a police officer at the Fruitvale station in Oakland in 2009 on New

Year's Day?

The officer worked for Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and they agreed to settle a lawsuit brought by the family by giving \$1.3 million to his mother and \$1.5 million to his daughter. The officer resigned a week after the incident and was charged with murder but was only convicted of the lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter. The officer only served about a year of a two-year term and BART made no admission of wrongdoing.

Again, of course I'm being facetious when I suggest that Black families should make a decision as ignorant and selfish as choosing to sacrifice a loved one in order to become rich and get paid. However, as I look at what is happening all across the U.S., it seems as if Black families are being forced to accept cash settlements as a substitute for real accountability and payouts as an alternative to true justice.

Commentary, Continued on page 11.

Terry Williams

Making Great Things Happen

by: Eric Craig

"Make it happen and make it fun," is the motto Terry Williams, President of Airware Transportation and Logistics, lives by every day. Williams was born in Houma, Louisiana and has been a resident of New Orleans for over 35 years. He is the son of Adrian and Mary Williams, with three other siblings. He is also the proud father of two children. Williams embodies the archetype of not only a family man, but a man of business and community service through Airware, goodwill and membership of the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club.

Williams story started in a small public school in Terrebonne Parish. He was noted as a prodigal student and an exceptional athlete. Graduating top of his class, he received a scholarship to attend Loyola University studying accounting. Once he graduated from Loyola, he went on to attend Stanford University to obtain a Master's in Accounting. Williams, once graduated from Stanford, passed the Certified Public Accounting Exam and worked at the United Parcel Service, becoming an esteemed Accountant. Soon, Williams outgrew his position and undertook his ambitions to operate his own business:

Williams would then go on to become President of Airware Transportation and Logistics.

Airware Transportation and Logistics was originally a spin off company that Williams created with a business partner. As Airware matured into a larger company, Williams began to shift his time and energy into operating the wing of the business that essentially became its own independent business. Currently, Airware has won the Federal Aviation Administration's Small Business of the Year Award in 2015 due to its unprecedented growth and unmatched performance. The company employs roughly 40 people. Despite its small size, under the work of Williams, the company has worked with over 37 airports domestically and internationally, managing billions of dollars in projects.

Despite its success, the company took a hit during Hurricane Katrina. However, Williams did not let that inhibit the growth of his company. With grit, determination and a will to serve the public, Williams and his staff rebuilt the company, returning it back to its optimal level of performance. "We came back after the storm and Airware was alive and well helping the City get



back together at the Emergency Operation Center, and later became leader of operations," Williams said. One thing that has gotten Williams through tough moments in his life is his motto "make it happen and make it fun."

While Airware is one of Williams' accomplishments, it is one of many efforts that he contributes to every day. Currently, Williams is a member of City

Church in New Orleans, the National Black Chamber of Commerce Board of Trustees, the Airport

Minority Advisory Council, the National Football League Youth Education Training and Kappa Alpha Psi Incorporated. Additionally, Williams is a part of the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club.

Williams is currently running for King Zulu 2017. With a track record of leadership, community service and determination, Williams has shown to be a boon to the club. Williams has helped the Zulu Society by sitting on committees such as the Zulu 5k; he has sponsored several Zulu initiatives such as the Zulu Souvenir Book, the Zulu Ensemble and the Zulu Big Dawgs; he has participated in the Zulu Experience, serving as Merry Makers Float Co-Captain for three years; He has served as Zulu Big Shot 2012, and a Zulu Community Outreach Advisor. As a candidate he is running on the platform that recognizes and puts more emphasis on the AID portion of the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club.

Social Aid is what Williams thinks makes him a strong person today. In Williams' spare time he enjoys lifting weights and playing golf. When he is not in his leisure, he is participating with several Social Aid Initiatives, such as Toys for Tots, Night Out Against Crime, and working with Junior Zulus to create a path for New Orleans youth to be successful. Williams is also a current member of City Church in New Orleans.

Most of all, Williams believes helping others is the best thing that anyone can do "The main thing here is about character in integrity to make sure they are afforded the right opportunities that others have. We give them all of the resources they need "I provide my financial resources to afforded what they need for them to be presented properly. I do a lot of things with the church. My biggest caveat is my community outreach with Zulu. It extends over 12 years," Williams said.

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"Roots" Remake Targets Younger Audience

By Freddie Allen
NNPA News Wire Editor

Tony Award winner Anika Noni Rose admitted that she questioned why Mark Wolper, the son of the producer of the groundbreaking 1977 miniseries "Roots," would ever consider returning to that story.

The original miniseries, based on Alex Haley's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1976 novel "Roots: The Saga of an American Family," won nine Emmy awards and was watched by more than 50 percent of United States population. The miniseries inspired scores of families to trace their own genealogy, according to the Christian Science Monitor.

With the legacy and emotional burden of the original "Roots," Rose said that she needed to understand the mindsets of the producers, their plan and what they were trying to accomplish with the remake.

When Mark Wolper sat down to watch the 1977 miniseries with his own son, then 16 years-old, he discovered that the pace and style of the original didn't resonate with younger audiences. Wolper shared what his son told him with actors and producers. His son understood why the story was important, but similar to his father's music, it didn't speak to him.

After meeting with the producers, Rose came around.

"I think that this is a story that deserves to be told over and over again. As much as we hear about the Jewish Holocaust, we need to hear about our Holocaust. This particular American Holocaust. The second American Holocaust," said Rose. "I hope that this is the beginning of the telling of the story of,



you know, another America. Of the America that built America. I hope that we continue to tell this story from different angles."

Rose continued: "We need to tell the story for new eyes, and a [younger generation] used to watching movies and television that move in a faster way and [speak with] a different language."

Malachi Kirby, the English-born actor who stars as Kunta Kinte, said that the reboot was necessary to make the film more accessible. Producers for the 2016 miniseries relied on a host of historians and research that simply wasn't available in the 1970s.

"[Roots] was the best that it could be at its time," said Kirby. "We've updated this now, hoping that it will be the best that it can be at this time."

"If there is something that's

keeping the younger generation from accessing that, then I believe we need to find a new way and I'm hoping that's what we did with this [miniseries]," said Kirby.

Like Rose, Kirby expressed anxiety about appearing in the reboot at first.

"I felt extremely unprepared for this," said Kirby. "I literally spent most of my time worrying about what I would do if I got the job instead of preparing for it. Then when I finally got it, I didn't have a clue how to tackle this."

Kirby turned to prayer to assist him in bringing his interpretation of Kunta Kinte to the screen.

"I came to an understanding that [Kunta Kinte's] strength and his power would have come from the knowledge of himself and his spirit and so I decided I wanted to take time to get a bit deeper into

myself, so I could play him and also strengthen myself in spirit," said Kirby.

Kirby acknowledged that many people were left feeling very angry and very hurt after watching the "Roots" miniseries in the 1977.

Kirby hopes that the updated "Roots" sparks public dialogue about America's history of racism and the legacy of slavery and that people gain some form of empowerment, healing and understanding in the process.

"There's 'Birth of a Nation' coming out, there's 'Underground' and ['Roots']. There are so many projects coming out about this same narrative, I don't think that it's a coincidence," said Kirby. "There's a discussion that needs to be happen. I don't think that people really understand this period of time. I hope that this project brings about more

understanding and clarity."

Rose said that she hopes more Black filmmakers like Nate Parker with "Birth of a Nation," will get the opportunity to tell stories about this part of America's history.

The cast also includes Laurence Fishburne as the narrator Alex Haley, Forest Whitaker, Mekhi Phifer, Erica Tazel and the rapper Tip "T.I." Harris. Mario Van Peebles directed the second episode. Will Packer, the executive producer of "Straight Outta Compton," also earned production credits on the "Roots" remake.

Rose said that she's excited that young people of color and others will be inspired to learn more about their own roots after watching the miniseries.

Kirby said that through the experience of filming "Roots" and conversations with actors and staffers on set, he learned the importance of self-knowledge and knowing where you come from.

Kirby, knew that his parents were from Jamaica, but he didn't know any of his family's history past his grandparents.

Kirby recently took a DNA test and learned that his roots go back to West Africa.

"Now, I can say it with confidence: 'That is where I'm from.' I can go to that land and know that is where my people are from. I can pass that down to my children and that's just the beginning," said Kirby.

Kirby continued: "It has already empowered me so much, just rooted and grounded me so much, that little information, and I'm just going to continue on that journey."

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

After the fatal shooting on video and controversy surrounding Laquan McDonald, the 17-year old Black man who was fatally shot 16 times by a Chicago police officer, it took Chicago City Council members only five seconds to vote to approve a \$5 million settlement with the family. Until that video was forced to be released, there were no arrests and no accountability. The only thing we witnessed was another settlement with another family. Another satisfied Black Benefit

Package recipient, right? Wrong!

These law enforcement officials that commit these irresponsible and fatal crimes currently have nothing to worry about and all of them continue to get their pensions and in many cases keep their jobs as if nothing ever happened. It almost seems as if these cities believe that the actions of these officers in their respective police departments are acceptable and justified.

It would be great to see these cities implement a policy that requires every member of law enforcement to have some form of Medical Malpractice Insurance or Wrongful

Death Insurance, whereby premiums are paid by those officers. It should be a mandatory requirement, so that if they refuse to pay the premiums, they should not be allowed to work until they get insured. Another thing these cities should do, as it relates to incidents like this, is rather than having the city and its taxpayers shoulder the burden for police misconduct, they should have their job performance tied to their pension or the pension of all officers. By doing this, an officer would probably think twice and differently about their overall actions, because of the potential

consequences that would come as a result of there being more internal accountability from their peers and superiors.

You already know it would make a huge difference in the way policing is handled, in that none of these rogue officers will be a fan-favorite of their peers, especially because they would not want to have their money and hard-earned savings impacted by the irresponsible and rogue actions of one of their own.

Don't get me wrong. I'm pleased to know many of these Black families are getting some sort of financial retribution and financial justice

for the untimely and tragic loss of their loved ones. However, I'm almost 100% certain that these families would rather have their loved ones here with them now.

We want our Black men and women to live out their lives to the fullest. We don't want this "New Black Benefit Package" to become the new norm in the Black community.

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as Associate Editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. You can reach him at jboney1@forward-times.com

Choose Your Gardening Battles Wisely

By LMG Calla Victoria
Data News Weekly Columnist

Get a game plan

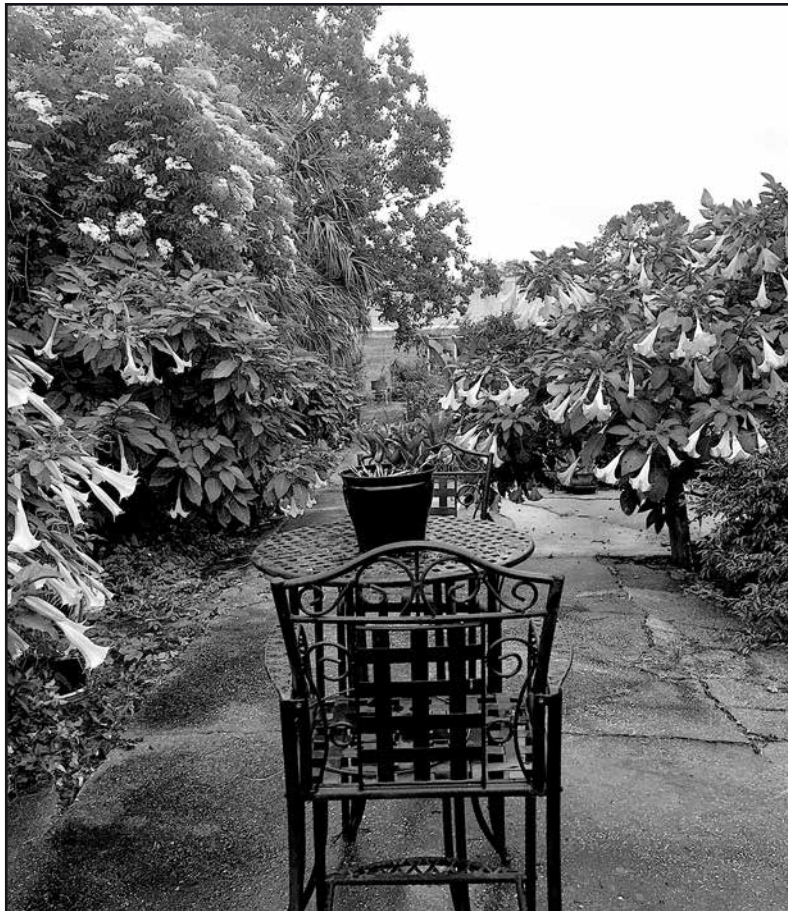
There are so many things to be done in the garden all the time, so have a game plan so that you can maximize your productivity. There are always weeds to be pulled so check the weather report, if there is rain in the forecast in a day or so, wait until then to pull those weeds. After a good soaking rain is the best time to yank some weeds because the ground is softened from being saturated by rain and those stubborn weeds will slide right out of the ground with little or no effort.

Run from the sun

If you are lucky enough to have a large yard with both sunny and shade areas, work against the sun. As my home faces east, I get a lot of sun in my front garden in the mornings; therefore, I work in my backyard during the morning hours. If I get a little over heated, I will move to one of the shady parts of my garden and relax and maybe pot some plants as I cool off. After 2 p.m. when the sun is high in the sky and moving to the west, which is the way my backyard faces, I move my activities to my front yard which is somewhat shady by the afternoon. Of course, the opposite is true when the temperatures cool off during the fall and winter. Then I work in the front garden in the mornings as it is warm and cozy then, and I work in the back yard in the afternoon when it's nice and warm and sunny out there.

Know your gardening directions

I know this is hard coming from a place like New Orleans where we



say uptown, downtown, frontatown and backatown. But it is easy to figure out east and west. In the morning when you get up, figure out which direction the brightest sunshine comes from, then that would be east as we all know the sun rises in the east. Around 3pm go out into your yard, and see where the brightest glare is coming from the sun and that would be west, as the sun sets in the west. It is important to know geographical directions when gardening, and to know what kind of sun exposure each direction provides. For example, if the care tags on a plant states indirect sunlight you would not want to place that plant facing the south, as the southern expo-

sure provides the longest sun exposure. That is why the optimum direction for solar panels to face is south for the maximum sun exposure. Once you have plotted out the geographical directions in your garden you can use some creative ways to denote the areas.

Take small bites

Maintaining a large garden can be overwhelming, so bite off small sections and complete those small tasks. Make a list of everything that needs to be done and then assign a day or time for those small specific tasks. As you complete each task you will have a sense of accomplishment and before you know it all of the work is done. Also get a routine

for ongoing chores like spraying your garden for pests. Pick a date monthly to do those chores, log them on your e-calendar with alerts so that you can stay on schedule.

Work smart not hard

Work smart when completing gardening chores. As I now have the pavers needing to complete my walkways through my garden, I now have to dig down and remove some soil so that the pavers will sit flush. So as I am digging out the area, I am placing that dirt in flower pots as I go. That way I have ample dirt for potting (already in pots), and all I have to do is amend that soil with some compost and organic matter. Unlike some gardeners, I garden old school, so I do prefer to use dirt as opposed to all of the different potting mixes. After all, plants did grow happily in the dirt/soil before we smart humans got involved.

Allow your other workers to work

Many times while I am working in an area of my garden, there are many busy bees there too. In that case I just move on to another area of my garden and let the bees work their magic! Bees have the important role of pollinating in our gardens, so if you are lucky enough to have some bees in your garden, let them work! Many species of honey bees are in danger of extinction, so if you have some, like I have hundreds buzzing around all of my angel's trumpet trees and all of my other blossoms, leave them to their work.

Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week" at www.thegardeningdiva.com

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

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