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# Data

News Weekly

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## Apollo Talent Search


July 2 - July 8, 2016 51st Year Volume 10 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# An Eight Year Journey

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# “The High Priestess of Dark Alley,” Finally Comes Home

*Jackie Alexander Brings Play to New Orleans*



New Orleans native Jackie Alexander, has directed and written six plays in the last eight years in celebration of Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre’s 100th Anniversary, the Downtown Theatre is featuring a play written and directed by Alexander, titled “The High Priestess of Dark Alley”.

**Eric Craig**  
Multimedia Editor

In celebration of Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre’s 100th Anniversary, the Downtown Theatre is featuring a play written and directed by a New Orleans

native. This New Orleanian has waited eight years to return home.

**The High Priestess**  
“The High Priestess of Dark Alley,” will be featured at the Le Petit Theatre between July 7-24, 2016. The play is writ-

ten and directed by Jackie Alexander. “For Le Petit to kick off their 100th Anniversary with this show is exciting,” Alexander said.

The Playwright noted that Le Petit is currently expanding its catalog to feature shows that revolve around New

Orleans. “It’s exciting that my show is one of the first projects tackling this,” Alexander said.

Alexander is originally from New Orleans, LA, and has worked as an actor, writer, producer and director for over 16

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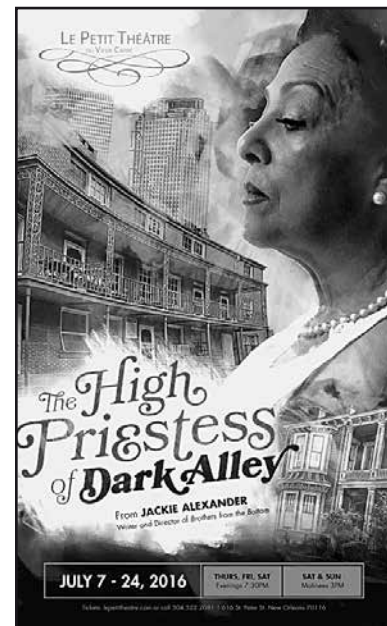
Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Alexander, a playwright originally from New Orleans, hopes to bring more original productions back to the City.



Alexander has worked at the Billie Holliday Theater in Brooklyn, NY for 16 years.



"The High Priestess of Dark Alley" will be featured at Le Petit Theatre between July 7-24.

years. Much of Alexander's work has been produced in New York, both Off-Broadway and toured regionally.

The Playwright has put an emphasis on the African-American experiences in his art, exploring areas such as success and failure in characters and the spirit of the African-American community.

Alexander's first production was produced in 2007. The Playwright said it took him eight years to get a production in his hometown of New Orleans. He said that the City is firmly increasing its opportunity for theatrical production.

"The High Priestess of Dark Alley" was originally written and produced in 2009 and premiered at the Billie Holiday Theatre. The story developed from conversations Alexander had with his friends.

The show sold out the six weeks it played at the Billie Holiday Theatre. Due to its success, it was extended a total of six months and toured outside of the city.

"I started off writing a story about a woman, thinking about African-American issues and issues in New Orleans," Alexander said.

"The story is centered around a woman that has lost herself in a marriage and the demands of different people as opposed to what she wants in her life," he added.

"When I was writing this, I wondered how I can color this with New

Orleans. I wanted to dig into being creole and the economics of New Orleans, and how Black people can often battle each other," Alexander said.

The production also touches on issues of social class and relationships. Beyond adding a New Orleans perspective to his play, Alexander says his characters, including the ones in "The High Priestess of Dark Alley," face issues that everyone has experienced.

"I write about good people that are trying to do their best with the things they have, but face obstacles," Alexander said.

Alexander has high travelling hopes for "The High Priestess of Dark Alley." The production is planned to be featured in North Carolina later this year once it leaves New Orleans. Within the next couple of years, Alexander hopes to eventually bring his play to Broadway.

#### A New Orleans Touch

The Playwright believes his success is contingent on his ability to write universal stories.

"A good story is universal; a story people can relate to. I want to tell stories of the people I knew and that I grew up with," Alexander said.

Despite many differences between cultures and ethnicities, Alexander believes that people go through the same trials, issues and stories all around the world.

In the case of his newest work, "The High Priestess of the Dark Alley," Alexander notes that people from backgrounds different from African-Americans have related to the characters and stories of his production.

"I think that people are all the same all over the world. The same things, the same issues happen to everybody. That's why telling a story universally works," Alexander said.

However, Alexander believes New Orleans holds a special place within his stories.

In the past 16 years, Alexander has produced, directed and written six plays. Five of the six plays have been based in the City of New Orleans, told from the African-American perspective.

Alexander's continuation to write about issues of his community come from advice of Weldon Irvine, a theatrical mentor to Alexander.

"If you don't like the stories being told about Black people, stop whining and create your own," Irvine said to Alexander.

With the African-American perspective in mind, Alexander believes New Orleanians have a different experience with his work.

"I always knew people of New Orleans would get my work on a deeper level," Alexander said.

"I always write with a New Orleans flavor. The New Orleans audience is the true test if I got it

right. It's always very exciting to put in front of a home audience," he added.

Currently, Alexander looks forward to the next opportunity to bring a production to New Orleans.

"I would like to make this a yearly thing to bring shows to New Orleans," Alexander said.

"I will be back in New Orleans, and I will be directing the Jelly Glass Jam at Le Petite. It's always been my hope to establish a presence in New Orleans and to do work here on a consistent basis. I love being home," he added.

#### Alexander's Previous Work

Alexander first large scale production was his independent film "Joy," which was released in 2002. Alexander produced, directed, wrote and acted in his original piece about an African-American male chasing after the American Dream but is met with obstacles that prevents him from achieving his goals.

The film was supported and toured by BlackFilms.com and added to the Black Filmmaker's Hall of Fame after its unveiling.

After the success of the film, many people reached out to Alexander to direct other projects. Coupled with ten years of working at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, several people contacted Alexander to direct, act and write in other productions.

Alexander was recruited by the

Billie Holiday Theatre in New York, a theater project that is designed to progress the lives of African-Americans in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community in New York State.

At the Billie Holiday Theatre, Alexander produced, and directed films such as "The High Priestess of Dark Alley," "Birthright," "The Right Reverend Dupree in Exile" and "The Desire."

Between the years of 2010-11 The Billie Holiday Theatre devoted its entire season to Alexander's productions, allowing him to write, direct, produce and feature three original plays during the year. Alexander is the only Playwright that has carried an entire season solo at the Billie Holiday Theatre.

In 2012, Alexander published his novel "Our Daily Bread. The book explores a coming-of-age story of a boy living in rural Louisiana in 1974.

In 2013, Alexander was named Artistic Director of the Billie Holiday Theatre, overseeing the expansion of the theater and its programs. The Playwright stepped down in 2015 at the theater because of its closure for renovations.

Alexander continues to use his skill in order to convey his perspective of being African-American within his artwork.

For more information about "The High Priestess of Dark Alley," visit <http://www.lepetittheatre.com/>.



# Xavier Welcomes Back Alfred Williams as Head Coach

## Data News Staff Edited Report

Former Xavier University of Louisiana student-athlete and assistant coach Alfred Williams, who engineered one of the best turnarounds in NAIA Division I men's basketball this past season at Harris-Stowe State University, is returning home to become head coach at his alma mater.

XU Director of Athletics & Recreation Jason Horn announced the hiring of Williams on June 28, 2016. He replaces Dannton Jackson, who left Xavier in April after 13 seasons as head coach to become an assistant at NCAA Division I's University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The new head coach will meet with news media, the XU commu-

nity and fans July 5 at 1:30 p.m. in Xavier's Convocation Center, 7900 Stroelitz St. (zip 70125).

"I'm super-excited about the opportunity to become the next head men's basketball coach at Xavier," said Williams, who played for the Gold Rush from 2004-08 and served as an assistant coach from 2009-15.

"Xavier has been near and dear to my heart ever since I stepped on campus in 2004. The rich tradition is second to none. I am looking forward to continue building on the foundations of the past while growing toward the future. We will work



day in and day out to build a program that mirrors toughness, grit, hustle and passion in everything that we do," he added.

Williams was head coach for one season at Harris-Stowe in St. Louis, where he led the Hornets in a 7 1/2-game improvement from the previous year and victories against a pair of NCAA Division II opponents. Harris-Stowe lost 84-83 in double-overtime Jan. 28 at American Midwest Conference champion Columbia (Mo.), a 29-game winner,



Alfred Williams

after losing there by 46 points the previous season.

During his previous Xavier ten-

ures, Williams was a member of three teams as a player and five teams as an assistant coach that qualified for the Buffalo Funds-NAIA Division I National Championship and won or shared four Gulf Coast Athletic Conference Tournament regular-season championships. The Gold Rush averaged 23.3 victories during his three playing seasons and 23.2 victories during his six seasons as assistant coach.

"After a comprehensive national search which attracted many outstanding candidates, we are excited to welcome back Alfred Williams. We are confident that AJ will continue the Xavier tradition of excellence and lead the Gold Rush to even greater national prominence while graduating our student-athletes," Horn said.

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## At&T Announces First Three Fiber Ready Certified Buildings In New Orleans



Ben Johnson, President of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce; Jason Williams, New Orleans City Councilmember-at-Large; Erika McConduit-Diggs, President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans; and, Leo Marsh, AT&T Regional External Affairs Manager, celebrate the first AT&T Fiber Ready designations in the City of New Orleans.

## Data News Staff Edited Report

As part of AT&T's continuing efforts to drive economic development and investment in Louisiana, the company has announced the first three properties in the Crescent City to receive AT&T's Fiber Ready designation.

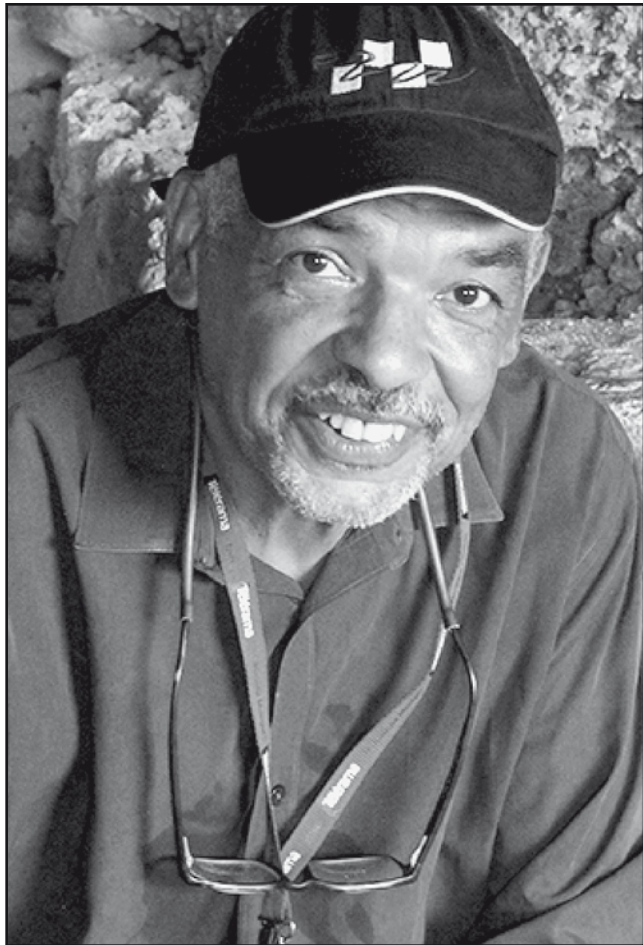
The three buildings to earn fiber ready certification are the Urban League of Greater New Orleans Building, Mid-City Market, and 643 Magazine St. The tenants of

these buildings now have access to AT&T's fiber-based high-speed services and an improved ability to connect with the world.

"AT&T has invested more than \$1 billion in its Louisiana wired and wireless networks during 2013-2015, and we are proud to highlight these three buildings as even more areas in Louisiana where AT&T's fiber infrastructure is in place and ready to help community leaders drive job creation," said Sonia Perez, State President of AT&T Louisiana.



# Local Landscaping Company Wins National Award



DesignJones LLC - Co-Owner Austin Allen



DesignJones LLC - Co-Owner Diane Jones

## Eric Craig Multimedia Editor

A New Orleans local landscaping company has been recognized by the National American Society of Landscape Architects.

On June 28, 2016, DesignJones LLC, a firm that does work in both New Orleans and Baltimore, received the Community Service Award for its pro bono community service in urban areas.

The ALSA is a professional association for landscape architects. Started in 1899, the organization currently represents more than 15,000 members.

According to the ALSA, DesignJones tackled several community projects in cities such as New Orleans, St. Louis, Baltimore, Cleveland and Key West.

DesignJones is owned by Diane Jones and Austin Allen, an Associate Professor at Louisiana State University. Both of the owners are ASLA members. The ASLA recognized the company for being an exemplar in community service by going "beyond any single locale or region and have helped to foster diverse communities near and far."

The company has completed

several landscape projects in the 9th Ward, including Cypress Forest Restoration in the Bayou Bienvenue Wetlands Triangle.

Jones was ecstatic when she heard that DesignJones was recognized by ASLA.

"I was shocked. You do this stuff and you don't think people are really looking at you," Jones said.

"We were really surprised, but humbled. Because it's a national award," she added.

Allen shared her excitement on the recent recognition.

"It's never one person that makes it work, and it's always the joint effort that makes something like this work," Allen said.

"It's thinking about everybody in your life that has touched your life and honoring that," he added.

DesignJones started in 2009 by Jones. Since then, the company has had several efforts, including Haiti restoration, and several community development projects around the United States. However, much of their work is centered in New Orleans and Baltimore.

"Both cities are a lot alike. They are both coastal and ethnic cities. They both have environmental justice and cultural issues that you

have to deal with," Jones said.

"They present the same problems with urban populations, housing, equity, gentrification and transit access," she added.

Both Jones and Allen believe that community service is important in areas of need.

"Landscape Architecture has a lot of skills that seem to be fitting to community service: Knowledge of the eco systems, plants, environmental issues—It's really about peacemaking, which requires to know how people want to live," Jones said.

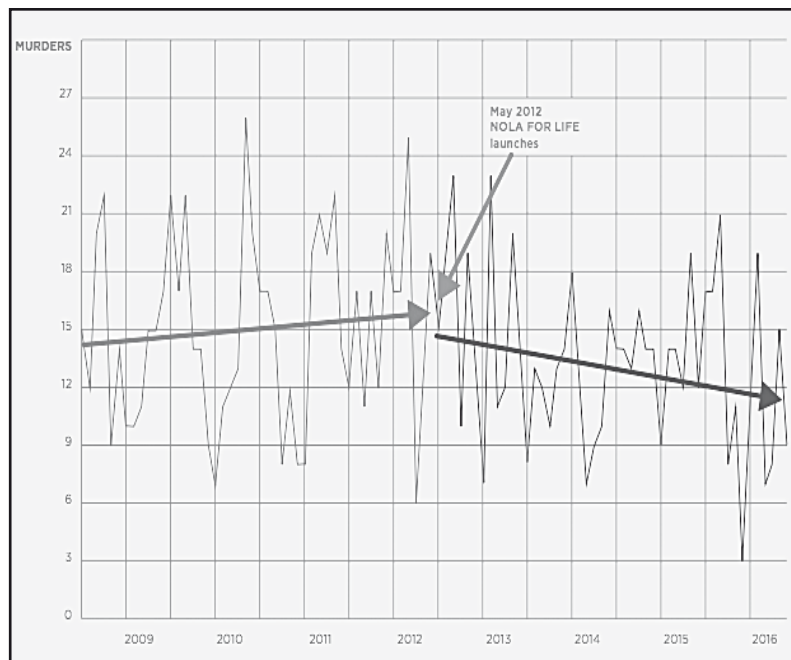
"Many communities do not have proper housing, parks, open spaces and circulation. I just like to help projects happen to make sure communities have a voice," Jones said.

Both Jones and Allen plan to continue their community service, putting an emphasis on the environment in New Orleans. According to Allen, understanding the environment is an important aspect of landscaping.

The problem is not over. We're dealing with sea level rises and climate change. This City will be impacted by it," Allen said.

The more we understand nature and weather is the better we are," he added.

# New Orleans Recognized for Reduced Murder Rates



According to statistics presented at the National Summit on Youth Violence Prevention in Baltimore, New Orleans has seen a 30 percent reduction in homicides in 2016; which represents the lowest number of murders New Orleans has tracked since 1971.

## Data News Staff Edited Report

The City of New Orleans has been highlighted for its decline in murders in 2016. On June 27, 2016, at the National Summit on Youth Violence Prevention in Baltimore, U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch noted that New Orleans had a 30 percent decline in murders.

According to the City's statistics, that is the lowest number of murders New Orleans has tracked since 1971.

"President Obama and his administration have been committed partners in our effort to change the culture of violence in our City to a culture of peace," Mayor Mitch Landrieu said.

"There is no challenge more urgent than preventing murder. And through NOLA FOR LIFE, we have developed a comprehensive murder reduction strategy that is getting results," he added.

At the Summit, Lynch was concerned about the growing violence in the nation's youth. She said that early exposure to violence can lead to long-term physical, mental and emotional harm, and the risk of failing in school.

"In the United States, homicide is the third leading cause of death for youths between the ages of 10 and 24. Every day – every day – 13 young people are murdered in our country," Lynch said.

"And as awful as these numbers are, they do not tell the whole story – because the dead are far from the only victims of violence. Its effects are felt far beyond a crime scene, inflicting invisible wounds on all who live in its presence," she added.

The City of New Orleans released the NOLA FOR LIFE 2016 Four-Year Progress Report which provides that details of the murder reduction strategy.

Since the start of NOLA FOR LIFE, there have been 86 fewer murders and an 18% lower murder rate than in the four years prior to NOLA FOR LIFE.

In 2011, 55 percent of New Orleans murders were gang or group related, while that number has been cut in half today. This year, New Orleans is on track to have the lowest number of murders since 1971.

Lynch is proud of the progress U.S. cities have had in the past few years, highlighting New Orleans in particular. She plans to continue to work with communities to further reduce violence.

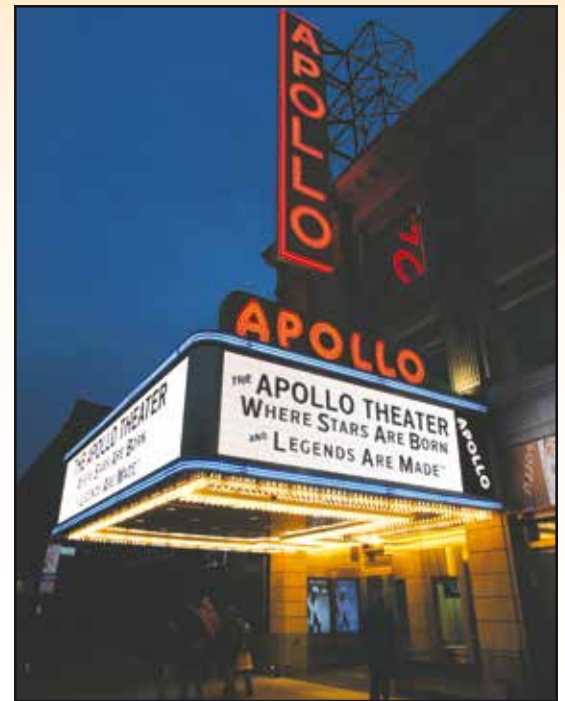
"We are joining with faith and community-based organizations, youth and family groups and business and philanthropic leaders in neighborhoods from coast-to-coast. And our U.S. Attorneys' Offices are working closely with local enforcement and elected leaders in their districts to reduce violent crime, to build capacity and to promote holistic responses to violence and its consequences," Lynch said.



# Apollo Theater National Talent Search at Essence Music Festival



The world famous Apollo Theater and Coca-Cola will present a national talent search for the next Apollo Legend, during the 2016 Essence Music Festival here in New Orleans.



Auditions will take place on Friday, July 1, 2016 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in Room 217; from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Data News Staff Edited Report

The Apollo Theater announced a major new initiative as part of its signature Amateur Night show. The Apollo and Coca-Cola will present a national talent search for the next Apollo Legend, during the 2016 Essence Music Festival. This special Amateur Night competition will give up-and-coming vocalists the chance to win the opportunity to compete on the iconic Apollo Stage. In a first for the legendary Theater, Amateur Night auditions will head to New Orleans where the first

phase will commence with auditions at the popular Essence Music Festival. Auditions will take place on Friday, July 1, 2016 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in Room 217; from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Contestants selected from the auditions will advance to a semi-final round on Saturday, July 2nd where two performers will be chosen to perform on the Essence Music Festival mainstage at the Mercedes Superdome, that evening.

The second phase of the competition will take place online via the competition's website (www.Apollo-

MakingAStar.com), with online voting starting July 11th through August 5, 2016. In total, five contestants will be chosen to compete at the world famous Apollo Theater for a special edition of Amateur Night on Wednesday, September 21, 2016. Contestants chosen will receive an all-expense paid trip to New York City.

Amateur Night at the Apollo is the long-running, live talent competition presented on the world famous Apollo stage in Harlem, NY. Now in its 82nd year, Amateur Night at the Apollo continues to be a primary source for

discovering new talent and spotlighting up-and-coming artists. With performances that occur virtually every Wednesday night since the theater opened in 1934, the Apollo's Amateur Night has launched the careers of countless world-famous artists, including James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Lauryn Hill, Michael Jackson and The Jackson Five, D'Angelo, Billie Holiday, Luther Vandross, Dave Chappelle, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Ella Fitzgerald, The Isley Brothers, Sarah Vaughan and more. Amateur Night at the Apollo is sponsored by Coca-Cola.

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

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# Jesse Williams Sets the BET Awards on Fire

*2016 Humanitarian Award Speech Inspires the Nation*



By Charmaine Ellington  
Data News Weekly Contributor

Social media is buzzing about actor and activist Jesse Williams and his profound acceptance speech at the annual BET Awards in Los Angeles on Sunday night. Williams, who plays Dr. Jackson Avery on ABC's "Grey's Anatomy" summarized in about five minutes the crux of the Black Lives Matter movement and issues including cultural appropriation and the struggles Black women face.

"If you have a critique for the resistance, for our resistance, then you better have an established record of critique of our oppression," he said. "If you have no interest in equal rights for Black people, then do not make suggestions to those who do. Sit down."

Williams, 34, is member of Blackout for Human Rights, which hosted the #JusticeForFlint event in February. He joined protests in Ferguson, Mo. following the death

of Michael Brown, has written extensively on BLM movement, and his documentary "Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement" premiered on BET last month. For his ongoing activism, the TV network honored him with its Humanitarian Award.

The Chicago native, whose father is Black and his mother, white, graduated from Temple University with a double major in African American Studies and film and media arts. Before launching his acting career, he taught in Philadelphia public schools.

Williams took the public at-large to school Sunday night. Here are some key takeaways from his acceptance speech:

## Relevance of Black Women

As a preface to his speech, Williams dedicated the award to the work of those on the front lines of social justice, specifically acknowledging the efforts of Black women.

Jesse/Continued on page 10

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# Congressman John Lewis is One of a Kind



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

I have always had enormous admiration for Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) and that admiration increased exponentially when I watched him lead dozens of his congressional colleagues to sit-in on the floor of Congress to force a vote on gun control. As the supercilious Paul Ryan called for “decorum” (where is the decorum in a man walking into a nightclub with an

automatic weapon and gunning 49 people down), determined Democrats disrupted proceedings in the House of Representatives. I say, “Right on!”

Congressman Lewis tweeted, “Sometimes you have to get in the way. You have to make some noise by speaking up and speaking out against injustice & inaction.” He is frustrated, as are many voters, about the fact that Congress has failed to take a position on background checks and the availability of assault weapons. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is equally frustrated, saying, “Moments of silence aren’t substitute for the action needed on gun violence.” Republicans have attempted to deflect, suggesting that the focus should be on ISIS and terrorism, not gun violence. But the Newtown, Conn., shooter was not a terrorist

connected to ISIS. Indeed, troubled White men have perpetrated many of our recent mass shootings with access to guns, not ISIS loyal terrorists. No matter. Can’t Congress walk and chew gum at the same time? Can’t they focus both on ISIS and on our out-of-control gun culture?

Nobody is talking about repealing the Second Amendment (though that might not be a bad idea). Still, the “right to bear arms” does not mean the unfettered right to bear all kinds of arms. Nobody needs an automatic weapon. And anyone deemed dangerous or mentally ill should never be allowed to purchase a gun. The National Rifle Association (NRA) is an irresponsible organization that elevates the right for any random citizen to own and bear arms over the right of other citizens to survive.

One might think the congressional sit-in has yielded few results. House Speaker Paul Ryan pulled the plug on C-SPAN coverage and dismissed the sit-in as a “stunt.” Still, responding to the fact that 90 percent of Americans support background checks those who sat in showed enormous courage. Taking advantage of social media, they broadcast their sit-in using Periscope, reminding Ryan that he might control C-SPAN, but he doesn’t control all broadcast.

Ryan was insulting and condescending in calling the sit-in a “stunt,” and he reminded me of the many reasons I so admire Congressman John Lewis. Was the Atlanta Congressman’s skull fractured in a “stunt” in 1965 on Bloody Sunday, when his civil rights activity caused rabid Whites to attack him? Lewis

pulled no stunt, he stood for what he believed in then. He is standing, firmly in his belief now, and using the time-honored tactic of protest to bring attention to the important cause of gun control.

Congressman Lewis and his colleagues were not successful in forcing votes on gun control. But they were successful in shutting the House down. Speaker Ryan was forced to adjourn Congress before he planned to, and Republicans sulked off like thieves in the night. Democrats held the floor hours after the Republicans scurried away, like hungry rats. No vote was forced, but a point was made.

Julianne Malveaux is an economist and author. Her latest offering “Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy” is available via [juliannealmalveaux.com](http://juliannealmalveaux.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

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# Charles L. Rice, Jr.

## *Giving Fuel to the Next Generation*

by: Edwin Buggage

Charles L. Rice Jr. is a man who is well-known in the business circles as the President and Chief Executive Officer of Entergy New Orleans, Inc., a post he's held since 2010. What many do not know is that he is committed to serving the New Orleans community in many ways, working hard to inspire the next generation.

Outside of his work at Entergy, he serves on several boards that are business and civic related aimed at helping the City and its citizens. "I sit on a number of boards including the Boy Scouts, Greater New Orleans Foundation, New Orleans Business Alliance and I am also involved in the Silver Backs, in addition to many others. I do this because I feel that it's important to give back to community that produced me and give back to those who are not as fortunate and have not had the same opportunities," says Rice.

Serving others have always played an important part in Rice's life. "My parents always told me to whom much is given much is expected, so I am emulating the things that my mother and father did as a kid, where I saw him heavily involved in the community at the NORD



Playground, coaching and inspiring kids. Also my mother volunteers to feed the homeless on a regular basis, so I basically, it was expected that it was your duty to give back," remarks Rice.

The mission to serve continues and is a family affair that includes his wife Vonda, who volunteers cooking meals at least once a month at Boys Hope Girls Hope, an organization that helps academically capable and motivated kids that are in need to reach their full potential. Speaking of their time helping there he says, "We have gone over there and had dinners with the boys, many who have had discipline issues, or their parents can't provide the

right environment. So this organization gives them a great foundation and make sure these kids get the foundational, educational and moral support they need. The result of this type of nurturing is what many of these kids need. As a result, many of them go onto college and these are kids that many would not be expected go to college. My wife and I are extremely proud of what these kids achieve in spite of obstacles and are big supporters of Boys Hope Girls Hope and their mission."

Charles Rice, is a native of the Crescent City and has a record of excellence in many areas. He is a Howard University graduate. Additionally, he served as a Commissioned

Officer in United States Army, serving as a Military Intelligence Officer with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, KY. While in the Army, he earned the Airborne Badge, Air Assault Badge and was awarded the Army Commendation and the Army Achievement Medals. Mr. Rice also holds a Juris Doctorate from Loyola University's School of Law and Master's Degree in Business Administration from

Tulane University. While Rice has reached amazing heights in business that's taken him across the globe; he proudly states he is a product of New Orleans and that all the people who raised and inspired him on his journey to success deserves a share of the credit. On his life's journey he says, "There are so many routes to success. Continuing he states, "When I am talking to African-American kids I let them know that sports or being a rapper is not the only way to be successful and that there are other ways to be successful."

He says his life story is important in connecting when he engages youth, "I go out and speak to different groups in the community about the importance of diversity, be it telling my story and how I've gotten to where I am today, and the things I've done to ensure my success, I am a product of public schools and grew up in Algiers. I feel it is important for kids to see people in positions

of leadership that look like them. And hopefully, emulate the things I have, others have done."

Rice is someone who says his door is always open to help and mentor youth of the City. Speaking of one of a few of these instances he says, "When it comes to helping young people my door is open, in fact, I recently had a lunch with a young man who contacted me through our legal department and wanted to have lunch with me to talk about his career goals. This is something I do on a regular basis advising young people and help give them direction to having a better life."

Charles L. Rice Jr., is a man who on his job at Entergy help provides lights and energy to a City, but in his other work as a humanitarian he is a positive force for change, fueling the next generation with the will to succeed. For his amazing work we are honored to name him the recipient of the Data News Weekly Trailblazer Award.

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





# HBCUs Important to Minority Success.

**Kaelin Maloid**  
Contributor

There are about 600 minority serving institutes and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in America, and three in New Orleans: Dillard University; Southern University at New Orleans; and Xavier University of Louisiana. These MSIs, despite making up only a small percentage of colleges in America, educate about 20 percent of undergrads.

On June 21st, the New York Times Magazine hosted a panel called "Winning Strategies at HBCUs and MSIs," which focused on how these two institutions became some of the most important universities and col-

leges at building the nation's middle-class. Nikole Hannah-Jones of the New York Times Magazine moderated the panel, while the two guests were Marybeth Gasman, a Professor of Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School and Dr. Pierre Johnson, a Xavier Alum and a University of Illinois Medical School Alum.

Latinos and African-Americans are "systematically deprived" of a high school education, according to Jones. They don't have access to advanced placement classes, honor classes, and an overall less quality education. This is why HBCUs and MSIs are so important.

"The sense of community is important," said Pierre, in response

to the importance of HBCUs, especially his experience at Xavier. "Everyone had a sense of achievement, and we pulled each other up. We had to pull each other up, and I knew it wouldn't hurt me to teach you or help you."

When Pierre arrived at Xavier, he was an 'A' and 'B' student, but he hadn't really been challenged. He wanted to be a doctor, but he didn't have a background in science.

"I barely knew what a periodic table was," Pierre admitted.

However, Xavier was quick to address his needs, like most HBCUs. Instead of sending him straight to tutoring, Xavier taught him how to study. Despite his academic problems, Xavier did not give up on him.

"They [HBCUs and MSIs] look at kids and say, 'They are smart. How can we bring them out of that?'" Pierre said.

Pierre also admitted that many of the role models kids and students you see are on television—role models such as Stephen Curry and LeBron James of the National Basketball Association. Pierre, from Chicago, didn't see doctors in his area, didn't see other role models in his area.

Gasman agreed with Pierre. "It's important to see people that look like him," she said.

She stated that was one of the problems with Predominantly White Institutes.

"Sometimes it's hard for White people to understand that because

we always see people like us," Gasman said. "Many classrooms are centered around whiteness, and once we change that, we change conversations."

Going from a HBCU in Xavier to becoming the only Black guy in his class at the University of Illinois was a change for Johnson. "Medical school didn't care about my problems—not only academics, but being the only Black kid in my class."

During this time, Johnson felt as if he was being judged differently, despite doing the same work.

Gasman stated that one of the keys to the winning strategies was that HBCUs and MSIs, "Embrace a student's identity but don't check it at the door."

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**Jesse, Continued from page 7.**

"This award is also for the Black women in particular who have spent their lives nurturing everyone before themselves — we can and will do better for you," he said.

### Police-Related Deaths of Black People

"Now, what we've been doing is looking at the data and we know that police somehow manage to de-escalate, disarm and not kill white people every day," Williams said. "So what's going to happen is we're going to have equal rights and justice in our own country or we will restructure their function and ours."

"Yesterday would have been young Tamir Rice's 14th birthday so I don't want to hear any more about how far we've come when paid public servants can pull a drive-by on a 12-year-old playing alone in a park in broad daylight, killing him on television, and then going home to make a sandwich."

"Tell Rekia Boyd how it's so much better to live in 2012 than 1612 or 1712. Tell that to Eric Garner, Sandra Bland ..."

### Cultural Appropriation

"We've been floating this country on credit for centuries, and we're done watching and waiting



while this invention called whiteness uses and abuses us, burying Black people out of sight and out of mind while extracting our culture, our dollars, our entertainment like oil — black gold! — ghettoizing and demeaning our creations and stealing them, gentrifying our genius and then trying us on like costumes before discarding our bodies like rinds of strange fruit," Williams said.

In his speech, Williams also re-

minded Black entertainers they shouldn't be complacent in success:

"Now, the thing is, though, all of us in here getting money ... that alone isn't going to stop this. All right? Now dedicating our lives to getting money just to give it right back. To put someone's brand on our body when we spent centuries praying with brands on our bodies and now we pray to get paid with brands for our bodies."

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# Hillary Clinton Up Close



Hillary Clinton speaks candidly with Kai EL'Zabar, the Executive Editor of the Chicago Defender. (Credit: Worsom Robinson/Chicago Defender)



Hillary Clinton addresses the Women's International Luncheon at the Rainbow PUSH 45th Annual Convention in Chicago. (Credit: Worsom Robinson/Chicago Defender)

By Kai EL'Zabar  
NNPA News Wire Contributor

(Chicago, IL) Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton came to Chicago on her Midwest Campaign jaunt to address the Women's International Luncheon at the Rainbow PUSH Coalition 45th Annual Convention. After the luncheon, the "Chicago Defender" sat down, up close and personal, with the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee to get greater insight into her vision for a better America.

"I have an old-fashioned belief that if you run for president, you should tell people what you're going to do," Clinton said as she revved up. "Listen, the next president of the United States can have the opportunity to select one, two, three Supreme Court justices...and we don't want that president to be Donald Trump."

Back stage, Clinton said that she has a personal commitment to working with the Black Press and all local press. However, she has noticed in particular the assumption of some in various parts of the country where she has traveled that it is assumed that the Black Press will show up.

"And that's not always the case, so we want to make sure that we make the effort to reach out, and not only during the campaign, but even in the White House," Clinton said. "I see the Black Press playing an active role in getting our message out directly to its readers, participating in the various activities such as today's luncheon, and making sure that it has access as well as being included in the advertising buy."

Hillary Clinton has made it clear that she will continue the initiatives that President Barack Obama implemented and work to enhance affordable health care. She credits the president with saving America from another national economic disaster, having inherited the worst financial crisis in American history since the Great Depression. And he's done so much more than he is given credit for, she said, and she plans to continue support of those efforts.

When asked about the Black, Latino, and LGBTQ communities, Hillary Clinton said she has plans to address the issues that disproportionately affect each of those underserved communities, and you can actually go to her website and read for yourself exactly what her vision is. She provided additional insight, adding that, "we need more good jobs with rising incomes, because we're just not seeing enough of them. There aren't enough employment opportunities in Chicago's underserved communities."

It's clear that Clinton recognizes the disparities that plague the marginalized.

"We need to make sure that there are some big, bold programs like infrastructure, like clean, renewable energy, like advanced manufacturing, that are within the reach of those people who need those jobs and [that should] have the chance to compete for them," she proposed, noting that over the last 10 to 15 years Americans have seen a lot of the jobs in the country that are not within reach of those who live in the most distressed urban or rural areas.

Hillary Clinton said she wants to make jobs available first. Second, she wants make high quality education more accessible. She was adamant about the need for the United States to do better at preparing our youngest children to go to school and supporting them throughout their academic careers.

"There are a lot of ways we can do that. I am committed to working with communities, churches and educational systems to try to figure out how," she said. "But parents and grandparents have to be supported in doing the most important job of raising the next generation of children, and we need to do all that we can to see to it that we do that."

Clinton spoke about her vision to restore, "schools that people believe in, that they are passionate about, and we have that in a lot of places and I know that you don't have that in Chicago."

Clinton continued: "We need diversionary programs so that we're not suspending and expelling five-, six-, seven and eight-year-old kids, who are acting out. We have a terrible disciplinary divide where kids, who are either having problems or are just acting like normal kids, are being suspended if they're African-American or Latino and White kids doing the same thing aren't. That starts the whole cradle to prison pipeline."

In her effort to end the cradle-to-prison pipeline, Clinton envisions doing more to intervene in helping young children be successful, including after school support intervention programs.

"We just need a big wrap around, 'It takes a village to raise a child' attitude about how we're going to

help our kids," the former Secretary of State said.

For the older youth, Clinton said that she recognizes that oftentimes teenagers don't have opportunities to direct their energy in positive directions and how easy it is for them to be misdirected, often leading to gang affiliation or some other form of violence or destructive behavior.

Clinton said that, "The policing issue is an essential, necessary step to be resolved, and then we have to figure out what more can we do to keep people safe."

She also pointed out that she promised the parents who have lost their children to gun violence that, she would do everything she can to change the gun laws.

If she becomes the first female president of the United States, she will break the highest glass ceiling in the world and with that in mind, she would also bring a cognizant reality of setting a precedent for women in the workplace.

"We also have to raise the minimum wage," she added. "Right now, two-thirds of minimum-wage workers are women. And that's a poverty wage. And I have met women working two and three minimum-wage jobs just to keep their heads above water, to keep their house and to keep their kids in day care, take whatever it may be."

Clinton said that she also wants to help more minorities and women start their own businesses.

"I want to see how we can help improve the process, to get faster credit, helping them to get the support they need, to understand to write a business plan...how to deal with the stress of being a business owner."

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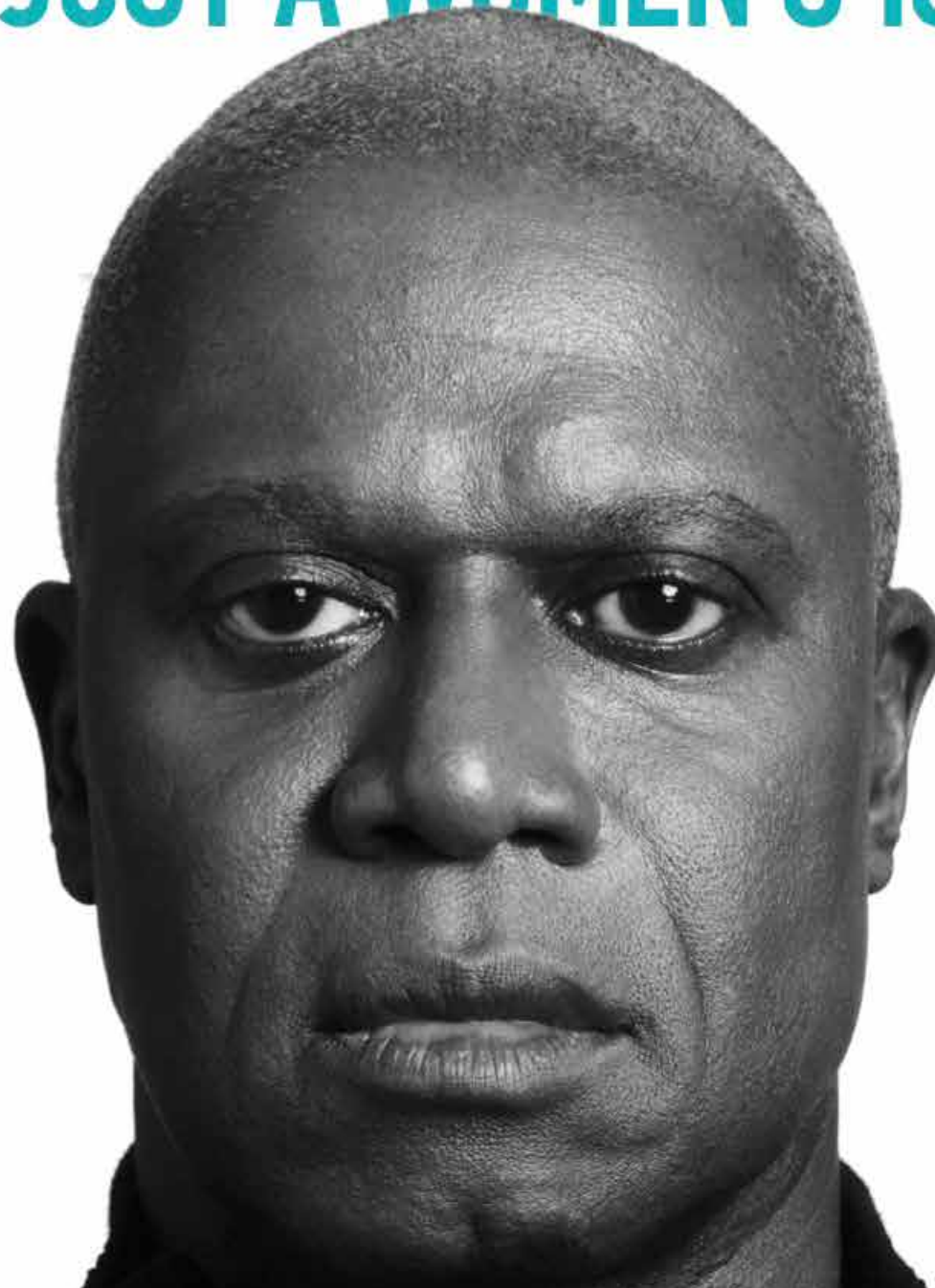
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