

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

**Data**

**News Weekly**

*"The People's Paper"*

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**DataZone**

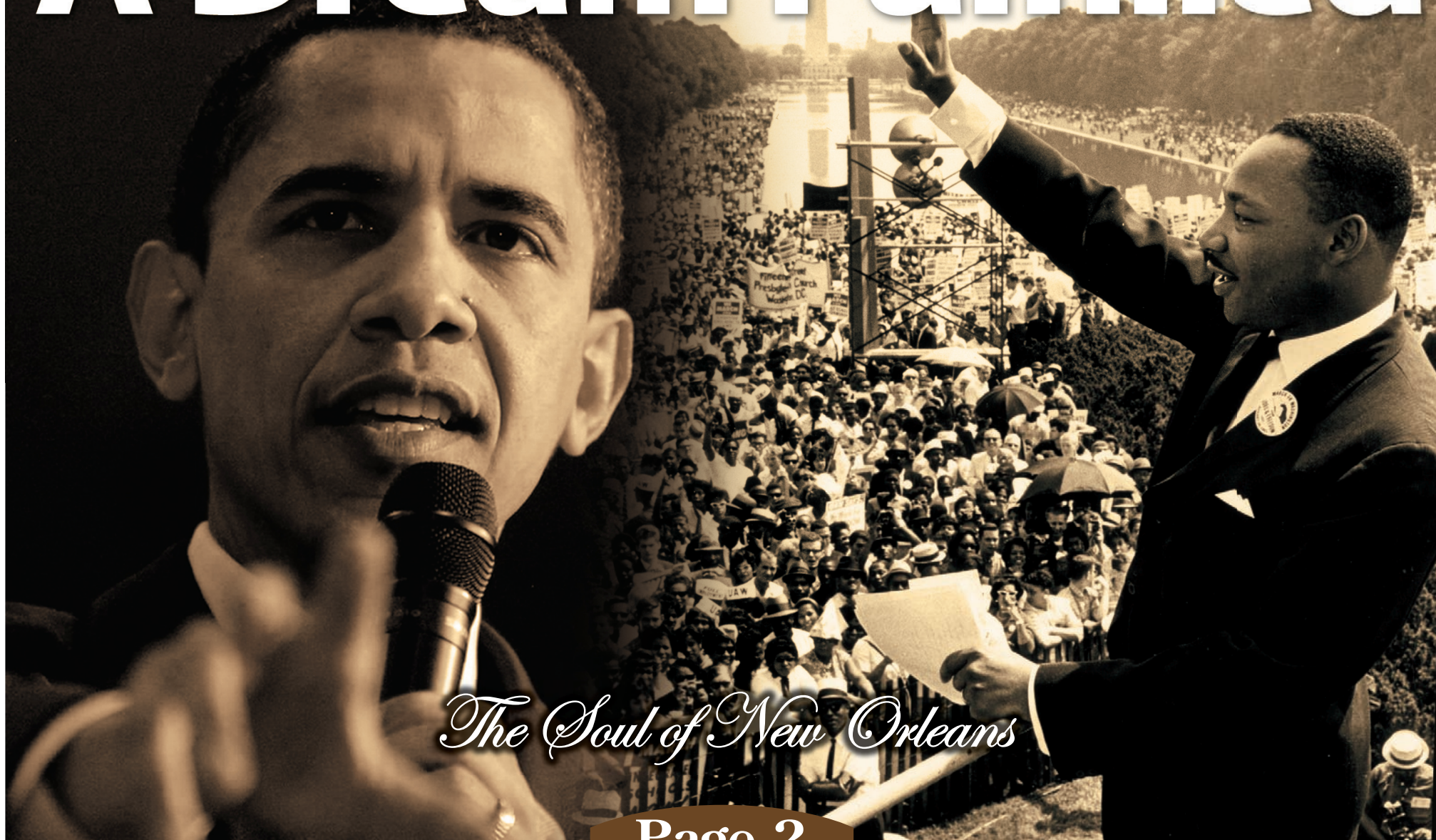
**Notorious**  
**Scores**  
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# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barack Obama A Dream Fulfilled



*The Soul of New Orleans*

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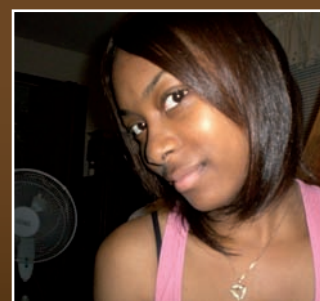


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# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barack Obama A Dream Fulfilled



by Edwin Buggage  
Editor-in-Chief

## The Day Has Come

The day has come when America has begun its evolution of becoming true to its promise of all people being created equal. The day has come when the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. can be realized. In 1963, Dr. King's voice rang from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial when he

spoke of a day when a man would not be judged by the color of his skin, but by the content of his character. That day has finally come with the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States. The day has come in America when people of ability can be inspired to aspire and that their abilities can take them down the roads to success that were unimag-

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# Inaugural Schedule

The Presidential Inaugural Committee has outlined a preliminary schedule of official inaugural events that underscores their commitment to holding an inaugural that is open, accessible, and brings everyone together in a spirit of unity.

The inaugural celebration will begin in the city where democracy was born and the promise of our country was realized. On Saturday, January 17th, President-elect Barack Obama will be holding an event in Philadelphia, before boarding a train bound for our nation's capital. He will be picking up Vice President-elect Joe Biden and his family in Wilmington, DE, and then making a stop for an event in Baltimore, MD, before pulling into Washington, D.C. that afternoon.

The following events will take place in the nation's capital between Sunday, January 18th and Wednesday, January 21st:

**Sunday, January 18th**

President-elect Barack Obama will kick off the schedule of official inaugural activities in Washington, D.C., with a welcome event on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Sunday afternoon. The event will be free and open to the public.

**Monday, January 19th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

In 1994, to further commemorate a man who lived his life in service to others, Congress transformed the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday into a national day of community service. To honor Dr. King's legacy, the President-elect and Vice President-elect and their families, joined by Americans in communities all across the country, will participate in activities dedicated to serving others in communities across the Washington, D.C. area.

That night, on the eve of the Inauguration, there will be a youth concert at the Verizon Center in downtown Washington, D.C. The concert will be free, but tickets are required.

**Tuesday, January 20th - Inauguration Day**

The President-elect and Vice President-elect and their families will participate in the traditional inaugural ceremonies and events. For the first time ever, the length of the National

Mall will be open to those wishing to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Festivities will commence at 10 a.m. on the west front of the U.S. Capitol and will include:

- Musical Selections: The United States Marine Band, followed by The San Francisco Boys Chorus and the San Francisco Girls Chorus
- Call to Order and Welcoming Remarks: Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Invocation: Dr. Rick Warren
- Musical Selection: Aretha Franklin
- Vice President-elect Joseph R. Biden, Jr. will be sworn into office by Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, the Honorable John Paul Stevens
- Musical Selection: John Williams, composer/arranger with Itzhak Perlman, (violin), Yo-Yo Ma (cello), Gabriela Montero (piano) and Anthony McGill (clarinet)
- President-elect Barack H. Obama will take the Oath of Office, using President Lincoln's Inaugural Bible, administered by the Chief Justice of the United States, the Honorable John G. Roberts, Jr.
- Inaugural Address
- Poem: Elizabeth Alexander
- Benediction: The Reverend Dr. Joseph E. Lowery
- The National Anthem: The United States Navy Band "Sea Chanters"

After President Obama gives his Inaugural Address, he will escort outgoing President George W. Bush to a departure ceremony before attending a luncheon in the Capitol's Statuary Hall. The 56th Inaugural Parade will then make its way down Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the White House with groups traveling from all over the country to participate.

Later that day, the Presidential Inaugural Committee will host ten official Inaugural Balls. More details about the Inaugural Balls will be released at a later date.

**Wednesday, January 21st**

The newly-inaugurated President and Vice President of the United States will participate in a prayer service.

For more information visit [www.pic2009.org](http://www.pic2009.org).

*Cover Story, Continued from previous page.*



inable for African-Americans less than a half century ago.

## The Dream is Reality

During this time in January the nation has paid homage to a man who dared to dream. It was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who was a drum major for justice, leading a charge against oppression and unfairness that kept Lady Liberty's light from shining bright. Dr. King was a man who dared to sacrifice; a man who was passionate about his work and had a compassionate soul. He fought during times of hypocrisy of democracy, and when a dark cloud reigned over a country that promised freedom, justice and equality. However, the shores that many landed on seeking refuge from tyranny

## The Audacity of Hope

On the stage at the 2004 National Democratic Convention, a then unknown Barack Obama emerged as a rising star in the Democratic Party when he challenged Americans to think beyond party affiliation, race, class, and gender, and to see themselves as solely American. Four years later this man has made history by becoming the first African-American President. He took the message he spoke of on that storied day in 2004, and brought it across the country. Obama has become a phenomenon that has restored faith in the American Dream and the American brand abroad, as people from nations across the globe celebrated on Nov. 4, 2008, a day that will forever be etched in the memories



was also the place that kept many of its fellow citizens through laws and customs away from pursuing the American Dream.

Today, this country has experienced a change in the tides, where the currents are flowing upstream toward the rivers of justice. In a country where Jim Crow, slavery and discrimination were the nooses that kept African-Americans from getting to the mountaintop, the day has finally come when people can say "Free at last, free at last. Thank God almighty, we're free at last."

of people. It is a day when people looked beyond class, beyond black, brown, and white, and did in their hearts what they felt was right.

On Inauguration Day, the world will witness America at its best. The world will see a country that has evolved from the dark into a new age of enlightenment, a new day when hope and optimism can trump fear and division, and where old ways of thinking from centuries past can be buried in the cemeteries and be a distant memory not to be revisited. In this day the election of Barack Obama to the



# Construction to begin on historic Saenger Theatre in 2009

Less than a week after the grand re-opening of the Mahalia Jackson Theatre for the Performing Arts, the City of New Orleans and the Canal Street Development Corporation (CSDC) signed an agreement that will lead to the re-development of the historic Saenger Theatre in downtown New Orleans. The Saenger is located on Canal Street at Basin Street and North Rampart Street, an important center of downtown

commerce, and is on the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places. Construction is scheduled to begin in late fall 2009. Work is expected to be completed to return the beloved, historic performing arts theatre to its former grandeur and glory by the fall of 2011.

"The revitalization of the Saenger is a key ingredient to the revitalization of the upper end of Canal Street, which is a critical

component of our recovery plan" said Mayor C. Ray Nagin. "Not only will citizens have another reason to enjoy our downtown in evenings and on weekends, but the impact of placing this historic facility back into commerce will have a ripple effect in the central business district, stimulating business for hotels, restaurants, parking garages and retail stores."

The CSDC will provide oversight of the redevelopment project.



City officials announced plans for re-development of the downtown Saenger Theatre.

## In Recognition and Celebration of Martin Luther King Day



Team together  
unity  
equality peace



Ticket purchasers must be at least 21 years of age. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call 1-877-770-7867. louisianalottery.com

ect. The City of New Orleans today signed a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with the CSDC to provide those services. As part of the redevelopment plan, Saenger Theatre Partnership, Ltd., the current owner of the theatre, will transfer the property to the CSDC, which will renovate and operate the theatre

and help anchor the rebirth of the Canal Street and North Rampart corridors, in a strategy that carefully rebuilds and restores the cultural infrastructure of New Orleans in a responsible and steady manner," said Randall Smith, President of the Canal Street Development Corporation.

Built in 1927, the Saenger evokes many memories for the city's citizens and visitors and has long served as a nostalgic and cultural touchstone for New Orleanians and the region, providing a venue for the finest theatrical entertainment, live concerts, movies and special events. Theatrical stars such as Rex Harrison, Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, and Tyler Perry, theatrical productions that include The Phantom of The Opera, Beauty and the Beast, and The Producers, musical greats such as Aaron Neville, Bruce Springsteen, Patti LaBelle, and the comedy of Bill Cosby, Chris Rock and Jerry Seinfeld are among the acts that have graced the Saenger stage.

Having sustained substantial damage during Hurricane Katrina, the Saenger Theatre was stabilized and protected from deterioration following the storm, but has remained closed during these past three years.

The existing 2,700 seat Saenger Theatre will be reborn and its elaborately decorated interior meticulously restored to its 1927 grandeur. Patrons will once again enjoy the Saenger Theatre's dramatically appointed inner lobby and auditorium. The venue will be a state-of-the-art facility for opera, theatre, dance, and popular symphonic, jazz and other musical presentations requiring a large seating capacity and modern staging and backstage facilities.



Saenger Theatre



Officials agree on Saenger Theatre plans.

on behalf of the City of New Orleans. The renovation project and subsequent theatre operation will be accomplished through a long-term lease arrangement between the CSDC and a new management entity.

"The revitalization of this important downtown venue will complement the recently renovated Mahalia Jackson Theatre,

Photo: www.cityofno.com

Continued next page.



# Zulu Celebrates 100 Years with Exhibit at the Presbytere

NEW ORLEANS – The Louisiana State Museum and the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club present From Tramps to Kings: Zulu 100 Years, a yearlong exhibit exploring the origins, unique Carnival traditions, and cultural and civic contributions of Zulu from 1909 to the present.

The exhibit premiered Friday, Jan. 9 at the Presbytere with “Celebrating Zulu 100 Years,” a gala benefit for the nonprofit Louisiana State Museum Foundation and community charities supported by the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club.

The exhibit opened to the public Saturday, Jan. 10 with a Zulu-style fanfare including a second line parade through the French Quarter to the museum on Jackson Square.

From Tramps to Kings features more than 100 seldom-seen treasures loaned by Zulu members, as well as artifacts from the Museum, the Historic New Orleans Collection, Tulane University, and other sources.

“We’re delighted to work with the Zulu organization to share their century-old traditions of fun and fantasy,” said Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu, whose office directs Louisiana’s Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. “This exhibit is a Mardi Gras season ‘must-see’ for visitors and locals alike.”

Highlights of the show include a ballroom tableau of 14 former Zulu Kings and Queens in bejeweled costumes and elaborate headdresses, and all seven of Zulu’s comic parade characters including the Big Shot of Africa, the Witch Doctor, and the Ambassador. The origins and development of these trademark figures are explored in photographs and personal memorabilia.

Also featured are rare sound recordings and a personal letter by Louis Armstrong describing his historic reign as Zulu King in 1949. “We really did pitch a boogie woogie,” Armstrong wrote of his experience to a New Orleans newspaper reporter in 1952.



But Tramps to Kings is not all-exuberant fun. The exhibit presents Zulu’s history in parallel with the wider struggle by the city’s African-Americans against discrimination. A turning point came in 1969 when Zulu won permission from the city of New Orleans to parade on Canal Street, formerly reserved for white krewes.

“Zulu is more than a revelry and comic characters. It has a special place in New Orleans’ history and the African-American experience,” said Ike Campbell, Chairman of Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club.

A yearlong program of family-oriented special events and

a monthly lecture series enhances the museum experience. Zulu members will share traditions like coconut decorating.

Visitors can also see the exhibit online and get updated information on special events at [www.trampstokings.com](http://www.trampstokings.com).

The exhibit is presented with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor; the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; the Louisiana State Museum Foundation; the Friends of the Cabildo, and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.

Tickets are \$6 for adults, and \$5 for seniors and active military personnel and include admission to the Museum’s comprehensive permanent exhibit, Mardi Gras in Louisiana. Children under 12 are free.

The Presbytere is located on Jackson Square, in the heart of the French Quarter.

## FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR GROWN FOLKS

### Who Should Make Our Choices?

Recently, some self-appointed activists have proposed a legislative ban on menthol cigarettes in a misguided effort to force people to quit smoking by limiting their choices. So far, wiser heads have prevailed and the ban on menthol has not passed. It could come up again. It shouldn’t.

When government “reforms” intrude into our lives to the point of restricting freedom of individual choices on what we can enjoy, our basic concept of liberty is threatened.

### How Should Our Choices Be Made?

In the American tradition, laws restricting freedom of choice must be based on sound reasoning, rational public policy and verifiable data while allowing for a minimum of governmental intrusion. Menthol is a matter of taste and preference. The body of scientific evidence does not support the conclusion that menthol

cigarettes increase the known risks from smoking. The effort to ban menthol is just another in a long series of attempts by the politically correct crowd to force Americans to give up their freedom to choose to smoke a cigarette.

**“Informed grown-ups who decide to smoke should have the freedom to choose menthol cigarettes”**

### Shouldn’t People Keep Fighting For The Freedom Of Choice?

The history of African Americans in this country has been one of fighting against paternalistic limitations and for freedoms. We all agree that children should not smoke, but grown-ups who can and should assess the risks of smoking should have the freedom to choose whether

to smoke or not. If they choose to smoke, they should have the freedom to choose to smoke regular or menthol cigarettes. Please visit [www.mentholchoice.com](http://www.mentholchoice.com) and learn more about how you can help prevent this ban on menthol from being considered.

*Lorillard*  
TOBACCO COMPANY

[www.mentholchoice.com](http://www.mentholchoice.com)



## New Orleans Martin Luther King, Jr. Planning Commission 2009 Calendar of Events

*"Everybody Can Be Great, Because Everybody Can Serve"*

Friday, January 16, 2009  
**United Teachers of N.O.  
Choral Concert**  
McDonogh 35 Senior High  
School  
1331 Kerlerec Street  
6:30 p.m.

High School  
3520 Dryades Street  
10:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 17, 2009  
**Essay/Speech Contest**  
Walter L. Cohen Senior

Sunday, January 18, 2009  
**Memorial Church Ser-  
vice**  
Fifth African Baptist  
Church  
3419 South Robertson  
Street

Speaker: Rev. Dale Sand-  
ers, Pastor  
1:00 p.m.

**Greater New Orleans  
Sports Foundation  
"A Dream & A Goal"  
Weekend Classic**  
1:00 p.m.

Monday, January 19, 2009  
**Opening Program**  
(Between the Municipal  
Auditorium and the newly  
renovated Mahalia Jack-  
son Theatre)  
9:00 a.m.

**Parade\March**  
(Beginning at Louis Arm-  
strong Park and ending at  
the Louisiana Superdome)  
10:00 a.m.

**Greater New Orleans  
Sport Foundation  
"A Dream & A Goal"  
Rally**  
New Orleans Superdome,  
Gate A  
noon

Over 5,280 children  
were abused in Louisiana  
last year.

This year, **you** can be the  
voice for **one**.



Each year thousands of children in every Louisiana parish enter into foster care because they were innocent victims of abuse or neglect. You can be the **1** to help an abused child in **your** parish.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate-or CASA- helps an abused child by learning about his or her case and speaking up for the child's best interests. Everyday people can be a CASA.

*Will you be one?*

**Be the 1. Be a CASA.**

To learn more about how to Be the **1** in your parish  
visit [www.louisianacasa.org](http://www.louisianacasa.org)  
or call 1-888-567-2272



## Mahalia Jackson Theater Re-Open- ing Celebrated at Congo Square



A young musician participates in re-opening festivities.

Photo: City of New Orleans



Congo Square was filled with families and children for Family Day in celebration of the re-opening of the Mahalia Jackson Theater.

Photo: City of New Orleans

The historic Congo Square was filled with music and dance at yet another Mahalia Jackson Theater Grand Re-Opening event on Sunday, Jan. 11. This particular event focused on the family. Children and adults alike gathered to enjoy a multitude of performances, including the Tremé Brass Band partnered with the New Orleans Youth Ensemble, poet Asia Rainey, the Congo Square Drumming Circle, the Traditional African Dance Co., Inc., and many more. Kids also enjoyed face painting, balloon creations, story telling, rock climbing, and the Hornet's Book Mobile.

## Rapper Lil Wayne and the One Family Foundation Gives Donation to NORD for Harrell Park



Photo: City of New Orleans

Hundreds of City youth gathered at Harrell Park on Sunday, Jan. 10 to share in the re-opening of a Hollygrove basketball court with Young Money/Cash Money/Universal Motown recording and Grammy nominated artist Lil Wayne. One Family Foundation, founded by De Wayne Michael Carter, known as Lil Wayne, presented a check for \$200,000 to NORD toward the restoration of the park's multi-purpose center located in the neighborhood in which he grew up. The funding also included \$50,000 to refurbish the basketball court. Carter summed up the purpose of the donation in one word; "kids" – going on to say that projects focused on youth development are important to the community keeping the kids engaged in recreational activities.





History is still happening,  
expect more to come...

Today's young people expect more from life. They know that dreams promised in the past are now within arm's reach. Regions celebrates the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and reaffirms our commitment to helping our future leaders reach their full potential. As part of our promise, Regions has joined forces with organizations like the United Negro College Fund and the INROADS internship program to create opportunities for educational growth.

**At Regions, our investment is in the future of our communities.**  
For more information, visit [www.regions.com/blackhistorymonth](http://www.regions.com/blackhistorymonth)





# Long Live Faubourg Tremé'

## *The Grand Re-Opening of the Mahalia Jackson Theater*



Dionne Character  
Data News Weekly Contributor

Commemorated in true New Orleans flavor and in the heart of the oldest American-African neighborhood and city, the state of the art rebirth of the Mahalia Jackson Theater was celebrated with a star studded stellar performance.

The weather was perfect, as if the creator himself took Mahalia's hand and spirit as they enjoyed moving throughout the night around the theater, ending with a second line of all who attended that even the saints would have been envious to march in.

It seemed only fitting to celebrate this grand opening in the heart of Tremé' where once arrived, black people were auctioned off just a few yards away in Congo Square only to rise above generations later beginning in the early 18th century to become the Mecca for people of color to be free and prosperous enough within their own rights and abilities equal to, if not surpassing White America. Together with Native-Americans and some whites, black people were able to grow and give the gift of jazz, rhythm and blues, funk, and yes, even gospel music to the rest of North America. Nowhere else in early America could people of color express themselves the way they did in New Orleans, where the word "Rock" was first introduced and used to describe the musical atmosphere that shook the city.

This freedom of expression laid down the quintessential foundation for American music rooted in faith and culture. Mahalia was no exception to this fact and rose to be the matriarchal Queen of Gospel music.

"This is our culture" said Mayor Nagin, who throughout the night smiled, clapped his hands and second lined to the music.

Complete with Divas and skilled musicians, the combination of artists was so diverse everyone could feel and appreciate the positive energy flowing from the stage that night. The performances brought forth a sense of pride for the community along with a glimpse of what is to come.

Preservation Hall sparked the crowd and opened up with "Bourbon Street Parade", Philip Manuel and Michael Ward's electric violin amped up the show with "You Got A Friend". Jeremy Davenport's, "When I Take My Sugar To Tea" kept the captivated audience enthused. Fredy Omar said he felt honored to play in world famous New Orleans, with a familiar Latino flare that spiced up the stage singing, "Lomento Barincano". The magnificent Marva Wright sat down with us and made us all feel a little Mahalia with her rendition of "House of the Rising Sun". Irma Thomas, and her signature sultry tone pulsed through the



Louis Armstrong Statue at the Louis Armstrong Park near the Mahalia Jackson Theater.

audience once again singing, "This Bitter Earth" and Kermit Ruffin came from backstage playing Skokian, lifting the crowd to their feet as everyone stood in front of their seats to see and hear one of New Orleans greatest performers who said, "I couldn't sleep knowing I was going to perform tonight."

While the night drew to a close, in true New Orleans fashion the performers

"took it to the streets", as everyone invited danced around the theater in a traditional second line precession.

The celebration of the Grand Opening of the newly renovated Mahalia Jackson Theatre seating 2,100 was an introduction to the revitalization of theatre in the City of New Orleans.

Faubourg Tremé' is once again filled with a vibe and rhythm that only the spirit of New Orleans can bring.



Michael Ward and the master of ceremony for the evening Gralen Banks



Data News Weekly's Terry Jones, Kermit Ruffin, and Michael Ward.



The participants of the New Orleans All-Star Celebration culminated the event with a grand finale.

## Initial Talent Lineup Confirmed For "We Are One: The Obama Inaugural Celebration At The Lincoln Memorial,"

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC) is pleased to announce the producers and initial talent lineup for WE ARE ONE: THE OBAMA INAUGURAL CELEBRATION AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL, the Opening Celebration for the 56th Presidential Inaugural, to be presented exclusively by HBO on Sunday, January 18 (7:00-9:00 p.m. ET/PT). The event will be free and open to the public, kicking off the most open and accessible Inauguration in history.

The special will be executive produced by George Stevens, Jr. (The Kennedy Center Honors), and produced by Don Mischer (Olympic Ceremonies) who will also direct the special, and Michael Stevens (The American Film Institute Salutes) who is also writing the special, and will be a production of The Stevens Company in association with Don Mischer Productions.

Musical performers scheduled for the event include Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige, Bono, Garth Brooks, Sheryl Crow,

Renee Fleming, Josh Groban, Herbie Hancock, Heather Headley, John Legend, Jennifer Nettles, John Mellencamp, Usher Raymond IV, Shakira, Bruce Springsteen, James Taylor, will.i.am, and Stevie Wonder. Among those reading historical passages will be Jamie Foxx, Martin Luther King III, Queen Latifah and Denzel Washington. The Rt. Reverend V. Gene Robinson will give the invocation. Rob Mathes will be the music director and arranger for the backing band, which will sup-

port all of the artists. Additional performers will be announced as they are confirmed.

"Our intention is to root the event in history, celebrating the moments when our nation has united to face great challenges and prevail," observed George Stevens, Jr. "We will combine historical readings by prominent actors with music from an array of the greatest stars of today."

"This is a great opportunity to capture an historic event in a very meaningful setting," noted Don Mischer. "We will have the

statue of Abraham Lincoln looking down on our stage and a crowd of hundreds of thousands of people lining the mall - a tableau any director would relish."

"We have found that the great artists are eager to take part and each one is working with us to find music that expresses the optimism and hope that people bring to the Obama inauguration," said Michael Stevens.

Televised to the nation, the Opening Celebration will be a declaration of common purpose and new beginnings. The

*Continued on page 10.*



# Notorious Scores B.I.G.

**Edwin Buggage**  
Editor-in-Chief

Over the past 30 years hip-hop music has become the soundtrack for global youth culture. It has painted pictures of an urban lifestyle that started out on the fringes of society and now is part of the mainstream. The influence of hip-hop has become a ubiquitous and a permanent fixture in the global marketplace. One of the hip-hop architects that helped create the beats and rhymes that have made this form of music part of the world sonic landscape is the Notorious B.I.G. Notorious B.I.G. took hip-hop to another level with his gritty tales about the life of the urban black male in America. He was an artist whose appeal was to those who were in the streets as well as the suites. But his life was cut short tragically on March 9, 1997 when he was killed in a barrage of gunfire in Los Angeles. But over a decade later his legend looms large in hip-hop circles and beyond.

Fox Searchlight pictures released a movie chronicling the life of Christopher Wallace a.k.a. Notorious B.I.G. It stars Jamal Woolard as Notorious B.I.G., Angela Bassett as Voletta Wallace, and a star-studded cast that also features Derek Luke as Sean P. Diddy Combs and New Orleans native Anthony Mackie as Tupac Shakur.

"Casting the lead role was a challenge," said George Tillman, the director, whose credits include *Soulfood*, *Barbershop*, and *Beauty Shop*. However, Tillman heard Ms. Wallace, who had seen Woolard, saying to herself 'that's my son.' She found their resemblance uncanny.

Ms. Wallace and Tillman worked together to tell a story about Christopher Wallace the person, for the world had already known Notorious B.I.G. "I wanted people to get a more complete picture of who my son was behind all of what they saw with him as a rap artist," said Ms. Wallace.

The role of Voletta Wallace is played by Angela Bassett who has throughout her career played a strong woman who persevered through hardships. "I enjoy playing women who overcome obstacles; women who are full portraits of human emotions—something that doesn't happen a lot of times in movies with African-American actors—so I welcomed this opportunity to be part of this project," said Bassett.

Although many bio-pics can sometimes easily take an individual and make that person a caricature, this film does an excellent job of portraying the characters as fully developed and paints a dynamic portrait of the ups and downs of the life of Christopher Wallace. New Orleans native Anthony Mackie who plays Tupac Shakur in the film said he hopes this is the beginning of a new movement in films particularly where African-Americans and hip-hop are concerned. "I believe hip-hop is the soundtrack for this generation of young people and this film embodies the spirit of that. It is the first of what are hopefully many films about the cultural icons of this generation."





# PIPELINE TO THE PEOPLE

by Benjamin Bates

The day has finally come upon us. Barack Obama will be sworn in as President of the United States on Jan. 20, 2009. Data News Weekly caught up with some people who shared their thoughts regarding this historic day.

## Eric Joseph



I'm overjoyed that I have lived to see in my lifetime an African-American president. I have hope for my country in a way I never did before. Best of all, you could not ask for a better role model for African-American youth who now can see that their dreams can become reality.

## Millicent Taylor



I am overjoyed and filled with optimism that my country has expanded the way it thinks by putting aside race and sex and allowing the person who is best capable of doing their job sit in the most powerful seat in the country. President Barack Obama is a man of great intellect and talent, and hopefully he is able to put his talents to good use and help our country.

## Phyllis Calvin



The American Dream has finally been fulfilled, especially for African-Americans. I personally never thought this would happen in my lifetime. This historic event will be talked about for years to come. We now have a President who has the best interest of all the people. He is a man who is intelligent, focused and has a vision. I pray that everyone will support him as he begins the arduous task of repairing our economy and tries to ensure a better quality of life for all the American People.

## Jeffrey May



Being alive to see the election of a Black Man for the office of President of the United States fills me with great pride. I am excited to be a witness as the nation embarks upon a new era in history. President Barack Obama has shattered the ultimate glass ceiling in America. Along with hope and optimism I feel we must be cautious in our expectations, because today we are facing tremendous challenges and I feel we must be hopeful, patient and supportive as this extraordinary man rises to meet these extraordinary challenges.

## Corey Anderson



I feel having Barack Obama as the President of the United States is a breath of fresh air. I see someone who can really make a change for our country, especially for the working class people of America. It's not just a dream come true, it's a reality that should have been.

*Continued from page 8.*

Sunday afternoon performance will be grounded in history and brought to life with entertainment that relates to the themes that shaped Barack Obama and which will be the hallmarks of his administration.

HBO will televise the event on an open signal, working with all of its distributors to allow Americans across the country with access to cable, telcos or satellite television to join in the Opening Celebration for free.

The 56th Inauguration prom-

ises to be the most inclusive in history, and the Opening Celebration is one of a series of inaugural events that reflect that commitment. On Saturday, the President-elect, Vice President-elect and their families will journey to the nation's capital via train, holding events that are free and open to the public along the way. They will be joined by a group of everyday Americans they met along their road to the White House. On January 19th, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President-elect Obama will call on all Americans to make an ongoing commitment

to serve their communities and their country. A new website, USAservice.org, makes it easy for Americans to organize service events or find existing events to participate in. To date, nearly 5,000 events have been organized across the country. That evening, Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, and their families will host a free "Kids' Inaugural" concert to honor military families, broadcast live on the Disney Channel and Radio Disney.

This spirit of openness will continue on Inauguration Day, when, for the first time in history,

the entire length of the National Mall will be open to the public for the swearing in ceremony. Local D.C. students have also been given the chance to receive tickets in front of the White House for the Inaugural Parade for themselves and their family members based on the submission of essays answering the question, "How can I contribute to my neighborhood through community service?"

On the evening of Inauguration Day, the first ball that President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama will attend will be the first-ever Neighborhood Inaugural

Ball. The ball will be broadcast live on ABC and over the Internet, bringing together neighborhoods across the country in the spirit of unity and celebration.

The sum of these public events is an Inauguration that allows more Americans than ever before to come together as one nation and one people, united in our resolve to tackle our greatest common challenges and move this country forward together.



*Cover Story, Continued from page 3.*

nation's highest office is the fulfillment of a dream, as he is sworn in as the 44th President of the United States.

### The 'United' States of America

In this transformative moment the word 'United' has come to have a special meaning, for this election brought together a broad coalition of people from a variety of backgrounds who supported the candidacy of Barack Obama. It has shown that Americans can unite around issues that affect them and look beyond superficial physical and geographical differences that sometimes separate them creating a gulf of misunderstanding. But as the country move nearly a decade into the new millennium, this country has shown the world that the promise of America is alive and well.

And as the country moves forward, the dream Dr. King spoke of is more a reality today than ever. The young people who came out in droves to help elect Obama are living in a time when race matters less than it had generations ago. Today is a time when young people who are the leaders of tomorrow are willing to accept change, and be part of a new 21st century America where everyone is embraced and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

### Martin and Barack: The Dream and the Hope for the Future

As the nation celebrates the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who would have turned 80 this year; last year the country mourned observing the 40th year of when an assassin's bullet took the life a man who dared to dream. Although the man who spoke of the dream died on that spring day in Memphis in 1968, his march toward the dream carried on. To-

day the battles of the Civil Rights Movement bore fruit as African-Americans are a vital and significant part of the American mainstream occupying positions across every spectrum of American life.

This has been most evidently witnessed by the ascendance of Barack Obama, who like King, challenged how people viewed race in America, but did it in a very different way. He went into cities across America making his case that in essence was what Dr. King spoke about asking voters to judge him by the content of his character. Across 50 states he trekked and the majority of Americans agreed with his message of change and hope. He found a way to bridge the gap and found a common ground where the American people could stand and be heard. In President Obama they believe that now they have a voice in Washington D.C. that will represent the best interest of the American people.

Barack Obama and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are two men who have accomplished a great deal, as one stands on the shoulders of those who came before him so that he could accomplish the unthinkable...becoming President of the United States. And as the days honoring these two men coincide, it is monumental and historical and a cause for celebration of a nation. It is time to bury a sad part of this country's past and to sail to the future of a country with renewed vigor, hopes and aspirations. And as the wind blows, the Stars and Stripes on the American flag will have a new meaning. On Jan. 20, history will be made. It is the day when Barack Obama will be sworn in as the first African-American President of the United States and Dr. King will be staring from the Heaven's with a smile saying....My Dream Has Been Fulfilled.

*Newsmaker, Continued from page 4.*

In addition to the restored interiors, plans for the theatre include modernized HVAC and mechanical systems, and expanded support and performance spaces.

"The restored and enhanced Saenger will serve the Gulf States region as a multi-purpose performing arts facility capable of hosting a wide variety of attractions including performing arts organizations, musical & comedy productions, family shows, community events as well as special events supporting the convention, film television and special event industries from across New Orleans and the nation. We are very proud to add this property to the holdings that the CSDC manages on behalf of the City of New Orleans," said Smith.

Funding for the renovation will come from a combination of tax credit financing and public sector funding, which together will create an approximately \$38 million redevelopment budget to complete the project. Disaster Community Development Block Grants totaling \$13 million will be augmented by Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, State Historic Preservation Tax

Credits, federal and state New Market Tax Credits, as well as Louisiana Live Performance Initiative Tax Credits to complete the package.

"We are proud to work with the city of New Orleans to see its vision for a vibrant return of this historic theatre come to fruition. Restoring the Saenger Theatre will not only bring world class performers to the city, it will also increase business revenues for supporting and surrounding industries and create jobs in downtown New Orleans," said Paul Rainwater, executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. "As we are rebuilding the city, it is important that we bring back its traditions, its landmarks and its economic engines. Culture and the arts will aid our tourism industry in New Orleans - and in these tough economic times, we need to feed this sector as much as possible."

Tax Credit Capital, a New Orleans based tax credit firm will secure the tax credit investments which play a significant role in this project.

## Cannizzaro is Sworn in for Six-Year Term



In photo: DA swearing-in ceremony. District Attorney Cannizzaro (right); Norma Cannizzaro (center); Magistrate Commissioner Anthony J. Russo, Criminal District Court.

(New Orleans, LA) - On the first day of his six-year term as Orleans Parish District Attorney Leon A. Cannizzaro, Jr. solidified his leadership team by announcing key staff appointments today, particularly his appointment of Graymond F. Martin as First Assistant District Attorney. The announcements were made one day after Cannizzaro was sworn-in to begin his first full term as DA.

DA Cannizzaro was sworn in at the Hellenic Cultural Center on Jan. 12, 2009 during a ceremony attended by well over 500 individuals, including city and state leaders.

## Census Increases 2007 Population Estimate for New Orleans by 50,000

*Change means millions in funding for local programs*

NEW ORLEANS - The U.S. Census Bureau has accepted a challenge by the City of New Orleans to the July 1, 2007 population estimates and has adjusted the estimates upward by nearly 50,000.

"The increase in population will mean millions more for programs that serve our citizens," said Mayor C. Ray Nagin. "As we continue our recovery from the greatest natural and man made disaster in our country's history, it is important for our community to have access to every dollar our citizens deserve."

The Census has informed the City of New Orleans that its population estimate for July 1, 2007 will be increased to 288,113 from its original estimate of 239,124. The 48,989 increase in population will mean \$45.6 million more for education, homeless assistance, child care, elderly assistance, law enforcement and other programs.

In July, the City submitted a challenge to the population estimates, which had been recently released. The challenge was prepared using new data analysis from the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. According to the Census Bureau, New Orleans was the first municipality to submit a challenge last year.

GNOCDC Deputy Director Allison Plyer said her organization examined building permit data, electric account data, and USPS data on households receiving mail to identify data not readily available to the Census Bureau. The report to the Census included data from all of those sources.

"We're pleased to have worked with the Census Bureau, combining their expertise with our local data to come up with a population estimate that better reflects the thousands of New Orleanians who have struggled to come home and rebuild," Plyer said.

Typically, the Census Bureau bases its population estimates on decennial census counts, adding births, subtracting deaths and noting changes of address from IRS tax returns and Medicare forms. Because many residents do not file taxes or are not legal citizens, this method often leads to inaccurate estimates.

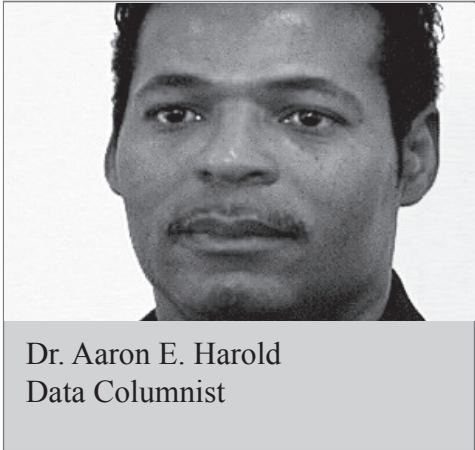
Census challenges such as this one are not uncommon. In 2007, 59 U.S. cities and counties successfully challenged their 2006 census estimates, including Cincinnati, New York City and Fulton County, Georgia.

To create its population report, GNOCDC gathered data from GCR & Associates, the City of New Orleans GIS Department, Entergy New Orleans Inc., Claritas Inc. and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



# Relationships:

## "Getting more from your relationship in 2009"



Dr. Aaron E. Harold  
Data Columnist

Many of you by now have heard of the name Keyshia Cole. She is a very talented R&B singer who sings with passion and feeling. In one of her hit songs she sings about getting more from a relationship. Folks, every one of you should want more from your relationship. Maybe 2008 wasn't a very good year for you, but in this year, all

of that could change. First, let me ask you a question: Are you willing to make some changes so that you can get more from your relationship this year?

I'm talking about change for the better. Come on, I know that some of you think that you are all that and a bag of chips, but if you are honest with yourself, certain changes are necessary in order to get more from your relationship in 2009. Folks, let me ask you another question. This is for all of the ladies. Ladies, would you want your man to say to you more this year how much he loves you? Of course you do. Now, this one is for all of the men. Men, do you want to hear more from your lady how much she loves you? Sure you do.

Folks, one of the things that we all need more of in our relationship this year is love. Love is one of the most important aspects in any relationship. Without love in your relationship, you have no real relationship. Love is the heartbeat when you have it in your relationship. Love is the driving force

that inspires a man and a woman to not be afraid to take their relationship to a new dimension. If you already have it, well that's great. However, why not work toward getting more of it?

For example, one of my favorite dishes is gumbo. One day I went to a great restaurant in the city and on the menu they were serving gumbo. After I ate the gumbo, I said that it was delicious. The waiter came back to the table and asked if I needed anything else. I said, "Yes, bring me another bowl of that delicious gumbo."

Now, here is something that you should want more of this year in your relationship—more commitment. Folks, commitment is another very important aspect in a relationship between a woman and a man because it is psychologically healthy for the mind and the soul.

Many relationships fail because a lack of it or not enough of it. You can't be afraid to ask the other person for more of it, because it will help to improve and build your trust

toward each other in the process. What about having more communication for this year between the two of you? The truth is, many relationships start off good, but later become miserable and people get unhappy and frustrated, because there is not enough or very little dialogue between the two. Look, this year, talk more about positive things including things that will help you to encourage one another.

Try believing more in yourself for the upcoming year as well. When you are able to do that, then it's easier to believe more in the person that you are with. Learn to show more confidence in the other person, because when you do that, you open up an avenue for the one you love to have more confidence in you also. One more thing before I go; try praying more for each other because prayers will give you hope, direction, purpose, and power to love more and give more to each other. God Bless You, and call me with your comments @ 504-813-5767.



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# The Inauguration of President Elect Barack Obama



Ron Walters  
Data Columnist

tion in America at that moment.

Yes, we will celebrate, some watching the parade, others attending various Balls, and we will not “come down” until it begins to be tempered by the realization that he is indeed inside the White House, in fact, in the Oval Office, and that he is facing a set of crises unprecedented in American history.

That will elicit another feeling, a feeling of anxiety, because literally the weight of this country and much of the world will be upon his shoulders and he and his administration will be faced with the test of executing the kind of judicious solutions that have the capacity to resolve these problems.

A Black man has never faced such a test in the history of America and although we wish him well, we also know that despite the well wishers, these crises that he inherits will be treated as his shortly and he will be judged and second-guessed at every turn in the road with respect to every proposal.

Presidents normally receive a lot of criticism and advice, but looking at administrations for 40 years now, I have never seen the weight of the advice that is descending upon Obama even before his takes office. Much of this is because of anxiety about the depth and severity of the crises such as the economy, home foreclosure, and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and etc.

But it seems everyone wants to give Ba-

rack Obama advice and while for many, it is their job, for others, their advice smacks of a lack of confidence in a relatively young, inexperienced Black man who has come to occupy the helm of society.

Trying to gauge the reaction of Blacks to Obama's presidency on radio shows, private conversations and elsewhere, I have detected that some Blacks wince in anger when he is attacked because they identify him with the Black community. Thus, a monumental challenge for us will be to detect when criticisms of Obama are based on credible and legitimate questions of his public policies and those that are leveled against him for who he is. Because of our experience with racism, Blacks often are good at determining when indeed, a criticism has an underlying message that has little relevance to the issue at hand. But some are so good at covering up their criticism that assessing the degree of racism that he will attract as a Black president of the United States, regardless of his attempt to run a race-neutral administration, will be difficult.

So, being trigger happy will not help, but being vigilant is the right posture. I recommend an attitude of vigilance because of the fact that many of the problems Obama will face have no patent ideological guide and no surefire policy corrective and thus, there are many times when he and his ad-

ministration, especially in their attempt to change course, will face uncertain choices and failure is almost certain for some.

So, the success of his presidency will depend as much upon understanding of the difficulty of his challenges, placing expectations of his enormous gifts in some rational perspective, and sorting out racism from real substance.

Given the prospect that he will face a high bar of performance and success probably not expected of any other modern president, it will take all of the 95 percent of the Black community, the 43 percent of Whites and the 70 percent of others who voted for him to become a support base and a safe harbor as he faces the task of turning the historical corner to achieve a more enlightened America.

So, permit me to say, as someone who has given much of his life work to making the election of a Black man President of the United States possible, I join you in wishing Brother Barack Obama God's speed.

Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. His latest book is: *The Price of Racial Reconciliation* (U. Michigan Press).

## Obama Presidency Brings New Dawn, New Day for America



Barbara Lee  
U.S. Representative (D-Calif.)

### To Be Equal

Jazz Legend Nina Simone once sang: “Birds flying high, you know how I feel. Sun up in the sky, you know how I feel. Breeze driftin’ on by, you know how I feel. It’s a new dawn, it’s a new day, it’s a new life for me...and I’m feelin’ good.”

Though I have heard the song many times, never have the words resonated with me as clearly as at this moment in time. As we enter the 111th Congress, I

can feel the electricity of that new dawn and that new day... of change that we have longed for and that we truly believe in. For the first time in a long time I am “feelin’ good” about our future and the start of the Barack Obama's first term as President of these United States.

As the newly elected Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I know that my CBC colleagues would join me in saying that this is a particularly proud moment for us. To have one of our members elected to the highest office in the land is an achievement that will serve to inspire our members to be more diligent and committed in our efforts to make this great nation even greater.

Barack Obama's successful bid for the presidency is a transformative chapter in American history, signaling a dramatic shift in our nation's politics and priorities. It is an extraordinary event that illustrates to our neighbors abroad that America has made tremendous progress in breaking down racial barriers that have historically paralyzed our nation.

When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

spoke a generation ago of the dream he held for America, he envisioned exactly this type of moment, where a man was judged by his character, his intellect and his hard work – and not by the color of his skin or his race or his ancestry. Now, children of color everywhere can truly dream without limitations and actualize the true promise of this great land. When a young child of color aspires to one day be the President of the United States, we can assure them, “Yes, you can!”

For 21 months, President Barack Obama issued a clarion call for change, and the message clearly resonated with every group of voters – young, old, white, Black, Latino, Asian, women and men and across party lines. His message of hope inspired millions of Americans who never participated in the election process to stand up and be counted for the very first time in their lives.

As we celebrate Barack Obama's achievements, we must remember that we too play an important part in his vision for change. We must become engaged citizens that are willing to stand up for

what is right and just. We have seen what can happen when Americans mobilize behind a dynamic candidate like Barack Obama. Now we must channel that same energy towards addressing this country's most pressing such as access to quality healthcare, education and economic empowerment.

This is our time, this is our task and this is our moment. We stand at the dawn of that new day. Let us enjoy this historic achievement, but understand that we have much work to do to bring about the change that this country so desperately needs.

I pledge to do everything within my power to help President Obama reverse the damaging policies of the last eight years, and to positively move our nation into its remarkable third century – one that begins to unshackle the burdens of our past and limited only by our capacity to dream a new future.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee represents the Ninth District of California and is chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.



# Burris Seated in the U. S. Senate

Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - U.S. Senate leaders have finally approved former Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris to fill the Senate seat vacated by President-elect Barack Obama.

The decision came Monday afternoon after meetings between Burris lawyers and Senate leaders came to a resolution at the behest of Obama, who had asked that officials solve the controversy.

Burris was seated on Thursday, Jan. 15.

Senate leaders had said the appointment by embattled Illinois



Roland Burris

Gov. Rod Blagojevich would not be respected. The governor had been arrested on charges that he

tried to sell the seat. Last week, he was impeached by the Illinois Legislature.

Meanwhile, the Congressional Black Caucus weighed in, calling for Senate Democratic leaders to allow Burris to be seated.

"Today, we met as members of the Congressional Black Caucus and voted unanimously that Roland Burris should be seated by the Senate," said a Jan. 7 letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid from all members of the CBC, chaired by U. S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.).

The legal struggle over the seat started after Blagojevich was

arrested on federal corruption charges alleging that Blagojevich attempted to "sell" Obama's Senate seat to "the highest bidder."

Pressure had mounted for the governor to step down. But, he has not yet been convicted of a crime. Tape recordings indicating his intention of receiving something in exchange for the seat were widely broadcasted on national media.

The Senate atmosphere began to soften shortly after Burris was turned away Jan. 6 when Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.), chair of the Senate Rules Committee, broke from her colleagues, saying she thinks Blagojevich still

has the power to appoint Burris and that the Senate should respect that appointment.

Despite the controversy surrounding Blagojevich, those who know Burris say Burris is a man of integrity.

With Burris, the 100-member Senate, will still have only one African-American.

"I've known him for about 30 years. He's a man of integrity and honor," says U. S. Rep. Diane Watson (D-Calif.). "He was the attorney general and I don't know why he had to be tainted with the scent of the governor. But, the governor had not been proven guilty yet."

## Lawyer for Baltimore Mayor Calls Indictment 'Ludicrous'

Sean Yoes

BALTIMORE (NNPA) - Members of the media crammed into the reception area of the Clipper Mill law offices of Arnold Weiner where embattled Baltimore Mayor

Sheila Dixon made her first press conference to address the Baltimore grand jury 12-count indictment leveled against her last week.

The city's first female mayor, a 20-year veteran of Baltimore politics, entered the reception area flanked by her attorneys Dale Kelberman and Weiner and sat down at a table crowded with microphones and recording devices.

Dixon, looking subdued and somewhat shaken read a statement that was sent out to members of the media earlier in the day.

For the rest of the press conference, which included no questions from the media, Weiner, a prominent Maryland defense attorney, vigorously defended his client.

"The first thing I would like to say is how proud I am that the lady to my left—Sheila Dixon—is the mayor of my city," Weiner said. "For more than two de-



Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon

cedes she has distinguished herself as a knowledgeable, effective and dedicated public servant."

Then Weiner offered a blistering indictment of state prosecutor Robert A. Rohrbaugh, strongly suggesting his pursuit of the mayor had become personal.

"I think it's fair to say from all that we've witnessed since 2005 that Sheila Dixon has been the state prosecutor's singular personal obsession for the past four years," Weiner said. "Over a period of almost four years the state prosecutor relentlessly pursued Sheila Dixon and examined every detail of her life—her tax returns, every bank record she has—there wasn't a bed sheet he failed to look under."

Weiner added, "After four years what we see is that he has brought himself and he has brought us back to where he started essentially with the same case that the federal prosecutor previously rejected as unworthy of prosecution."

"And this case comes after the mayor has been investigated longer than anybody that I've ever heard of except perhaps the people being held in Guantanamo Bay. And I think I can say fairly looking at the indictment that we've been presented with today that the indictment that she faces is

ludicrous."

Weiner emphatically pointed to what he argues as being a ubiquitous hole in the state prosecutor's case, the lack of a bribery charge against Dixon.

Officers leaving Mayor Sheila Dixon's home during the investigation back in June 2008.

"The single most important thing about this indictment is what it does not charge—the offense that every prosecutor looks for when he or she investigates a public official is bribery—that is the corrupt official who takes public actions for private gain," Weiner said. "Even this prosecutor with all of his personal effort to get this public official and his overwhelming desire to prosecute her could not come up with a shred of evidence to justify a charge of bribery. There is no charge of bribery in this indictment."

And then at one point Weiner stood up from the table filled with microphones and stepped to a chart and continued his assault against the state prosecutor's case against Mayor Dixon.

"I want to state here and now that Sheila Dixon's disclosure forms were 100 percent accurate and she did not fail to report any gifts on any of the disclosure forms that were required to be reported," Weiner said.

As he stood at the chart he specifically outlined sections of the city's ethics ordinance he says the state prosecutor either erroneously interpreted or ignored.

"These charges are fatally deficient because they are based upon a fatally mistaken view of the law and of the requirements of the Baltimore City ethics code," Weiner said.

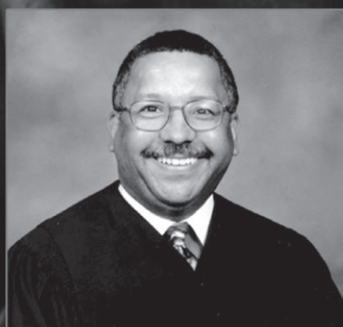
Ultimately, Weiner said he would move to have the charges against Dixon dismissed.

"We intend to move for their dismissal at the earliest appropriate time," Weiner said. "And we fully expect that they will in fact be dismissed."

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."

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Honorable Judge Kern A. Reese  
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# Days Before Historic Inauguration, Congressional Black Caucus Anticipates Greater Power

Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – The 41-member Congressional Black Caucus, which often describes itself as the “conscience of the Congress”, is anticipating a power surge next week as one of its former members takes the oath of office as president of the United States.

“As I stand here today, I can

tell you with certainty that these 41 members of the Congressional Black Caucus recognizes that this is our moment,” said U. S. Rep. Barbara Lee, the new chairwoman of the 40-year-old caucus at the group’s ceremonial swearing in last week.

Recalling the mission of the 13 founding members of the CBC as being “to achieve greater equity for persons of African decent”,

Lee, of California, told the audience of hundreds in the new Capitol Visitors Center, “As we change the course of our country, and as we confront the economy, and as we continue moving forward, we will continue their legacy in working day and night to make this a better and more secure world for our children.”

Then U. S. Sen. Barack Obama served as a member of the Con-

gressional Black Caucus with a consistent record of 100 percent on the NAACP Civil Rights report card. But it is often said that he must now govern the nation as a president - not as a “Black president.”

Agreeing, members of the CBC interviewed by the NNPA News Service at a reception following the Jan. 6 swearing in, said as they push legislation to improve the plight of Blacks in America, they will be emboldened by the support of the president – because of his principles, not because of his race.

“It challenges the Congressional Black Caucus because now more than ever, America will recognize that there are three branches of government, the executive, the judicial and the legislative, the legislature being the initiator of ideas,” says Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-Texas). “It will be very good to compliment the leadership of President Obama to have ideas coming from the Caucus - ideas and solutions to problems, working on the dream that is still a work in progress.”

For too long have certain tenets of American democracy, such as “freedom and justice for all” been recited, but not fully realized, says Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.). He ticked off a list of issues that will need immediate attention.

“Health care, jobs, education... getting serious about reducing crime. We have a lot of work to do and we look forward to working with President Obama and we will work enthusiastically to solve these problems,” says Scott.

Black political observers will also watch closely to see what will happen with legislation on predatory lending, police profiling and misconduct, sentencing disparities, affirmative action, and other areas of public policy that have largely remained stagnant.

The CBC was founded in January of 1969 when 13 African-American representatives of the 77th Congress formed the Democratic Select Committee. The committee was renamed the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971. Founding members of the CBC were Reps. Shirley Chisholm (N.Y.), William Clay (Mo.), George Collins (Ill.), John Conyers (Mich.), Ronald Dellums (Calif.), Charles Diggs (Mich.), Augustus Hawkins (Ca-

lif.), Ralph Metcalfe (Ill.), Parren Mitchell (Md.), Robert Nix (Pa.), Charles Rangel (N.Y.), Louis Stokes (Ohio), and Delegate Walter Fauntroy (D.C.).

Forty years later, two of the CBC founding members are chairing two of the most powerful committees in Congress. Rep. John Conyers, known as the “dean” of the CBC, chairs the House Judiciary Committee and Rep. Charlie Rangel chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. Two other CBC members chair House committees. They are Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) of the Homeland Security Committee and Edolphus Towns, who chairs the House Oversight Committee. In addition, there are 15 subcommittee chairs who are CBC members.

U. S. Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), the House majority whip, is currently the highest ranking African-American in Congress.

The growing power of the CBC is clearly bolstered by Democratic majorities in both houses.

“This will be an outstanding year in the history of our great nation,” Clyburn told the audience at the swearing in. He introduced House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as a “strong, steely petite woman”.

Pelosi told the Caucus, “Here we are in this incredible, incredible time. With all the good work, all of the inspiration, all of the volition, leading the challenge with much work undone, laying the foundation for two weeks, Barack Obama for president of the United States.”

The audience burst into applause.

“This is a great opportunity and I think we’ll take advantage of it,” said Rep. Al Green (D-Texas) at the reception.

Rep. G. K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), newly elected CBC secretary, was emphatic: “The CBC has the tremendous responsibility to expose and confront the disparities that hurt our community,” Butterfield said in a statement. “With a solid Democratic majority and a powerful ally occupying The White House, the African-American community can expect us to be relentless in our effort to empower our community.”

## Martin Luther King III: ‘We’ve Got to Roll Up Our Sleeves’

Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – On the verge of commemorating the Martin Luther King National Holiday Jan. 19, Martin Luther King III, has declared “We’ve got to roll up our sleeves” during what he describes as “a very special period in the history of our nation and world.”

Speaking last week to the ceremonial swearing in of the Congressional Black Caucus, King says America must remind itself that despite the historic swearing in of the nation’s first Black president Jan. 20, his father’s “dream has not been fulfilled even though a significant aspect of that dream has been fulfilled.”

Sitting aside a prepared speech, King III, now a human rights leader in his own right, spoke from his heart as he stood before the Capitol Hill audience of hundreds, thinking of his father, who was assassinated April 4, 1968 and his mother who died of cancer on Jan. 30, 2006.

“I cannot say exactly what my

father and mother would say, but I know they’re looking down on us smiling,” said King, founder and president of Realizing the Dream, a non-profit advocacy organization for the poor. Then he laid out the bare facts:

“But, as long as there are 37 plus million people living in poverty, the dream will not be fulfilled; as long as we live in a nation where 47 plus million people have no health insurance, the dream has not been fulfilled, as long as we live in a nation where the criminal justice system has millions of people and just about 50-50 percent of those people are people of color, the dream will not be fulfilled,” he told the vigorously applauding audience. “We still have work to do, but the wonderful thing is we can make it happen. Where there is great challenge, there is also great opportunity.”

Referring to the historic inauguration of President-Elect Barack Obama, King said, “Our nation is getting ready to move in a most powerful direction in the most positive way.”

But, he added, “We’ve got to roll up our sleeves.”

Had he lived, Dr. King would be 80 years old on Jan. 15 this year. Listening to King III speak were civil rights icons U. S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) and Dr. Dorothy Height, president emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women, both of whom marched on Washington with Dr. King on Aug. 28, 1963, where he rendered the famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Both Lewis and Height received rousing applause when acknowledged by King III.

But, King pointed out that it was the principles for which they stood that made them great. He encouraged the CBC and the audience to remember those principles as outlined succinctly by Dr. King in several of his speeches. King quoted his father, “The ultimate measure of a person is not where they stand in times of comfort and convenience, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy.”

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# HISTORIC



The employees of Entergy New Orleans recognize the significance of this historic election and landmark inauguration. We congratulate President Barack Obama, and we look forward to working with him and his administration as we all move forward on the issues that matter to the nation, the State of Louisiana and our beloved city.

We know the importance of working together under adverse conditions to fix the problems before us. We also know that adversity reveals character. And we feel confident President Obama will do the work necessary to transform these times of struggle into times of peace and prosperity.

For our part, Entergy will continue to find solutions to benefit all of our customers, solutions to help sustain and protect the environment, and solutions to help build a brighter future for our communities.

Together, whether it's from the historic hallways in our nation's capital or here on the crescent-shaped banks of the Mississippi, we can make the changes we need to make our world a better place. Yes we can!

Rod West  
President and CEO  
Entergy New Orleans, Inc.



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