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# A Prescription for Good Health

*Dr. Corey Hebert Launches BlackHealthTV.Com*

By Dr. Eric Griggs  
Data News Weekly Contributor

## A Doctor's Journey

These days, it is a rare occasion in life that we are able to sit with our colleagues and reflect on from where we have come to where we are now. Even rarer is the opportunity to witness the evolution of the minds of friends as they interact and shape their professional world, and more importantly, the world around them. As the world gets smaller and technology faster, moments to chat, laugh, reflect and grow (in person) have become fewer and further between. However, recently I was able to have such a chat with an old friend, Dr. Corey J. Hebert, one of the hardest working physicians on the planet. Between his clinic schedule, travel schedule, public service, and his most recent project, Black Health TV.com, it's a wonder that he sleeps at all.

Dr. Hebert, now affectionately known as "The Doctor for the People," began his journey in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, when a visit to the doctor for a dog bite changed his life. He relates, "I actually got bitten in the face by a dog and I needed about sixty stitches. The doctor came in the room and everyone shut up. He said 'Look little dude, I'm

gonna fix your face, but I need you to chill out and trust me.'" In that moment his decision was made. "I said I want to do what that dude does." His destination was set.

He attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, then Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, arriving in New Orleans at Tulane University Hospital for his residency training. Always keeping a constant ear to the pavement for changes in the community-at-large, what struck him during his training was the number of unnecessary visits to the Emergency Room for non-emergent conditions and the number of events that could have been prevented. So, he decided to spring into action. He made some personal sacrifices to start a show on New Orleans Access Television called "Urban Pediatrics," with the goal of educating the general public through media about Health and empowering them to make smarter, informed decisions. The show was a success and he realized that this would be his niche in changing the world for African-Americans and the world population-at-large. "People don't read. People don't read and they don't go to the doctor. Especially in populations that don't have insurance, they never get the health information nor the health care that they need."



Dr. Corey J. Hebert

Photo provided by Dr. Hebert

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## Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

When it comes to New Orleans, Dr. Hebert considers us a “special group” of people. We are a City of people, rich in spirit and full of life. We love our Saints. We love to celebrate, and we love to eat. We love our food. The world loves our food. People travel for miles just to sample our wares. New Orleans boasts the best food on the planet, but it comes at a cost. “We have the most decadent food in America, maybe the world. We eat excessively. We don’t always know the difference between complex carbohydrates and the good food that we are supposed to eat...we have a horrible paradigm set up for people that don’t have the appropriate information, don’t have enough money to get the food that they need and don’t have the ability to get fresh food in their community when they do have the money. So, that it is a setup for Hypertension, Diabetes, Early Death, Preventable Death, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and anything else you can name that could be an ill of our community,” says Hebert. All of which is evidenced in the patients he encounters in his practice. He candidly relates the numerous tales of well-meaning patients suffering the consequences of their mis- and disinformation. Take for example, the new mother that brings her infant to the ER for vomiting. “We want ‘big fine’ babies so we think that fat babies are great. But, a baby that is two months old shouldn’t have an 8 ounce bottle every 3 hours. The baby’s stomach can only hold 3.5 - 4 ounces... I always tell them, if the baby is vomiting and is gaining a ton of weight, he’s only vomiting what he doesn’t need. It sounds logical, right?”

But despite his tireless work to inform the community about health issues some people still were not getting it. In spite of his efforts in clinic, his medical stories on the local news, radio shows geared towards health, the numerous articles written, the appearances on CNN, the Dr. Oz Show and more, people were not making better health decisions. The numbers for African-American health disparities were still on the rise. People still believed that they should place “butter on a burn.” Dr. Hebert conducted a study of one-thousand African-Americans of varying socioeconomic statuses. An alarming 87 percent of those surveyed be-

lieved this old adage to be true. Nothing could be further from the truth. Disinformation of this nature was still lingering and causing people to harm themselves. He felt frustrated that in spite of his efforts in multiple media platforms, people were still uninformed and misinformed. He searched for another way, a way to target a specific group in a manner they would understand from people they trust. He laughingly observes, “People might not stop eating greasy foods because their doctor says so or they read it in an article, but they’ll stop eating it if Michael Jordan says so because they trust him. If he says it on TV, it must be true.”

## Enter Black HealthTV.com.

“African-Americans surf the internet more than any other group. They download health apps for iPhone more than any other group. They go online for TV more than any other group. African-Americans love to identify with a person they see on TV.” After discovering these facts he found his solution. He decided to create a site that provides online health videos in a language that people can understand. Black HealthTV.com was born, an online mobile platform where African-Americans can go to get all of their pertinent health information specific to their race and culture. The problem he faced was that many times in our community we choose not to receive information unless it is validated by an outside, well-respected source. With that in mind, he negotiated a partnership with Morehouse College School of Medicine, which has produced a number of Surgeon Generals, and Harvard University. Yes, Harvard University provides content and standardizes the information on the site. He also took the opportunity to partner with some of the largest corporations in the country. The website launched first in Durban, South Africa and Nigeria in September, followed by a launch here in New Orleans in October and has been well received. “Interestingly,” he explains, “the health issues faced by Africans and African-Americans mirror each other throughout the world.”

When asked to describe Black Health TV.com, he excitedly explains, “It’s nutrition. It’s Fitness and it’s Health. But, it’s all online videos, hundreds of videos cover-

ing every aspect of health possible pertaining to Black people. So, if you want to learn about a new exercise to tone up, you have an online video by a Black person (New Orleanian Fitness Expert, Jordan Vappie) doing it. If you want to learn how to make stuffed bell peppers healthy, you have a Black woman (Celebrity Chef Nikki Shaw) cooking the stuffed bell peppers in a video while you prop up your iPad in your kitchen and learn how to make them healthy. There is no excuse. If people don’t have the internet at home, there is a mobile online platform, which is where most Black people go these days to receive their health information. People can even sign up on the site to receive a Black Health TV Health Tip of the Day from Harvard University every morning.”

“We like to think of Black Health TV as the first-time where a Black man, woman or child can get on-demand information, regardless of their level of education or socioeconomic status. Every second that a Black person does not know about this website, another Black person dies.”

The years of hard work and ingenuity have culminated in an unprecedented culture-specific website that provides much needed health information in a manner that is easily digestible. It even goes so far as to provide 3-dimensional videos explaining surgical and office procedures. Dr. Hebert has come a long way on his journey and has large plans on the horizon. “We will be rolling out Latino Health TV.com, Asian Health TV.com, Irish Health TV.com, Jewish HealthTV.com and more in the near future. Everyone has their subtle differences, but the thing that will make people understand and change is the way that the information is delivered and who is delivering the information... If we don’t have the knowledge, then we will never get to where we need to be.”

On a breezy December afternoon in New Orleans, two doctors sat in a park to chat and catch up. This one is really proud of his friend.

For more information, go to: **www.blackhealthtv.com**

Dr. Hebert can be reached at: **chebert@blackhealthtv.com** or follow him on Twitter: @drhebert

Prescription for the Week: Make **BlackHealthTV.com** your home page. It could save your life.



Photo: Shawn Colin

On a breezy December afternoon in New Orleans, Dr. Eric Griggs (left) and Dr. Corey Hebert (right) sat in a park to chat and catch up as Dr. Hebert explains the features of the new site, Black HealthTV.com.



Photo provided by Dr. Hebert

In describing Black HealthTV.com, Dr. Hebert says, “It’s nutrition. It’s fitness and it’s health. But, it’s all online videos, hundreds of videos covering every aspect of health possible pertaining to Black people.”

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THE PEOPLE'S PAPER **Data News Weekly** New Orleans  
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# U.S. Attorney Jim Letten Resigns Amidst Scandal

By Eric Connerly

In some circles Jim Letten, New Orleans' corruption-busting federal prosecutor was deemed a hero for successfully prosecuting and convicting many public elected officials in a state that is well-known for graft and corruption. In a surprising turn of events Letten recently resigned under a cloud of suspicion after the discovery that two of his top deputies were caught posting anonymous comments that threaten to undermine some of his biggest cases.

In his 11 years as a U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, Jim Letten's won bi-partisan support for his office vigilantly working to root out corruption. His most well-known conviction was that of longtime Louisiana Governor Edwin Ed-

wards. He also successfully prosecuted dozens of high-profile cases, including the Jefferson family political dynasty, former Orleans Parish School Board President Ellenese Brooks-Simms, former Jefferson Parish Judges Alan Green and Ronald Bodenheimer, former St. Bernard Parish Judge Wayne Cresap, former St. John Parish President Bill Hubbard, former Mandeville Mayor Eddie Price, former Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard (and several associates), and former New Orleans City Council members Oliver Thomas, Jon Johnson and Renee Gill-Pratt and possibly an upcoming indictment of former New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin.

During his short news conference, Letten, gave no reason for his resignation but stated the decision to step down was ultimately



U.S. Attorney Jim Letten, gave no reason for his resignation in his recent news conference, but stated the decision to step down was ultimately his and was not connected to the recent shakeups within his office.

his and none of it came from the recent shakeups at his office.

Until recently, Letten, a Republican-appointed holdover who has held the post since

2001, appeared on his way to retain his post during President Barack Obama's second term. Instead, his departure ends his tenure as the nation's longest-

serving U.S. Attorney.

Letten's career up to this recent bump in the road has been one where even some of his critics took note that his office was doing a good job. Where some of his support came from across party lines; one of his advocates was Democratic Party U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu.

In time serving in the office he was a figure that loomed much larger than his position, in a published report Rafael Goyeneche, Director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans, a watchdog group said of Letten. "In many respects, he is the public face of what the people of Louisiana want to change about the pre-Katrina ways of doing business in Louisiana."

**Newsmaker, Continued**  
on page 10.

## Supporting Louisiana's Next Generation of Public Health Leaders

The AmeriHealth Mercy Family of Companies (AMFC) and its local health plan, LaCare, are pleased to support Louisiana State University's (LSU) mission to advance the public's health through education, research and service through an endowment named in honor of General Russel L. Honoré. AMFC's endowment to the LSU School of Public Health further demonstrates the company's commitment to Louisiana's underserved.



The AmeriHealth Mercy Family of Companies

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# Super Bowl XLVII Host Committee Holds Media Luncheon

## Edited by Data News Weekly

On February 3, 2013 New Orleans will be hosting the Super Bowl for the Tenth time and recently, the Super Bowl XLVII Host Committee held their second media luncheon at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. The host for the event was Mary Matalin, Host Committee Co-Chair and members of the host committee spoke to media to give them updates and their plans leading up to Super Bowl XLVII. During the one hour luncheon the speakers included Jay Cicero, President and CEO of the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation and Executive Director of the Super Bowl XLVII Host Committee, Mark Romig, Co-Chair of the Media/PR Committee, Mary Matalin, Rod West, Chair of the Community Affairs and Emerging Business Committee, Environmental Chair Patty Riddlebarger and NFL Vice President of Special Events Frank Supovitz and NFL Experience Spokesman Noah Gold.

Mary Matalin, Host Committee Co-Chair and media luncheon host, reminded attendees that the Host Committee is tirelessly working with the NFL to make a lasting impact on the Greater New Orleans community. The NFL and Host Committee want to

ensure that the impact of the Super Bowl lasts long after the game is over. Matalin announced that, when the Host Committee began recruiting volunteers in 2009, their database had a dedicated base of 600 members. Now, as of December 7, the Host Committee has over 17,000 total volunteers. Matalin expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Host Committee to those who have already volunteered and reminded people that there is still an opportunity to be a part of Super Bowl XLVII and sign up to volunteer.

Rod West, Chair of the Community Affairs and Emerging Business Committee, provided the media with an update on the Super Saturday of Service and other Super Bowl Community Affairs initiatives. The Host Committee is proud to announce that the NFL's \$1 million contribution toward renovating five New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD) playgrounds has been matched by another \$1 million of local funds from the City and sponsors like Chevron. The Young Leadership Council, New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity and the Urban League of Greater New Orleans Young Professionals has taken leadership roles with the event. West announced that Rebuilding Together New Orleans



Super Bowl Host Committee Co-Chair Mary Matalin and Data News Editor Edwin Buggage at the second media luncheon at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

has invested a total of \$45,000 in the NFL YET Center and another \$250,000 to complete 10 home repair projects in the McClendonville neighborhood. Other organizations have taken on long-term goals in partnership with the Super Saturday of Service, including Hike for KaTREENa, Play 60, Green Light New Orleans and Samaritan's Feet. In its entirety, the Super Saturday of Service will have over 1,000 local and visiting

volunteers who will donate more than 5,000 hours of their time.

The Geaux Green Initiative, as outlined by Environmental Committee Chair Patty Riddlebarger, will work to "green" the Super Bowl by minimizing the impact on the environment through sustainable practices, as well as by using the platform of the Super Bowl to educate fans, guests and residents about smart environment choices. The Host Committee

Environmental Committee will partner with a number of organizations, including Entergy, RePurpose Nola, Hike for KaTREENa, Shaw, America's Wetlands, Make It Right, Second Harvest Food Bank and Green Light New Orleans, to carry out several venue and fan-based green initiatives. These initiatives will include providing carbon offsets to neutralize the environmental impact of energy usage at Super Bowl venues and of travel by Super Bowl teams and NFL officials, installing recycling stations in the CBD, French Quarter and Woldenburg Park, providing free bike valet to fans, recycling food donations from Super Bowl events, repurposing Super Bowl décor, providing fans with emissions calculators, planting trees in the Greater New Orleans area, hosting an NFL sporting goods and book drives and others.

Jay Cicero, President and CEO of the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation and Executive Director of the Super Bowl XLVII Host Committee, announced that the Host Committee is successfully hitting all of the marks and goals set upon bidding for Super Bowl XLVII four years ago, and that the Host Committee is on track to make it the best Super Bowl yet.

## Sam Bonart Playground In The Lower Ninth Ward Reopened

Mayor Mitch Landrieu was joined by Dell Demps, General Manager of the New Orleans Hornets earlier this week, to reopen Sam Bonart Playground at 1200 Forstall Street in the Lower Ninth Ward. The newly refurbished park was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and represents one of Mayor Landrieu's 100 Committed Projects. The renovation cost \$473,915 with funding coming from FEMA public assistance, City bond funds, the New Orleans Hornets, and Salvation Army.

"The repairs to Sam Bonart Playground are another sign of renewal for the Lower Ninth Ward community," Mayor Landrieu said. "As one of my

Administration's 100 committed capital projects, this park will once again be an important gathering place for young and old alike. I also want to thank the New Orleans Hornets and the Salvation Army for their commitment to help restoring the basketball shelter. Through strong partnerships, we are building the city we always knew we could be."

This park's restorations include renovation of the concession building, improvements to the pool building and replacement of the basketball posts, backstops and hoops. The basketball shelter and courts were also repainted.

"We're proud to unveil this

new court with Salvation Army as a part of the reopening of Sam Bonart Playground," said Hornets Owner Tom Benson. "This park will provide the neighborhood with a beautiful place for kids to play and come together and enjoy the game of basketball, while also learning teamwork and leadership skills."

"On behalf of The Salvation Army of New Orleans it is a great pleasure to work with the Hornets Organization in providing not only a means of recreation, but also a means of developing leadership and motivation for the young people that will be using the basketball court at Sam Bonart," said Salvation Army Major William Owens.

## Come with the New Orleans Black Chorale "To Bethlehem!"

### The New Orleans Black Chorale's Annual Christmas Concert

Saturday December 15, 7:00 pm  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
1314 Jackson Avenue  
**FREE**

Special guest narrator:

**Norman Robinson**

Guest soloists: **Darah Rahming,**

**Ivan Griffin, Gregory Dixon**

Organist: **Albina Prizgintas**

Accompanist: **Veronica Downs Dorsey**

The NOBC's selections focus on Bethlehem for this year's Christmas celebration.

Featured will be Lena McLin's Christmas Cantata



Guest Narrator, WDSU-TV News Anchor Norman Robinson

with narration by local news anchor Norman Robinson. NOBC member Clyde Lawrence, known around the city as Mr. Music, will perform a gospel arrangement of the Negro spiritual Bethlehem Babe.

The concert is **FREE** and open to the public!



# Shoot Ya Best Shot!

## Latoya Cantrell Victory Celebration

*Photos by Eric Connerly*

Latoya Cantrell won a hard fought race to become the representative of New Orleans City Council District B, and Data News Weekly was there.



City Council-At-Large Stacy Head, Eric Strachan and Louisiana State Senator Karen Carter.



Cantrell supporters celebrating her victory.



Councilwoman elect Latoya Cantrell and Data News Editor Edwin Buggage.

## 504 Magazine Celebrates Anniversary

504 Magazine celebrated its First Anniversary on December 6th at Irvin Mayfield's I Club at the Marriott. The event was sponsored in part by Data News Weekly and was well attended by supporters from the business and entertainment community and by loyal supporters. Congratulations to 504 Magazine.

Photos provided by Doc Jones of 504 Magazine.



Happy Birthday Derrick!



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**NAYO JONES**

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**Featuring Ms. Nayo Jones and Friends at:**  
**Le Roux Supper Club**  
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Beneficial	GMAC Mortgage	U.S. Bank
Chase	HFC	Wachovia Mortgage
Citibank	HSBC	
CitiFinancial	IndyMac Mortgage Services	Washington Mutual (WaMu)
CitiMortgage	MetLife Bank	Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
Countrywide	National City Mortgage	Wilshire Credit Corporation

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**IF AN ERROR IS FOUND, YOU COULD RECEIVE A PAYMENT OR OTHER COMPENSATION THAT MAY INCLUDE REFUNDED FEES, STOPPING OF A FORECLOSURE OR PAYMENTS UP TO \$125,000 PLUS EQUITY.\***

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Don’t pay for help to request a review. Federal bank regulators—the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury—are directing and monitoring the review process.

For more information, go to the government websites: [occ.gov/independentforeclosurereview](http://occ.gov/independentforeclosurereview) or [federalreserve.gov/consumerinfo/independent-foreclosure-review.htm](http://federalreserve.gov/consumerinfo/independent-foreclosure-review.htm)

If you need free help to complete the Request for Review Form, contact a HUD-approved nonprofit organization that helps homeowners in distress. Information about HUD-approved nonprofit organizations that can provide free assistance is available at [makinghomeaffordable.gov/get-started/housing-expert](http://makinghomeaffordable.gov/get-started/housing-expert) or by calling 1-855-778-0855.

Si usted habla español, tenemos representantes que pueden asistirle en su idioma para darle información sobre la Revisión Independiente de Ejecución Hipotecaria.

Assistance is also available in over 200 languages, including: Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Hmong and Russian.

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the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System  
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INDEPENDENT FORECLOSURE REVIEW**

# Opportunity and Diversity One Industry at a Time



**Benjamin Todd Jealous**  
President, NAACP

There is a missing component to the national discussion concerning how to strengthen and rebuild the American economy. It is true that high unemployment, a weak national infrastructure, the need for stronger public education, the concentration of wealth and the deficit are all challenges to the nation's economy but being left out of the discussion is the continued economic marginalization of racial and ethnic minorities.

The American economy has always been strongest when it's kept the middle class within reach for most Americans. But with white households holding nearly 20 times the wealth of black or Latino households, and with rising disparities in unemployment, poverty, and income, the future of the middle class has never looked more uncertain. As the country rapidly becomes majority-minority the nation's economic well-being is increasingly tied to overcoming racial economic inequality.

The economic challenges that people of color face is reflected in the recently released NAACP Opportunity and Diversity Report Card which analyzes the hotel and lodging industry. Mediocre grades among the five leading hotels we examined—Hyatt, Starwood, Wyndham, Marriott and Hilton—reveal the widespread lack of investment in minority suppliers, the over representation

of people of color in the lowest paying entry level positions, the under representation in the more highly paid career track positions and finally a lack of commitment to collecting basic diversity data that could be used to strengthen inclusion efforts.

Our report shows that black-owned businesses, which comprise 7% of all businesses in the U.S., make up only 0.9% of all vendors receipts—a troubling red flag that signals how far corporate America has to go in their supplier diversity outreach. And while people of color are 36% of the population, only 13% of the governing bodies in the hotel and lodging industry consists of people of color.

One of the most disconcerting findings of our report card is that all of the top 5 hotel and lodging corporations do not collect diversity data from their franchise properties. This means for four out of five of these leading corporations no data is collected for the

majority of their individual hotels. This is unacceptable.

The NAACP is calling for these corporations to collect the diversity data already mandated by the government through EEO1 reports. We are also asking for planners of major events to request EEO1 reports from any individual hotel they are considering for their event so they can make diversity and inclusion part of their assessment as to which hotel is worthy of their business. The National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners has already voiced support for this action and we will be working with our community and civil rights partners as well as local bureaus of tourism to make widespread the use of EEO1 data as an important and widely used factor for determining which hotels qualify to hold major events.

The EEO1 survey is a primary means that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission uses to advance its mission de-

rived from the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act focused on prohibiting racial discrimination in employment and almost 60 years later we still find great racial and ethnic disparities in business and its workforce. The Opportunity and Diversity Report Card and our call to action for greater use of EEO1 data should not be seen as just a "civil rights" matter but should be understood as a means of dealing with one of the greatest threats facing the American economy over the next thirty years, racial economic inequality. We at the NAACP have always seen racial inequality as a grave threat to the country and in the next few decades if serious action isn't taken to bridge this divide the entire nation will see the economic results of this inequality.

**Benjamin T. Jealous is President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP in Baltimore, MD.**

# What about Kasandra Perkins?



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

By now, it's old news that Kasandra Perkins was murdered by Kansas City Chiefs football player Jovan Belcher, who was her boyfriend and the father of her daughter. By now we've read about how great a teammate Belcher was, how dedicated to his girlfriend and daughter. We've read his hardscrabble story of moving from the University of Maine, hardly a football powerhouse, to a coveted slot in the NFL. Belcher has been hu-

manized, even enshrined, as his friends have talked about him not having a violent bone in his body.

What about Kasandra? It has been disturbing that the news focused mostly on Jovan (yes, I know, he was the famous one), with a focus on Kasandra only later in the week. Her friends said they did not want her life to be overshadowed by the sympathetic coverage of Jovan.

While Jovan Belcher was clearly a troubled man, the bottom line is that Jovan Belcher murdered Kasandra Perkins. Not just shot her, he murdered her. And then he killed himself. Yes, this is a tragedy, but it is also a murder, so let's not use euphemisms, let's just call it what it is. The news reports that Belcher was angry because Kasandra Perkins went to a concert and came home at about one in the morning. But another report says that he was parked outside some other woman's

house in the middle of the night. Go figure.

What do we know about Kasandra Perkins? The 22-year-old woman from Texas aspired to be a teacher and was studying at a local community college. She had a 3-month-old child, Zoey. She made friends easily and worked with other wives and girlfriends of Chiefs players. She enjoyed going out with friends. There is probably lots more to her story, but it has been scantily reported.

Nobody knows what goes on in a relationship except those who are in it. So it is also disturbing to see Belcher's friends take to the media to describe the relationship as troubled and to suggest that Kasandra is at fault for her own murder. According to some, she provoked her own murder by staying out late at night. Guess what? Belcher's mother was caring for their infant. Sounds like a control issue to me.

Too often, men beat and even kill women when they step outside their sphere of control. Women are beaten or killed because they didn't cook dinner, because they raised their voice, because they chose to spend time with friends or family, because, because. This violence does not know race, class or gender, though different groups have different levels of violence. While 1.5 million women experience domestic violence annually, African American women are 35 percent more likely than White women to be battered.

Without mentioning names, the Kansas City Chiefs called for a moment of silence for victims of domestic violence during the game that Jovan Belcher did not play. With football as the focus, they did not have the grace to mention Kasandra Perkins by name. It would have made a difference if they had. Despite the fact that Belcher was a member of

the KC team, there is a villain and a victim in this incident.

This type of violence is such an epidemic that the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed in 1994. The act established an office in the Department of Justice works to prevent violence, and allocated \$1.6 billion to work on violence against women issues, including strengthening existing state laws and raising awareness of this issue. Now the law is up for reauthorization, and some Republicans are holding it up because they do not agree with protections for Native American women, immigrant women, and people in same-sex couples. We know that VAWA is effective. Since its passage, intimate partner violence has dropped by about 60 percent, but it didn't save Kasandra Perkins. If nothing else,

**Malveaux/Continued  
on page 11.**



# The Teacher Who Changed My Life

## An Essay Contest By New America Media and New Orleans Ethnic Media

WHAT: New Orleans Data News Weekly and the Joseph M. Jones Continuing Education Fund is partnering with New America Media (NAM) and other media partners in New Orleans, LA to organize an essay contest on teachers. We invite you to write a short essay (500 words max) describing the teacher who changed your life or the life of your child. Who is this remarkable person? Did this person mentor you, open your mind to a subject that became your passion, help you in a personal crisis?

### DEADLINE:

January 14, 2013. (Mail-in entries must be postmarked by then)

### ELIGIBLE CONTESTANTS

All contestants must reside in New Orleans or the surrounding parishes. You can ONLY enter one of the following categories:

#### Teenagers between 14 to 18 years old;

Write about a teacher, who is not your relative, who teaches in public or private school in the City of New Orleans or the surrounding parishes.

#### Adults 19 years of age and older;

Write about a teacher, who is not your relative, who teaches in public or private school in the City of New Orleans or the surrounding parishes who have changed your life or the life of your child.

#### Teachers in Memory

Write about a teacher, who is

not your relative, who might have passed away or lost contact with, or a teacher who taught you in your home country.

### ESSAY FORMAT

Essay writers are invited to write up to 500 words. Essays should be sent via email or regular mail, along with the Entry Form (See instructions below).

### JUDGES AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Distinguished educators, journalists, scholars and advocates will select a winner from each category. Judges will look for evidence that the teacher opened up a new pathway of knowledge or opportunity for the student that he or she had previously not been aware of, or that the teacher inspired or fos-

tered a love of learning. We are looking for real life examples and expect the entries will help us expand our definition of what a "great teacher" is.

### AWARDS

Winners in the "Teenager" and "Adult" categories will each receive a cash award of \$500 and the teachers profiled will also receive an award of \$500. Winner in "Teacher In Memory" will have the honor to pick a local public school in New Orleans or the surrounding parishes to donate a \$500 check made by NAM.

### AWARD PRESENTATION

We will host a special presentation of the awards in New Orleans in February. Winning essays will be published by NAM and other media outlets.

FOR ENTRY FORM & OFFICIAL RULES, PLEASE VISIT: [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

TO ENTER, PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ESSAY ALONG WITH THE ENTRY FORM TO:

[datanewseditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewseditor@bellsouth.net)  
subject line:

Teacher Essay Entry

OR MAIL TO:

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Attn: Edwin Buggage  
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# Taking the Red Pill



Dr. Eric Griggs, MD  
Data News Columnist



"You take the red pill, you will stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes." Morpheus (The Matrix, 1999)

"This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back. You take the blue pill, the story ends; you will wake up in your bed and believe what you want to believe. You take the red pill, you will stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes."

Morpheus (The Matrix, 1999)

Who can forget this line from the cult classic movie, The Matrix? In this pivotal scene, Neo has to make a simple decision that will forever change his life, and on a larger scale, the course of history. In this crossroads moment, he had to decide whether to take the blue pill and continue

on the scripted path to a predetermined destiny or to take control of his life and make his own decisions, saving not only his life, but consequently, the rest of humankind. The X factor in the equation is "fear of the unknown." Let's examine this situation and how it parallels to our everyday lives when it comes to our health.

Every morning we wake up, we make a similar decision. We ask ourselves, albeit subconsciously,

whether or not we are going to make the same decisions today that we made the day before. We decide what to wear, what to eat, what to do, whether or not to exercise, and the list goes on... However many times, after years and years of making the same decisions, we find ourselves feeling "trapped," or "stuck" in situations that we cannot escape (i.e.- being overweight, having diabetes, or hypertension, or even difficult financial situations). The

reality is that we have "trapped" ourselves without even being conscious that we are doing so. We simply follow the script laid out for us, thinking that by a miracle we will not arrive at the predetermined end that has been laid out for us. Making poor lifestyle decisions by overeating, not exercising, drug use, smoking, and overindulging in alcohol all have decades of statistical data to show that diseases such as Hypertension, Diabetes, COPD, Cancer, Stroke, Heart Attacks and more will bring us to an early death. Choosing to do these things day-in and day-out creates a vicious cycle. The only way to break this cycle is to change our decision-making. We must take the red pill.

My grandmother always told me that "if you don't like something, CHANGE it." It is really that simple. These were her words long before The Matrix was ever created. In essence, it is the same decision as in the movie. Take the blue pill and wake up to the same reality, or take the red pill and take control of your life.

The problem here is that by

taking the red pill, making different and healthier decisions, we are forced to leave our "comfort zone". Change is oft times neither comfortable nor convenient. By deciding to exercise, we must make the sacrifice of getting up earlier or making the time in our schedules. To eat healthier, we must become more disciplined in our food choices, with limits on the amounts and content of our diets. By deciding to get more rest, we must sacrifice the possibility of missing our favorite show on television (even though DVR exists) or we might miss out on the most exciting event of the year. There are a multitude of reasons not to make healthier decisions. However, the cost of not doing so is largely outweighed by the reward - a longer, happier, healthier life.

**Prescription for the Week:** In the spirit of the Holiday Season, take the red pill - make the choice to live a happier, healthier life and be a better YOU. Get checked. Get fit. Get moving!

## Newsmaker/ Continued from page 4.

As he steps down, Dana Boente, a first Assistant U.S. Attorney in Virginia, has been appointed to Letten's post in the interim. Before this unfortunate incident

Letten had a stellar record of convictions, but his house of cards began to fall when one of his prosecutors, Sal Perricone, resigned in March after acknowledging he

criticized judges and politicians and commented on cases in anonymous posts on NOLA.com, The Times-Picayune's website.

Among many of his incendiary posts it was published that Perricone described a federal judge in New Orleans as someone who "loves killers," and charged that "Obama and his West Wing band of Bolsheviks have a master design to strangle America's economy." And following this public relations fiasco Letten then demoted his top assistant, Jan Mann, after she, too, confessed to posting anonymous comments on the site. Presently, the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility is investigating the postings, which defense attorneys have cited as evidence the prosecutors improperly tried to influence cases.

As it is quite evident the story of Louisiana politics sometimes resembles the John Kennedy Toole book, The Confederacy of Dunces. The story of Letten's resignation began when the authors of the posts in question were unmasked in court filings by attorneys for New Orleans business-

man Fred Heebe, whose landfill operations are under federal investigation. And it is well-known that Heebe and Letten have a history. In 2001 Heebe had been nominated by then-President George W. Bush for U.S. Attorney, but withdrew when allegations surfaced he had abused an ex-girlfriend and his ex-wife which he denied, subsequently, Letten filled the post.

But as Letten is stepping down, another high profile case is being investigated which is looking into former New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin and questioning business activity that took place during his reign in office. This probe has already resulted in guilty pleas by two businessmen who said they bribed an unidentified city official.

While the recent discovery of misconduct by members of Letten's office have taken place its provided ammunition for defense attorneys that will more than likely challenge other high-profile prosecutions.

An example of what is potentially to come is already been set

in motion as Defense Attorneys in the Danziger Bridge case have asked for a new trial, arguing that the online posts and other media leaks were part of a campaign to smear the officers and possibly influence potential jurors.

Last week, Attorney General Eric Holder announced the appointment of John Horn, a First Assistant U.S. Attorney in Georgia, to investigate the online posts and leaks. The ramifications of the findings may be precedent setting if it is discovered that this practice is wide-spread and not simply isolated incidents.

With the resignation of Jim Letten, whose office has gained praise for rooting out corruption; with these recent events leading up to him stepping down will possibly leave a stain on his legacy. And in the history books it remains to be seen that an asterisk may appear by his name and his record of wins. Only time will tell how he is seen in the full frame of history, but in the meantime Louisianians depending on their vantage point Letten's work may or may not have left Louisiana a more a less corrupt place.

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# What is Your Garden Type?

By MG Calla Victoria  
Data News Columnist

In the world of landscape design there are several specific garden designs. This article is the beginning of a three-part series on Garden designs.

For all of you OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) gardeners there is the Formal or Parterre Garden with very clipped and manicured hedges with corners so sharp they could cut you. Formal gardens are on a level surface consisting of planting beds, edged in stone or tightly clipped hedges usually symmetrical pattern. Parterres need not have any flowers at all as the beauty of this type of garden is the geometric designs created and can best be appreciated from looking down on the garden from a porch or balcony. French parterres originated in 15th-Century Gardens of the French Renaissance, with the most famous being the garden at Palace Versailles in Paris. I had the pleasure of touring that garden which is breathtaking, but



Pictured here is a Chinese Classical garden

one must marvel at how they kept those acres of hedges so finely manicured back then with no power tools. If you are not traveling to Paris any time soon, a trip to the Viscaya Mansion in Miami will do just fine. I was there for Thanksgiving and was intrigued at the use of plant materials that were cut into hedges, specifically a bank of spruce pine trees created a soft and wispy alley (pronounced a1-lay).

nounced a1-lay).

Now the polar opposite of the formal garden is the Cottage Garden. This garden design is most informal with dense plantings and a mixture of ornamental and edible plants. English in origin, the Cottage Garden depends on grace and charm rather than grandeur and formal structure. The Cottage Garden design encompasses both the front and backyard and

tolerates little, if any lawn. From the curb to the front door you will find mass plantings of flowers and grasses. To some the Cottage Garden may look a little overgrown but that is the charm of the design, just basically allowing plants to do what they do naturally; trail, flop or intertwine with other plants with no respect of space or definition.

The third and final garden design to be discussed today is the Chinese Garden, also known as a Chinese Classical Garden. This type of garden design is characterized by an enclosed wall and has one or more ponds, a rock garden, trees and flowers, and an assortment of halls and pavilions within the garden connected by winding paths and zig-zag galleries that create a sense of mystery and curiosity; as you wonder what will unfold around the next curve.

Come back next week for Part 2 of Garden Designs, and check out my Gardening Tip of the Week at [www.thegardeningdiva.com](http://www.thegardeningdiva.com).

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Malveaux/Continued from page 8.

her brutal murder reminds us why this act is so important.

Jovan Belcher had a temper, drank heavily, and had at least eight guns. Some say he had suffered multiple head injuries playing football. That's no excuse for a murder so brutal that he shot Kasandra nine times. And the stories about his supposed nonviolence is contradicted by some of his college behavior, including punching through a window when he was frustrated by a girlfriend who did not want to see him. This man was a serious candidate for anger management!

Kasandra Perkins isn't the only woman who has been murdered by a husband or boyfriend. According to the Department of Justice, three women are killed by spouses or partners every day. I don't want to hear about the tragedy of football player Jovan Belcher. I want to mourn Kasandra and the many women like her. And in her name, and in the name of others, we must all fight to get the Violence Against Women Act renewed.

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

## Wilson Charter School High School Fair Big Success!

On December 4, Andrew H. Wilson Charter School held its 3rd Annual High School Fair for 7th and 8th Grade students. All middle school students and parents in Orleans Parish were invited to attend and learn more about prospective high schools. Representatives from several Orleans Parish High Schools were on hand to answer questions about their school and participants learned about the many educational high school options in New Orleans.



(left to Right) Andrew Wilson Charter School students Daishawn Tobias, Cory Robinson, and Troy Rollins speak to Brandon Bonona and Jacques Janvier from The New Orleans Military and Maritime Academy (NOMMA).

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