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**Birthday Bash at  
Bertha's Place**

**Data  
Zone  
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September 20 - September 26, 2014 49th Year Volume 21 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# Data News Weekly Honors



Kristi Coleman



Rev. Dr. Ernest Marcelle, Jr.



Cameron Mims



Darryl Young



Jaqueline Fleming



Delfeayo Marsalis



Damon Batiste



Tracie Washington



Rev. Samson "Skip" Alexander



Lisa Crinel



Norris Henderson



Kayla Neville

## The 2013 - 2014 Trailblazers of the Month

Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things

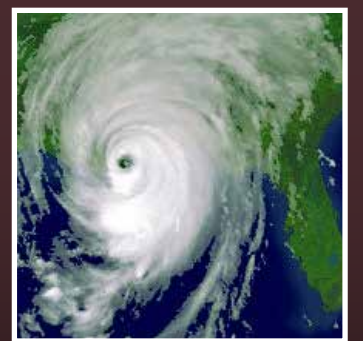
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Inequality**



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Data News Weekly Honors

The 2013 - 2014 Trailblazers of the Month

Ordinary Citizens Doing the Extraordinary, to Make New Orleans Great.

As part of the Data News Weekly annual celebration, we take time out to recognize those or-

dinary citizens, our neighbors, teachers, pastors, business owners and public servants who with their extraordinary acts of caring and kindness, make New Orleans a better place for us all. It is

with great honor that we present to you the 2013 - 2014 Trailblazers of the Month. Please join us on Thursday night as we celebrate them and name the Trailblazer of the Year

MAY 25, 2013

DAVID BATISTE  
Marching to the Music of Change



By Edwin Buggage

David Batiste is a legend in the field of music as Founder and Bandleader of David Batiste and the Gladiators. He is most notably known for his soul classic 'Funky Soul Part 1 and 2.' Today he continues to be in demand internationally as a pioneer of New Orleans funk music. Also these days he is giving back to the next generation. On any given day you can see Mr. Batiste engaging young people at the Batiste Cultural Arts Academy, a Pre-k thru 8th Grade School started by one of his sons Damon Batiste. The school was one of eight schools across the nation that won the President's Art Initiative Award through the President Obama's Committee

on the Arts and Humanities. "I feel blessed to have this amazing opportunity working with kids, when I see how they light up when we help them there is no dollar amount that can compensate for seeing children being given the tools to be successful in life." Continuing he says, "I try to tell young people to learn to think for themselves, and to push themselves to be their best. I am glad to see these young kids go on to do great things with their lives. We have children this year that will graduate and go on to Benjamin Franklin, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) and so many other schools around the City and it feels good that we played a part in these kids' lives and encouraged them to strive for excellence." (Photo by Peter Nakhid)

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

JUNE 29, 2013

CAMERON  
MIMS*Wise Beyond His Years*

By Edwin Buggage

Cameron Mims is a young man on a mission. In his short 18 years of life he has amassed the wisdom displaying the traits of a young Solomon. Wise beyond his years, he is a leader giving counsel and guidance to those both young and old. Cameron is a 2013 honors graduate of Eleanor McMain High School. He was inducted into the National Honor Society, and was a member of the track team. He is a young man armed with a plan and a focus that will insure a bright future. "My plan is to attend college, this year where I will be an incoming freshman at Xavier University. I will be studying Business and Computer Science and

one day hope to become a Computer Information Systems Manager," says Cameron. Planning is important if you are to become successful in life, and this has been first and foremost in Cameron's quest to achieve greatness. Speaking with the confidence of someone who is on the path to achieving his goals, advising other youth who do not have a plan he remarks, "For those who don't have a plan find something you enjoy or something you have a talent at because everyone has a talent, for some it may be in numbers, for others it may be in computers or some in writing or speaking or a knack for business, but I say explore your talents and try different things." (Photo by Edwin Buggage)

JULY 27, 2013

DARRYL "DANCING  
MAN 504" YOUNG*Healing the World through Dance*

By Edwin Buggage

New Orleans is a place where life consists of more than simply existing; it is a place where life is lived to

the fullest and celebrated on a daily basis. Twenty four hours a day, somewhere in the City you can hear blaring horns, the sounds of drums, voices singing or see people dancing to the unique beats and rhythms that are New Orleans. Hailing from the Ninth Ward, Darryl "Dancing Man" Young has become an ambassador bringing Second Line Culture and the educating people on New Orleans to people of all ages across the globe. His "Heal

2 Toe Project" is a fitness program aimed at kids using the second line dance as way to engage young people in physical activity while teaching them about New Orleans culture. He has taken his program to many cities in the U.S. and places as far away as Paris, France teaching young kids through dance. Young says as he travels many kids say they can't dance and are afraid, but he uses this as an opportunity to teach a greater life lesson.

Cover Story, Continued on page 4.

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Cover Story/ Continued from page 3.

AUGUST 31, 2013

## DELFEAYO MARSALIS

### *Playing a Tune of Success for New Orleans Youth*



By Edwin Buggage

The name Marsalis has become synonymous with great music and many people have come to know Delfeayo Mar-

salis as a talented musician (trombonist) and producer. But what many do not know is that he is an educator who uses his immense talent to give back to the community. In addition to being part of a great legacy of music he is also active in working with the youth as founder and artistic director of The Uptown Music Theatre. Since founding the theatre in 2000 children between the ages of 8 and 18 have been enriched after going through Marsalis' program, also in 2009

he implemented his "Kidstown After School Program" in three New Orleans Public Schools and composed 80 songs to introduce kids to Jazz. With great pride he speaks of the kids and their great accomplishments saying they have participated in the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta, Georgia where year after year competing with kids from around the nation and winning numerous awards including "Outstanding Production" and being recognized for their excellent work.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2013

## REV. SAMSON "SKIP" ALEXANDER

### *Eyewitness to History*



By Edwin Buggage

He has been on the front-line of history with many in both the national and local struggle for Civil Rights. Today Rev. Samson "Skip" Alexander is still fighting the righteous fight using his wisdom and passing it on to future generations. When speaking with him you are always guaranteed to get a lesson given the great gifts he has for both teaching and preaching. Rev. Alexander or Mr. Skip as he is known is a fountain of information and is a walking history book or encyclopedia on Civil Rights and the History of Black New Orleans. Much of which he shares

on his television program on community access on Cox Channel 76 and a Radio Show that airs on WBOK-AM 1230, most appropriately called "Eyewitness to History." Throughout his over eight decades of life he has been involved in media working both for the Louisiana Weekly and the Data News Weekly and has fond memories and great respect for his friend Data News founder Joseph "Scoop" Jones, "He was a great man with a vision to give people a voice and I am glad to see what he created continue, because our community needs our own media to tell our own stories and record our own history."

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Cover Story/ Continued from page 4.

OCTOBER 26, 2013

## TRACIE WASHINGTON

### *Battling on the Frontlines of the Fight to Secure Justice for All*



By Edwin Buggage

Her name has become synonymous with advocacy and the fight for justice. For over 20 years Tracie Washington has maintained a general civil practice concentrated in education law, civil rights, and labor/employment law. As Hurricane Katrina changed the lives of many, thrusting them into new directions, it took Tracie on a new and more meaningful path. Post Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Tracie's legal practice has focused on protecting the civil rights of individuals affected by these national catastrophes. Tracie has been counsel in several cases involving the rights of New Orleans Katrina survivors

as President & CEO of Louisiana Justice Institute (LJI), a non-profit human rights organization and law firm devoted to fostering social justice campaigns across Louisiana ([www.LouisianaJusticeInstitute.org](http://www.LouisianaJusticeInstitute.org)). In addition to her work with LJI, Tracie is the Principal Consultant with Higher Ground Consultants, LLC (<http://www.highergroundconsultants.com/>). On the education front, Tracie serves as General Counsel to Friends of King, Inc. a school district within New Orleans, established by distinguished and accomplished New Orleans Educators post-Katrina. She is also an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Dillard University.

NOVEMBER 30, 2013

## KRISTI COLEMAN

### *Generation "Why?" An Answer to a Bigger Problem*



By Edwin Buggage

Kristi Coleman, hailing from New Orleans East, is an admirable example of a leader of our generation. Graduate of the Historically Black College and University of Dillard University, daughter of a Director of Clinical Research and a retired school instructor, Kristi was drawn to

entertainment from young. As her first love, she began dancing at an early age. "It just feels natural to be in front of a crowd," she explains. With this as a contributory piece to her foundation, she began to help with Leap 4 Success while studying Mass Communications at Dillard and graduating at the top of her class. Here, the technical and behind the scenes work helped her to become a well-rounded co-host for the all access New Orleans Public School channel, but she didn't stop there. Ms. Coleman's first true step into television came at the opportunity of hosting the television show "Our Wedding Day, Southern Style," where she gained more expo-

sure and experience, all while staying in front of the camera. She, then, began to use her talent and accumulated knowledge for the local news station, FOX 8. While still maintaining her radio show under the alias Kristi "Sugarcookie" that can be heard Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons on Power 102.9. Kristi noticed that the opportunity to show the world, at least the metro area, came in the form of FOX 8's official Traffic Reporter. This was a way to prove herself wrong once again. "That doesn't mean I didn't think I was going to get the position. I just like to challenge myself and see what happens."

Cover Story/Continued on page 6

September 17, 2014 marks the third anniversary of The Legend Of LIONMAN One Million Kick Challenge, a national kicking event created by GrandMaster Eric "LIONMAN" O'Neal, Sr., 7 Time U.S.K.A. World Karate Champion, in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative to help end obesity in America. Based in New Orleans, Louisiana, The Legend Of LIONMAN One Million Kick Challenge is a national event with more than 2 billion kicks reported across the country in 2013, and an international phenomenon with The Legend Of LIONMAN One Million Kick Challenge in Japan at the Yokosuka Naval Base. First Lady Michelle Obama has inspired this movement which has had a phenomenal impact on the quality of life for America's youth!



The schedule is as follows: Arise Academy 8:15 am-9 am

Martin Luther King Elementary School 9:25-10:10 am

Mary Coghill Elementary 10:30 am-11:10 am

Lunch

Ben Franklin Jefferson Campus 12:30 to 1:15 pm

Ben Franklin Nashville Campus 1:30 to 2 pm

Join thousands of schools, universities, churches and community groups as we help "Kick Obesity Out Of America" with The Third Annual The Legend of LIONMAN One Million Kick Challenge on September 17, 2014.

DECEMBER 28, 2013

**LISA CRINEL***A Woman Laced with a Heart of Gold*

Lisa Crinel is a business and civic leader who has dedicated much time and effort serving the people of New Orleans and giving back. She is the embodiment of the words that appear in the Book of Luke, "to whom much is given, much is required." During the holiday season many are in the spirit of giving. But Crinel is someone who gives year round and in so many ways. Recently, she completed her annual fourth annual bike give away, but this

year had a different twist. Normally, it is open it up to the public, but this year she gave away bikes to the kids of incarcerated parents. Throughout the years Crinel has been an advocate for education, in addition, to supporting other activities aimed at helping youths reach their full potential. She partners with different organizations to help in giving away school supplies to young people. Currently she partners with St. Mary's Academy, giving three

full tuition scholarships, and has also given scholarships to St. Augustine. She sponsors four AAU Basketball teams, and has purchased plane tickets for kids to fly to tournaments or rented buses so kids can go and have the opportunity to play in playoff games. As the Owner of Abide Home Care Services and Lace the Grand Ballroom and as a Board Member of the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce she is a role model for all people.

JANUARY 25, 2014

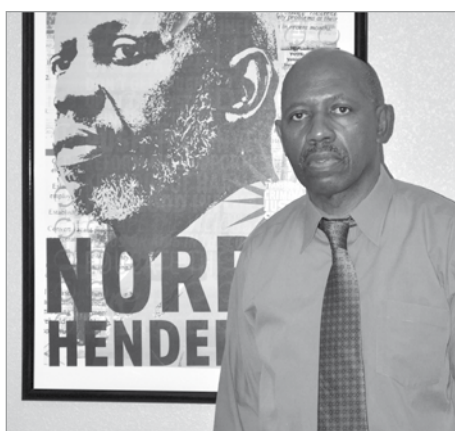
**REV. DR. ERNEST MARCELLE, JR.***A Profile in Courage*

Ernest Marcelle Jr. has paved the way for African-Americans in the quest for justice, equality and opportunity. Throughout his life he's been involved in Civil Rights. Marcelle's life is one of many historical firsts. In many of his early jobs after leaving the military he was the first Black hired in non-menial positions during the dark days of segregation, but the one he's come to be most noted for is as the first

Black Louisiana State Policeman. Marcelle has led his life dedicated to equal rights; telling many stories of his personal struggles on the frontlines battling stereotypes and the racial barriers of the time. Retelling these stories he is not bitter, but someone who has triumphed against injustice with strength and compassion. He advises young men to avoid getting a criminal record because it may cause problems in

their lives and limit their opportunities. He's worked in many capacities ministering and serving those in need. "I've worshipped at Prayer Tower Church of God and Christ for 53 years, I've served as Assistant Pastor for 35 years. Over the years through the church I've worked with our prison ministry program, we bought supplies for young men and upon release we would help them transition to get jobs."

FEBRUARY 22, 2013

**NORRIS HENDERSON***Leading the Fight Towards Justice for All*

Norris Henderson is a name that is synonymous with the fight for justice. After serving 27 years for a crime he did not commit he has become a soldier on the frontline fighting against injustice and empowering those formerly incarcerated. Speaking of how he's come to the work of serving others he says, "After serving 27 years for a crime I didn't commit and seeing first-hand the flaws in the Criminal Justice System and additionally there were not

enough services available upon them being released. So when I got out it's been my goal to advocate for removing some of the barriers for people getting out of prison that inhibit them in trying to find jobs, access to healthcare and housing." He is the Co-Director of Safe Streets/Strong Communities and Founder and Executive Director of V.O.T.E. (Voice of the Ex-Offender). After being unjustly incarcerated for nearly three decades some would assume he would be

angry. Conversely, he is a compassionate caring man who says he made lemonade out of lemons, he is an eternal optimist when speaking of what has become his life's work. "I would describe my life as one where a bad experience netted great results; I turned a negative into a positive. I feel if I wouldn't have gone through what I did I couldn't do the work of helping others and reform a system that in some regard is still unfair to people of color."





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- U.S. SENATOR  
**MARY L. LANDRIEU**

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# Birthday Bash at Bertha's Place

Photos by Glenn Summers

Mark, the Co-owner Of Bertha's Place held his Birthday Bash on Sunday September 14, 2014. The event was well attended, as friends and family gathered to wish Mark the best birthday ever. Happy Birthday Mark.



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

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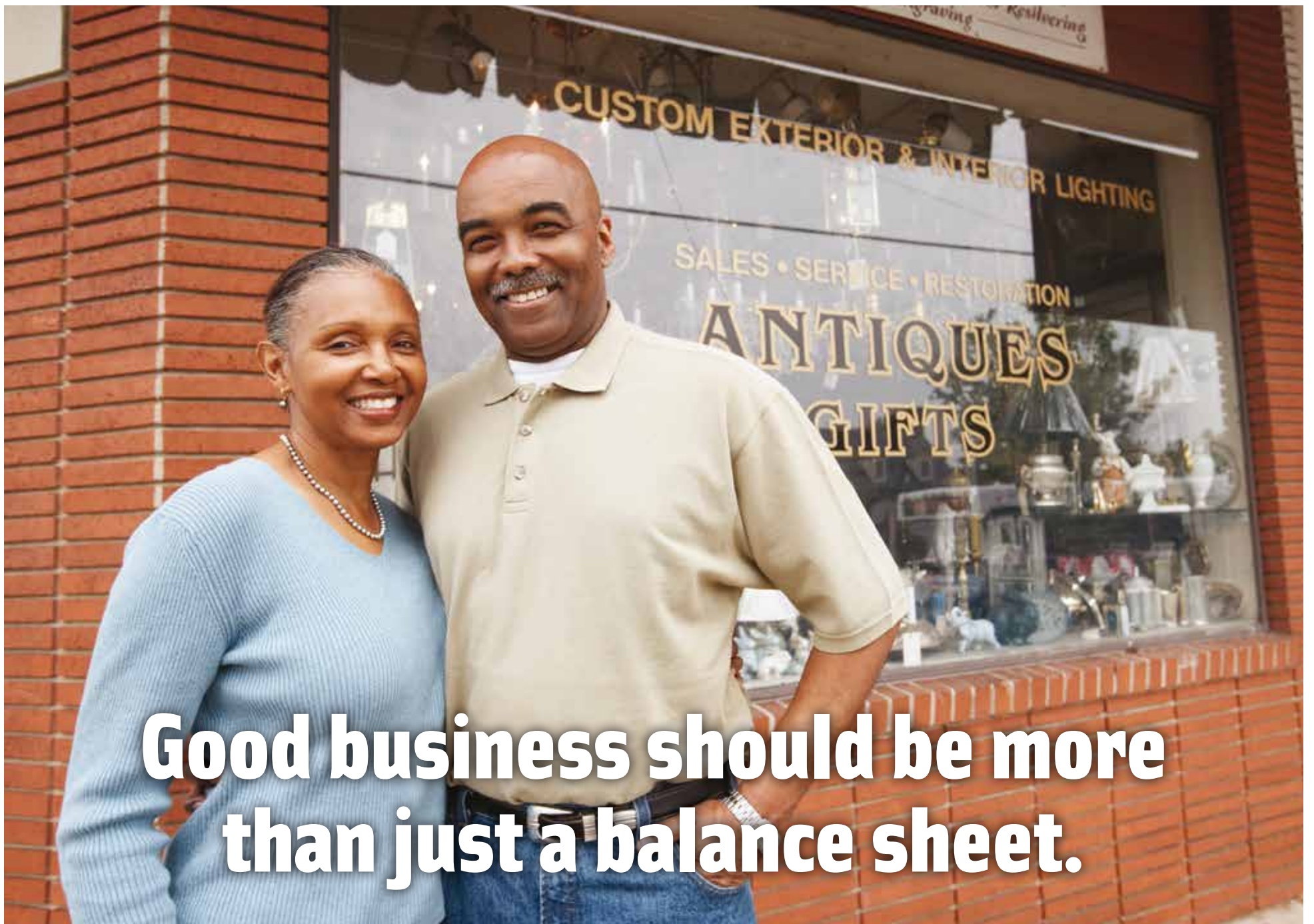
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*Charles Rice  
President and CEO,  
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MARCH 29, 2013

# JAQUELINE FLEMING

## *Making Big Dreams Come True*



Jaqueline Fleming is a woman many have come to know as an Actress, sharing the screen with many of Hollywood greats including Terrence Howard, Samuel L. Jackson, Mark Wahlberg, Blair Underwood and many others. But what many do not know is that she is a person who is dedicated to giving back to the next generation. With her Jaq's Acting Studio she imparts not only acting lessons but lessons for life. "I give of my time and wisdom to my kids; I go the extra mile for them to help them realize their dreams." Continuing she says, "In some cases their parents may not have the means to pay for classes, but because of their passion I still work with them. I spend a lot of time with my students

mentoring, encouraging and trying to inspire them both inside and outside of the classroom."

When some think of acting, they oftentimes don't think of what goes into it; discipline, focus, dedication, the ability to work with others, taking direction and playing your role to the best of your ability. These are many of the skills one must have to be a success in life. A point that Fleming stresses, "My acting class is more than just about teaching kids acting; it is about preparing them for life, because many of the things they learn in my classes can be applied to other areas of their lives and can help them through their journey through life and its many challenges."

*Hon. Dale N. Atkins*

*Clerk, Civil District Court, Orleans Parish*



*As Clerk of Civil District Court of Orleans*

*Parish, I would like to extend well wishes to Data News Weekly on 48 years of service to the community and congratulations to the twelve (12) Trailblazers on their accomplishments.*

*Happy 48th Anniversary to the Data News Weekly*

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APRIL 26, 2013

# KAYLA NEVILLE

## *The Voice of a New Generation*



By Edwin Buggage

Kayla Neville is a young woman who is poised to become a leader of her generation. As a senior at De LaSalle High School she is working to create awareness around stopping the violence on the streets of New Or-

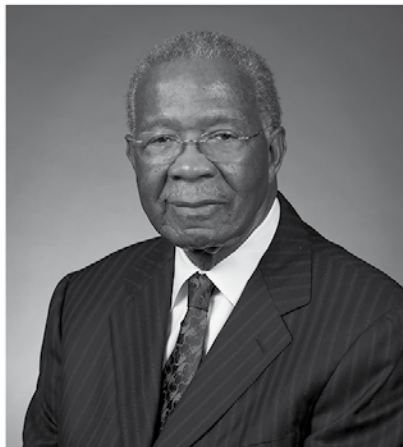
leans; something is plaguing our community and threatens the future hopes and dreams of many young people. Recently, Kayla won a \$2500 college scholarship essay contest sponsored by local radio station WQUE-FM Q93, Attorney Morris Bart, Crimestoppers and other businesses. In her

essay she wrote how she would create a non-violent community and since her winning she has shared her essay with other students at schools and leaders with discussions hopes that violence in New Orleans can be reduced especially among ages 24 and under. She has taken her platform

seriously as she has spoken before the New Orleans Recreational Department Commission, she has also been a guest on WBOK and started an Instagram page; 504violenceturnaround, to have an open dialogue with other students and to promote peaceful resolutions to conflicts.

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## Advancement Project Remembers the Victims of the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing

Fifty-one years ago, four young girls lost their lives to a Ku Klux Klan bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The deaths of Addie Mae Collins, 14; Denise McNair, 11; Carole Robertson, 14; and Cynthia Wesley, 14; horrified the nation, and served as a clarion call for civil rights for African Americans. Advancement Project issued the following statement in solemn remembrance of the church bombing and these young martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement:

"The deaths of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley jolted the nation's conscience and hastened the call for federal protections for African Americans," said Advancement Project Co-Director Judith Browne Dianis. "The notion that men, filled with unmitigated hate, would decimate a place of worship, killing and maiming unsuspecting church members, sent shockwaves across the country. The

tragic loss of the young lives galvanized Americans, helping to guarantee the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Fifty-one years later, it is our duty to vigilantly ensure continued progress and justice for communities of color."

"While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, the rights of many are still under fire," said Advancement Project Co-Director Penda D. Hair. "Today, the stains of racism continue to manifest in both subtle and equally pernicious manners across this nation – from New York to Los Angeles, to the streets of Ferguson, Mo. While it has been 51 years since the deaths of those four little girls, we must never forget the sacrifices they and so many others made. We walk on sacred ground in the footsteps of those lost but not forgotten, and in their memory we continue to work towards a more just democracy for all."

## Reaching Out to Help Homeless Veterans



Former Governor Edwin Edwards and Tulane Graduate and Director of Veterans Housing Outreach Ministries Addresses Housing for Homeless Veterans

Lisa Carey, Director of Veterans Housing Outreach Ministries which provide housing, clothing and food to homeless, needy, disabled, unemployed and senior veterans in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Charles Parishes, recently delivered a speech on "Housing For Homeless Veterans" for the 9/11 Remembrance and Service Day Event in Hahnville- St. Charles Parish. Both Former Governor Edwards and Carey (pictured above) created a homeless awareness forum to address Urban and Rural Veterans Homelessness. The speech identified the availability of vacant housing for veterans in Hahnville and Luling, Louisiana.

## NOPD Consent Decree

The third Quarterly Report of the New Orleans Police Department Consent Decree Monitor is available for review. A copy of the report can be found at [www.consentdecree-monitor.com](http://www.consentdecree-monitor.com), and also will be posted on the U.S. District Court's web site. The Monitoring Team will hold two public meetings to present the report and respond to questions and comments from citizens. The meetings will be held on the following dates:

Tuesday, September 23, 2014  
6:00 pm until 7:30 pm  
Xavier University  
1 Drexel Drive  
University Center Room 205  
Wednesday, September 24, 2014  
5:30 pm until 7:00 pm  
Ashe' Cultural Center  
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*Civil District Court ~ Division F*

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*And we also*

*salute the Trailblazers on their accomplishments*

# NFL Threw Ray Rice Under the Bus

By Raynard Jackson  
NNPA Columnist

By now most people have heard how Ray Rice has been thrown under the bus by the National Football League (NFL) and his former team, the Baltimore Ravens.

First, some background for the non-football fans. Rice was drafted by the Ravens in the second round (55th overall) of the 2008 NFL draft. He signed a 4-year contract for \$ 2.805 million plus a \$ 1.1 million signing bonus. Last year, he signed a 5-year, \$ 35 million contract, paying him a \$15 million signing bonus.

Second, here are some cold facts:

On February 15, both Rice and his then-fiancée, Janay Palmer, were arrested and charged with assault after a fight at an Atlantic City, N.J. casino.

On March 27, a grand jury indicted Rice on third-degree aggravated assault (charges against Palmer were dropped).

On March 28, Rice married Palmer (the date had been planned and announced before the assault charge).

On May 20, Rice was allowed to enter into a pretrial diversion program. Upon successful completion of the program, which will be a minimum of one year, the third-degree charge of aggravated assault causing serious bodily injury would be dismissed. The arrest would remain on his record, but with no conviction.

On July 24, the NFL suspends Rice for 2 games.

On July 25, the Raven's organization rallies around Rice.

On August 28, the NFL established domestic violence policy for the league.

On September 8, the celebrity Website TMZ releases video of Rice knocking out his wife in an elevator and dragging her out of the elevator when it stopped.

On September 8, the Raven's terminates Rice from the team.

On September 8, 2014, the NFL suspends Rice from the league indefinitely.

The Associated Press reports Sept. 10 that an law enforcement officials said he sent damaging video of Rice knocking out his then-

fiancée to the NFL, despite League denials.

The above narrative is the only thing we know to be indisputable.

Prior to the video's release, Rice had been caught on a security camera dragging his fiancée out of the elevator. That got him suspended for two games without pay. The penalty, which some criticized as too lenient, cost him about \$530,000 in salary.

Now that everyone has seen the graphic video of the actual event, people have all of a sudden become filled with phony righteous indignation. Rice should have been punished not because of the video, but because of the act itself. But doing a bait-and-switch on his punishment amounting to pilling on.

Now many professional athletes, entertainers, politicians, and the public want to make public statements about how terrible a person Ray Rice is. Where was this outrage before the release of the video? Where is the outrage from these athletes and entertainers about the precious Black children being killed in Chicago? Where is their

outrage about anything other than collecting a bigger paycheck?

To ultra-feminist groups, especially the National Organization of Women (NOW), why are you so selective in your outrage about how women are treated? To this day, you have never criticized Beyoncé for objectifying herself and women in her music. Yet you criticize Hip Hop for the same thing. Where is their outrage about a woman who raped a child in Arizona when he was 14 and now, at 20, is being forced to pay child support for a 6-year-old child he never knew existed?

It sickens me that people want to take, by all accounts, a good person and kick dirt in his face because he made a terribly horrible mistake; a mistake because there was nothing in his past that indicated this type of behavior. Even more troubling is the contention that Ray does not deserve a second chance. That's a mighty high standard, considering human frailty.

There was absolutely nothing in the video that Rice hadn't already admitted to police and the Baltimore Ravens. The Ravens have

admitted as much. The difference is that the NFL faced a growing backlash, based on the release of the video

Rice is not guilty of breaking any laws. The criminal justice system – with everyone having access to the controversial video – treated Rice as the first-time offender that he was. He was dismissed by the NFL for violating a league's "conduct" policy. In other words, for "conduct detrimental to the league." Once that is invoked by the league or a team, based on their collective bargaining agreement, punishment can be anything from a fine to being banned from the sport.

The NFL, after meting out a 2-game suspension, changed the rules in the middle of the ride. After serving half of his 2-game suspension, Rice was retroactively given a death sentence.

Raynard Jackson is president & CEO of Raynard Jackson & Associates, LLC., a Washington, D.C.-based public relations/government affairs firm. He can be reached through his Web site, [www.raynardjackson.com](http://www.raynardjackson.com). You can also follow him on Twitter at [raynard1223](https://twitter.com/raynard1223).

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

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# Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy

## Disaster Inequality

By Jazelle Hunt  
NNPA Washington  
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Just before Labor Day 2005, the world was stunned as images of Gulf Coast citizens, trudging through chaos and stagnant floodwaters, strewn with the debris of wrecked buildings and storm-tossed earth. The sights seemed to replay just before Halloween 2012, as coastal New York and New Jersey waded in icy waters and picked through the rubble of their destroyed property.

The incidents were separated by more than 1,300 miles, seven years, and two extreme weather events: Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy. But a new Web media project titled, Katrina/Sandy, juxtaposes the storms to suggest that disastrous scenes like these may be on repeat, as extreme weather becomes a new global reality.

“We’re not trying to say they’re the same event.... But it’s definitely a worthy thing to put [them] in context with each other when we think about, how do we respond better, how do we prepare better?” says Rachel Falcone, filmmaker, co-founder of Sandy Storyline (along with multimedia artist, Michael Premo), and co-creator of the Katrina/Sandy project.

“We’re trying to tell stories that can impact and improve the recovery after Sandy, or at least improve it so that...we learn from the mistakes we made during Sandy and especially during Katrina. And also the successes...not all the stories are sad stories. Communities are coming together to meet needs suc-



cessfully and create solutions.”

Katrina/Sandy is the joint endeavor of two award-winning projects, Land of Opportunity and Sandy Storyline. Sandy Storyline is a crowd-sourced collection of Hurricane Sandy experiences, solicited and curated by a team of filmmakers. Land of Opportunity is a New Orleans-based multimedia project from a team of filmmakers that explores issues around housing; the Katrina/Sandy timeline is hosted as part of this larger project.

Created from donated footage and testimony from scores of local filmmakers and citizens around the country, Katrina/Sandy blends film, photography, and firsthand audio accounts into a powerful timeline before, during, and after the storms.

Viewers click points along the line and journey through footage of ravaging winds, relentless floodwaters, weatherworn residents, and weary homeowners. As the short films and accounts play, viewers can also segue to compelling documents, articles, and interviews that explore related issues.

The similarities continue to un-

fold in straightforward, powerful vignettes. Notably, low-income residents share similar experiences of isolation and neglect. In Sandy’s wake, it is elderly and disabled people stuck in high-rise public housing units without electricity, heat, or medications. Post-Katrina, it is mostly Black people slogging through hazardous floodwaters, searching for food and dry clothing.

Scientists and researchers almost unanimously agree that extreme weather events like these have become and will continue to be commonplace, as a result of climate change. Low-income and underserved communities, often home to people of color, will continue to bear the brunt of the effects.

“Folks who don’t have resources are the hardest hit at every stage of disaster. Katrina continues to be an ongoing disaster for a lot of people, and that’s clearly the bulk of what’s going on on the ground in Sandy,” says Luisa Dantas, filmmaker, director of Land of Opportunity, and co-creator of Katrina/Sandy.

“When we talk about looking ahead, and learning, and prepar-

ing, it’s mostly around ensuring that folks who don’t have access to resources are protected, and cared for, and able to recover and rebuild their lives just like everyone else can.”

Marginalization of these communities continues in debates about land use, rebuilding, and the right to return in the aftermath of disasters. Outside this project, both Dantas and Falcone work on issues around housing rights; Dantas points out that this scenario plays out often around the country.

Sandy survivors are at the beginning stages of these issues.

“Right after the storm there was all these meetings the mayor convened around policy that were shocking,” Falcone says. “There were town hall meetings, there’s been a lot of discussion around policy...and around buyouts, and development, and who has a say in what’s happening to different areas that are trying to rebuild. So we

definitely see similar issues. But for us we feel like it’s not yet written, so we wanted to invite people to help us tell that story.”

Viewers are invited to share their post-Sandy stories at [sandystoryline.com/participate/share-your-story](http://sandystoryline.com/participate/share-your-story), and the Katrina/Sandy timeline can be viewed at <http://beta.landofopportunityinteractive.com/#/compare>.

Dantas and Falcone hope the timeline will help inform how people and officials prepare for this new normal.

“The Sandy anniversary is coming up and the decade of Katrina coming up in a year. The value of reflection isn’t just looking at what’s happened but also thinking about how what’s happened can be applicable to your own community. We’re really hoping that this work is driving home to people that this could happen to them, and if it were to happen to them, could they be better prepared?”



Judge Kern Reese

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