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Black History Month Events

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

The Challenge of Black Businesses in the United States



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The State of Black Businesses in the United



Madam C. J. Walker



John Harold Johnson

Eric M Craig
Multimedia Editor

The month of February marks the beginning of Black History Month, a time where the nation recalls the triumphs, inventions and strides of African-Americans in United States history.

While the month is usually geared towards celebrating Black individuals in United States, it can also be used as a point in time to reflect on the current state of Black people. One area in particular is the growth of Black wealth in the nation, which can easily be measured by the amount of Black businesses in operation.

So how well are Black Businesses in the United States?

State of Black Businesses

African-American businesses have grown at an exponential rate in the 21st Century. According to the United States Black Chambers, Inc., in 2012 there were 1.9 million Black businesses. In Fall of 2015, there were over 2.6 million. Black women tend to start more businesses on average, according to the data.

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Cover Story

Cover Story, Continued
from page 2.

However, Black Businesses still face challenges in the new year.

"The challenges the Black businesses face, any business regardless of race for that matter, is location and access to capital," said Ron Busby, Sr., CEO and Presi-

never receive as much as needed, Busby said.

While access to capital is one disadvantage of minority firms, information is among the many that can stagnate Black businesses.

"Challenges Black businesses face year to year is the same: It's access to information. Most small minority businesses are unaware

Group Gen-X, which focuses on business development by linking small minority firms to large corporations that are looking to fulfill contracted tasks.

"There has been a significant push from the smaller corporate entities for more inclusion with more minority businesses," Garret said.

Particularly in New Orleans,

sponse, because of the lack of an ability to move as quickly as its majority owned counterpart" Garret said.

"Home Depot started with one store at a time, just as many Black Businesses start slowly. If all circumstances were equal things would be different.

Another concern is the higher

tiative, the USBC also hopes to increase Black annualized revenue. In 2014, the annual revenue, on average, for Black Businesses was \$86,000. In 2015, the annualized revenue was \$75,000.

Reflection of African
Americans in Business

Throughout history, several



Black businesses being inferior to white businesses is a myth, according to Kelisha Garret, Executive director of the New Orleans Regional Black Chambers of Commerce.



According to the USBC, Black Women are starting businesses at an exponential rate. Photo by WOCin-Tech Chat, via Flickr.



Annie Minerva Turnbo Malone



Ron Busby, CEO and President of the U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.



Kelisha Garret, executive director of the New Orleans Regional Black Chambers of Commerce.

dent of the United States Black Chambers, Inc.

When small Black Businesses obtain capital through loans, they either have a high interest rate or

of many opportunities," said Kelisha Garret, the executive director of the New Orleans Regional Black Chambers of Commerce.

Garret works for the Consulting

infrastructure and construction related services have been on a rise, especially for minority businesses. However, professional services, such as marketing, public relations and legal have not grown nearly as fast.

"We have capable minority businesses that provide those services, but they are not highly identified within the larger push that's coming from the public or private sector," Garrett said.

Stereotypes of Black
Businesses

While Black businesses have seen growth throughout the years, they sometimes struggle with the stigma of being less than, less organized, and less effective than their majority counterparts.

Both Busby and Garret say that myth is false, especially in the 21st Century.

"It's a perception that has continued to go around the country, that our product and services are inferior," Busby said.

"But that's in fact not true. Looking at the size and infrastructure of majority firms, they have the ability to invest back in the firm. Many Black firms don't have the resources to invest back."

Many big box stores, and majority-owned chains have been around longer than their minority counterparts. That additional time has allowed them to work out quirks that are common in any start up business, Busby said.

"Majority owned counterparts have been in existence longer, and have more resources to act quicker than a 'mom and pop' store. That has led to minority businesses leading to a jaded re-

cost of goods at Black establishments compared to their majority-owned counterparts.

"This lays into the fact that we pay more because we buy less. We cannot leverage our dollars. Larger corporations have purchase power in volumes, and we're purchasing in need," Garret said.

When shopping, consider minority businesses had to pay a little more to receive the same item, Garret added.

"As we continue to have pride in our community and our businesses that myth will decrease. But I don't think the fact and the myth is that Black people's services are inferior. That's true today, and it's true 40 years ago," Busby said.

Goals for African-
American Businesses

The United States Black Chambers, Inc., is spearheading the "Black Wealth 2020," which is an initiative to close the wealth gap between White and Black families by the year 2020. The USBC has partnered with over 22 other organizations geared towards building Black wealth.

The new initiative plans to increase the number of home owners by 2 million, increase the number of Black Businesses to 4 million, and to increase the general number of African-Americans banking at Black banks.

The USBC has developed an application for both iPhone and Android users to help users find Black businesses in their immediate neighborhood. According to the USBC, there are over 101,000 Black businesses in its application's directory.

Through the Black Wealth Ini-

African-Americans have taken on the task of starting a business to build the wealth and social power of Blacks in the United States. Many Black businesses today stand on the shoulders of these great men and women. Here are a short list of some of successful African American entrepreneurs.

- Annie Minerva Turnbo Malone was an inventor and philanthropist in the early 20th century. Born in 1869, Malone developed cosmetics for African-American women, including hair care and skin-safe hair perm. Malone also created Poro college, a beauty college for African-American women.

- Madam C. J Walker was an entrepreneur and philanthropist in the early 20th century, and is currently regarded as the first female self-made millionaire in the United States. Walker worked for Malone, but soon ventured off to her own company that pioneered hair care for African-American women. Despite popular belief, Walker did not invent the hot comb, but her business did successfully pushed, supplied and refined the technology, making it more accessible for consumers.

- John Harold Johnson was known as an American publisher, and the owner of Ebony, Negro Digest and Jet Magazine. In his publications, Johnson supported publishing Black national news, entertainment and features, which had little to no national support at the beginning of his publication. Johnson was the first African-American man to appear on the Forbes 400 list in the early 1980s.

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Tornado Severely Damages New Orleans East Neighborhood

Delaney George
Data News Weekly
Contributor

On Feb. 7, 2017, a massive tornado hit the City of New Orleans around 10 a.m., damaging several homes in New Orleans East. The area remained under mandatory tornado watch for over six hours.

Chef Menteur Highway, a local residential area in New Orleans



Fallen power lines leaned over the streets of Chef Menteur highway as local law enforcement guarded the street entrances.



Many residential areas near Chef Menteur Highway experienced fallen power lines and fallen tree damage.

East was devastated by the tornado. Fallen power lines, roof shingles, and house debris lined the eastside highway from Downman Road to Interstate 510.

That evening, many homeowners paced the streets only to find their homes in ruins. Many homes and vehicles on and near Chef Menteur Highway were damaged by the fallen trees.

Monique Cook, local resident and daughter to the tornado victim said her mother had been living at her home on Prentiss Drive since 1995.

"I never thought it would hit New Orleans East. The second floor, the roof, the vehicles, the bricks are all gone, everything's severely damaged. I am hoping for the best but I think this will be a long road ahead with rebuilding" said Cook.

Cook described the damaged as severe and unbelievable, saying she hopes for a timely recovery.

Homeowners with minimal damage found debris from across

the neighborhood in their front or backyards.

Bernard Merricks, a local resident and victim has been living in the area for five years, said he is

blessed and thankful to be alive.

"The damaged to my neighbor's home was very extensive, but mine was minor. I've seen Betsy, I've seen Katrina and none of them top

this, with them we knew it was coming" said Merricks.

Visit LaDataNews.com for more photos, videos, and updates on the New Orleans East Tornado Disaster.

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Children's College

NOLA College Students Experience Culture Through Black History Month Event

Tyra Johnson

Data News Weekly Contributor

Photos by Tyra Johnson

Across the country, college students are observing and participating in Black History Month through campus and community activities, indicating that their generation is just as “Woke” on recent issues of race, as those of their parents. On Feb. 3rd, students at Xavier University of Louisiana gathered in their University Center to watch traditional African dances performed by the Nkiruka Drum and Dance Ensemble, a New Orleans-based community group that performs African Cultural Art Forms. Across town, students at Dillard University learned about Black History through different events on campus held at Lawless Chapel that examined problems and solutions for the Black community.

“In my [African Word Survey] class, we study African history and the real size of Africa,” said Brandi Philips, an Urban Studies and Public Policy Major at Dillard University. Students like Philips believe strengthening their knowledge of Africa is important since the continent and its peoples are often portrayed negatively. Students should have no excuse not to get a civic education about Black History given the number of events on campus and in the community, Philips said.

“Black History Month just really gives my generation a chance to learn and honor the Black people that have done so much for America,” Philips said. However, some students said 28 days is not long enough to explore the multiple victories of Black people.

“Black History Month is a great first step to recognizing accomplishments of the Black community,” said Bria Black, from Memphis, Tenn., and a Political Science Major at Xavier University of Louisiana. “Recognizing Black successes should not end with Black History Month,” she said. Black History is rich, she said, so limiting the celebration to one month is unfair.

Read the full story online at LADatanews.com.



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

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Artists Explore Black Identity Through Cultural Expression in Gomela Production



Kevin Foster
Data News Weekly
Contributor - Photos by
Melisa Cardon

The Ashé Powerhouse Theater filled to capacity as Junebug Productions sold out their final showing of "Gomela/To Return: Movement of Our Mother Tongue," a retelling of Contemporary and Historic Trials Facing the African-American community on Jan. 29, 2017. The performance, which featured a religious and social altar to traditional Orisha and Blackness, was told through a combination of dance and spoken word pieces focused on police brutality, slave brutalization – cultural staples from African-American daily life and outlooks for the future. "We haven't looked at this as a business model, but far exceeded our expectation. We sold out! So, that was exciting," said Stephanie McKee, the Director, who along with the show's Producer Kiyoko McCrae, were students of the Founders of the Free Southern Theatre, who incorporates the arts as a tool

for Civil Rights Action.

The show was timely in its critique of marginalization of Black peoples. The restriction of people of Muslim faith by a travel ban signed by President Donald Trump hung over the performance. Of the seven countries on the ban, three of them: Lybia, Sudan and Somalia, are on the African continent. McKee, the show's director, explained that at the start of Black History Month, Gomela's place was a creative tool for alternative education and social awareness. The performances, she said were designed to foster unity and understanding, contrasting the current re-racialized political system that fosters discrimination and prejudice.

"This entire campaign has looked at the idea of making America great again but what does that mean?" McKee said. "I'm saddened by the current administration. Adding to the othering of people and pushing people out."

To read the full story, visit LADatanews.com.



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Marc Lamont Hill Kicks off Black History's Speaker Series at Xavier

Leonard Lewis IV
Photos by Nate Dockery
Data News Weekly
Contributor

National Television Host Marc Lamont Hill fired up local students as he spoke on the significance of Black History at the first of three public lectures organized by Xavier University for Black History Month. Hill, who contributes to CNN, BET and VH1, spoke to a packed University Center Ballroom on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2017 that attracted students and officials from universities across the state, as well as members of the community.

"Release your imagination," Hill told audience members as he called on them to find solutions to the education system, misogyny, and racial issues facing the Black community.

While activists have kept up



Marc Lamont Hill is a CNN correspondent at CNN.

protests in response to President Donald Trump's executive orders, Hill said that even before Trump took office, there were problems

needing to be solved. He urged the audience to consider ways to give back to the community, to volunteer to educate young people, and

to make sure they showed up to vote in local elections where Black voters are often underrepresented. Hill said those were the most powerful ways to respond to the Trump presidency.

"I am a prisoner of hope, not of optimism," Hill told the audience about the changes to come under a Trump presidency. But he urged the audience to consider the issues they can change. Hill said the Nation's Education System suffers from historical racism, but he believed it was possible for the next

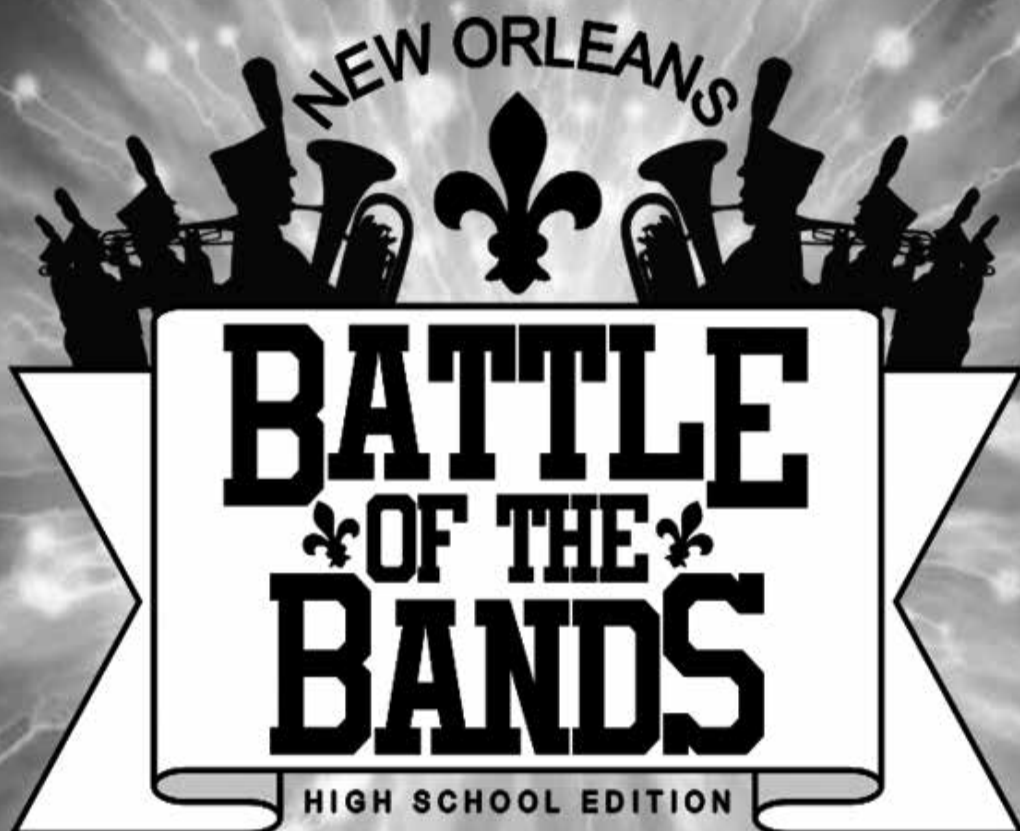
generation of Civil Right Leaders to change the status quo. He urged students to get involved in national organizations who are working to change institutional racism.

As people of faith, the Black church is a powerful organizing tool, he added. The Black community, Hill said, should use faith as a driving force for the good that they do in the community, and not just as a badge of honor.

"Your Christianity isn't keeping track with your humanity," he said, asking the audience to consider the type of faith that leads to real change in society. He cited Howard Thurman's Love Ethics of Jesus as an inspirational work for American Civil Rights Activism. The Morehouse College graduate said the experience of attending an Historically Black University is one where all these values come together: faith, activism and community. He told students to consider careers that exemplify these values in making a difference for all people.

Xavier will continue its Black History Month Public Lecture Series featuring Writer and Social Media Activist Shaun King on Feb. 16, 2017 and Author and Activist Stevona Elm Rogers on Feb. 22, 2017.

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If you are a graduate or if you know of someone who graduated from the school, contact the alumni association at mcdonogh35alumni-association@yahoo.com, mcdonogh35alumniassociation.org, or write to McDonogh 35 Alumni Association, P.O. Box 50306, New Orleans, LA 70122, ATT: Alumni Association.

Submit New Orleans school items to Orleans@nola.com. Include contact information.

Doc Griggs Corner

Health and Wellness Center- Cholesterol

What is it?



Eric Griggs, MD
Data News Columnist

Welcome to "Health Talkin' with Doc Griggs". In conjunction with the Xavier School of Pharmacy Health and Wellness Center, we will discuss topics that we find most relevant in our community. Our shared

goal is to help you "Get Checked. Get Fit. Get Moving!™" This month we tackle...

Cholesterol: What is it?

Cholesterol is a type of fat that is found within the blood. The fat combines with calcium and other bad things to form plaque. This plaque hardens in the blood vessels and restricts the flow of blood. And over a period of time, the vessels become small and narrow. This causes a major risk factor leading to heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes (5, 6). Today, there are many people who do not know that they suffer from high cholesterol because this disease DOES NOT present or cause any symptoms. Therefore, it is important to be

aware of your cholesterol levels and take proper action if you are a candidate for treatment.

What kind of test do I need?

In order to check your cholesterol levels, a blood tested called a "Lipid Panel" or "Lipid Profile" must be taken. To receive a good reading, do not eat or drink (water is allowed) 9 to 12 hours before the test. The test will consist of a small finger prick or a small sample of blood from the arm (6). A normal total cholesterol value roughly falls below 200 mmol/L, anything above this is considered to be elevated or abnormal. Anyone greater than 20 years old without heart disease should get their cholesterol checked every 4 to 6 years to measure their cardiovascular risk (6).

Visit your primary care physician today!

Where does it come from?

Problems with cholesterol can come from many different factors. It can be caused by genetic factors, especially if a family member suffers from the disease. Lack of exercise and poor eating habits can lead to elevated cholesterol. Obesity is also a major risk factor for this disease, and it is very important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and lose any excess weight in order to prevent onset or severity.

How to Prevent it?

Preventing problems with cholesterol starts with you! Daily exercise and healthy eating habits helps to both maintain and decrease cholesterol levels. Foods that are low

in fat are the best, as well as foods that consist of Omega-3-Fatty Acids, vegetables (3), fruits, and lean meats (poultry, fish, etc.). A good diet and regular exercise (~30 to 45 minutes daily) aids in the prevention of cholesterol problems. Additionally, smoking and drinking alcohol are habits that should be avoided or limited while trying to maintain cholesterol (4). If you are struggling with tobacco use, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about different options that are available to assist you in quitting.

How is it treated?

Cholesterol can be treated in a way that does not require medication, and this type of therapy includes: exercise, good nutrition and health, and weight loss. How-

Health, Continued on page 11.

Our lives begin to end

THE DAY WE
BECOME SILENT

about things that matter.

Martin Luther King Jr. | Paraphrased from a sermon, March 8, 1965

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Black Excellence in Fashion

Rowena Kay McCormick-Robinson



Delaney George
Columnist

A Black woman has the power to be as great as she dreams and achieve any goal she claims as her own; A black woman is power, influence, and grace all in one. This entertainment, fashion, and business mogul is all of these things in one and a proud New Orleans native.

Rowena Kay McCormick-Robinson, Model Coach/Mentor, Fashion Enthusiast, and Part Owner of Fashion and Entertainment Powerhouse Chic Nouvelle, has worked in the industry for over 25 years, paving the way for fashion culture to thrive in New Orleans.

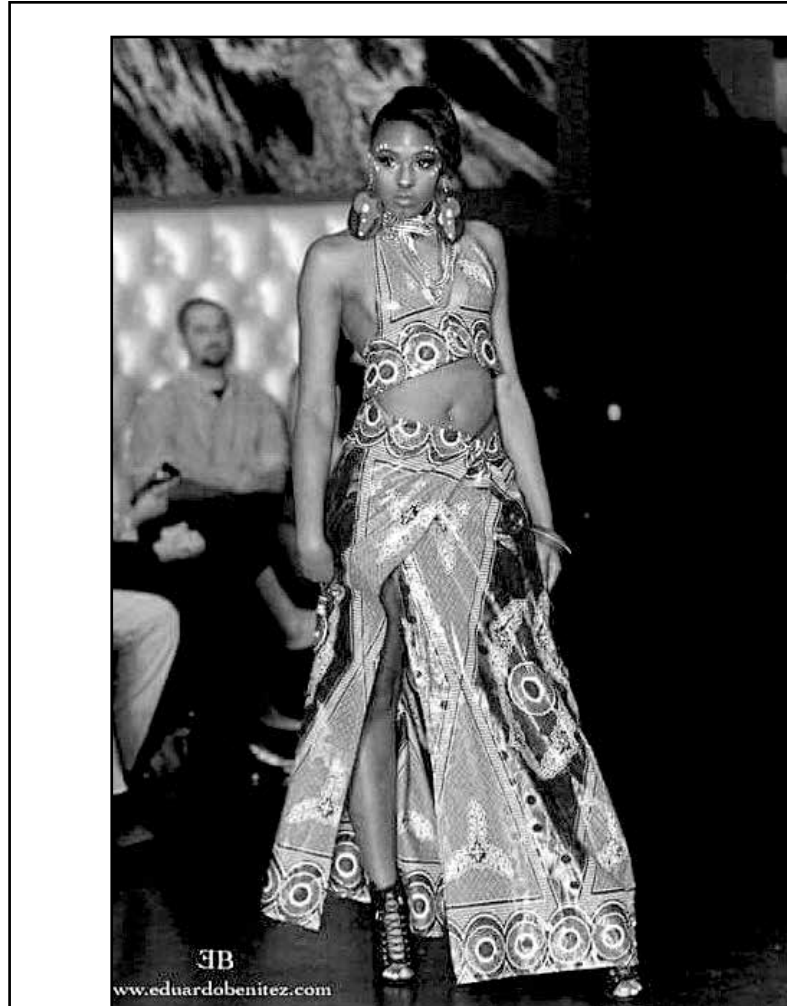
McCormick-Robinson made one of her first and most influential marks on fashion in Louisiana in 2010 by putting on the first Fashion Week in Louisiana: Bourbon Park Fashion Week. The showcase was the first in the area to present fashion on a larger scale and for an extended time frame. Showcasing international models, a large variety of designers and entertainment, this showcase paved the way for the New Orleans based Fashion Weeks we know today.

"Media laughed at the idea of a Fashion Week being in NOLA, saying fashion is for New York, not New Orleans" said McCormick-Robinson.

McCormick-Robinson recalled all of the criticism and skepticism she received from the critics; saying how happy she was for remaining persistent due to the "ground-work" she had done, allowing future shows in Louisiana to flourish.

"I put so much work into the showcase, I couldn't get out of bed for a week, but it was all worth it" said McCormick-Robinson.

Aside from permanently impacting the fashion culture in New Orleans, McCormick-Robinson prides herself and focuses her business on helping others. McCormick-Robinson has mentored, trained, and managed many models over the southern region and provided them with gigs and the confidence to keep pursuing their dreams even



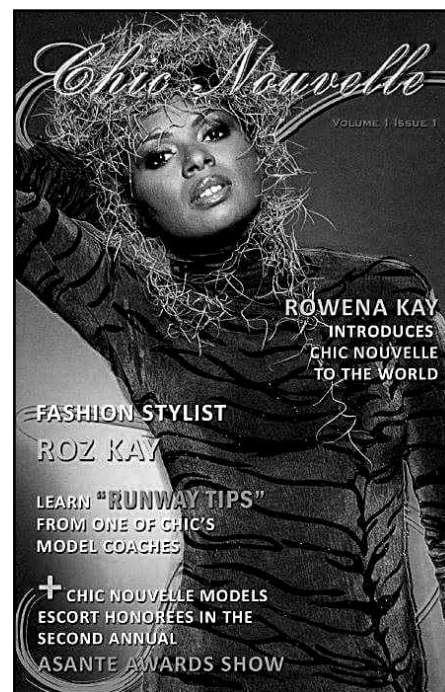
Chic Nouvelle model strikes a pose for the end of the runway at a local showcase. Photo by: Eduardo Benitez



Owner and CEO of Chic Nouvelle poses on a balcony on high fashion couture.



Chic Nouvelle models are featured in Celebrity Solange Knowles' Cranes in the Sky video. Screenshot via youtube.



Model poses for front cover of Chic Nouvelle's Magazine.



Chic Nouvelle models pose for a Jamaican Style wedding spread.

after being turned down.

"I love to take the turned down models and help them find their niche, and groom that talent. We aren't here to kill people's dreams we are here to uplift them" said McCormick-Robinson.

The fashion enthusiast has made

quite a name for herself and her business within the metro area. Having been involved with big name celebrities like Solange, starring in shows such as NCIS, and working with Ms. Louisiana, McCormick-Robinson and Chic Nouvelle are hard to go unnoticed.

McCormick-Robinson honors her motto of "never having a plain fashion show" by making sure that entertainment and fashion go hand-in-hand at every showcase or business venture.

"I am always striving to be the plug for fashion, it is my passion

and I cannot fight that passion" McCormick-Robinson.

Chic Nouvelle will be having their next fashion show on April 22, 2017 at the St. Bernard Civic Center. The showcase will have over 150 models and a variety of designers and entertainment.

Angela Davis and the Revolutionary Afro



Destiny Johnson
Natural Hair Columnist



The infamous afro of Angela Davis

Famous for her luxurious afro, Angela Davis was one of the most recognizable faces of the Black Panther Party in the 1970s. Her hair illustrated the mass rebellion against Eurocentric standards of beauty in the Black community. Wearing an afro also represented the notion that hair processes, such as perms, manipulated African hair in a way that hid natural kinks and curls. Wigs and perms were still worn during the 1970s, but natural styles were becoming

much more widely accepted.

Angela Davis had an incredible platform that represented both Black men and women in a way that worked to highlight

the unique physical qualities of Black people such as their hair. By helping to pioneer the first natural hair movement, thousands of young Black women

were encouraged to return to their roots.

Angela Davis is a Professor, Speaker, Author and Former Black Panther Party Member that gained notoriety in the early 1970s. Known for her fierce demeanor and careful articulation of Black issues in her numerous speeches, her afro, often paired with a raised fist, were two of the most memorable symbols of the Black Civil Rights Era. Fighting for the rights of Black prisoners, Black women and the enforcement of Black Civil Rights Legislation, Angela Davis was the embodiment of the rebellion. Straying away from the Christian-based, non-violent approach of the 1960s, Angela Davis helped to lead a much more physical and vocal retaliation against the status quo.

Davis helped to shape the role of Black women during the rise of Black Nationalism in the 1970s. Prior to Angela Davis, being bold and relentless during the rise of the Black Cultural Revolution was reserved for men. Women were typically relegated to standing beside their men as they marched and fought for Civil Rights. Black women were wives of the revolution but never revolutionaries themselves.

Angela Davis helped to inspire more Black women to become vocal leaders of the Black community. Her presence would invigorate Black women in various leadership roles for years to come. Davis' command in the Black Panther Party reflected the changes that were necessary to move the Black community forward. Most importantly, her afro symbolized a new cultural shift for Black people to not only act like the revolution but to look like it too.

Follow me on Instagram @Seeyourcurls

Health, Continued from page 9.

ever, medicinal treatment of cholesterol is sometimes necessary with proper diagnosis. Treatment with such medications reduce the risk of cardiovascular events (1). There are many different classes of drugs that are used to help treat cholesterol. The drugs that are commonly used are:

1. HMG-CoA Reducase Inhibitors, or "statins", which can lower cholesterol over 40% (2).
2. Bile Acid Binding resins
3. Omega-3- Fatty Acids, known as "fish oil"

Just remember...do right by your body, and your body will do right by you!

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