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The Movie
**Black
Panther**

Inspires a Community to Greatness

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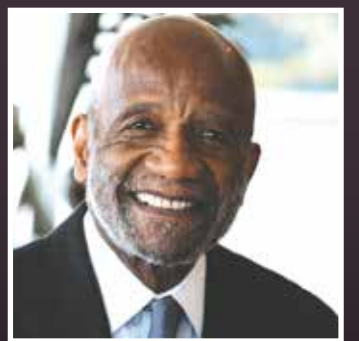
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The Movie Black Panther Inspires a Community to Greatness



“Black Panther” starring Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong’o and Michael B. Jordan, surpassed box office expectations during its opening weekend. Black Panther is a vibrant, empowering allegory hidden beneath the cloak of a comic book movie, where most of the characters are Black, large and in charge.

By Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly Editor

Black Panther Strike Box Office Gold

Black Panther,” Disney/Marvel’s African-oriented comic book adaptation, has taken the movie industry by storm breaking box office records for a film with a primarily Black cast. All over America and the globe

for that matter, there is great hysteria over this film and its cultural impact. In its first week it’s made over 200 million dollars at the box-office domestically and with its international receipts; it jumps to an estimated 369 million.

The film is directed by the young African-American Director and Screenwriter Ryan Coogler and it has a stellar cast that includes; Chadwick Boseman, Lupita

Nyong’o, Michael B. Jordan, Angela Bassett and Forest Whitaker.

Across the country, civic groups, businesspeople, fraternal organizations and families have come out to see this movie that for many is more than just a film about a superhero, but about promoting positive Black images on the big screen and in the everyday existence for African-Americans and the African Diaspora.

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This film is a source of pride and has for some raising the hopes of future Hollywood projects that can have uplifting stories about Blacks proving they can be both a critical and commercial success.

Community Goes to the Movies to be Inspired

On the heels of the release of the of Disney/Marvel Studios "Black Panther", local Attorney Juan LaFonta, gave back to the community by treating inner-city kids and local families to a red-carpet premiere of the film at the AMC Palace Elmwood Theater.

Partnering with several organizations that included non-profits, churches and community programs thousands showing up for this event. "I wanted the young people in attendance to see other professionals; I also wanted them to see they're strong Black people doing things that are impacting the community in a positive way. Because too often the focus is on the negative things such as murdering, killing; the things that are destroying our community and that is not who we are as a people," Juan LaFonta told Data News Weekly.

The premiere was filled to capacity. On hand was Data News Weekly's Glenn Jones who spoke to Rapper and Activist Dee-1, whose brand of spiritually uplifting hip-hop is a breath of fresh air in an industry where images of Black men are often stereotypical and glorifying the most antisocial aspects of the Black community. "This film is about our heritage, we are here tonight because this symbolizes Black excellence at its finest." He says of the film and the people who came out and braved for hours in a long line to see this film and that defy stereotypes.

Cumulus Radio, who is a Community Partner of Data News Weekly, was also on hand for the event. 102.9 Radio Personality Downtown Leslie Brown telling Glenn Jones on the red-carpet of the significance of Black Panther the movie in inspiring a community of young people, "As a Black woman with a Black son and Black daughter they need to see more positive role models."

Dreaming Big

New Orleans native Brandon Okpalobi runs Dibia Dream, Inc. an organization dedicated to giving back to the youth. He splits time between the City of his birth and Miami Florida. Recently, he took a group of kids in Miami to see the film and is also sponsoring a group of kids in New Orleans to see the film as well. "We felt it was important for the youth of color to see a movie where people who look like them are portrayed as



New Orleans native Brandon Okpalobi runs Dibia Dream, Inc. recently, he took a group of kids in Miami to see the film and is also sponsoring a group of kids in New Orleans to see the film as well.



Local Attorney Juan LaFonta, gave back to the community by treating inner-city kids and local families to a red-carpet premiere of the film at the AMC Palace Elmwood Theater.

Kings and Queens, but also are leaders, inventors and belonging to a strong family unit. Due to the current political climate, we felt it was important for our youth to see a positive representation of themselves." He says that this is more than simply about entertainment but educating and inspiring the youth after they watch the film, "There are many hidden messages within the movie and we will dissect those messages after the film with our DREAM Scholars."

Black Panther and Inspiring the Next Generation

While many like those involved in community outreach like Juan LaFonta, Brandon Okpalobi and others across the country wanted to give back; for some, it was a family affair. In the case of Jamie Jones Sr., a local educator who took his

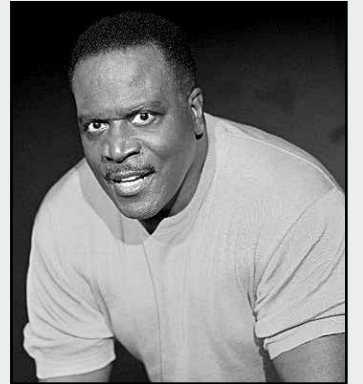
10-year-old son Jamie Jones Jr. to see the film. Jones is a dedicated father who in addition to raising his son plants the seeds of greatness in children every day in his role as an art teacher. He takes great pride in being a father and an example for his young son and others. "I felt great because it was Son and Father's Day. It was a nice to see an African-American Marvel Character in a leading role because there are very few," says Jamie Jones Jr.

A precocious and intelligent young man who is an honor student at his school and skilled drummer; he says of the film, "If you really pay attention to the movie, it was not only about fighting the bad guys, it showed proud African women dressed in African clothing, and many of the Blacks attending dressed in traditional African cloth-

Cover Story, Continued on page 5.

Why It Can't Be Real

By Anthony Bean
Data News Weekly Guest Columnist



I had to stop looking more than fifty years ago for a superhero that looked like me. In the era of Black is Beautiful I couldn't settle for a White Superman, Batman, Fantastic Four, etc. You get the picture. I had to satisfy my appetite by opening a community theater where I can find or write heroes consistently in plays. More recently, there's only been two other movies that got me out of the house and into the movie theater. It was "Django Unchained" and "GET OUT!" Up until then, those have been the only films to satisfy my appetite for Black excellence. I have caught the 6 episodes of Black Panther, the animated series on BET many time. So, I was quite familiar with the theme. So, all the hype surrounding Black Panther, the movie couldn't help but catch my attention. It was the talk at my school, theater, and at the gym. I couldn't escape the hype. All the while I'm loving it. The last time I saw my people get this hype was voting our first Black President into office, Barack Obama. Being in the entertainment business and a purveyor of my people's true image I understood the importance of getting my people excited, that means, they will come out in support of you. When I pulled up to the theater on Premiere Night for the Black Panther, the lines were around the corner. The only thing I can say was, (In my Esther Rolle voice) Damn, Damn, Damn. This better be good!

"Black Panther" opens on a short re-telling of the history of the fictional country of Wakanda, an African nation that sealed itself off from the world upon discovering its technological advantages and was left undisturbed as the rest of the world was colonized by Western European powers.

Sorry fellas, but in this movie, Black women rules. There's Black girl magic throughout. So, talk to your lady before

you go into the movie theater, tell her not to get it twisted, this is only a movie. Just kidding fellas. It's a beautiful thing. Speaking of beauty, the sceneries are breathtaking. The Costumes are creatively African with a hint of urban America. The ships are shaped like African masks, and the waterfalls are mind-blowing, and Black People are in charge all the way. My only regret is that Wakanda isn't real. It only exists in Marvel Universe. The ending was different also, the movie credits started rolling and the audience thought the movie was over, so they applauded and was heading to the exits when the final scene came back on, people who already left their seats, are now standing in the aisles to catch the ending. When the scene ends, people were still standing around, wondering if that's really the end, end. I thought that was interesting. I was sitting with my guests watching the credits roll when I couldn't help but wonder. This is a big budget movie. They had spare no expenses. The script was good, the acting was excellent, and the overall presentation is worth the price of a ticket. But I couldn't help but dream that someday we will, as Black people market our own image. I heard this movie alone will gross a billion dollars worldwide. And to think, all this money will go to Disney/Marvel Entertainment Company. A White-owned Conglomerate. Wouldn't it be more powerful if the Black child will know this was designed with them in mind and most importantly, the profits stay Black? One day I hope! Go see Black Panther.

Three Black Doctors Share Their Path to Success

By Jade Myers
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Only 5 percent of U.S. Physicians are Black. On Feb. 15th, three of them shared their journey to entering the medical profession after writing the new book: "Pulse of Perseverance: Three Black Doctors on Their Journey to Success." Award-Winning Journalist and New York Times Magazine Writer, Nikole-Hannah Jones returned to Xavier University to moderate the panel along with the three doctors who she assisted in editing the new book.

"When I grew up learning about our history of Black people, the history of the struggles we had to overcome one of my motivating factors was realizing that I was standing on the shoulders of giants,"



Xavier University President Emeritus Dr. Norman C. Francis greets three alumni medical physicians whose new book chronicle their journey. They are from left to right: Dr. Pierre Johnson, Dr. Maxime Madhere, and Dr. Joseph Semien Jr. (Photo by Jade Myer)

Johnson, said that when he attended Xavier the curriculum was not as simple as he imagined it would be, but as a result, he pushed his pride aside and took advantage of resources that Xavier provided him, to help him to stick to a medical career.

"Use all of the mentorship, all of the teachers that are here to help you, use them as your resources," Johnson said.

Madhere told the audience that it is unfortunate that despite having a medical degree, people tend to make false and stereotypical assumptions about him because of his appearance and he hopes that one-day that changes.

"Any trials that you go through, just know that your goal is still attainable, push no matter what happens and just know that if you are not doing well that the support is here for you," Madhere said.

Among the guests in the audience were current and former Xavier Presidents, Dr. C. Reynold Verret, and Dr. Norman C. Francis. Francis, who served as President of the university for 47 years, said that he enjoys seeing Xavier's mission being carried out. Xavier's current President Verret added that if Xavier can help build successful students, other colleges can too.

"When I see Xavierite's doing what they do, it reaffirms what Xavier stands for, and it's so fulfilling because it's not about the brochures being sent out, but it's about what we see being done, like these three doctors," Francis said.

Verret said that he hopes Xavier's achievement can be a model for the rest of the country.

"Xavier is not just for certain students, but it is for the nation. What we are telling the nation is that this is possible. If we can do it, we should be doing it for every student," Verret said.

The visit inspired current student Deja Gantt, a Biology Pre-Med Major attending Xavier, who said that it was beneficial for her to attend this event because it is not often that she hears about success stories like these in the media.

"Seeing African-Americans regardless of gender, knowing that I can be where they are one day, this event also showed me that success is attainable if the hard-work is put towards the goal," Gantt said.


said Dr. Maxime Madhere, one of the physicians who co-authored the book.

All three of the doctors are Xavier graduates. In 2015, Hannah-Jones chronicled in "A Prescription for More Black Doctors" how a small, private university like Xavier is number one in producing Black students who attend and graduate from medical school. This year the university announced that once again, it retained the ranking that it once held from 2011-2017, according to data compiled by the Association of American Medical Colleges.


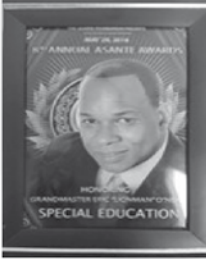

Dr. Joseph Semien Jr. and Dr. Pierre Johnson are Board Certified OB/GYN's and alongside Madhere, a Double Board Certified Cardiac Anesthesiologist, they spoke to the audience about the importance of sharing the obstacles they experienced on their path to success. Semien, a New Orleans native, admitted that he once found himself involved in the violent and drug infested streets of Inner-City New Orleans and that he hopes that sharing stories like his may encourage individuals who may be in similar situations, to reach for higher.

"Don't let your past define you and your future, and don't accept failure as an option. You are going to go through trials and tribulations but keep pressing forward," Semien said.


Johnson and Madhere, also shared their journeys at the event.



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Rep. Richmond To Homeland Security Chairman: Hold Hearing on Mass Shootings

"We need to hold a hearing to explore these mass shootings as the domestic terrorism they are..."

Data Staff Reports

In a letter to House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX-10), Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-LA-02) demanded that the Committee, of which he's a member, "live up to its name and mission" and hold a hearing that explores mass shootings as the "domestic terrorism they are," as well as solutions that would help stop them. The letter was sent in the wake of the school shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., which left 17 people dead. It's one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history.

Rep. Richmond wrote, "As Members of Congress, there is no greater responsibility we have than trying to protect our nation. As we saw this week with the attack at Stoneman Douglas High School, we have failed. Once again, one person with a gun has shocked the nation and shattered a community. It is time that the Committee on Homeland Security lived up to its name and mission. As a Member of the Homeland Security Committee, which you chair, I call on you to hold a hearing to explore these mass shootings as the domestic terrorism they are and figure out what we can do to stop them."

Full text of the letter is below:

February 16, 2018

Chairman Michael T. McCaul
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-LA-02)

Dear Chairman McCaul,

As Members of Congress, there is no greater responsibility we have than trying to protect our nation. As we saw this week with the attack at Stoneman Douglas High School, we have failed. Once again, one person with a gun has shocked the nation and shattered a community. It is time that the Committee on Homeland Security lived up to its name and mission. As a Member of the Homeland Security Committee, which you chair, I call on you to hold a hearing to explore these mass shootings as the domestic terrorism they are and figure out what we can do to stop them.

In the last decade, we have been shocked time and time again by mass shootings in places we

thought were safe or sacred. There have been so many of these mass shootings that we have to distinguish which church or which school shooting we are talking about. That is unconscionable.

Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook Elementary, Mother Emanuel, Pulse Nightclub, First Baptist Church, Las Vegas. Though we know these tragedies by the name of the place in which they occurred, families across the country know them by the names of the loved ones whose lives were taken. These were tragedies on both a national scale and a personal level. And all of them have been made even deeper tragedies by a failure to act to prevent the next one.

Since I've been in Congress, we

have seen mass shootings take the lives of more than 400 fellow citizens while they lived their everyday lives. We have seen 12 people killed as they watched a movie, 59 people killed as they listened to music, and 50 people killed as they danced. We have seen multiple shootings specifically targeting children as they went to school and people of faith as they prayed. What we have not seen is a real response from Congress or this Committee. That has to end. We have to do better. Failing to respond and better protect people makes us, at best, enablers of these tragedies.

Protecting our children is a priority everyone in Congress shares. It is time for us to prove that. So I call on you to hold a

hearing and take a comprehensive look at this issue. There are people out there with the knowledge and expertise we need to prevent tragedies like this and we should hear from them. We should hear from sheriffs and police chiefs who can offer real solutions. We should hear from researchers who have studied this issue in depth and government agencies charged with public safety. We should hear from survivors of these tragedies, principals from these schools, managers from these movie theaters and music venues, and pastors from these churches. We should hear from gun violence prevention groups like Giffords, Everytown, and the Brady Campaign. We should even hear from the National Rifle Association if that is what it takes to get to a place of action. All of these people should be invited to a hearing so that we can develop real solutions. What we can't do is continue to do nothing.

We should be willing to take a comprehensive look at how to prevent these tragedies. We know there are common sense steps with bipartisan support that we can take. We should pick that low-hanging fruit. These shootings were carried out by real people, with real guns, firing real bullets, that did real damage to bodies, took real lives, and caused real terror in communities across the country. The people of America deserve real action to prevent them from happening in the future. The very least we can do is hold a hearing. If we are not willing to even do that, why are we in Congress?

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

ing to show support. It also showed how the use of technology can either destroy or make the world a better place; this is something we should all think about."

Positive Role Models: Fantasy vs. Reality

This film is undoubtedly monumental and is helping spark a dialog about images of non-Whites onscreen and its larger impact on combating negative stereotypes. But in truth when this film is long

gone from the silver screen there is work that needs to be done in coming up with solutions that plague the African-American community. This is something that one great film, however, well-produced can solve.

Jamie Jones, who is in the trenches educating young people every day speaks to this point, "I think Black Panther is a great film that can inspire our community as well as others about the positive attributes of our community." And while he is excited that the film is getting rave reviews Jones feels that more

emphasis need to be placed on our everyday heroes who work tirelessly to make the community better.

This sentiment is also echoed by Juan LaFonta, who is planning an event for the summer that will focus on anti-crime measures with its goal of lowering the murder rate in New Orleans. "It's important that our young generation recognize that there are superheroes amongst them every day; lawyers, doctors, policemen, the list goes on and on", and it's even more important that our families spend quality time together in today's society."

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Kids Reign at the “Black Panther”

By Edwin Buggage

In our cover story, we told you about the groups of kids that were treated to a day at the movies to see the smash hit, and the tremendously uplifting blockbuster “The Black Panther”. Pictured are more photos from the day of fun here in New Orleans. We can all agree, that this was an amazing way to brighten these kids’ day, and we say Thank You on their behalf to Juan LaFonta, and Brandon Okpalobi for taking time and making the way for them to have that experience



Isaac Delgado Fine Arts Gallery and the Delgado Department of Workforce Development and Institutional Advancement present:

Black Masking Indians

An exhibition of Black Masking Indians and an evening with tribal members that includes a film presentation and a lecture about the connection between the indigenous black Indians of Louisiana and the Black Masking Culture of today.

Special thanks to:

Chief Shaka Zulu / Yellow Pocahunters, Chief Bo Dolis / Wild Magnolias, Chief Fiyo 7th Ward Head Hunters, and Chief Freaky E / Uptown Warriors

Exhibition of Suits: Now through February 22, 2018

Closing Reception: Thursday, February 22, 2018, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. - Free to the public

An Evening with the Indians: February 22, 2018, 5 p.m.

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You Look Like a Star!



Delaney George
Columnist

There once was a time when your favorite celebrities would endorse the hottest beauty products to get you to buy them. In today's world of beauty, your favorite singer could be the producer of your favorite lipstick.

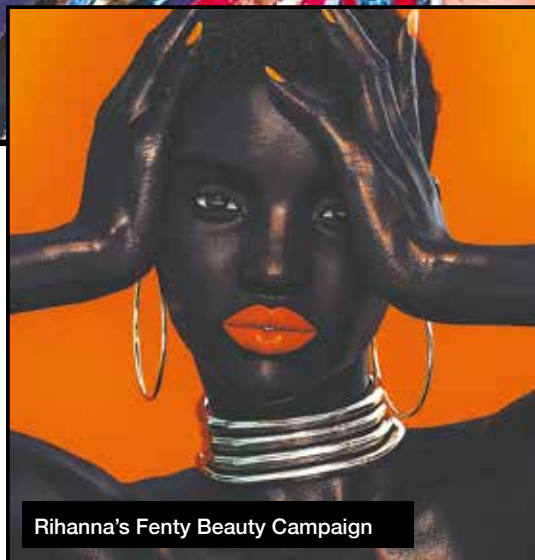
Celebrities are taking over the world of fashion and beauty by creating more brands than ever before. Brands like Fenty Beauty and Kylie Cosmetics have recently gained major buzz in the beauty community and are both owned and founded by two headlining celebs. Rihanna, a well-known megastar released "Fenty" her own cosmetics line that is a must have with the beauty community.

Many critics have lifted the megastar's brand up to gatekeepers like MAC and Sephora and Fenty still takes the cake. Reality stars like Kim Kardashian and sister Kylie Jenner have also released their own cosmetic line, reeling in millions from the beauty industry. Although of the same bloodline, the two brands have obvious differences and cater to two different types of makeup connoisseurs.

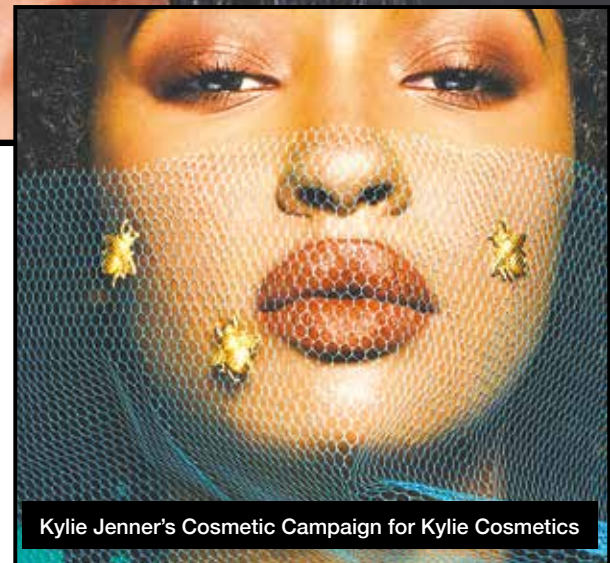
Have you ever seen your favorite celebrity and said "hey, I want her look" or "I wonder what she uses"? It's possible they've made just what you're looking for. For more information on these brands email Delinkey@yahoo.com



@Makeupshayla wears Kim Kardashian's KKW Cosmetic Line



Rihanna's Fenty Beauty Campaign



Kylie Jenner's Cosmetic Campaign for Kylie Cosmetics

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

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To Be Equal

Black Panther is the Superhero – and Heroines – We Deserve



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

“The film serves as a breath of fresh intellectual air, especially amid today’s sociopolitical climate. It is the power of representation in its best form. It is empowerment on a higher level. It is inspiration to a different degree. It is black excellence exemplified that will leave audiences yearning to inhabit Wakanda forever.” Film critic Tonja Renee Stidhum

As long as there have been movies, there have been movie heroes.

From Douglas Fairbanks’ swash-buckling heroes like Zorro and

Robin Hood in the 1920s, to Luke Skywalker in the 1970s to Harry Potter in the 2000s, the movies have always provided inspiration and role models for young people and a source for fantasy and imagination.

Most of these figures, as one might expect, have been white and male.

That is why the blockbuster superhero film Black Panther, which opened this week, is such a significant milestone.

Few films have been more joyously anticipated, with advance ticket sales breaking records. The character, created for Marvel Comics by Stan Lee in 1966, already had generations of fans. Its A-list cast and crew include a number of Academy Award and Golden Globe winners and nominees. Setting aside its cultural impact, Black Panther has been hailed as one of the best-acted, best-directed, best-created superhero movies of all time.

But let us not set aside its cultur-

al impact. Representation of women and people of color in film also has been an issue as long as there have been films. Actor and playwright Dylan Marron a few years ago introduced a web series entitled “Every Single Word,” which highlights the shockingly small amount of dialogue spoken by actors of color in mainstream films. The entire Harry Potter series – more than 1,200 minutes of film – includes precisely 5 minutes and 40 seconds of what Marron calls “POC talk time.” In 2015 and 2016, we took the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to task for the woeful lack of diversity among Oscar nominees.

Too often, even when women and people of color do have significant roles in film, negative stereotypes are reinforced. The Bechdel Test, named for cartoonist Allison Bechdel who popularized it, determines whether a work of fiction features at least two women characters who speak to each other

about something other than a man. Only half of all films pass this test. Screenwriter and novelist Nikesh Shukla proposed the Shukla Test, which determines “two ethnic minorities talk to each other for more than five minutes about something other than race,” and New York Times critic Manola Dargis devised a variation, the DuVernay test – named for African-American film director Ava DuVernay – asks whether “African-Americans and other minorities have fully realized lives rather than serve as scenery in white stories.”

Black Panther doesn’t just pass these tests, it shatters the very precepts on which they rest. The significance of a powerful, intelligent, wealthy and resourceful Black hero cannot be overstated. The women of Wakanda, Black Panther’s fictional African kingdom, are the true force behind the throne, and are as complex, varied and layered as white male characters usually are

given the freedom to be.

When the first Black actress to win an Academy Award, Hattie McDaniel, faced criticism in the 1940s for accepting roles that reinforced negative stereotypes, she retorted, “Why should I complain about making \$700 a week playing a maid? If I didn’t, I’d be making \$7 a week being one.” Thankfully, the world of Wakanda is light-years from the plantations where McDaniels’ “Mammy” character bowed and scraped to Scarlett O’Hara. I’m thankful that our children have the opportunity to see themselves on screen as kings and queens, warriors, scientists, artists and most importantly, the heroes of their own stories.

Marc Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League. You can connect with the National Urban League on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalUrbanLeague>, Twitter: <https://twitter.com/naturbanleague> or on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/naturbanleague>.

We Need Educational Equality in Our Schools

This Black History Month, Let’s Take Back the Fight for Education Equality



Kay Coles James
President, The Heritage
Foundation

Frederick Douglass. Condoleezza Rice. Martin Luther King, Jr. Clarence Thomas. Ida B. Wells. Shirley Chisholm.

All of these leaders will receive renewed national attention during this Black History Month. And all have something else in common: their emphasis on education.

None of these leaders would have been able to achieve the remarkable victories or overcome the incredible obstacles they faced without an education.

I share their passion for educa-

tion equality. I’ve fought for it all my life.

My own battle started in 1961 when I joined 25 other Black students to integrate a segregated junior high school in Richmond, Virginia. And it hasn’t stopped since. I fervently believe all children—no matter their race, religion, income, age, or address—have an equal right to receive an excellent education.

That’s more than opinion. It’s the law of the land. In the landmark Brown v. Board of Education ruling that ended school segregation, Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote, “It is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is ‘a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.’”

Nearly 65 years later, however,

it’s painfully obvious that education in America remains very unequal. Too many schools are failing their students. Schools that squash children’s dreams beat down their hopes, and diminish their expectations have created a crisis in the black community. Today, in many large U.S. cities, more than half of all African American students never graduate high school.

All children deserve to get the tools they need to make their dreams come true. But high school dropouts typically don’t have them. As a result, it’s much harder for them to get a job, much less earn what those who do graduate make. They’re also more likely to commit crimes and be victimized by crime. Far too often, the dreams they once had turned into nightmares.

I was fortunate. Even though I was kicked, punched, and stuck with pins during the integration battle, I was able to attend a better

school. Too many kids today don’t have that chance. Instead, anti-reform forces block them from going to better-performing schools.

Who are the anti-reformers? A determined cartel of teacher unions, education bureaucrats, and career politicians. They make a lot of money from the current system in the form of union dues, salaries, and political contributions. And they view any attempt to change that system as a threat and anyone seeking to advance education equality as their enemy.

Just ask U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. Testifying before Congress, DeVos explained her goal is “ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to receive a great education.” But rather than be hailed for seeking the equality promised decades ago, she’s being attacked by those who want things to stay just as they are.

If you are wealthy, connected,

or elected, chances are your child goes to or graduated from a great school. But if you live in a poor urban neighborhood, your child is much more likely to go to a failing school, a school where more than half of all students can’t read or write well, have low math scores, face the daily threat of bullying and violence and won’t graduate.

Do these sound like “equal terms” to you?

I say—no more! The crisis of failing schools has afflicted too many Americans for too long, and it will never end so long as we continue to deny every child their equal right to an excellent education.

And so I call on all caring Americans to join me in this fight. It’s a part of our heritage as a people—and of our inalienable rights as citizens of this nation.

Kay Coles James is President of The Heritage Foundation. You can follow Kay on Twitter @KayColesJames.

Ask Dr. Kevin

Debunking the Myths Around Sickle Cell Disease



By Dr. Kevin Williams
Chief Medical Officer,
Pfizer Rare Disease Unit

Sickle Cell Disease is a “Black” Disease.

Myth! It’s true that in the U.S. more than 90 percent of people living with SCD are of African descent. In fact, SCD occurs in one out of every 365 African-American births. However, it’s not exclusive to this patient population. SCD is also found in people of Indian, Middle Eastern, Hispanic, and Mediterranean ethnicities.

Sickle Cell Disease is contagious.

Myth! You cannot “catch” SCD—

it is a genetically inherited condition (passed down from parent to child). For a child to inherit SCD, both parents must carry the sickle cell trait (or have the disease) and each must pass the sickle cell gene to the child.

A person with the sickle cell trait will automatically develop Sickle Cell Disease.

Myth! Sickle cell trait is different from SCD. Just because a person carries the sickle cell trait does not mean they will have the disease. What’s the difference? When a person has only one copy of the sickle cell gene, he or she will have sickle cell trait. Someone with SCD will have two copies of the sickle cell gene.

A person with sickle cell trait can, however, pass the disease on to his or her child, if the other parent also has the trait. That’s why testing for sickle cell trait or disease is incredibly important. Sickle Cell Disease (and sickle cell trait) can be

diagnosed through a simple blood test. In developed countries, like the U.S., babies are now routinely screened at birth to determine if they carry the trait or have the disease.

People with Sickle Cell Disease abuse pain medication.

Myth! Studies have shown that there is no increased substance abuse in patients with SCD. The most common symptom of SCD is excruciating, debilitating pain that often does not respond to over-the-counter medications and needs opioids to provide relief. Over time, the body becomes used to the opioids—ultimately leading to high doses being required to manage SCD pain. This need for high doses of opioids (which may not even provide complete relief from the pain), has unfortunately led to the perception that these patients are “drug-seeking.”

A baby born with SCD will die before reaching adulthood.

Myth! Until the 1990s, SCD was considered a life-threatening condition as many children born with the disease did not live to adulthood. In developed countries, like the U.S., this is no longer true, with the majority of children living to adulthood, thanks to advances in SCD care.

However, the life expectancy of someone with SCD in the US is only between 40 and 60 years, compared to average U.S. life expectancy of 78.74 years. There is still much more work to do to improve the outcomes of people with SCD in the US and worldwide, particularly in underdeveloped countries. Although the disease was identified more than 100 years ago, there are still very few medicines available to help patients or address SCD symptoms. While there has been recent progress in this area, more still needs to be done. At Pfizer Rare Disease, we are working tirelessly to bring safe, effective treatment

options to those in need.

One way to help address this is to encourage participation in clinical trials. To date, there have been several challenges in securing the adequate participation of African-Americans in clinical trials, which has been one of the key barriers to the development of new SCD medications.

Hopefully, this article has helped to clear up some of the more common misperceptions about SCD. By increasing awareness and providing education about this disease, we aim to improve the care of those affected.

Dr. Kevin Williams is the Chief Medical Officer for Rare Disease at Pfizer. He pursued medicine after being inspired by his father’s work as a general practitioner in his hometown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Kevin is passionate about raising awareness and increasing understanding of Sickle Cell Disease in the African-American community. You can follow Pfizer on Facebook and Twitter.

Cumulus Radio and Data News Weekly Present TRI-CENTENNIAL BLACK FACTS

MAROONS

Maroons were Africans who had escaped from slavery in the Americas, mixed with the Native Americans, and formed independent settlements. Between 1780 and 1784, a group of Maroons led by Jean Saint Malo resisted re-enslavement from their base in the swamps east of New Orleans. When captured, St. Malo was hanged in Jackson Square.

FRENCH CODE NOIR

In 1724 France imposed a set of laws called the Code Noir (Black Code) to control the lives of colonists and Africans in Louisiana. The Code Noir resulted in a far higher percentage of Blacks being free people of color (13.2%) in Louisiana compared to 0.8% in other areas. They were on average exceptionally literate, with a significant number of them owning businesses, properties, and even slaves.

NATCHEZ REVOLT

Maroon villages were centers of trade and marriage between Enslaved people and native tribes. In 1729 the powerful Natchez Indians and their Maroon allies massacred French plantation owners and liberated hundreds of slaves in an attempt to force the French out of their land. French authorities created a military force of Choctaw and Enslaved Blacks who eventually conquered the Natchez and recaptured the freed slaves.

SPANISH ARRIVE

The 1764 arrival of Antonio de Ulloa, the first Spanish Governor of Louisiana, led to the demise of the French Code Noir replacing it with a Spanish model regulating Black-White relations. Ulloa upset the French Creole Community of New Orleans when he permitted the marriage of a White Spaniard and a Black Slave. The new governor also perturbed the local White population when he restricted the common practice of whipping slaves in the City of New Orleans because the cries of whipping victims bothered his wife.

SPANISH CHANGES

A French Creole attempt to overturn Spanish Rule failed and a new Spanish Governor banned the trade of Native American slaves, although there was no movement toward abolition of the African slave trade. Spanish Rule introduced a new law called “coartación,” which allowed slaves to buy their freedom and that of other slaves.

Play Aims To Tell An Authentic History of Civil Rights Movement

By Kimani Hamilton
Data News Weekly
Contributor

His concern that this modern generation was still not being taught true Black History is what led Flint Mitchell to decide to write a play that teaches the true struggles of people of African descent in the United States. As part of Black History Month events across the City, Mitchell's play "The Other Black History" will debut on Feb. 22-24, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 25, 2018, at 3 p.m. at the Ashé Power House Theater, on 1731 Baronne St.

"I have a theory that those too young to remember or know the Civil Rights Movement, are likely not to be civically engaged (i.e., vote, etc.) because they have no idea of the struggle their ancestors went through to gain them the right to vote," Mitchell said.



Playwright Flint Mitchell's "The Other Black History" is a Civil Rights play starring Oliver Thomas (above) about a formerly incarcerated schoolteacher who is serving as a two-day detention monitor of four students. In the play, he teaches students about racial justice and how to face adversity. (photo by Flint Mitchell)

"The Other Black History" is a Civil Rights play about a formerly incarcerated schoolteacher who is serving as a two-day detention monitor of four students. In the play, he teaches students about racial justice and how to face adversity.

This lesson begins with slavery and ends with the Civil Rights Movement. Mitchell, a native of Lake Charles, La. said he first started writing in his late-twenties. He is an Adjunct Instructor in Public Health Program Implementation and Man-

agement at Tulane University and serves as Vice President of the Louisiana Children's Research Center for Development and Learning.

As a W. K. Kellogg Foundation Community Leadership Network Fellow, Mitchell said he wrote his first play as part of his fellowship. In "The Other Black History," Mitchell makes an effort to educate viewers on authentic Black History rather than the revised version of history that is learned in schools. Mitchell said he believes that history classes in public schools "whitewashes" the truth, romanticize the brutal facts, and excludes Blacks' positive contributions to the United States.

He said he knew it would be challenging to persuade the government, school districts, and schools to teach what is accurate. He hopes the play will enlighten citizens on basic and controversial American facts.

Mitchell said he wrote the play because he believes that this generation does not understand the significance of Black History. He was inspired to write this play to affect change among young people.

"If they knew their history, maybe they would be engaged. Moreover, learning their history in school is unlikely because the history that is taught is revisionist," he said. Mitchell defined his play as non-revisionist history – a history that does not romanticize colonialism and disparages people of color or minimizes their worth and contributions. After viewing this play Mitchell said he wants viewers to take away new knowledge, the courage to face oppression, and an understanding of the need for narrative change.

Tickets purchased after Feb. 16 are \$20 and can be purchased at <http://bit.ly/TheOtherBlackHistory2018>.

Jazz & Heritage Foundation Presents Educational Workshops for Teens

Learn Audio Engineering, for Concerts and Recording Studios



Data News Staff Edited Report

Applications are open now for two new instructional workshops in Music Production for teenagers presented by the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.

One workshop will teach the Fundamentals of Audio Engineering in a recording studio environment. The other will teach the Basics of Stage Production and Mixing Sound in the context of a live event such as a concert or festival.

Both workshops will be monthly, on Saturday afternoons, and will take place simultaneously at the Jazz & Heritage Center starting Feb. 24.

The workshops are open, free of charge, to students between the ages of 13 and 17, and are made possible with support by a Grant

from the Country Music Association Foundation.

To participate, students and their parents or guardians must submit an application using this online form. A brief essay written by the student is required.

Enrollment in both workshops will be limited to 20 students. We will continue to admit new students on an ongoing basis as long as space is available.

The workshops are part of an ongoing effort by the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation – the nonprofit that owns Jazz Fest – to increase Arts Education Opportunities for young people. They expand on the growing repertoire of classes the Foundation presents in the state-of-the-art education facility the founda-

**Jazz Heritage,
Continued on page 11.**

The Black Press Remembers “Before the Mayflower” Author, Freedom Fighting Journalist Lerone Bennett Jr.

By Stacy M. Brown
(NNPA Newswire
Contributor)

Perhaps no other voice—or pen—captured the real life of Africans and African Americans like Lerone Bennett Jr., the former editor of EBONY and Jet magazines who died on Wednesday, February 14 at the age of 89.

Chicago Sun-Times reported that, Bennett suffered from vascular dementia.

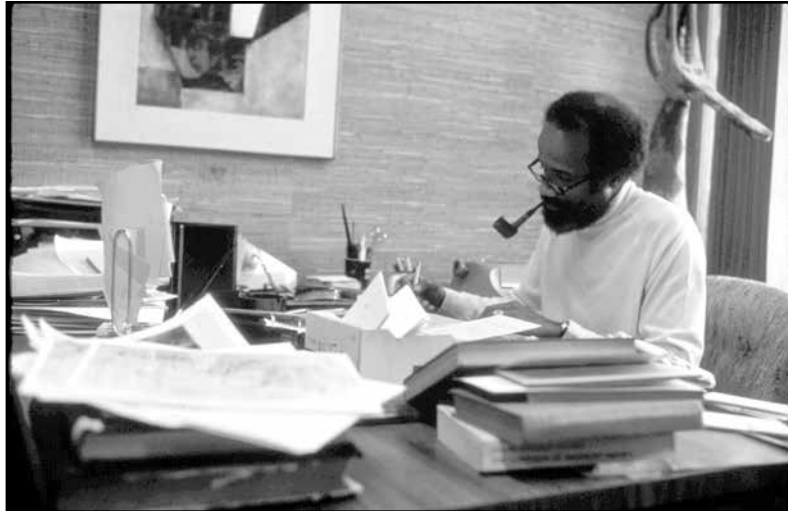
Among his many hard-hitting and compelling works was the exposé, “Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America,” in which Bennett traces Black history from its origins in western Africa, through the transatlantic journey and slavery, the Reconstruction period, the Jim Crow era, and the Civil Rights Movement.

The book was later re-issued five more times and ultimately included life in the 1990s.

Bennett would go on to pen at least 10 books, including the eye-opening, 2000 book titled “Forced into Glory: Abraham Lincoln’s White Dream,” which, for some, shattered centuries-old myths about America’s 16th president’s involvement in the freedom of slaves.

A description of the book on Amazon.com said: “Beginning with the argument that the Emancipation Proclamation did not actually free African American slaves, this dissenting view of Lincoln’s greatness surveys the president’s policies, speeches, and private utterances and concludes that he had little real interest in abolition.”

Pointing to Lincoln’s support for the fugitive slave laws, his friendship with slave-owning Senator Henry Clay, and conversations in which he entertained the idea of



Veteran journalist Lerone Bennett Jr. died on February 14, 2018 from advanced vascular dementia. He was 89. (Environmental Protection Agency/Creative Commons)

deporting slaves in order to create an all-White nation, the book, concludes that the president was a racist at heart—and that the tragedies of Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era were the legacy of his shallow moral vision.

“Smart man and great author. His book [about Lincoln] changed my life,” said comedian Sinbad. “Before the Mayflower’ educated me about the need to research our true history.”

Others too expressed their sadness and profound gratitude for Bennett.

“I am personally saddened by the death of Lerone Bennett Jr. We have lost another great journalist who will be sorely missed,” said Dorothy R. Leavell, the chairman of the NNPA and editor and publisher of the Crusader newspapers in Chicago, Illinois and Gary, Indiana. “We knew him as the conscience and voice of EBONY and Jet magazines and through the many books he published. The world is richer, because of his work here on earth and we are grateful for his many

contributions.”

Bennett counted as an elegant scholar and freedom fighter who used the power of his pen to awaken millions of people to the true history of African people in America and throughout the world, said NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

“Bennett’s journalistic genius will be missed, but his contributions to documenting the struggles and triumphs of Black men, women and children will continue to be cherished by generations far into the future,” Chavis said. “The NNPA salutes the living legacy of Lerone Bennett Jr. with a commitment to pick up his pen and put it into the hands of today’s freedom fighting publishers, editors and journalists.”

Bennett worked for EBONY for nearly 50 years, after starting at Jet in 1951 and then moving to the sister publication in 1953. By 1958, he was the executive editor.

“Lerone worked side by side with my father in establishing EBONY’s voice,” EBONY CEO Linda Johnson Rice told the Chicago Sun-

Times. “He was the guiding light for the editorial vision of EBONY. Lerone was not just essential in the formation of EBONY’s historic trajectory, he was a pillar in the Black community.”

The Griot reported: “In addition to being remembered as an editor for these two magazines, Bennett, a graduate of Morehouse College, is known for his books, many of which cover the Black experience in America and the civil rights movement.”

Bennett’s footprints are cemented at the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame in Atlanta and he once served on President Bill Clinton’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. The veteran journalist and historian also served as an early adviser to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture.

In a tweet, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Jr., praised Bennett’s work.

“A classmate & biographer of Dr. King, during the turbulent 60’s, his was a pen that mattered. As historian, author of ‘Before the Mayflower’, editor of Ebony magazine, the most read voice of the freedom struggle, his impact will long be felt and remembered,” Jackson tweeted.

From its official Twitter account, the NMAAHC tweeted, “it is with great sadness and profound sense of loss that we share the news of the death of Lerone Bennett Jr., a gifted historian and journalist.”

On Twitter, Bernice A. King called Bennett a beloved and brilliant man.

“If you haven’t read his books, I encourage you to. Even if you have, I encourage you to. Truly one of a kind historian & scholar,” King tweeted. “Grateful for what he’s meant to my family.”

Jazz Heritage, Continued from page 10.

tion opened in 2015, the George and Joyce Wein Jazz & Heritage Center.

“Since the Jazz & Heritage Center came online, we have continually increased our educational programming to make this incredible resource available to more young people in our community,” said Don Marshall, Executive Director of the Jazz & Heritage Foundation. “First, we doubled the size of our Flagship Program, the Heritage School of Music, from 50 to 100 students per week. Then we doubled it again by adding

new classes for beginners – and providing free instruments.

“We put all sorts of audio technology in the building with the goal of turning it into a hub of education – not just in Music Performance, but in the technical side of music as well,” Marshall added. “By adding these new workshops – and holding them in the same building at the same time – we’re taking another step in that direction.”

Both workshops will be from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on these dates: February 24, March 24, April 21, May 26, June 23, July 21 and August 18.

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*A TIME TO REFLECT ON
THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN.
AND WHERE WE'RE GOING.*



During Black History month, we remember the past in order to create a prosperous future.
We salute and acknowledge the innovations, accomplishments and culture of African-Americans.
From scoreboards to boardrooms and from concerts to congress, you are making differences that can be felt
every day. Toyota salutes those who are driven to succeed because determination can lead to elevation.



TOYOTA

Let's
Go
Places