

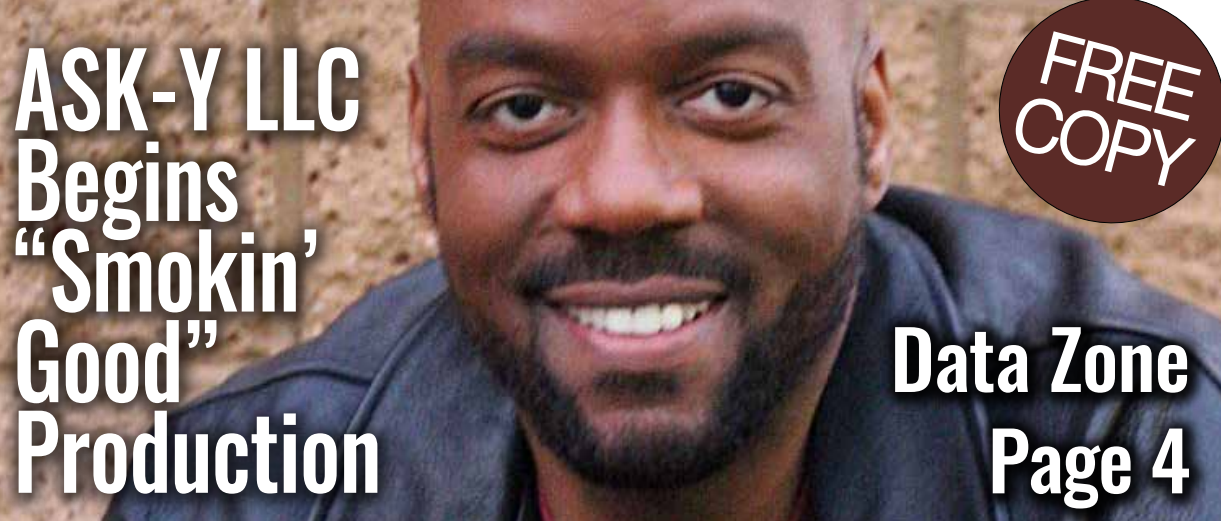
Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



ASK-Y LLC
Begins
"Smokin'
Good"
Production

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August 29 - September 4, 2020 55th Year Volume 18 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

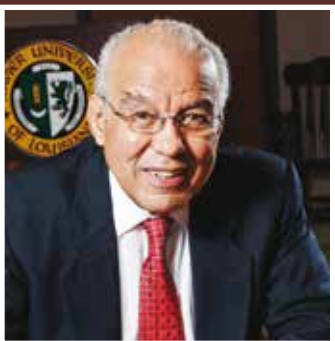
New Orleans

Fifteen Years after Katrina

Recovery Reconsidered



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New Orleans

Fifteen Years after Katrina

Recovery Reconsidered



In this the 15th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we must ask ourselves in 2020 has the City recovered from the ashes rising like a phoenix and has all lives been improved or is it a place where the status quo have been maintained?

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

August 29, 2005: A City and the Lives of a People Changed Forever

We are 15 years past what was the darkest time for the City of New Orleans, where Hurricane Katrina

and the breaching of the levees washed away the lives many built across the Crescent City for generations. It was a time where places of leisure like the Superdome and the Morial Convention Center was overrun with people seeking refuge. The same streets where second lines, block parties and the cacophony of joyous sounds of New Orleans was replaced with cries of hopelessness, confusion, and despair.

During this deluge, 1800 people died and 80% of the City was under water, causing billions of dollars in damages displacing a large majority of the City's residents. Today as you tour the City; in some ways it is a vastly different place from pre-Katrina New Orleans. In this the 15th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we must ask ourselves in 2020 has the City recovered from the ashes rising like a phoenix and all lives have been im-

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It is true that New Orleans is doing some great things post-Katrina, but the question becomes where have the majority of investments been made, and who is benefiting from them? Pre-COVID-19, we can look at tourism that brings major events into town and their economic impact, but how are the residents and areas that need the most help seen any of this changes in their way of life?

proved, or is it place where the status quo have been maintained? In addition to the City being invaded by carpetbaggers furthering the racial and economic divide or is it something in between?

What's Going On?

15 years later the official line is that New Orleans has become for some the success story of how a City can rebuild. Also, it's become a boom City for many young people who are coming to live in the City and experience the rich culture. But behind the veil this rosy picture does not tell the full story of a recovery that does it reflect the reality of the entire City, and what it looks like 15 years later with 100,000 less people, higher cost of living and many living from paycheck to paycheck. And sadly, these changes have left many native New Orleanians unable to return to the City they love.

It is true that New Orleans is doing some great things post-Katrina, but the question becomes where have the majority of investments been made, and who is benefiting from them? Pre-COVID-19, we can look at tourism that brings major events into town and their economic impact, but how are the residents and areas that need the most help seen any of this change in their way of life?

Yes, New Orleans is changing, but it is not for natives and African Americans in particular. For example, we have seen Magazine Street, areas of Uptown, the Marigny, St. Roch and of course the Central Business District redeveloped and repopulated, but what you do not see is in the areas where there are high concentrations of African Americans, like New Orleans East and the Lower Ninth Ward being a real priority



In these 15 years we have seen the City move in positive directions by beginning to remove confederate monuments that are remnants of a racist past.



The City's also elected its first female Mayor, LaToya Cantrell, who is taking on the tough issues and is on the frontlines fighting for people from every zip code to get a piece of the pie.



New Orleans is a Gumbo and this is what makes it great; and I would argue that the Black culture of the City is the special ingredient and the roux giving it the unique flavor.



as far as any real investment?

What you see in the City is progress and distress dance in a daily tango. We see a City that in some areas look the same if not worse than they did 15 years ago. And we know some of our leaders are fighting the good fight, but we must re-prioritize to get those who need, the most vulnerable citizens the resources they need to thrive in the City of New Orleans.

Recovery Means Equity and Opportunity

Behind this great comeback story is some in the African American community continue to face the greatest economic challenges. In this City 15 years later you see pockets of prosperity and splendor, which are marketed as the "new" New Orleans but nestled away, there are communities which still sit with blighted houses that are toxic wastelands; we must ask ourselves is this the kinds of places some of our children should be growing up in and what can we do to improve it?

We must also ask ourselves about an education system that has placed many of our most vulnerable kids inside of a petri dish being used to experiment in the name of reforming our education system. Ultimately, we must ask how are

we preparing our young people to take the mantles of leadership in our City? Are we trying to create a City where everyone can have a hand in shaping the New Orleans of tomorrow, or one where only a few will continue to set the agenda for the City?

Will there be parity in power between the Black and White residents, between the rich and the poor? What will the future of the people of New Orleans be? Will those with power even care to create programs which uplift the people, or will we continue to have two New Orleans' separate and unequal? If this is the case it is a recipe for New Orleans sinking deeper into the abyss and becoming a more dangerous City of haves and have nots?

This is something that nets bad consequences, where areas with resources are priorities in regard to safety and security while some areas are neglected in addition to and poor relations existing between the citizens and the police which only serves to exacerbate the problem in some of our communities. On a hopeful note the present Administration at City Hall is working to create equity and balance the scales making it a priority.

In these 15 years we have seen the City move in positive directions



The future of New Orleans must be one where all can sit at the table of power and determine its direction. (Michael "Quess" Moore).

by beginning to remove confederate monuments that are remnants of a racist past. The City's also elected its first female Mayor, LaToya Cantrell, who is taking on the tough issues and is on the frontlines fighting for people from every zip code to get a piece of the pie.

Gumbo: The Flavor of a People

This is a new day and fifteen years later as the City reflects on where it has been, it must be forward thinking and have a mutually beneficial vision on where it wants to go. New Orleans can no longer be a City that can linger in its past glories. It must move itself forward to face the challenges of becoming a City that can yes, embrace its rich and unique history and culture, but also embrace change and

progress. But that change and progress must be for all of the citizens of New Orleans, not just those that are wealthy, well connected, or White.

New Orleans is a Gumbo, and this is what makes it great; and I would argue that the Black culture

of the City is the special ingredient and the roux giving it the unique flavor. The food that tourists come to savor is our food. The music they flock to hear is our music. The flavor of New Orleans is our flavor. It is the heartbeat of New Orleans and this City would not be the same without it.

With that said, the future of New Orleans must be one where all can sit at the table of power and determine its direction. Fifteen years ago, the City was shown to the world as a place that was separate and unequal. Today we must work to rectify our ills which still remain and recognize that if this City is to become the great it must deal with issues of equity. The City must invest in the value and potential of all of its citizens. And those who lead whether it is civic, business, faith and an activist community must realize that if we are to recover fully, that all citizens and all neighborhoods in New Orleans matter.

And when we get to this glorious day, we can then second line and celebrate that we have fully recovered.

Celebrating the Life of Fred “Chocolate Santa” Parker

Data News Staff Edited Report

Fred Parker, the man known as “Seventh Ward Santa” or “Chocolate Santa,” whose warmth and holiday spirit lives on in the thousands of photographs he posed for with generations of Black New Orleanians at Christmas, has passed away.

A family member confirmed Parker’s death. For nearly 50 years, Parker dressed as Santa Claus and posed for pictures with children who visited Dennis Photofinish Studio at St. Bernard Avenue and North Tonti Street.

His smiling face and gray and white beard became instantly recognizable to children and parents, many of whom now remember taking their own photos with him in their youth at a time when Black Santa’s was rare.

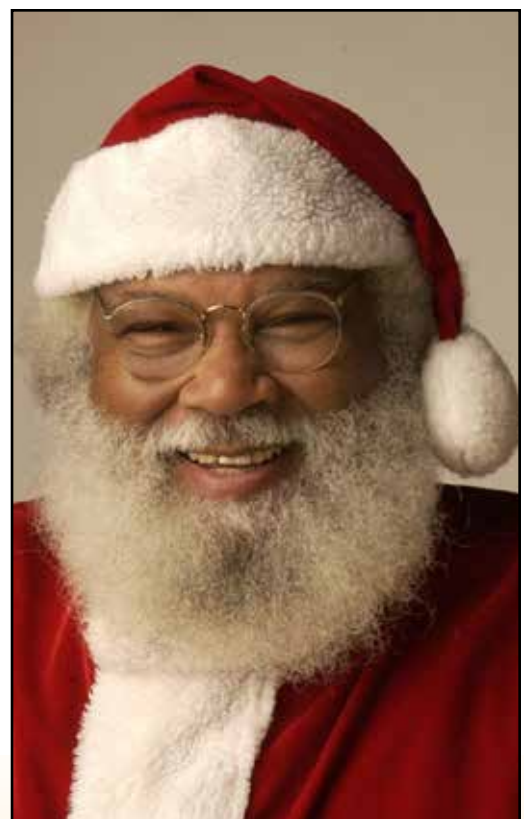
Throughout his marvelous life, Parker also made countless visits to schools and daycare centers and traveled to other cities as Santa as well.

“I love bringing joy to people, that’s my job - bring joy to the world, as much as I can,” he stated in an interview with former WWL-TV Anchor Sally Ann Roberts.

Fred Parker will be missed by all who he put a smile on the faces of many Black Kids during the holiday season.



Fred “Chocolate Santa” Parker’s, smiling face and gray and white beard became instantly recognizable to children and parents, many of whom now remember taking their own photos with him in their youth at a time when Black Santa’s were rare. Throughout his marvelous life, Parker also made countless visits to schools and daycare centers and traveled to other cities as Santa as well.



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

ASK-Y LLC Begins Production on Cutting Edge TV Series “Smokin’ Good”

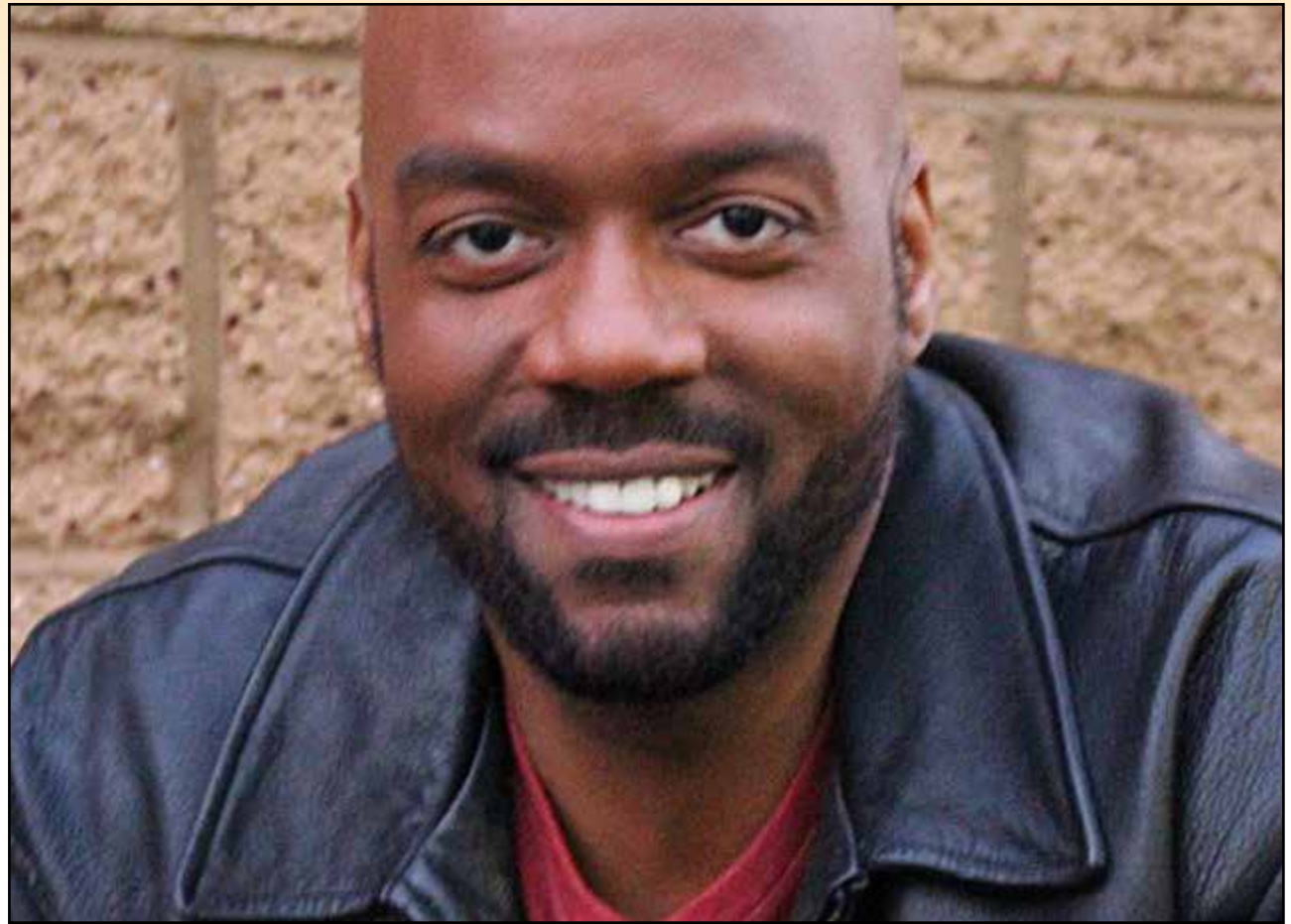
NNPA Newswire

ASK-Y LLC, a TV/Film production company based in Detroit, has begun production on their highly anticipated show, “Smokin’ Good,” a scripted drama series that is based in the world of cannabis.

The series chronicles the journey of August Good, who turns his life around from an illegal past, to a legal present; in hopes of achieving a prosperous and wealthy future for himself and his family. August believes that cannabis is the golden ticket to the prosperity he seeks, but the path is full of many hurdles to overcome. Enemies from the street, jealous family members, bitter ex-girlfriends, backstabbing partners and unscrupulous political forces, just to name a few.

“What’s so enamoring about this show is that it’s semi-autobiographical,” says Andre Watson, co-executive producer. “It details my successes, my failures, and everything in between as a cannabis entrepreneur. The average person has no idea what this industry is really about. They primarily feed into the stigmas attached to cannabis, and that in turn affects their perception. This show will give them a taste of what the industry is, and from a very unique perspective. You rarely see a black man’s point of view with cannabis, outside of being arrested and locked up from it.”

Shiek Mahmud-Bey, actor/director/producer, who credits include The Inner Circle, The Martyr Maker, Chasing After You, and many others, portrays the main role of August



Shiek Mahmud-Bey, actor/director/producer, who credits include The Inner Circle, The Martyr Maker, Chasing After You, and many others, portrays the main role of August Good.

Good. “What intrigued me about this project was the subject of cannabis, and the main character’s determination to make it in this business,” says Mahmud-Bey. “It’s also a classic, from-the-streets-to-the-boardroom tale. Those type of stories never get old, and the writing for this one is incredible.”

Ken Williams (pen name Octavis Gray), writer of “Smokin’ Good,” believed it was a hit when he first pitched the concept to Andre and Shiek. “I’ve known Andre for a long time, and the stories he shared about his experiences in cannabis were so amazing and detailed. I was so intrigued that

I told him we should turn his stories into a TV show. Then I told him I knew Shiek, and he could play the title role. So, the three of us crafted this masterpiece to portray to the masses.”

Shooting begins in October. Smokin’ Good will be filmed in Detroit and surrounding areas.

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City Council Votes to Rename Jefferson Davis Parkway to Norman C. Francis Parkway

Aviwe DuBois
Data News Weekly
Contributor

On the corner of Drexel Drive and what is currently Jefferson Davis Parkway lies Xavier University of Louisiana's Campus. On Aug. 20, 2020, the New Orleans City Council unanimously voted to rename Jefferson Davis Parkway to Norman C. Francis Parkway. This will be the first New Orleans street named after a slave-owning president of the Confederacy that will be renamed for an African American educator whose vision transformed this Historically Black University.

"I am most grateful that the city of New Orleans has named a street in my honor, particularly one that borders Xavier University, an institution that I have called home for more than a half-century," said Norman C. Francis, Xavier's former President and President Emeritus.

"And I am extremely appreciative of everyone who supported this effort, most importantly, Mayor LaToya Cantrell, the City Council,



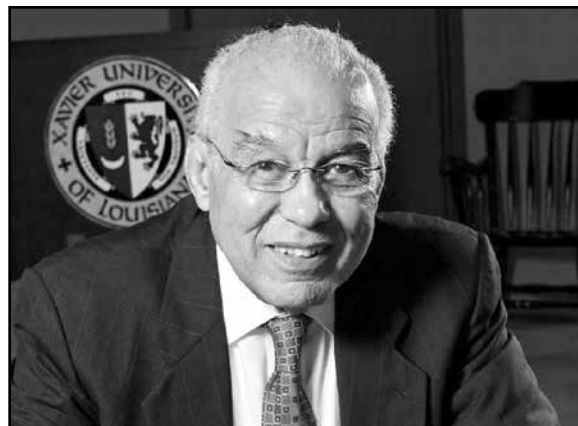
On Aug. 20, 2020, the New Orleans City Council unanimously voted to rename Jefferson Davis Parkway to Norman C. Francis Parkway.

and those who wrote letters, editorials, and signed petitions in support," Francis said in a statement.

Initially proposed in January 2018, the renaming was supported by the Xavier community and the Board of Trustees, university officials said. However, after the killing of George Floyd on May 25th, by Minneapolis police officers, the nationwide protests sparked a re-

newed interest in removing symbols honoring Confederates, slaveholders, and White supremacists.

"Changing the name of Jeff Davis Parkway is significant because it erases a racist past tied to the Civil War and the legacy of slavery," said Dr. Sharlene Sinegal-DeCuir, a Civil Rights-Era Historian, and Chair of the Department of History at Xavier. "This means the world to



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activists who are fighting to reverse the prominence of the myth of the lost Confederacy that glorifies the Southern cause and seeks to preserve its racist legacy."

The decision to rename the street that borders Xavier's campus will ensure that future students feel welcomed, university officials said.

"Dr. Francis always knew that education is the pathway to social

justice," said Reynold Verret, Xavier's current President. "His unwavering commitment and courage in the face of adversity spanned 50-plus years at Xavier and taught us all many lessons on how we must serve and lead our community."

The actual renaming of the street will occur on Jan. 1, 2021, to avoid complications with the ongoing Census or problems that may arise if voters in the upcoming elections have addresses that don't match their IDs. The renaming will be the first change in the city since the removal of statues honoring three Confederate leaders and a White supremacist militia in 2017. A commission created by the city council is considering whether to rename other streets, parks, and places in the city in the future.

"St. Katharine Drexel and the Sister of the Blessed Sacrament trusted me to serve Xavier and make it an integral part of this community," Francis said. "I share this acknowledgment with them and my Xavier colleagues. I am truly honored and humbled by this recognition."

State & Local News

Ephesus SDA Church Drive-Thru Food Distribution



Brenda Clark (Ephesus ACS Chairperson), Charles Shed and Danielle McGinnis of World Central Kitchen.



Ephesus SDA Church came together with several partners to host a drive-thru food distribution and giveaway. The Ephesus Church will continue to provide meals to local residents on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of every month.

Orleans Uptown area. Ephesus partnered with the World Central Kitchen, The Munch Factory, Café Reconcile, Farmers to Families, and Coca-Cola to provide food and water. Organizations such as JenCare, My Hood Exchange, Solid Rock International Ministries, New Orleans Police, Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Adventist Community Service

Organization, and Councilman Jay Banks's office provided services to assist in the event.

Volunteers bagged meals, and distributed food as hundreds of cars came through the church parking lot well into the evening. The Ephesus Church will continue to provide meals to local residents on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of every month.

Own the Crescent Expands to Help Small Property Owner Provide Housing



Own the Crescent provides the tools needed to navigate the housing market to find programs that suit participants' needs. Participants are given hands-on help including homebuyer training, credit counseling and special financing options. Now with the expansion of the program, even more landlords and first-time homebuyers will benefit. New Orleans currently has 19,000 rental units that are sitting empty, not being rented.

Andrenecia Morris
Executive Director,
HousingNOLA

Two years ago, HousingNOLA launched our Community Development Finance Plan in order to quantify the cost of creating the Affordable Housing opportunities needed to end New Orleans' housing crisis. We also relaunched "Own the Crescent" as a program to help landlords fix up and rent their properties and

helps first-time homebuyers find housing.

The program, which was set to expire this December, was extended through September 2021. JP Morgan Chase has extended the grant through September 2021 and now all New Orleans neighborhoods can benefit in the hopes of countering the impact COVID-19.

Own the Crescent provides the

Own the Crescent,
Continued on page 7.

Data News Staff Edited Report
Photos by Davis Haywood and Tariq Shotwell

The Ephesus SDA Church hosted a drive-thru food distribution on August 22nd in response to COVID-19 and the vital assistance needed for families within the New

New Orleans Own Cedric Richmond Jr., Shines at the Democratic National Convention

Benjamin Bates
Data News Weekly
Contributor

It was an historic Democratic National Convention, with the nomination of Joe Biden and his selection of Sen. Kamala Harris, becoming the first woman of African American and South Asian descent to be chosen on a major party ticket.

On these four nights' people from all walks of life made appearances to make the case for the Biden/Harris ticket. But many are talking about a little boy from New Orleans, who is stealing the hearts of many Americans.

During the last night of the convention, Louisiana Congressman



While standing in front of the artwork commemorating the Civil Rights Movement, Cedric Richmond Jr., recited the Pledge of Allegiance. With his hand over his heart and an infectious smile, he warmed the hearts of Americans becoming a viral sensation.

Cedric Richmond, who is also one of the campaigns co-chairs brought in his son, Cedric Jr., to open the final night and just like that, he became an instant viral star.

While standing in front of the artwork commemorating the Civil Rights Movement, Cedric Jr., recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

With his hand over his heart and an infectious smile he warmed the hearts of Americans in these divisive times reminding us all that we are "One Nation Under God Indivisible with Liberty and Justice for All."

It is times like this that America needs young people like Cedric Jr., to remind the country that we are better united than divided.

Commentary

Learning to Savor Each Flavor and Every Moment



Renee Dugué
Co-Founder and Executive
Director of Reborn and Rising

I'm so 504! Ask me my favorite food, my favorite music, my favorite holiday, my favorite things to do... they all represent my life in New Orleans, and The Desire. As a kid, were you told to "close the icebox cause you were letting all the cold air out"? If so, I bet you have The Holy Trinity in your refrigerator right now! And if you don't, I bet you'll get it before you make your favorite dish. As I write from Houston, TX and you read from where you are, in this very mo-

ment, we are connected through our shared experiences, emanating from the soul of our little big city. Small, close-knit, everybody knows everybody! And we'll feed anybody, at any hour, cause unlike the kitchen on Chef, we never close. Prime, staple ingredients or not, we are true makers of something out of nothing. It's in our genes; po boys from poor girls made strong with melanin. Whipping a pot of water, some celery, bell peppers, onions, and flour, and within an hour on that fire...got the whole block hot and popping for what you are cooking up. Man! I'm craving a praline and a snowball right now!

Home truly is where the heart is. Unfortunately for so many of us, blended with happy memories, our childhood home is also where hurt lies. Made better with melanin, we're strong enough to endure the pain though. We stand tall and push forward by any means necessary. This

seems so easy for some. It certainly was easier said than done for me. I truly struggled. I was confused by things that happened to me as a child. I was scarred, literally physically, emotionally, and mentally by the sexual abuse I suffered. Pain and trauma were trapped so deeply within me, most of my self-destructive behavior was done unconsciously. Like many, I gravitated towards what I knew. I wallowed in dysfunction as I walked across the courts, around the corner, up the streets, and crossed the tracks of The Desire to wander further, aimlessly throughout the city.

True to our heritage, I masked my low self-esteem. Draped in purples, greens, and gold, feathers, leather and lace, red lips, and painted face; I never showed my true colors. But I couldn't hide me eyes; and it's so true they never lie. It took years for me to realize what I was searching for resided within

me. I had to face the woman in the mirror. Flaws and all, I came to understand that if I liked any part of myself, I had to accept every part of my life's experiences, as necessary. I had to be grateful for everyone who was a part of each lesson lived. I had to forgive them and myself, realizing that people in pain hurt people, and when we know better, we do better. Every day is a gift to go further on our path of self-discovery. Sharing my truth has set me free to see my wildest dreams come true. I walk every day, literally, on my journey from desire to purpose. Be encouraged to do the same.

Renee Dugué, is a Healer, Artist, Writer, Humanitarian, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Reborn & Rising in Houston, TX. Learn more of her WALK-4WATER Campaign's efforts to provide clean water to Africans in need. Visit RebornAndRising.org today. Helping is healing. Healing is helping.

Own the Crescent, Continued from page 6.

tools needed to navigate the housing market to find programs that suit participants' needs. Participants are given hands-on help including homebuyer training, credit counseling and special financing options. Own the Crescent collaborative partners include NewCorp Inc., Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance, Ujamaa Economic De-

velopment Corporation, Lift Fund, Hope Credit Union, Hope Enterprises, CD Capital and Tru FUND.

In less than one year, Own the Crescent's success was proven in the Claiborne Corridor:

- 28 First-time homebuyer opportunities were created
- 624 Individuals received certification through training programs
- 25 Small businesses were assisted

Now with the expansion of the program, even more landlords and first-time homebuyers will benefit. New Orleans currently has 19,000 rental units that are sitting empty, not being rented. There simply aren't enough lending solutions for people who may have inherited property that needs repair—particularly for working class African Americans.

Through Own the Crescent

we're offering the financial help needed to fix up their properties and get them rented. And people struggling with the challenges of buying their first home get the resources they need to succeed. It's a win-win situation and another way to ensure that we #PutHousing-First. To sign up or learn more, go to www.OwnTheCrescent.org or call 855-228-9328.

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Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net and datanewseditor@bellsouth.net.

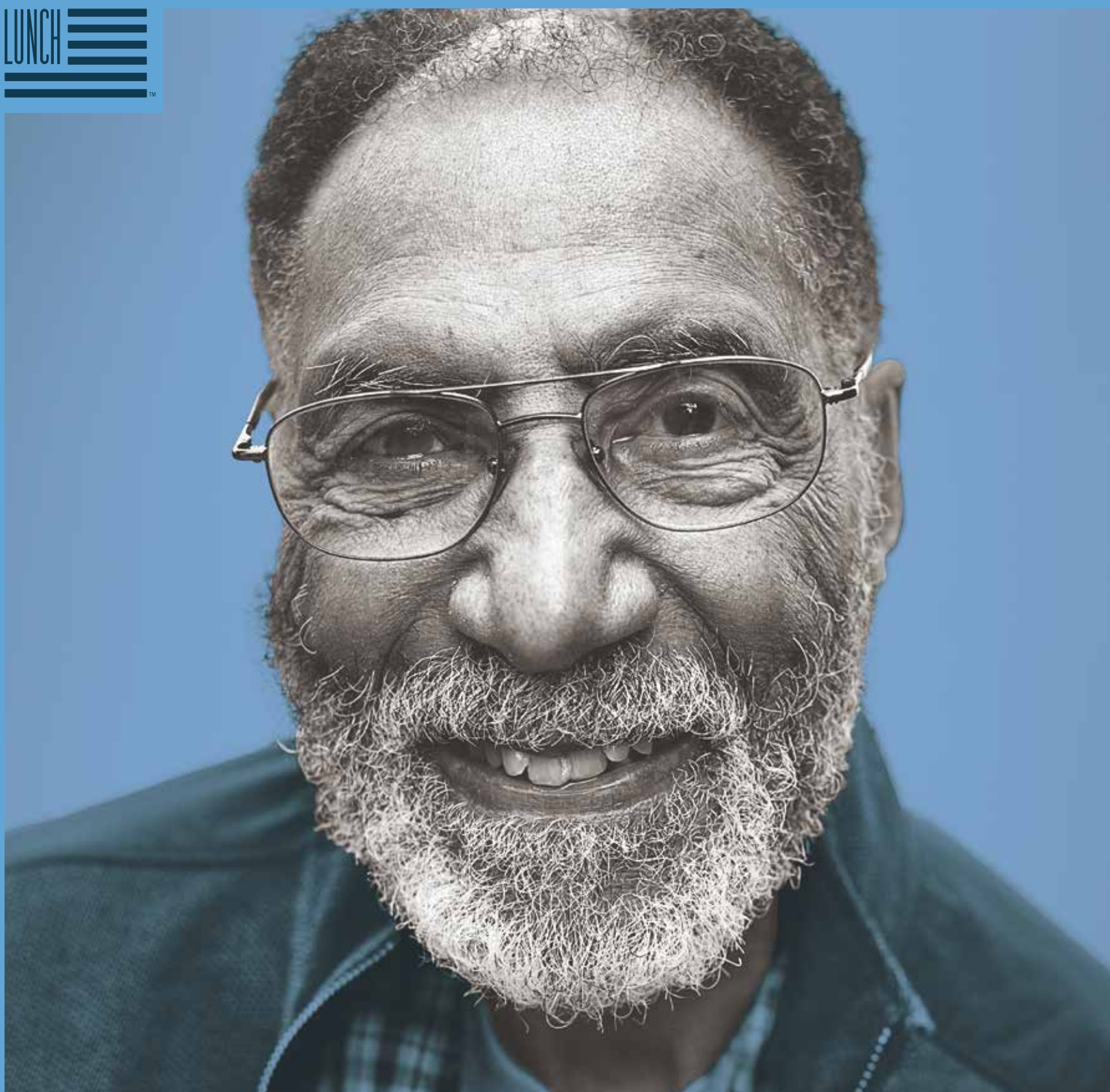
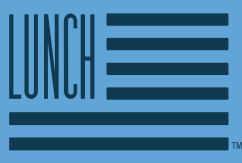
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