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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

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Taysom Hill Is the Real Deal

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Who Will Be the Next District Attorney of New Orleans?

Data News Weekly Speaks with the Candidates

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

The voters in the City of New Orleans are already early voting for the Dec. 5th run-off election where several races and millage proposals are on the ballot. While all are important; the race that all are talking about is the contest for District Attorney between Keva Landrum and Jason Williams. Data News Weekly caught up with both of the candidates to talk about their campaigns.



Both Keva Landrum and Jason Williams are making their cases to the people of New Orleans to become the DA. They have both garnered much support for this coveted post. Ultimately, it will be up to the voters to decide on Dec. 5th who will become the next District Attorney

What is it that makes you the better choice for the people of New Orleans to represent them as the District Attorney?

Jason Williams

I have served the people of New Orleans as their City Council President who chairs Criminal Justice Reform, a Judge, and respected defense attorney for over 20 years. In all of these roles, the people have seen me fight for them and to make our city fairer and equitable. They have seen me fight for those less fortunate. And the people of New Orleans know that I will bring that same spirit to transform the Criminal Legal System to increase safety and justice for everyone.

Our people have seen the results of the plans and record of my opponent. It has denied justice for too many in our community, especially Black men, and has not made our

families safer. My opponent is promising more “tough on crime” which means that our communities will be targeted, our young people won’t get the same treatment as others with means, and the DA’s office will focus on non-violent petty offenses that set traps for people versus focusing on the crimes that the people want to see an end to. The people of New Orleans know me and know that I will prioritize violent crime, get illegal guns off the street, get the right perpetrators causing harm, and increase support to people who have mental or drug challenges versus funneling them into the jail and increasing the mass incarceration injustice in our city.

Keva Landrum

Starting at a very young age, I aspired to become a community leader. In my legal career, I served as an Assistant District Attorney and rose through the ranks to become interim DA in 2007, and also served as Chief Judge of Criminal District Court. I gained a unique perspective as to what leadership qualities this office needs. I believe that I am the only candidate in this race with the experience needed to deliver on meaningful Criminal Justice Reform while prosecuting violent criminals, both of which I have a proven track record of doing successfully throughout my career.

As a former District Attorney and Chief Judge of Criminal District Court, I understand the importance of prosecuting violent criminals and pursuing justice for victims and their families. I have also seen the toll an unfair system can take on our community. Serving

as a former prosecutor including as Supervisor of the Sex Crimes Division coupled with having served as a Judge in Criminal District Court has provided me with the right balance, knowledge and skill set needed to lead this office.

If I were allowed only one word to explain why I am the better candidate for District Attorney of New Orleans, I would choose the word “experience.” I have experience as an Assistant District Attorney trying violent crimes of rape, murder, sexual and physical abuse of children, armed robberies, carjackings, and more. As the acting District Attorney of New Orleans, I led the Office through chaotic times and stabilized it. As an elected Judge at Criminal Court in New Orleans, and as the Chief Judge, I saw every day for 11 years the good, the bad, and the ugly in the system.

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

There's been historic racism in the Criminal Justice System that's adversely affected African Americans. Today many are demanding reforms in the Criminal Justice System. What are your thoughts on Criminal Justice Reform and if elected what is it that you see is the most pressing issue facing the DA Office?

Keva Landrum

I will review every area and division of the office to identify policies, procedures, conduct, or attitudes that condone, allow, or cause racism. I will examine charging practices, sentencing recommendations, diversion recommendations, bail recommendations, plea offers; in short. I will examine every part of the office for possible racial inequity or bias. When found, these will be eliminated. Corrective policies will be promulgated, and training will ensue, designed to prevent any recurrences. Even absent specific racist findings, anti-racist and anti-bias training will be provided to all staff. I will work with law enforcement to correct and prevent racist behavior in their ranks and will offer to sponsor and participate in joint trainings for D.A.'s and police. I will investigate thoroughly and fairly any criminal charges against law enforcement personnel.

In my opinion, the most pressing problem for the office is the lack of confidence and support for the office in the New Orleans community at large. As District Attorney, it will be my immediate task to begin the work to improve and reform, the behavior, attitude, and policies that have caused this lack of confidence. This lack of confidence causes a host of problems, among them poor morale and high turnover of attorneys.

In addition to my vision and platform outlined above, I believe that real Criminal Justice Reform begins with a commitment to reform our bail system. As the former Chief Judge, I was instrumental in spearheading the current Pretrial Services Program at Criminal District Court. As District Attorney, I will ensure people don't remain in jail simply because they can't afford to pay. My Administration will begin with the premise that people are innocent until proven guilty and the purpose of bail is to ensure individuals return for future court appearances. We will also evaluate individuals charged with violent crimes using a pre-trial risk assessment tool to determine public safety risks and protect victims and witnesses of violent crime and domestic violence.

As District Attorney my goal is to reduce pre-trial incarceration by offering rehabilitation to non-violent offenders. My Administration will seek to link individuals with the services they need. We will expand diversion for those with a history of drug abuse and addiction with treatment, mental health care, and job training.

I agree to work to reduce all racial disparities and overcriminalization. Regarding the elimination of unaffordable fines and fees, we will seek to consider alternatives, but much of that is determined by statutory mandates and judicial discretion. With respect to alternatives to incarceration for misdemeanors, we agree that it would be appropriate with all nonviolent offenses while protecting the victims of domestic violence.

Jason Williams

I have said for years that the Criminal Legal System is racist and sexist. It was designed to marginalize and oppress. Today, the system is not broken. It is operating just as it was designed to operate. Because it was designed by men, it can be redesigned to deliver justice and safety. But make no mistake about it.

I am the only candidate in this race that the people of New Orleans has seen leading Criminal Justice Reform for years. I did not just start using the terms. The people have seen me write the legislation to decriminalize marijuana because the oppressive laws have led to the mass incarceration of too many poor people in our community and has eroded our families.

The people saw me work to reform the Money Bail System and help reduce the number of people in jail just because they don't have money to pay for bail. And the people of New Orleans saw me stand up to Cannizzaro when he was issuing fake subpoenas and jailing victims.

The most pressing issue with the DA's Office is changing the culture and mindset that is focused on locking up everyone irrespective of innocence and failing to hold people accountable without putting the legal system stamp on them. I have a record of standing up, speaking out, and delivering change. As our next District Attorney, I will make New Orleans proud by what we're able to achieve together to increase safety and justice.



Jason Williams speaking with residents about his campaign with a message of Criminal Justice reform and running a more efficient and transparent District Attorney's Office.

There is a perception problem with the DA's Office left by the former DA. What will you do to make the public confident that the office will operate with integrity and transparency to produce better results for the people of New Orleans?

Keva Landrum

The D.A.'s office is suffering from a serious decline in public confidence. Public confidence cannot be restored by paper plans and promises. As District Attorney, I plan to earn the respect and support of the citizens of New Orleans by working all day, every day to implement the plans, policies, and reforms I have stated in the answers to these questions. Through transparency, through integrity, through a commitment to justice and anti-racism in every area of the District Attorney's office, the office can become highly effective in promoting the safety of citizens. This is a big, important job and I am ready to take it on.

Jason Williams

As City Council President and Criminal Justice Committee Chair, I developed public dashboards to increase information sharing and transparency with the public. I will do the exact same thing as DA so that the public has the information needed to hold me accountable. I also developed the Jerome Smith Criminal Justice Citizen Advisory Council to allow citizens to help set priorities in criminal justice and law enforcement budget priorities. As District Attorney, I will establish a Citizen Advisory Board of Advocates and victims to help ensure we are hearing of the needs, responsive, and rebuild trust.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell the voters as they head to the polls regarding your candidacy?

Keva Landrum

Please visit Kevalandrum.com to learn more about my candidacy!



Keva Landrum is touting her experience as a former interim District Attorney and Chief Judge of Criminal District Court as reasons why the voters should elect her as the next District Attorney.

Jason Williams

I was born in New Orleans and love this city with everything that I have. I am raising three kids in this city and I want to be District Attorney so that my kids and yours can be safe and grow up to be prosperous, productive, and add to our amazing culture. This is a defining moment for us. This vote for DA is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform a racist and sexist Criminal Legal System that is oppressive and that has not made us safer. I encourage the people of New Orleans to not give in to the fear that my opponent and her supporters want you to have. You can have both safety and justice. Don't let anyone scare you into believing that the only way to have safety is by continuing to throw our brothers, sisters, and young people into jail for petty offenses while failing to provide people with mental illness and drug addiction the real help they need. We can vote for a change agent and increase safety and justice. I sincerely hope I can earn your vote.

Data News Weekly Encourages All to Get Out and Vote!

A Historic Walk Through History with an Eye on the Future

Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr.
Superintendent, NOLA Public Schools

This past Saturday marked the 60th Anniversary of the Desegregation of New Orleans Public Schools - an historic event not just for New Orleanians, but for the entire nation. On Nov. 14, 1960 Ruby Bridges, Leona Tate, Tessie Prevost, and Gail Etienne became the first African American students to be integrated into what had previously been all-White public schools in New Orleans.

Together, these brave young women changed history and took an important step on the long road towards equity and racial justice. Last Friday, it was my honor to join students from Akili Academy as they took part in the "Ruby Walk" - following the path 6-year-old Ruby Bridges took to her first day of school in 1960. Together, we walked through the school's halls, toured Ms. Bridges' original classroom and ended the walk by the Ruby Bridges Statue in the school's courtyard.

While we walked in honor of the bravery of these four young women, we did so with the recognition that the best way to truly honor their legacies is to build on the foundation that they started 60 years ago. The Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and NOLA-PS are continuously striving to ensure equity and racial justice remain a priority and a hallmark of the NOLA school community. That's why, this past summer, the OPSB passed a resolution to advance a racial equity audit on all policies in the District with the goal of ensuring that inherent or systematic racism does not affect outcomes and experiences for NOLA-PS students and their families. While this is an important step forward, we know there is still so much work that needs to be done for us to best serve our students, staff, and community.

The examples we set and lessons we teach our students today will help shape the type of grown adults they become tomorrow. We remain dedicated to following in the footsteps of Leona Tate, Tessie Prevost, Gail Etienne, and Ruby Bridges so that future generations understand that equity is a fundamental right.

As we head towards the Thanksgiving Holiday, we should all take time to reflect on the many things



Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr., Superintendent, NOLA Public Schools recently joined students from Akili Academy as they took part in the "Ruby Walk" - following the path 6-year-old Ruby Bridges took to her first day of school in 1960. Together, we walked through the school's halls, toured Ms. Bridges' original classroom and ended the walk by the Ruby Bridges Statue in the school's courtyard.



we have to be thankful for. For me, I'm thankful for my family, the thousands of incredible students, teachers, and families that make up our school community, and the strength of our community in the toughest of times.

At the same time, we must all remember that we are still in the midst of a Pan-

demic - one that requires us to keep our guard up and continue to adhere to safety measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. While our metrics remain strong and schools will remain open at this time, COVID-19 cases are on the rise again. We know it's not easy, but for the safety of our school community and all New Or-

leanians, I urge everyone to please limit your contact with people outside of your immediate family during the holidays. Let's all mask up, stay socially distanced, and wash our hands. There are 45,000 students depending on it.

Together, we can do this.



Taysom Hill Is the Real Deal

Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly Columnist

What's up people? This ya boy Fleur De Lis, giving it to you with all things 5-0-4. What is everybody talking about this week...Taysom Hill is the Real Deal.

This week in his debut as a starter Taysom Hill showed he had what it takes to be the heir to the throne of number 9 once he hangs up his cleats and go down as one of the greatest of all time.

Taysom Hill, over his short stint in the league is the Black and Gold version of the Swiss Army knife, showing that he can do it all and why he is the second highest paid back-up QB in the NFL, earning 10.5 million dollars a year. (Get ya money bruh)!!!

This past week as he played quarterback, he was able to score two running touchdowns as well as pass for 233 yards as the Black and Gold beat the stuffing out of the Dirty Birds (Atlanta Falcons) 24-9.

In what was a route, the defense also got it done sacking Atlanta QB Matt Ryan 8 times and keeping their high-powered offense out of the end zone for the entire game.

The Saints improve their record to 8-2 and on top of the NFC South.

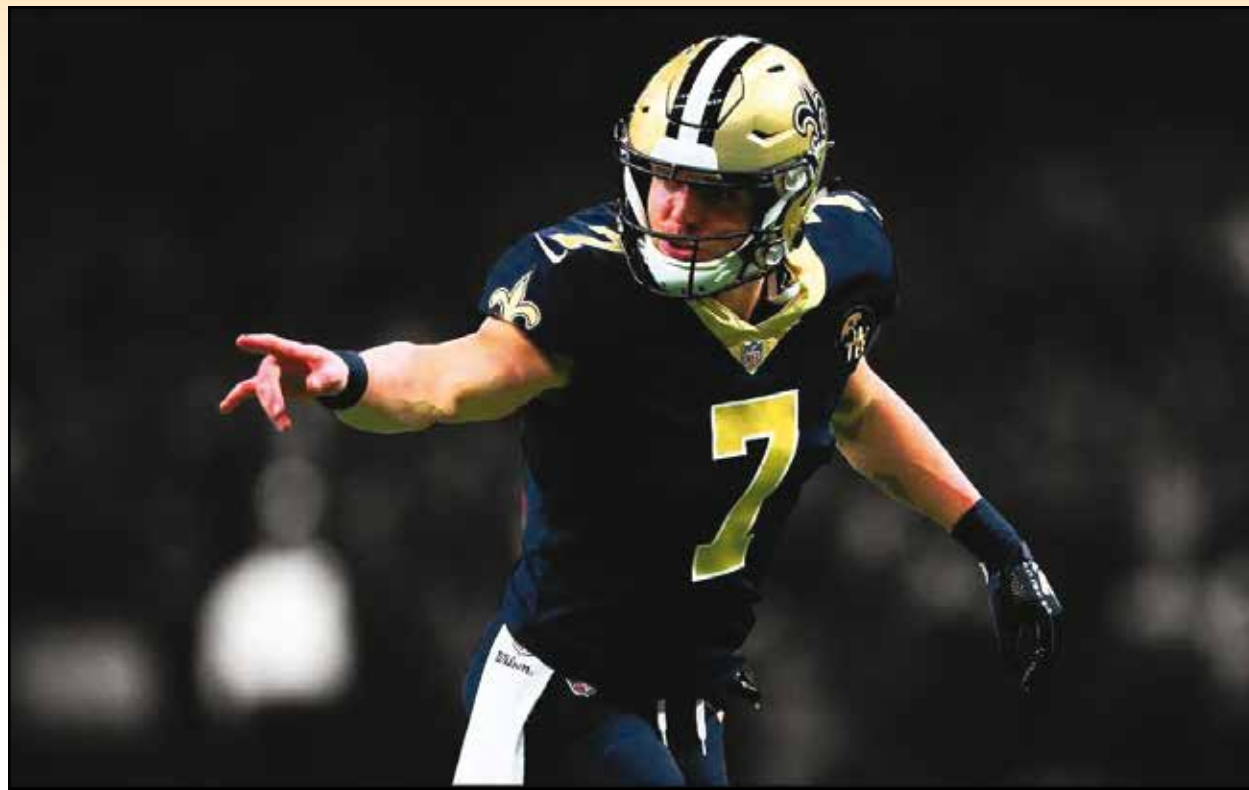
With more folks in the Dome cheering them on the Who Dat Nation watched as the Saints "Did Dat." With Drew Brees out for several weeks Hill, showed he can make it happen, putting points on the scoreboard and doing whatever it takes to win.

While we know one week does not dictate what his success will be long term, but Taysom is in the mode of many of the new stars in the NFL at the QB position; where sitting in the pocket is the thing of a by-gone era. So, it seems the Black and Gold can with Taysom Hill as the starting QB be competitive in years to come.

Of course, we are waiting for number 9 to come back and light up the scoreboard and get us to this year's Super Bowl. But in the meantime, I can't lie, I and many of the people I've spoken to like Taysom Hill and his style of play...He knows how to get it done. True All-Madden Team Material.

Well, I know many feel good as we beat the up on our rivals the Dirty Birds, but as we get ready for Thanksgiving; I ask all of our people to remain safe and give thanks for all that is good in your life.

Take care and until next time...This is Fleur De Lis saying take care of yourselves and all those you love not just during the holiday season, but every day "Baaaby."



Taysom Hill, showing he has what it takes to win, as he in his debut game as the starting QB leading the Saints to a 24-9 win over their bitter rivals the Atlanta Falcons.



Community Organizations Encourage Giving along with Spending, During Holidays

Kira Mercado
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Giving Tuesday 2020 has new meaning for charitable organizations working to sustain their community efforts during the Pandemic. The day is designated for global generosity calling for kindness and unity, and is a day set aside for people nationwide to donate to nonprofit organizations. This nationwide act of charitable service will take place this year on Dec. 1, 2020. Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 in New York City in the Bethel Center for Innovation and Social Impact. Since then, Giving Tuesdays has grown with over 200 leaders who have launched community campaigns across the U.S. and national movements in more than 60 countries.

Giving Tuesday in 2019 gener-



The Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Louisiana has supported families of severely ill or injured children while they receive their critical treatment. In 2019, there were a total of 480 families from 42 different Louisiana parishes, 13 other states, and four foreign countries that stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in New Orleans.

ated over \$2 billion dollars in donations in the U.S. With Americans spending millions of dollars over the Thanksgiving and Christmas



Kimberly Woodard, Director of Development at Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Louisiana.

holidays on gifts and other items for their loved ones, non-profits aim to encourage citizens to also support the work of their local non-profits

and community organizations.

"People spend money on Black Friday and Cyber Monday like running water. So, we're going to do a campaign to raise money on the following Tuesday," said Kimberly Woodard, the Director of Development at Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Louisiana.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Louisiana has supported families of severely ill or injured children while they receive their critical treatment. Due to COVID-19, volunteers are unable to cook in the house kitchen due to safety protocols. During Giving Tuesday, the organization will encourage residents to contribute to the Meals from the Heart Program. The organization welcomes individuals or groups that can sponsor meals for families during their stay in the city for long-term medical care for their children, Woodard said.

Additionally, as a result of the Pandemic, the Ronald McDonald House has a shortage on the number of families they could house in the "Comforts of Home" Program dedicated to bringing a "homey" environment to the hospital. The foundation has created comfort bags filled with gift cards, blankets, books, toiletries, and other selected items and deliver it to the hospital for social workers to distribute.

In 2019, there were a total of 480 families from 42 different Louisiana parishes, 13 other states, and four foreign countries that stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in New Orleans. The average stay was seven nights at a cost equivalent to \$750,000 in hotel stays. The community can support charitable work over the holidays by donating to a wide range of organizations supporting families at 225gives.org, Woodard said.

Commentary

From Desire to Purpose...A Dreamer's Journey

Embrace Change & Activate your Willpower



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

How excited were we for this year?!?! Clarity of purpose, focus, and perfect vision are what we all envisioned 2020 would bring. Never did any of us imagine the tremendous change, loss, and pain we would suffer through. Although, from The N.O., we're no strangers to losing loved ones. No other place in the country grieves the loss of life like we do. So accustomed to it that we still carry on the centuries-old quintessential New Orleans art form, brought over by our West African ancestors. Our Second Line Jazz Funerals are a true celebration of life and loss. A parade of pride and joy, we dance and enjoy the time spent with our loves before we usher them into the afterlife. Drawing strength from the

enslaved that gathered on Sundays in Congo Square, we call to them with every beat of the drum and each step and strut up the street; as if to say "Come carry our beloved home and into the loving arms of Our Creator." Call it voodoo, some say hoodoo, but we knew we had to pull through, and we still do! Even though COVID-19 has stripped our freedoms to carry out this cultural tradition, we must be as resourceful and resilient as our forefathers when, similarly out of fear and for safety (of White inhabitants) in the early 1800s, they too, were forbidden to gather. Just like them, we can and WILL get through this. We must learn to embrace the change. Change is truly the only constant.

Directly and indirectly, we all are experiencing so much loss. Our families, our finances, and our freedoms are being affected and we are all hurting. Each of us is in some way scrambling, trying to cope with the current uncertainty. Forced to shelter in place, many of us are isolated as we struggle to maintain, and are resorting to unhealthy, self-destructive coping strategies. For many, some "bad habits" (overeating, TV binge-watching, social



"When a T-shirt just won't do," said Renée Dugué of her new tattoos, honoring friend and sponsor, William Poole Jr., founder of Addiction Matters 412, who lost his battle to heroin addiction on 9/27/20. She now has a visual reminder to embrace change and to activate her WILLPOWER every day as she walks on her journey from desire to purpose. Left to fulfill his legacy is his Queen Darlene McGruder Poole and their children, who vow that their pain WILL not be in vain.



media, drinking, gambling, promiscuity, and pornography) have evolved into addictions. For others, the battle to maintain their sobriety and stay clean has been overwhelming. Even those tasked with being strong for others have fallen victim, leaving their families broken and in more pain. We must realize

that although this current state of affairs is new, our fight to survive, with all the odds stacked against us, is not. It was our people that made it through The Middle Passage, forced naked and bare feet onto this city's very land, and into the mouth of the Mississippi River to gather with the indigenous Americans to

build this country into what it is today. We were born with all we need to succeed, but it must be done together; not "Alone Together."

No one person's issues are theirs alone. Everyone is struggling with something. We must not allow fear, shame, or stigma to prevent us from seeking the help we need. Reach out, talk to someone, be honest, and PRAY. How do you think you made it this far? For me...I know it's because I had a praying grandmother that had a praying grandmother, that taught my grandbabies' great-grandmother to pray and believe! We must rely on our faith as we purpose every day to walk our paths. Our Creator woke you and me up today, on purpose, to fulfill our purpose. Together we are stronger. Let's join to heal each other, and choose to live, prioritizing peace, love, and light every step of our journey.

If you are in need of non-emergency emotional support or are a local provider with resources to support your community, TEXT Renée Dugué of Reborn & Rising @832-683-8165. Together we are stronger. RebornAndRising.org

African American Woman, Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber, Makes US Naval Academy History

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber, a mechanical engineering major from Illinois, has been named Brigade Commander for the spring semester at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Barber, a track star with a stated desire to work as a Marine Corps ground officer, becomes the first Black woman to lead the Naval Academy's student body.

The brigade commander heads the Academy's day-to-day activities and trains the class of approximately 4,500 midshipmen. Barber becomes the 16th woman to serve in that role.

"Earning the title of brigade commander speaks volumes, but the title itself is not nearly as significant as the opportunity it brings to lead a team in doing something I believe will be truly special," Barber said in a news release. "I am humbled to play a small role in this momentous season of American history."

As a walk-on sprinter and hurdler of the Navy Women's Varsity Track and Field team, Barber has lettered all three years of competing and is an Academy record holder for the outdoor 4x400m relay, according to her biography.

She is the co-president of the



Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber becomes the first Black woman to lead the Naval Academy's student body.

Navy Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club, secretary for the National Society of Black Engineers, and a USNA Gospel Choir and Midshipman Black Studies Club member.

Barber served as the 13th company's executive officer and currently serves as the Brigade's 1st

regiment executive officer.

She also initiated a STEM outreach program that leverages mentoring, literature, and service lessons to serve middle school-aged girls of color.

Barber led a team to organize the inaugural U.S. Naval Academy

Black Female Network Breakfast to bridge the generational gap between current black midshipmen and alumni.

Barber is recently credited with mobilizing a team of more than 180 midshipmen, faculty, and alumni to develop the Midshipman Diversity Team to promote greater diversity, inclusivity, and equity within the Brigade.

"Sydney stands out amongst her peers, for not only her exemplary record but for her clear vision of how she intends to make the world a better place and her accompanying bias for action," said Lt. Commander Darby Yeager, a member of the U.S. Navy Academy's Truman Scholarship Selection Committee.

"We were incredibly proud to have Sydney represent the Naval Academy in her Truman Scholarship interview this year," Yeager added.

Janie Mines, who became the first Black woman to graduate from the Naval Academy in 1980, expressed her excitement for Barber on Twitter.

"This brought me to tears. This young woman, Midshipman Sydney Barber, will be the first Black Female Brigade Commander at the U.S. Naval Academy. 40 years later. Thank you, Sydney! Love you!" Mines tweeted.

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Job Opportunity

Freelance Writers Wanted

Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. We want to hear from you if you are a working journalist, or an aspiring journalist who has 2 years or more of newspaper or PR writing experience. We need writers who can cover New Orleans news stories, ranging from local high school sports, community events, City Hall and entertainment. Experience in print is necessary, experience in digital and social media are encouraged.

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.

We can't wait to
hear from you!

State & Local News

President-Elect Biden Chooses Louisiana Native Linda Thomas-Greenfield as UN Ambassador

Eric Connerly
Data News Weekly
Contributor

A native of the State of Louisiana was officially named U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations under the incoming Biden-Harris Administration.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield comes with 35-years of experience as U.S. Foreign Service who has served on four continents.

This is not her first stint working in under a Presidential Administration. Previously, she served as the Assistant Secretary for the Bu-



Louisiana native and Veteran Diplomat Linda Thomas-Greenfield was officially named U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations under the incoming Biden-Harris Administration.

reau of African Affairs during the Obama-Biden Administration until 2017.

The Baker, LA. native graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in 1974 from Louisiana State University and in she also earned a Master's Degree (MA) in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Among those who congratulated her was Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards on Twitter, saying, "Louisiana is proud to have one of our own serving as the country's representative to the international community."



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