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New Orleans

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"The People's Paper"

Black Pride

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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New Orleans Voices of Congo Square

It Brings the History of the City's Black Music, Song and Dance to the Stage



"We wanted to bring our story not just to New Orleans or Louisiana, but bring it to the world," says Shaka Zulu as the reason for producing the play. For more info go to <https://new-orleans-voices-of-congo-square.com/phone/index.html>.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

Taking a Journey Through History

New Orleans is a City with a history and cultural heritage that is a rich gumbo of cultures that makes for

a rich tapestry that draws many to explore the mysterious jewel that makes it one of the world's most interesting and international cities.

It is a place that intersects the old and the new world; and at the roux giving it its unique flavor and the heartbeat that gives it life arguably is the Black people, who create and today continue to build upon

centuries old music and dance traditions.

Many of these such as the Brass Bands, second line, marching clubs, the Black Masking Tradition (Mardi Gras Indians), Jazz, R&B/Funk and more recently, Bounce music showcases a City and its people that's revered around the world.

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.

Photos by Antonia Zennaro.

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



The impact of New Orleans culture is worldwide as explained by Zulu, who travels around the world doing lectures and presenting the culture of New Orleans across the globe.

New Orleans Voices of Congo Square an Amazing Production Gives a True and Authentic Look at some of the Traditions of Black New Orleans

"New Orleans Voices of Congo Square is a vibrant and brilliant production of New Orleans' magical music, colorful dance, and mysterious chants. This artistic creation shares the unique culture of the indigenous people of New Orleans and those who arrived from Africa, Haiti and other Caribbean Islands all culminating on the sacred grounds of Congo Square in the heart of New Orleans' historic Tremé Neighborhood. It is the Sunday gathering of these people that shaped the current day Black Carnival Traditions of New Orleans. This sacred backstreet culture presents the pulsating Live New Orleans Jazz Second Line Band, the mystical beauty of the Masking Black (Mardi Gras) Indians, the rhythmic traditional movement of electrifying dancers and all things that make New Orleans unique to any other part of the United States," says Shaka Zulu, the producer, who is also a "keeper" of the culture who believes telling the story of New Orleans accurately and from a practitioner who also studies the culture is important in painting the picture of the true essence of Black New Orleans.

Due to the crisis of the Corona Virus Pandemic, the World Tour launch for New Orleans Voices of Congo Square came to a screeching halt, confining its staff and performers to their home base. This virtual premier provides the opportunity to present to the World, the powerful hidden history that spiraled into the current day cultural gumbo of New

Orleans.

The show is a two-hour spectacle that is entertaining as well as educational and inspiring. Giving a glimpse into the many facets of New Orleans Black Cultural traditions.

The Griot and the Search for a True Voice

While being subjugated to slavery and other institutions that attempted to strip away the culture and humanity and voice of a people, but the traditions of Africa continued in modified forms to create new traditions that continue to be built on to this day. This production explores this phenomenon throughout.

"New Orleans Voices of Congo Square is about us having a voice, our true and authentic voice. Our story told by us and in this day is very important to note because many have told our story, but I feel I bring a unique perspective as someone who is a practitioner and keeper of the culture. It gives me valuable insight in a way that sometimes well-intentioned people often miss the target when attempting to tell our story," Shaka explains.

"We wanted to bring our story not just to New Orleans or Louisiana but bring it to the world. We wanted the world to know those Carnival traditions has a historical context and we wanted to tell our story to the world about our culture ourselves. And we realize that anything that is about us is not for us without us. So, we're telling the whole story through music song and dance. The full story being told for the first time in history."

Speaking of his bona fides, he paints a picture of his life as a cultural practitioner and keeper and

that the production in many ways mirror many aspects of his own life.

"It's almost bio-pic of my life, I come from a masking tradition, I come from a family of stilt dancers, I have been a masking Indian for over 20 years and is one of the Big Chiefs of the Golden Feather Hunters and we have a company that deals African and Caribbean Drum and Dance called Zulu Connection we started that in 1995. My wife Naimah Zulu, is a dancer and I was in a Social Aid and Pleasure Club "9 Times" and I played with a lot of jazz cats, so it was a no brainer to put all the things I was involved in in my life together on the stage. My wife is the playwright, we kicked it off in 2015 with all the shows sold out except one. Story about lives."

Telling the Story of New Orleans to the World

New Orleans is a City many across the globe have questions about. It is one that is fascinating that many come to visit, read about, or watch documentaries and films. But often times the point of view shows a skewed and sometimes inaccurate portrayal of what the City is.

Shaka Zulu, with his immense and varied talent has become an ambassador in some ways for the City telling the story of New Orleans that is true to life. And with New Orleans Voices of Congo Square, his audience reach is one that is global.

"I have been to six of the seven continents as an ambassador of our culture and way of life not just a show but a way of life. Authenticity cannot be questioned because we are the practitioners of the culture, we live it, and who better to tell the story someone



Shaka Zulu believes that the need for authentic voices telling the story of Black New Orleans. "We realize that anything that is about us is not for us without us," explains Zulu on the need for more control of productions by the people who create the culture and derive more of the benefits from them.



New Orleans Voices of Congo Square was set to launch an international tour, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic it will be streamed on Dec. 11 in the U.S. and internationally on Dec. 12.

who is living the story."

"I go to different parts of the world to lecture on the culture, my suits are exhibited in the Netherlands and Berlin, museums all of the world and I have been to Africa and the Caribbean and I love being able to be one of the many people who represent our city and the culture it produces."

Speaking of the times the show will be streaming he says, "It will be streaming Dec. 11th in the North America Canada Market and Japan, India and all of Europe on Dec. 12th, so they don't have to leave their living room to get a glimpse of these amazing cultures."

Coming Full Circle...The Future of the Black Cultural Traditions in New Orleans

In these changing and challenging times for the City, some believe that much of what is in "New Orleans Voices of Congo Square" are

withering away in a sea of gentrification, something that's changing the face of the City and its neighborhoods.

While Shaka understands this, he is optimistic about the "traditional" culture surviving and even prospering in this changing landscape.

"Today I see young people keeping it alive by continuing these traditions and most importantly they are building on them and innovating. I see this as a good thing. They are using their voices to pay homage to what they have been given and letting their own voices be heard. That is what 'New Orleans Voices of Congo Square' does; giving us a voice for the world to hear and know some of the story of New Orleans through music, song, and dance.

For more info go to <https://new-orleans-voices-of-congo-square.com/phone/index.html>

Black Pride



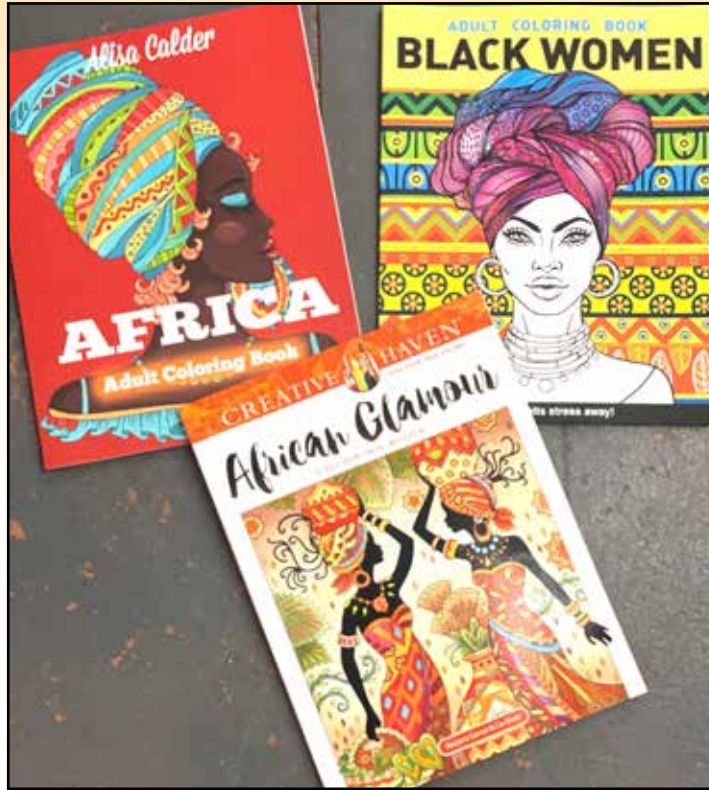
Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

Tis' the season to think outside the [gift] box by shopping and supporting local Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. Here's a holiday gift guide showcasing thoughtful and unique items that will give you comfort and joy by supporting the New Orleans Black community.

Fashion Stylist:

Tracee Dundas |
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TERRANCE OSBORNE GALLERY – A picture is worth a thousand words and a piece of artwork by renowned Artist Terrance Osborne tells a story of New Orleans' heritage and culture. www.terranceosborne.com



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A photograph of an elderly couple walking together on a lush green golf course. The woman is wearing a bright yellow sweater and dark pants, and the man is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and khaki pants. They are both smiling and holding hands. The background is filled with trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting.

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Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) Vision & Passion Remembering a Legend ~ Dean Millie M. Charles

By Dr. Mike Meehan

New Orleans, Louisiana – November 27, 2020 - Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) family is saddened to learn of the passing of Millie M. Charles, Founding Dean of the School of Social Work.

Interim Chancellor Dr. James H. Ammons, Jr., said, "While I did not have the pleasure of knowing her, Dean Charles' accomplishments as a social work educator, civil rights advocate and in social justice will endure in the practice of social work for generations to come. As a member of the 'SUNO Village,' which she helped to establish, I take pride in knowing when one visits our campus, her legacy is prominent throughout the state-of-the-art Millie M. Charles School of Social Work building on the Lake Campus. I pledge to remain committed to her legacy by ensuring that we continue to graduate a significant number of Baccalaureate and Master of Social Work students in the State of Louisiana."

Dean Charles, affectionately known as "Mama Millie," established the School of Social Work in 1985. Prior to establishing the school's programming, she was



Millie M. Charles, Founding Dean of the Southern University at New Orleans School of Social Work recently passed away at the age of 97.

hired at SUNO in 1965 to begin a Child Welfare Certificate Program while working as the only faculty member. When Dean Charles retired in 2006, the School of Social Work staff peaked at 30, with 27 full-time faculty members. Dean

Charles believed in "advocacy, empowerment and transformation," which serves as the cornerstone and theme of the School of Social Work. She further believed that those in power should advocate for those who could not speak for

themselves. As an advocate for the less fortunate, her goal was to empower individuals to find the courage to speak for themselves eventually, and, once able to, their transformation began.

In a 2012 interview, Dean Charles stated, "You need to be true to a cause that extends beyond yourself." An alumna of Dillard University, the history of Millie M. Charles reflects a life committed to civil rights, child advocacy, and social justice as she became a nationally respected social work educator. In the late 1960s, she successfully advocated for the establishment of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. Currently, there are over 500 Baccalaureate Programs in the United States.

According to Harry J. Doughty, a veteran social worker and tenured assistant professor who was hired by Dean Charles, "Millie devoted her life to making the world a better place especially for children. I was fortunate to have known and worked with Dean Charles for over fifty years as she helped me to become a better person and social worker. While she was demanding of her faculty and students, she had a contagious laugh with a sense of

humor. I will always cherish our relationship."

As a pioneer social worker, Dean Charles was often recognized not only by her contemporaries, but also organizations supportive of social justice and civil rights. Some of Dean Charles' accolades include Times Picayune "Loving Cup Award" in 2013; Millie M. Charles School of Social Work Endowed Chair; National Association of Social Workers Pioneer; Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, Dillard University; Founders' Award, National Association of Black Social Workers, New Orleans Chapter; National Association of Social Workers' Social Worker of the Year; Humanitarian of the Year Federal Women Employees Association; Hannah G. Solomon Award, National Council of Jewish Women; and, she was one of four Women honored by the New Orleans YMCA for A Lifetime of Community Service; Social Worker of the Year; Humanitarian of the Year Federal Women Employees Association.

Dean Charles is survived by her daughter, H. M. K. Amen, and a host of relatives and friends. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Publisher's Note

All Elections Matter

Get Out and Vote on Dec. 5th



Terry B. Jones
Publisher,
Data News Weekly

In our role as The People's Paper we continue to ask all of our citizens to get out and vote. As you'll know we have made history by electing an African American woman to the

Vice-Presidency, in Kamala Harris,

This is something we should be proud of as a people; but the fact is, while our national elections are important, I would argue that who we elect to lead us locally is more important and impact our lives more directly.

Therefore, we cannot sit idly by and not vote in this election. I think back to not even a month ago when people waited in long lines for several hours in some cases to vote in the November Election.

This was a watershed moment for us, as we saw the collective power of our voices when we get

out and vote.

In the December 5th Election, several important races are on the ballot, as well as a three millage propositions.

These races include District Attorney, various races for judge, school board and other important offices; so we are asking all to get out and vote.

It is your hands that will shape the future of the City and its direction.

As the Publisher of Data News Weekly, I am asking you to let your voices be heard at the polls, because all elections matter.

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His first football season, Isaiah told us, 'Wear a jersey with my name on it. I want everyone to know you're here for me.'

Darnell and Denna, adopted 16-year-old Isaiah



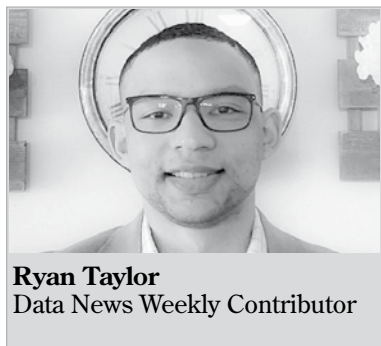
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Get Out & Vote

Financial Fundamentals

Part 1



Ryan Taylor
Data News Weekly Contributor



“Popping tags” and “Ballin” are popular slang terms we often associate with riches or being financially well-off. When the beat drops and you hear “\$2,000 just for the shoes I put on, spin out and do a 360 for nothing (probably in a car most people can’t afford)” ... your natural inclination might be to start nodding your head and swaying to the beat. After all that’s the effect it’s supposed to have right? If we didn’t feel the music ... “the culture” wouldn’t be a thing because it wouldn’t make money, which at its core is what we’re glorifying right? Making money and living the good life.

As adults we have to separate the entertainment value from what we actually do with our money. When we seek to live out what we hear in our music or see in the media, things can take a turn for the worst. We can end up spending above our means, piling up unnecessary debt, and living paycheck to paycheck. If you’re wearing and driving every

penny you make ... you’ve popped too many tags and need to re-think what you consider “ballin.”

“Ballin” is state of mind that codifies hustle and self-discipline. It’s not only about making money and then frivolously spending it on depreciable consumer items such as cars and clothes. It’s about managing the money you make to build wealth and ultimately have it work for you. That starts with building a solid financial foundation. To maximize our savings and investing, we first need to enfranchise ourselves into mainstream financial services and products.

McKinsey & Company produced a report called, the economic impact of closing the racial wealth gap stating that almost half of Black

households (47%) are unbanked or underbanked. Underbanked being defined as not having sufficient access to mainstream financial services and products offered by retail banks. This means a large population within our community rely on alternative financial services like check cashing and prepaid cards, which charge significant fees to people accessing their own hard-earned money recorded at \$40,000 over the life of one’s career.

“Ballers” do not let 40 bands slip through their hands by not having the right financial products at their disposal. As Jay-Z said, “If you owe me \$10 dollars, you ain’t paying me \$9.” You get a checking account to manage your inflows (money coming in) and outflows (money you

owe to other people). You keep a savings account to stack your paper up in case of an emergency, save for a big purchase, or accumulate dollars to invest in other larger interesting bearing financial vehicles (e.g. CDS, IRAs, stocks, bonds, commodities, alternative investments, real estate, etc.) that build your wealth.

If you’re in the market for a checking account and savings account, think about supporting your local Black depository institution (<https://mightydeposits.com/posts/bank-black>). In Louisiana, that would be Liberty Bank and One United Bank. Otherwise check out <https://www.businessinsider.com/personal-finance/best-no-fee-checking-accounts>. These bank accounts offer great terms and fees and allow for \$0 dollar balances. Likewise, when opening a savings account, make sure to maximize the amount of interest earned on your deposits (money you put in the bank) by opening a high-yield savings account. A list of the best high-yield savings accounts can be found here <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/best-high-yield-interests-savings-accounts/>.

In the next issue we’ll discuss creating a budget and how to maximize your savings. Remember its journey of small steps, but with a little bit of discipline and effort we can all be “ballers” in our own right.

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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.

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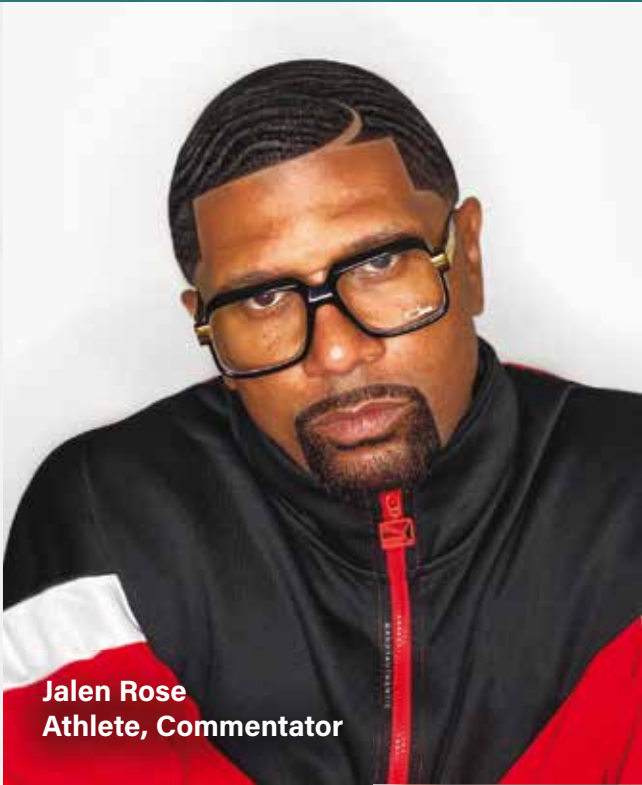
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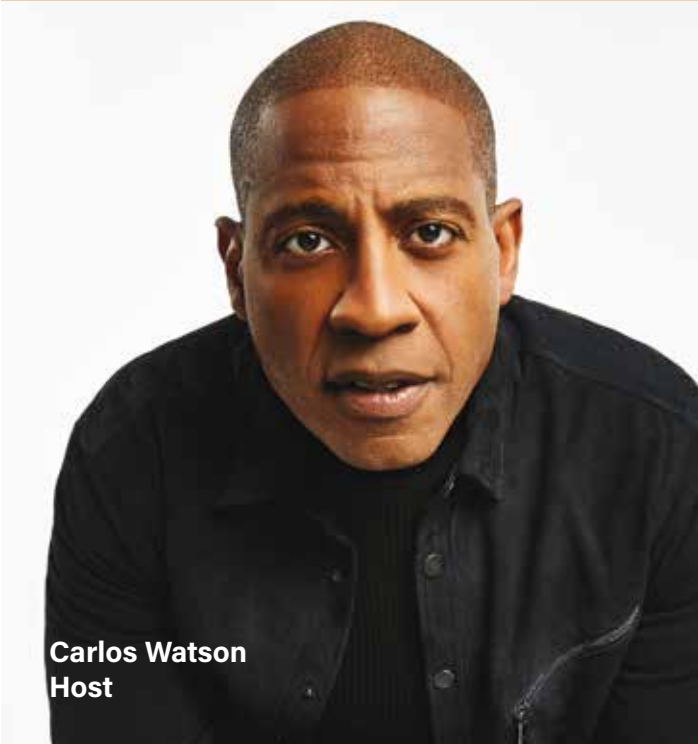
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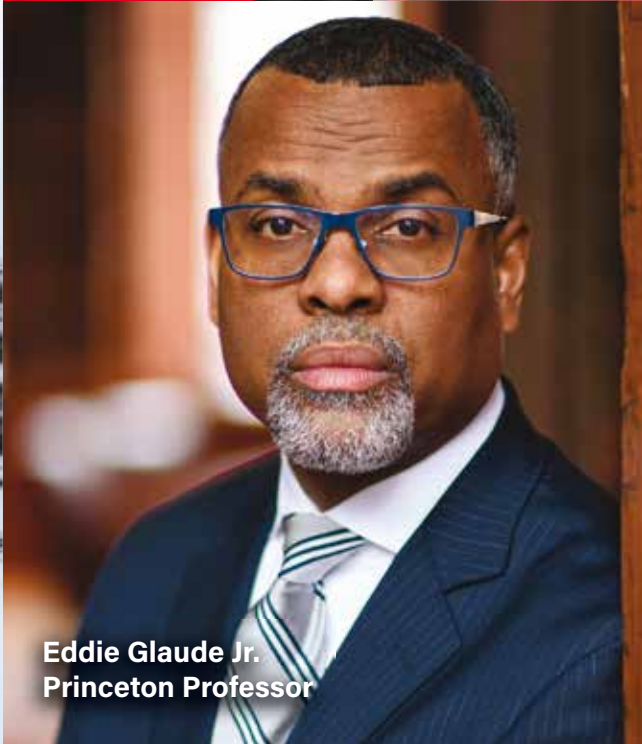
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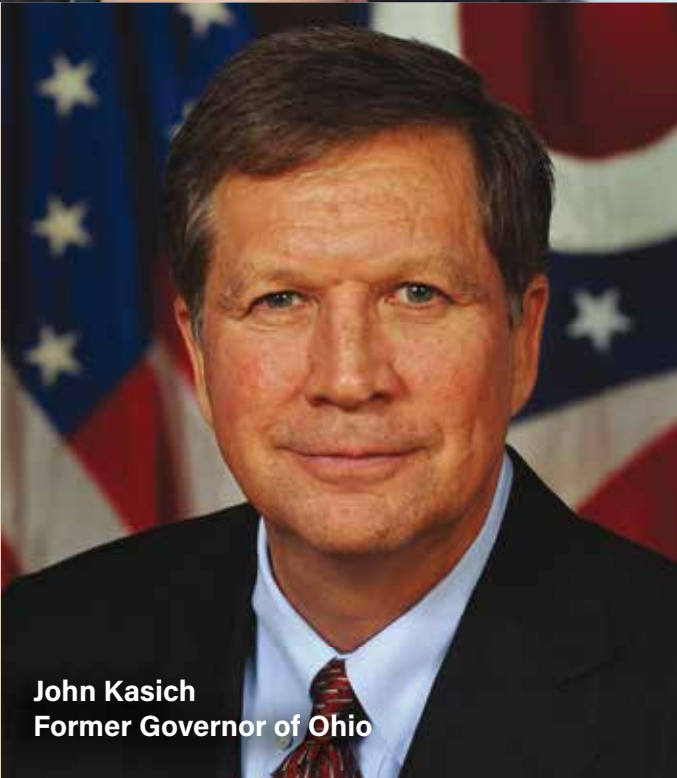
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