

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



NORDC Toy Drive and Giveaway

Data Zone
Page 4

December 26 - January 1, 2020 55th Year Volume 35 www.ladatanews.com


A Data News Weekly Exclusive

2020

The Year in Review

A Year That Changed Us All

Page 2




Newsmaker

**NORBCC Announces
New Executive
Director**

Page 6

State & Local

**Local College
Admissions Adapts
to COVID-19**



Page 7

2020

The Year in Review

A Year That Changed Us All



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

2020: Adjusting to the New Normal

In the year 2020 it was one that saw a lot happen in our City, state, and the world. The year started as normal with much hope and optimism; but after celebrating Mardi Gras, the landscape shifted, and unforeseen events made this year one that will go down in history as one that changed our lives forever.

This year have seen us experience the COVID-19 Pandemic, brutal deaths of Black people by law enforcement and cries for justice in these cases all over the world, wearing face coverings, facing the challenges of working remotely and our kids going to school online, many losing their jobs or businesses and the testing of our Democracy.

Living in a Changing World

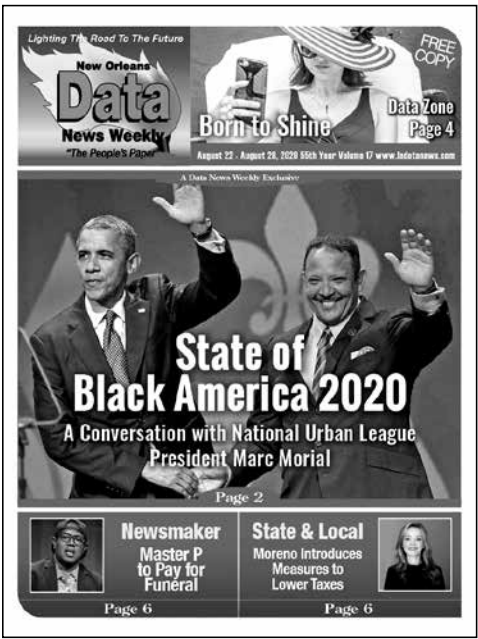
In normal years we would simply summarize some of the stories we've covered during the year; but this year was like no other and it is important that we view 2020 through a different lens. It is important to take note that when we come out on the other side of what's happened this year that we as a City, nation and world are better humans seeing we are all connected and dependent upon one another.

I Am My Brother/Sisters Keeper.... Masks Mandates and Economic Uncertainty Across the Globe

That wearing masks in public, while uncomfortable at times is important for all of us to stay safe as we have seen over 300,000 people die from COVID-19 this year with numbers still rising. And while we today there is hope with a vaccine, it will still take time for its distribution and getting buy in from the public.

On another front, we are seeing an economic downturn of major proportions. In New Orleans, which is a City that heavily relies on tourism have seen this come to a screeching halt. Today many citizens and businesses are struggling to survive.

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.



INSIDE DATA

Cover Story	2	Publisher's Note	6
Data Zone	4	State & Local News . . .	7
Newsmaker	6		

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

ASK-Y LLC Begins "Smokin' Good" Production
Page 4

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"The People's Paper"

August 19 - September 4, 2020 50th Year Volume 18 www.ladatanews.com

New Orleans Fifteen Years after Katrina
Recovery Reconsidered

Page 2

Newsmaker
Norman C. Francis Parkway
Page 6

State & Local
Ephesus SDA Church Food Distribution
Page 6

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

Celebrating Black Fathers
Page 4

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

June 27 - July 3, 2020 50th Year Volume 18 www.ladatanews.com

The Right Side of History
Finding the Road to Democracy

Page 2

Newsmaker
N.O. Church Launches Voting Black & Brown Issues Campaign
Page 6

State & Local
Gov. Edwards Announces State to Remain in Phase 2 until July 20th
Page 7

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

Dorian Francis Love Label Spreading Positive Messages and Giving Back
Page 4

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"The People's Paper"

June 6 - June 12, 2020 50th Year Volume 18 www.ladatanews.com

IN SEARCH OF JUSTICE

Page 2

Newsmaker
Cash Money Records Co-Founders to Provide Rental Assistance
Page 6

State & Local
New Orleans Holds Protests Demanding Justice
Page 6

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

NOLA Stay at Home Part 2
Page 4

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

April 11 - April 17, 2020 50th Year Volume 18 www.ladatanews.com

The Gift of Music
Ellis Marsalis, Jr.
1934-2020

Page 2

Newsmaker
Black Businesses Adapt
Page 6

National News
Protection of Black Americans
Page 7

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

Crystal Magnolia "Last Friday's" Black History Month Celebration
Page 7

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

March 7 - March 13, 2020 50th Year Volume 43 www.ladatanews.com

COVID-19
Coronavirus Facts and What You Should Know

Page 2

Newsmaker
N.O. Pelicans Zion Williamson Breaks NBA Record
Page 4

State & Local
Buckjumping Film Screening
Page 5

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

Louisiana Black Theater Conference & Festival Postponed
Page 6

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

March 21 - March 27, 2020 50th Year Volume 47 www.ladatanews.com

The New Normal
Coronavirus (COVID-19) and our Changing Lives

Page 2

Newsmaker
The Exonerated Five
Page 4

State & Local
Urban League of Louisiana
Page 5

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

Black Lives Matter
Page 4

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

July 11 - July 17, 2020 50th Year Volume 11 www.ladatanews.com

BLACK VOTES MATTER

Page 2

Commentary
Remembering Stan "Pammy" Barre
Page 6

Endorsements
Data Endorses Joe Biden
Schalyce Harrison
Page 7

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

BeYonce "Black Is King" Shines the Light on Black Excellence
Page 4

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New Orleans Data News Weekly
"The People's Paper"

August 15 - August 21, 2020 50th Year Volume 18 www.ladatanews.com

Crime... Violence and Finding Solutions

Page 2

Newsmaker
August 15th Election
Page 6

Publisher's Note
2020 Voting Is More Important Than Ever
Page 6

Today there are hard-working people who are in food lines because they do not have enough food and money for basic necessities.

And the question becomes, what are we going to do? Because in spite of the vaccine, some aspects of life may at some point return to some semblance of normalcy, but many will still be without jobs and local governments may not have the resources to provide some services to its citizens.

Black Lives Matter: Race, Reconciliation and Justice for All

During the long summer months, one could say things came to a boiling point as the nation grappled with the horrific death of George Floyd by the police. While this of course was not an unusual occurrence, for Floyd was one of many Blacks killed by the police this year.

But this event was a watershed moment that lit the wick to set off protest, not only in our City, but across the globe; as people from all races, creeds, and color chanted Black Lives Matter. That they recognized that they could no longer tolerate or turn a blind

eye to injustice. It was for many veterans of Civil Rights an inspiration to see mostly young people on the streets; brave and bold, taking the baton and running the race to navigate a new direction for the nation in the area of police reform, the Criminal Justice System and addressing systemic racism in American society.

Democracy Tested and Historical Firsts

In 2020 we also saw our Democracy tested in a year that had a Presidential Election where because of a Pandemic there were record numbers of people voting by mail. In addition, some waited in long lines for hours donning masks to exercise their right to vote in what was a historic election.

The nation turned the page by electing Joe Biden and Kamala Harris (The First Woman and Person of Color) as its next President and Vice-President. A majority of citizens rejected the politics of division and approach to governing that resembles a dictator. In these challenging times to our experiment in Democracy, the outgoing President is still not formally conceded the race.

This is something that further sows the seeds of division in a nation. But to his credit, President-Elect Biden is vowing to bring the country together to heal and realize that as in the words of the Pledge of Allegiance that we are in fact one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

The Lessons of 2020 and Moving Forward

What does 2021 hold; who knows, but one thing is for certain that 2020 was a year that tested and changed us all. From mask wearing, to distance learning for our children, online shopping, voting by mail, virtual hugs, etc. But while these are trying times, its shown the best of humanity as people are more charitable than ever giving what they have to those in need donating time, money and resources to help our fellow citizens in their time of need.

And yes 2020 is a year that's changed us all, but hopefully it is for the better where we can see ourselves in others. To decide to be more kind, more considerate, more respectful, more charitable, and empathetic seeing the common bonds that connect us all.

We may be keeping our distance,
but we are in this together.

Stay Calm.

Stay Connected.

Stay Active.

#AloneTogether



Go to AloneTogether.com for ways to take care of yourself and others.

NORDC Toy Drive and Giveaway

Data News Staff Edited Report

NORDC continues their mission of providing top level recreation service to the residents of the City of New Orleans. On December 19, 2020 they joined in the spirit of giving by holding a their Annual Holiday Toy Giveaway, but because of COVID-19, this year's giveaway was a drive thru event. It was a huge success bringing out many from volunteers including Mayor LaToya Cantrell, who came out to hand out gifts to families.

NORDC CEO, Larry Barabino, Jr. thanks the community for their participation and feels good that NORDC can help provide joy for so many during the holiday season.



New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell came out to this amazing event handing out gifts and sending holidays wishes to attendees.



NORDC CEO, Larry Barabino, Jr. thanks the community and those who came out to support NORDC Annual Toy Drive and Giveaway. He feels in these trying time it is great that people are giving back and serving those in need during the holiday season.



Many came out to volunteer giving gifts to families who came from all areas of the City to participate in the NORDC Annual Toy Drive and Giveaway.

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

Marc Morial Book Signing and Virtual Lecture Series on Leadership Kicks off in New Orleans

Photos ALY Media Relations

Marc H. Morial returned home to Kick-Off his Independent Bookstores Virtual Gumbo Coalition Leadership Lecture Series and Book Tour to speak about his book "The Gumbo Coalition: 10 Leadership Lessons That Help You Inspire, Unite and Achieve" making stops at Community Book Center and Blue Cypress Books.

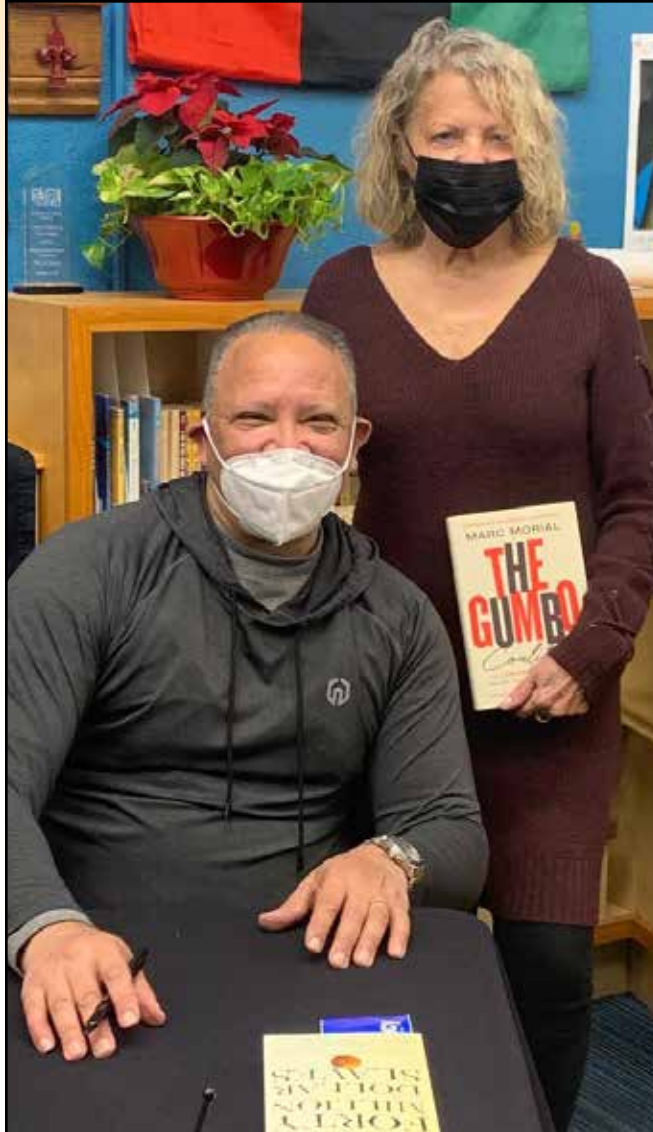
In a news release Morial spoke of feeling good about starting his tour in New Orleans, "I am looking forward to kicking off our virtual tour in my hometown. There's no place like New Orleans in the world and it has to start here," says Morial.

He is also an advocate and supporter of small businesses. Speaking of the importance of how essential they are he says, "Small businesses are the backbone of our communities and I recognize the importance of supporting independent, locally owned and operated bookstores on this tour. I will be at each of the bookstores (Community Book Center and Blue Cypress Books) communicating with patrons via Facebook Live."

Our nation at its core has been broken and Marc H. Morial has written a book that is exactly what coalition builders, leaders, educators, students, government official and entities need right now. In his book, The Gumbo Coalition: 10 Leadership Lessons That Help You Inspire, Unite and Achieve, Morial lays out a strategic plan and provides tools to help us build coalitions, create diverse and inclusive work places and communities that will unite and inspire all to move into greatness. Filled with inspirational anecdotes and action-oriented leadership strategies, The Gumbo Coalition reveals that with the right tools, significant change is possible. This book is a must read for everyone.

For more information about the Gumbo Coalition visit: <http://gumbo-coalition.com/> Or

<https://www.rwnyork.com/about/gumbo-coalition-university>



Marc Morial (left) and Beverly McKenna, Publisher and Editor of the New Orleans Tribune (right).



Marc Morial engaging in conversation with a semi-virtual signing attendee.



Marc Morial signs a copy of his new book for a semi-virtual signing attendee.



Marc H. Morial, former Mayor of New Orleans and current President of National Urban League signs a copy of his new book, The Gumbo Coalition: 10 Leadership Lessons That Help You Inspire, Unite and Achieve at Community Book Center.



Marc Morial discusses his new book, The Gumbo Coalition: 10 Leadership Lessons That Help You Inspire, Unite and Achieve at Blue Cypress Books.

New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce Announces New Executive Director and 2021 Board of Directors

Data News Staff Edited Report

NEW ORLEANS - The New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce (NORBCC) has announced that LaVerne Toombs will lead the organization as the new Executive Director. Ms. Toombs brings over twenty years of experience in local and federal government, nonprofit, public relations and marketing, fundraising, grant writing, and business development.

"I feel extremely blessed for the opportunity to serve as the new Executive Director of NORBCC. I look forward to working with our members and stakeholders to promote, grow and sustain a diverse and healthy business community that will continue to enrich the quality of life and enhance prosperity in the



New Orleans region," said LaVerne Toombs, NORBCC Executive Director.

NORBCC held its Virtual Annual Meeting & Holiday Extravaganza



LaVerne Toombs

on Thursday, December 17, 2020, where the Chamber body voted on the slate of new 2021 Board of Directors: Attorney Rubi Brown (Transcendent Legal), Stephanie

Chambliss (P.J.'s Coffee - New Orleans East), Arlanda Williams (AJ Williams Consulting), Inez Jordan (Ochsner Health System), and Karl Weber (Atmos Energy).

Current board members, Dr. Margaret Richard (DMM and Associates), will move to Immediate Past Chair, and Krista Pouncy-Dyson (Performance First Digital), will assume the Board Chair role.

In addition to Dyson's appointment, the following executive committee positions were also confirmed;

Dr. Margaret Montgomery-Richard, Immediate Past Chair (DMM & Associates) Perry Sholes, Vice-Chair (Progressive HR Strategies) Joseline Frank, Secretary, (Russell Frank Realty) Vanessa James, Treasurer (Hammerman & Gainer) Shawntele Green, Membership Chair (Star Automotive) Arkebia Matthews-Johnson Programming Co-Chair (AECOM) Ed Robinson (L & R Security)

13 Year Old Entrepreneur Marli Lyric Gives Back to the Community During the Holiday Season

Jaaz Thomas
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Over the past few months that quarantine and COVID-19 has presented, there have been lots of challenges and obstacles to face.

With those obstacles, there have also been some success stories. Marli Lyric, a 13-year-old business owner from New Orleans created her own business and online store during this Pandemic. Marli has been able to connect with many youths outside of her immediate family and friends and has been able to inspire them through positive change and embracing this new normal.

Marli has only been operational through quarantine. In this short time, she has managed to produce a profitable business. With her savings, Marli has decided to donate toys to kids that may have more challenges this year.

Although COVID-19 has created more restrictions and barriers, Marli has made it her mission to provide Christmas toys to a minimum of 100 kids, using her own money and efforts.



Marli Lyric, A 13 year old business owner from New Orleans at her first Toy Giveaway presented by her business Young and Fly by M.

This Toy Giveaway came at a much-needed time, as so many homes and the kids in them will face financial hardship due to COVID-19 this Christmas. The toys were given out Sunday, December 20th, at the Optimus Entertainment Center in New Orleans East. Hundreds of kids were given toys up to the age of 12. This toy Giveaway was the first for Marli Lyric, but there is surely more to come.

Publisher

Continuing Our Mission as "The People's Paper" in 2021 and Beyond



Terry B. Jones
Publisher,
Data News Weekly

This has been quite a year not only for our City, but our nation and world. We at Data News Weekly, in our job as "The People's Paper" were on the frontlines of giving you news that you can use.

We have seen this year as one that's changed us all, as we have experienced a Global Pandemic, an unusual election cycle where our institutions and our Democracy were tested, and a nation and world demanding racial justice.

These are trying and crucial times where citizen engagement is important if we are to change the world for the better.

As Publisher of Data News Weekly, I believe that people receiving accurate and reliable information is essential in them making decisions that will better the lives of themselves and the community; so to combat the assault on truth that's taking place in some sectors of our society, we are re-committing ourselves to being the paper that tell stories that are relevant to our community and giving you a voice in the issues that matter in the City of New Orleans.

Furthermore, in 2021, we will continue into growing our digital platforms, so that we can connect with our readers where they are and providing information, insight, and most importantly inspiration that make us aspire to have a better community.

In closing, I would like to thank all those who continue to support Data News Weekly, as we continue in our mission as "The People's Paper" and "Lighting the Road to the Future."

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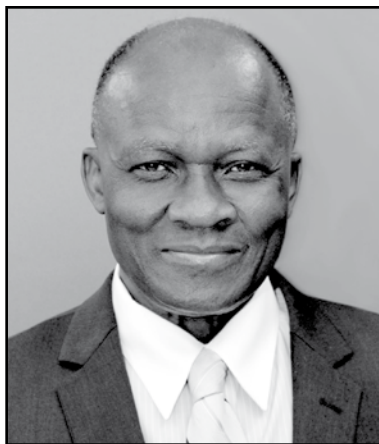
Local College Admissions Adapts to COVID-19

Scott Lipscomb
Data News Weekly
Contributor

When applying for college, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT) examinations are required for high school students to prepare for and submit for acceptance. In a year that has been anything but normal, many colleges and universities have had to evaluate incoming students very differently. With nationwide cancellations of many testing dates for the SAT and ACT exams, admissions offices are finding other solutions for admitting prospective students.

Local Historically Black Universities say they are working to account for the impact of the Pandemic on the Class of 2021 during application season which begins, in earnest, towards the end of 2020. Dillard University announced on Dec. 1st it will make standardized tests optional for students who were not able to take the SAT or ACT before COVID-19 shut down the country in the Spring. This option is for students with a 3.0 unweighted GPA from their ninth to eleventh grade on their official transcripts.

"The Office of Recruitment, Admissions and Programming understands the stress and uncertainty that many students are facing regarding college entrance exams," said Monica White, the Director of Recruitment, Admissions, and Pro-



David Agedboye, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs & Weekend Affairs at SUNO.



Monica White, Director of Recruitment, Admissions and Programming at Dillard University.



Warren Easton student, Steven Jackson.

gramming at Dillard.

"We want to remove that added barrier for prospective students and their families to make Dillard University a viable option for the next steps in their educational journey," White said in a statement announcing the recent changes.

Grambling State University also has made options available for students who were not able to test this year, however, those students will also need to meet the set GPA requirements. Xavier University of Louisiana also grants a test-optional admission which requires students to submit an essay, resume, and letter of recommendation. In the past, students who did not submit test scores did not qualify for all merit scholarships from Xavier. Southern University of New Orleans still requires test scores, however stu-

dents with lower test scores than the normal threshold is granted admission with academic support resources, such as required office hours.

"With a strong support system, we believe we can increase retention and graduation rates," said David Agedboye, Ph.D., the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Evening & Weekend Affairs at SUNO, in a statement.

With no timetable for when K-through-12 education will return to normal, admissions counselors said that high school students should expect their GPA to be a major focus of the admissions process next year and going forward. High school students can also expect their co-curricular activities, skills, and community service to be a major component of their applications



Shayla Lewis, Admissions Counselor, Xavier University.

for college.

A new Warren Easton student, Steven Jackson Jr., said he has been keeping up his co-curricular development, practicing basketball with a hybrid-schedule for the reopening of New Orleans' schools. "A dream of mine has always been to play a sport in college, and this extended time gives me a chance to practice more," Jackson said of adjusting to the new normal as a high school student during a Pandemic.

Since virtual schooling at the start of this year restricted many activities for rising seniors, admissions counselors expect to use their entire high school record as an evaluation tool. If they need to, they will take a student's entire high school record into consideration when determining acceptance.

"At Xavier we have always viewed students in a holistic manner, and during this unprecedented time we understand the new challenges, and will continue to make the admissions process as smooth as possible for students and parents," said Shaysa Lewis, an Admissions Counselor for Xavier.

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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.

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