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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Chief Justice Bernette Johnson Retirement



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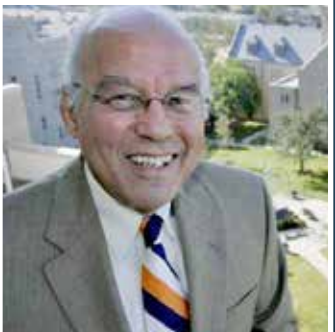
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Justice For Jamere

Stopping Gun Violence In New Orleans



Jamere Alfred was a child that was loved by family and friends. His parents LaRicha Alfred and John Alfred are seeking justice for their son and asking for an end to gun violence in New Orleans.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

New Orleans: A Tale of Two Cities

New Orleans is a City where neighborhoods, family and a zest for life exists that is like no other. It is a place where people flock to experience the joy of living that is life in this amazing City. But beneath this veneer, lies a City where crime and violence are a part of everyday life in New Orleans. Something that leaves families having to put the pieces together when they

lose a loved one. In the City it is something that happens too often.

Recently, the shooting death of 14-year-old Jamere Alfred on Christmas Day in New Orleans East while he took a ride with his two cousins to Walgreens on Lake Forest and Bullard Boulevards. Who would imagine that a quick run to Walgreens would turn tragic when someone opened fire on the three cousins with Jamere being shot twice and losing his life.

This tragedy concerning a young man who was full of innocence, hope, optimism, ambition and was part of a loving supportive family have become a watershed

moment for a City plagued by gun violence.

A Parents Worse Nightmare...

It was Christmas and young Jamere Alfred was like many his age; simply enjoying the day with his family. Recounting the time that led up to the moment that would change their lives Jamere's parents LaRicha and John Alfred, who are successfully co-parenting are still grieving but are people of faith who are resilient in the face of this tragedy that took the life of their son.

"Christmas Day was awesome a very blessed day; he got everything he wanted. He was by family; this

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was somewhere he's been going since he was a baby. His dad dropped him off Christmas Eve, he was there Christmas morning. He called his dad and him and I face-timed with him. I was out of town and got a phone call after 10 that night saying there was an accident. I thought it was a car accident at first. When I got the call, I sent Jamere's aunt to the Walgreens first

him a special young man full of promise his dad says beaming with pride, but visibly distraught as his voice sometimes cracking, remembers Jamere.

"He was the peacemaker, he was the inquisitive kid, he was the teacher when the teacher left the room, Jamere was the teacher when the teacher was inside the room. He had a real desire for

"From there he wanted to be in the NFL, and while he was short, I would encourage him that no goal was unobtainable. That he could do or be whatever he wanted to be and that the sky was the limit for him, and he would always be supported by myself and his mother. He always said he would make it to the NFL and retire me and his mother.

people. They won't allow us to stop praying. When you have a situation when you are facing adversity; the first thing you do is look at it as a huge problem, and you try to see are you qualified to face this challenge. As parents we didn't get the chance to see were, we qualified to face this challenge the situation told us we have to

to turn this particular challenge down. It came to our front door. It was our child, and it hurts," says John as his voice trembles while displaying strength and courage. "Neither one of us have faced the challenge of losing a loved one this close."

LaRicha chimes in seemingly trying to make sense of what happened to her son Jamere and how she is coping. "Your child was going to the store with family and was murdered. We want Justice for Jamere, you are talking about a 14-year-old who was murdered. He looked like a baby. He was my only child, so at night I am sleeping with his pillows and his jerseys. It's been like something's been ripped out of me."

John Alfred is using this moment as a call to action to stop the crime and violence in New Orleans.

"We understand the impact of crime in New Orleans, but now we feel like we've been given the challenge and opportunity to do what we can to stop it. My overall goal it would be that that the murder of Jamere would be the pivotal moment when the City of New Orleans changes where aunts, uncles, and people across the City get together and stand against crime. It is too widespread and senseless. I want everybody to come together. And take a turn that this is not just another case and that any parent that's lost a kid, your kid is not a number."

Towards Finding Peace and Solutions to Gun Violence in New Orleans

John Alfred speaking of his son says that he would like his son's legacy to be one of peace.

"His life symbolized peace, he literally wanted world peace. He would ask why there is poverty? We don't have to live in a world of violence and accept the fact that killings are happening in the City of New Orleans."

Making a plea for justice for his son Jamere, John Alfred says...

"We want justice for Jamere and the shooter to come forward and allow the justice system to do what it is set up to do. Also, in the City of New Orleans we must work to find a way to give an outlet to kids that are broken. We are in the beginning stages of starting a foundation in Jamere's honor and thought what would be the focus and we thought immediately the first thing was to help kids in the City to get to understand the way they are living; they don't have to. That there are other ways to live your life... and that life is beautiful. We want to get the message out you don't have to live like that. Gun violence is senseless, and it has to stop."



Jamere Alfred, was a young man with a bright future; playing in the band and on the football team. He was an exemplary student attending Martin Behrman and was preparing next academic year to attend St. Augustine High School. The sky was the limit for Jamere Alfred.

because she lived around the corner. Then, I called his dad and had him go out there because something happened, but we didn't know what. His dad was told he had to go to UMC Hospital and when he got there, he found out that Jamere was shot. He called me back and at first we just thought that it was something minor maybe a graze wound, shot in the leg, we were telling ourselves in our mind and the night just started trickling down and the news came that it was fatal," says LaRicha Alfred.

A City sends Condolences and Support to the Family of Jamere Alfred

Immediately, people from around the City, was shocked that an innocent kid with a bright future would be gunned down on Christmas Day. In the coming days people would hear the name Jamere Alfred on newscasts as well as the story trending on social media.

Condolences came from many; including New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell. Speaking of Jamere and the qualities that made

knowledge because he always had many questions. And if he thought your question was not complete or wrong, he was on Google trying to find the right answer."

Continuing John speaks proudly of his son about who he was and was aspiring to become...

"He was a teammate, he was a band member, he was loyal. Play Station 4, football that was him. He was attending Martin Behrman as an 8th Grader and had a desire to go to St. Augustine was his next step. After that, he was debating because he wanted to go to Morehouse, but they don't have a Division 1 football team and he was trying to figure out how to start a Division 1 football team at Morehouse," he says with a laugh reminiscing of the time spent with his son dreaming about what his future could be.

That was Jamere."

Across the City people are reaching out to support this family in their time of need. The Alfred's have spoken to New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, who assured them that she would not let this case be one that will not be unsolved and that she will do everything within her power to help get justice for Jamere.

Matthew 19:26...With God All Things Are Possible

John and LaRicha Alfred are people that live a life where God is at the center and speak of how this is something that is helping them cope during these trying times for them. Speaking of this they say, "Faith, Grace and Prayer."

Continuing John says, "We surround ourselves with faith-based

face it. We are talking to the detectives daily asking are there any updates, and we continue praying and we are getting through it the best way we can and believe we will be ok because the foundation of our lives are faith based."

The Impact of Crime and Violence in New Orleans on Families

When we think of crime and violence many say it is something that happens, but not to you. To understand the impact and that something must be done to stop crime and violence in New Orleans, so that parents like John and LaRicha Alfred or for that matter the many thousands who have been killed senselessly over the years in the City of New Orleans.

"We did not have the opportunity

Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Johnson Retirement Celebration

Photos by Effram Hill
Data News Weekly Contributor

Bernette Johnson is retiring after having a legal career spanning half a century – for the past 26 years she's been the only Black Jurist on the Louisiana Supreme Court rising to the ranks of Chief Justice.

On January 2, 2021 family, friends and supporters came out on the steps of the Louisiana Supreme Court to celebrate the life and legacy of this giant in the legal community.

Johnson, who is 77, is past the constitutional age limit of 70 for Louisiana Judges. She will be succeeded in the 7th District by Piper Griffin, who, like Johnson, is an African American, who was once a judge at Orleans Parish Civil District Court.

Data News Weekly would like to thank Chief Justice Johnson for her years of service and blazing the trail for African American female judges.



Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Johnson, is a giant in the legal community. Many came out to celebrate her life and legacy dedicated to service as a judge.



Justice Johnson with sister-in-law Carol Joshua.



Chief Justice Johnson enjoying a moment with Judge Roland Belsome.



A celebration New Orleans style with members of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club and the Mardi Gras Indians.



Chief Justice Johnson standing with her daughter Judge Rachel Johnson and son David Johnson.



Fearless in 2021



Diva Dionne Character
Female Empowerment
Columnist

LET THE CHURCH SAY AMEN...
I am so elated that I did not have to do any jail time taking out the gardener blowing imaginary leaves outside my window, disturbing my peace making the transition to work from home incredibly harder as I remained fearless and steadfast with my goals and dreams; becoming more grateful for the opportunity to continue on my

journey to write passages of wisdom in the midst of a failed society, who has scolded us all like children who can no longer play outside because we did not eat all of the peas on our beautiful plates.

Whether you acknowledge it or not, YOU MADE IT – to see another year and in this very moment you are capable of all things as the universe has provided you with the perfect tools to soar into yet another year of opportunities as we vastly approach continuous months of staying away from loved ones; wearing masks and tight bras just to hold it together as women.

Now, is not the time to let the world snatch your dreams away in light of fear as you should realize that there is enough faith for you to continue to make things happen because you are



Diva Dionne Character

the keeper of your own greatness.

This year, I encourage you to wear your own mask, sheltering your dreams from the world as you implement a plan to take back your life and rise like the Queen you were born to become. Girl, you are dynamic! Don't let the world taint your confidence. Tap into your fearlessness and realize that you have the confidence and strength to slay this new year with hope and love for yourself.

Let this year be a year of discovery as you embrace the clarity you hold, realizing that you were chosen to make a difference.

Dionne Character
can be reached at
characterinhollywood@
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Street Renamed to Honor Dr. Norman C. Francis

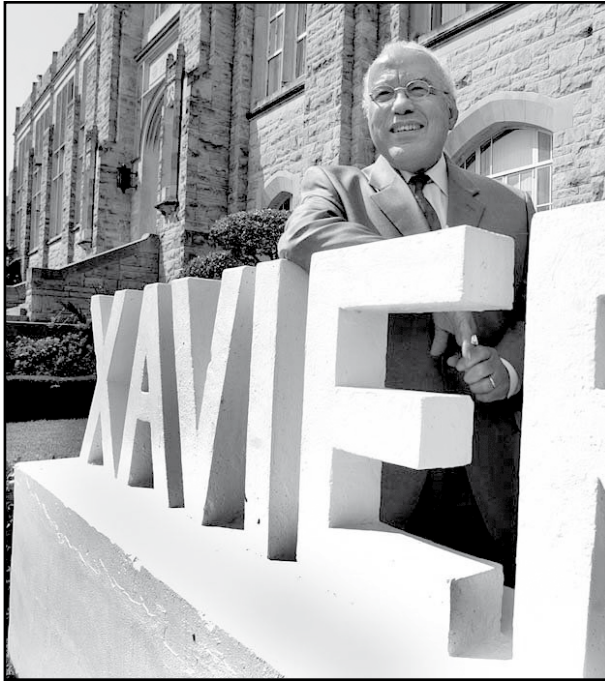
Eric Connerly
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The City of New Orleans is continuing to turn the page on a legacy of racial strife and division.

In a recent move to change the names of streets named for confederates and slave owners, Jefferson Davis Parkway officially has been renamed Norman C. Francis Parkway. Who served as President of Xavier University for nearly 50 years.

Throughout his storied life he's been a leader that's brought people together in the spirit of unity and promoted the idea of Black Excellence, leading Xavier to become one of the top HBCU's in the nation.

It is befitting that a man who's dedicated his life to education and uplifting the entire New Orleans



Dr. Norman C. Francis is a giant in the world of education and civil rights. He is being honored with a street bearing his name.



community will now have a street that bears his name.

"I'm grateful to be named on the street, but I'm hoping that also says to the people who drive by, walk by, that we're all one," said Francis. "We need to stay one. Being one together, we can make this a much better City," said Francis in an interview on local NBC affiliate WDSU-TV.

Francis is one who's received many honors in his long and purposeful life; that includes being awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006.

His life and legacy are one that continues to inspire those pursuing a life of purpose and service to others. This re-naming a street is a reminder that the heroes of the City of New Orleans includes people from all areas of the community.

State & Local News

New Orleans Schools Go Back to Distance Learning

Data News Staff Edited Report

In the Public Schools of New Orleans, it was recently announced that they will go back to "distance learning" this week because of rising COVID-19 cases in the City.

The City's School System said Monday that all pre-K through Grade 12 classes will go online by no later than January 6, 2021.

The school year began with the Public School System in New Orleans doing remote learning then returned to in-class learning that began back in September.

Superintendent Henderson Lew said in a statement that a spike in positive cases in the City prompted the "unfortunate but necessary" decision to go back to distance learning.

The move comes a week after the City tightened virus-related restrictions on public gatherings and again ended indoor service at bars.



Because of the possible spreading of COVID-19 after the Christmas Holidays; the New Orleans Public Schools will go to remote learning until mid to late January.

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Former NBA Star Junior Bridgeman Purchases EBONY Magazine

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

The legendary EBONY Magazine is being revived.

Former NBA Star Junior Bridgeman reportedly has anted-up \$14 million for the famed Black media publication.

The magazine, which was founded by John H. Johnson in 1945, was forced into bankruptcy earlier this year after an attempt to revive EBONY failed. EBONY sold its photo archive for \$30 million last year, and Willard Jackson briefly took over as CEO but left the company soon after.

"EBONY kind of stood for Black excellence, showing people doing positive things that could benefit everyone," Bridgeman said, according to Black Enterprise. "It just made you feel good."

Bridgeman has a history of business success, Black Enterprise reported.

As the CEO of Manna Inc., the holding company for his franchise empire of quick-service restaurants, he is a longtime member of the [Black Enterprise] 100s.

According to the Michigan



NBA Legend and Businessman Junior Bridgeman.

Chronicle, Bridgeman, who played for the Milwaukee Bucks and Los Angeles Clippers, was once featured on a 2016 Forbes top-paid athletes list.

He is the CEO of a Coca-Cola bottling company and part-owner of Coca-Cola Canada Bottling Limited.

The former athlete attempted to purchase Sports Illustrated in 2018 but eventually withdrew his bid a year later.

According to BlackPast.org, EBONY earned fame by honoring

Black identity – portraying Black life, refuting stereotypes, and inspiring readers to overcome racial and other barriers to success.

John H. Johnson began his career with Negro Digest in 1942 and started Ebony three years later.

Both magazines were so successful that in 1972 the Magazine Publishers Association selected Johnson "Magazine Publisher of the Year."

EBONY occasionally presented works by well-established literary

figures such as Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Brooks.

It also frequently published special issues, such as the 1963 one hundredth year commemoration of the Emancipation Proclamation, that highlighted issues deemed particularly relevant to African Americans.

EBONY first featured articles about notable African Americans such as celebrities and sports figures, and during the late 1950s ran Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s column, "Advice for Living By."

By the 1960s, articles supporting civil rights appeared as the magazine provided reliable coverage of the civil rights movement as it unfolded across the United States.

EBONY also discussed the increasing opportunities for African Americans, suggested ways to overcome obstacles, and encouraged the Black community to exhibit racial pride.

"When you look at EBONY, you look at the history not just for Black people, but of the United States," Bridgeman said. "I think it's something that a generation is missing, and we want to bring that back as much as we can."

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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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