

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Catapult to the Next Level

**FREE
COPY**

**Data Zone
Page 4**

January 8 - Jaanuary 14, 2022 56th Year Volume 37 www.ladatanews.com


A Data News Weekly Exclusive



From Denmark to Louisiana

*Danish Pop Star's Search for Veteran Dad
Ends in Baton Rouge Area*

Page 2



Newsmaker

**Marc H. Morial
and Family Feed
the Homeless**

Page 6

State & Local

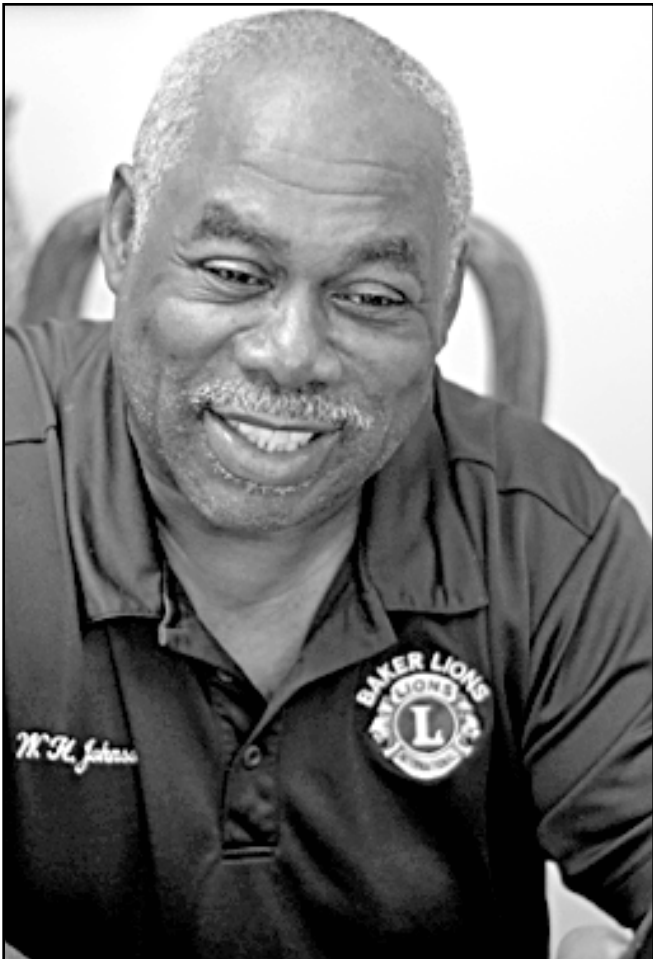
**Dr. Toya Barnes-
Teamer
Takes Over**



Page 6

From Denmark to Louisiana

Danish Pop Star's Search for Veteran Dad Ends in Baton Rouge Area



Danish Pop Star Zindy Laursen has spent the past thirty years searching for her biological father, a man she believes may be an American veteran of the Vietnam War. (Anne-Sofie Hjort)

Frances Y. Spencer
The Drum Newspaper

Zindy Laursen’s parents, a Danish go-go dancer and a Louisiana GI headed to Vietnam, met more than fifty years ago in Australia. Armed with only that tiny bit of information, the Danish pop singer and ac-

tor embarked on a 30-year journey to find her father. Her quest ends at the Baker home of a retired police officer who marked Christmas 2021 with the gift of a newfound daughter.
Bill Johnson has held many titles in more than fifty years of public service including GI, soldier, and police captain. This Christmas, “dad” is a new title, and

the Zachary native is ecstatic to begin a new role as a father. “I found somebody in my life that was like me,” he said. “I just enjoyed the first time we talked, and I looked at the pictures. I said, ‘wow, my God, look at her cheeks.’ Then the brown eyes floored me. I said, ‘well, that’s, that’s got to be my daughter.’”
The talk of a family reunion is the end of a long

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.

INSIDE DATA	
Cover Story	2
Data Zone	4
Newsmaker	6
State & Local News . .	6
National News	7

DATA NEWS WEEKLY

P.O. Box 57347, New Orleans, LA 70157-7347 | Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622
editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Terry B. Jones	Contributors	Art Direction &
CEO/Publisher	Frances Y. Spencer	Production
Edwin Buggage	Tracee Dundas	Pubinator.com
Editor	Lauren Victoria Burke	Editorial and
Sharonda Green	DNW Staff Writers	Advertising Inquiries
Executive Assistant	John Merrit	datanewsweeklyad@gmail.com
June Hazeur	Anne-Sofie Hjort	Distribution
Accounting		by Terrence Lee

Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



Johnson was encouraged by his wife Gloria to take DNA test. He was excited to find out that Laursen was his daughter. They spoke by FaceTime and plan to meet in person later this month for Bill Johnson's birthday celebration.



journey that began in 1969. Stars and Stripes, the U.S. military news organization, introduced the world to Laursen's quest in an article published in September 2021. The article, "Danish pop star hopes DNA will lead to father she suspects is a Vietnam War vet," documented how Laursen's mother was a go-go dancer in Sydney and met a U.S. service member on leave from their units in Vietnam. Laursen's mother moved back to Denmark, but Laursen said she grew up eager to find out about her father, a "mysterious person that her mom met dancing, like something out of a movie."

The singer-actress, known in Denmark and Europe as "Zindy," grew up in a fishing town with her mother, brother, and her Ghanian-born stepdad who died when she was sixteen. "We were living in a predominantly White area, and I got teased a lot, so, I felt really out of place," she recalled. "I didn't know where I belonged because I was getting teased in school every day."

Her unique heritage became a motivating factor when she saw Prince perform for the first time. He was a total package – he could play the piano, he could sing and dance, and he seemed to have a biracial heritage. "I could identify myself with him," Laursen said. "We lived in an area that was really poor but there was this little place where there was a piano, and I went down to ask the super if I could go in there and play the piano because it seemed like something Prince would do, and I was inspired."

Her music career started a few years later when she was second runner up in a singing competition similar to American Idol. She signed a record deal with EMI and became the lead singer of a group called Cut 'N' Move. After performing all over Europe and winning a Danish Grammy, she moved to New York in 2002 and has starred in plays while splitting her time between the two continents.

The first time she visited the

United States she recalled thinking her father could be right around the corner. The quest to find him intensified.

Laursen enlisted the help of a genealogist and a DNA Analysis from 23andMe. Earlier this year, the analysis provided her with a relative match from a man living in New York. She connected with him to see if someone in his family could be the American veteran who visited Australia in 1969. He immediately started calling his uncle, Bill Johnson. "He had been trying to call me for three or four days," Johnson said. "He gave me the exciting news: 'I think you have a daughter out there.'"

Johnson had initial doubts. He worried that he might be the target of a scam and sought lots of advice. Many associates advised him to walk away. "But that would have been the biggest mistake of my life," he said.

Encouraged by his wife, Gloria, he submitted to DNA testing to compare his profile to Laursen's.

The report returned that he was a 99.99 percent match for being Laursen's father. "I was excited, she was excited, and we started exchanging messages," he said. "We just connected, and God put us together. And I'm one person that's glad that happened."

Johnson said he sees comparisons in his life and Laursen's life in persevering to achieve goals and in collaborating with people. "I grew up in the Avenues, which was one of the poorest areas in Zachary, but I was determined to make it," he said. "My dad died when I was 8 years old. My mother died at the young age of forty-five."

He said he did not have running water growing up but would take odd jobs like cutting grass to contribute and eventually buy his own car. After serving in the Army, he returned to Zachary and continued his education at Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge.

He became the first Black police officer to serve in Zachary, LA., and

he rose to the rank of captain.

In his retirement, he gives back to the community and is a member of the Baker Lions Club and the President of the Zachary Men's Club.

He didn't raise any children of his own, but he was involved in the lives of the young people in Baker and Zachary serving as a basketball and track coach in community leagues. "I was determined to save young people, so I started the Drug Enforcement Program in the City," Johnson said. "They still have signs up. So, I've been involved in the lives of young people and it's not about me; it's about someone else."

Laursen is in Denmark for the holidays working a string of performances, but she hopes to visit her father in early 2022. Johnson is busy with calls from relatives and press inquiries. He knows a great gift is on the way. "I'm just looking forward to that great day," he said. "This will be the best Christmas of my life."

Catapult to the Next Level



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

Since its inception, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation has strived to teach, build, and celebrate New Orleans culture. And, while the organization has been recognized most for its contribution to the music industry; it has long had a passion to support other cultural creative industries. It is through this passion that New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation introduced the Catapult Fund in 2014.

The purpose of the Catapult Fund is to encourage innovation and sustainability for entrepreneurs in cultural industries through training and investment. Each year the program focuses on a different creative category ranging from culinary to the arts. The 2022 program will put the spotlight to the creatives in the fashion, jewelry, and beauty industries. To be eligible, applicants must have small Louisiana-based businesses in one of these industries. Applications are open to small and emerging fashion businesses with a gross annual revenue of less than \$500,000. It includes business owners in fashion design, clothing brands, accessories, cosmetic, hair and beauty products, and more. As an education and funding program for entrepreneurs in the arts, the Catapult Fund provides an intensive 3-month training in best practices for business, along with access to grant funding. Following completion of the training course, participants will be awarded grant funding.

"The Jazz & Heritage Foundation has over the years provided millions of dollars in grant funding to nonprofits and education programs through our Community Partnership Grants. With the explosion of entrepreneurship in our region, we also want to support those businesses working in the arts that are contributing to the development of a sustainable cultural



industry," said Don Marshall, Executive Director of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.

"Like New Orleans Fashion Week, the Catapult Fund is an excellent platform for the region's designers and fashion creatives. This opportunity will allow them to receive mentorship from business professionals, while building

their management and marketing skillsets. All-important attributes necessary to catapult their brand to the next level," stated New Orleans Fashion Week Founder.

The program is a partnership between the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, Capital One Bank, and the Louisiana Small Business Development Center

Greater New Orleans and River Region.

Deadline for online applications is January 12, 2022. Learn more and apply on catapultfund.org.

FASHION EDITOR – Tracee Dundas
@fashionablyyoursnola
Photographer: JOHN MERRIT
Photos: New Orleans Fashion Week

Data Zone, Continued on page 5.

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

Data Zone, Continued from page 4.



I'm a mom first.

I may be Dr. Nina Ford Johnson a pediatrician, but I'm a mom first. My babies are my top priority, always. With COVID going around affecting Black kids at a higher rate, I'm telling any parent with children 5 and older to get the COVID vaccine.



Paid for by the
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services.

**WE
CAN
DO
THIS**

Find vaccines near you
at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

Former Mayor Marc H. Morial and Family Feed the Homeless

Data News Staff Edited Report

In the spirit of giving back, Marc H. Morial and his family decided to brighten up the holiday season by feeding the homeless at the New Orleans Mission. They distributed socks, masks, and plates of food to those who were in need.

"I am extremely delighted to give back to my community and spread some holiday cheer this season," says Marc H. Morial. "The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused a huge burden for everyone. If we can put a huge smile on someone's face and make their day special, then we know that we have made a difference."

About New Orleans Mission

New Orleans Mission (NOM) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) Christian Humanitarian Organization dedicated to relieving human suffering. NOM combats poverty, hunger, homelessness, exploita-



Former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial and family spreading holiday cheer by feeding the homeless.

tion, and oppression with the provision of food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and oth-

er basic necessities of life. We also help facilitate the healing and development of healthy,

vibrant, and self-sustaining individuals by addressing issues of addiction, abuse, and

human trafficking through our Christian Discipleship/Recovery Programs.

State & Local News

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer Takes Over as New Owner of Teamer Strategy Group, LLC

Data News Staff Edited Report

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer is pleased to announce that she is the new owner of Teamer Strategy Group, LLC which was founded by the late Cheryl R. Teamer in 2009. It began as a company dedicated to advocacy, business development, event coordination, government relations, project management, and strategic planning. In 2021, Dr. Barnes-Teamer assumed the role of CEO. However, she has begun her independent practice January 1, 2022.

Under her leadership, Teamer Strategy Group (TSG) has expanded its services to include administrative management; strategic enrollment management; workforce development; faculty and staff training; leadership



Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer

searches; board development and training; research, assessment, and evaluation; and diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting.

Teamer Strategy Group serves both for profit and not for profit organizations in meeting their goals and objectives. "TSG's philosophy is to meet organizations where they are

and help them to get to where they want to be. We partner with organizations who value integrity, boldness, honesty, trust, accountability, innovation, and a commitment to their stakeholders" says Barnes-Teamer.

Toya brings more than 30 years of experience to Teamer Strategy Group, most recently as a principal at HCM Strategists, LLC. At HCM, Barnes-Teamer provided expertise in state and system-level higher education research, policy, and cross sector collaboration. She provided technical support to organizations, systems, and institutions to support their goals and objectives, as well as developing assessments to identify barriers and opportunities to meet deliverables. Toya also helped to identify strategies focused on improving outcomes and closing equity gaps.

Help Wanted

Advertising Sales

- Our Sales Reps sell online and print advertising space to local, regional and national businesses of all sizes throughout the US.
- You must love talking to people, as this job requires you to be on the phone constantly. You will spend your time making contact and building relationships with business owners all over the nation.
- Uncapped commissions for unlimited earning potential.

Call (504) 821-7421 to apply.

Voting Rights Battle Ahead in Early 2022

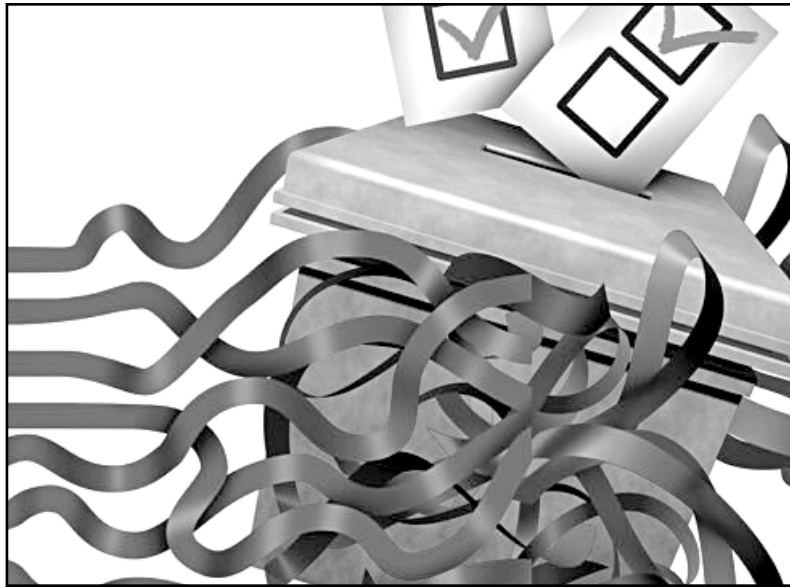
Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

In 2021, 440 bills to restrict voting access were introduced in 49 states. Nineteen states passed 34 new laws making it more difficult to vote. There have been no cases cited demonstrating evidence of any widespread voter fraud. But the main focus of Trump Republicans is on unproven claims of fraud as they question the legitimacy of the 2020 elections a year away from congressional midterms.

With the clear indication that Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) are against changing the filibuster rules in the U.S. Senate, a big battle over the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021 is ahead in early 2022.

The legislation will restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which was weakened in 2013 by the U.S. Supreme Court. Now that Democrats are in control of The White House, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House, voting rights advocates are pushing hard for the passage of federal legislation that would protect voting.

After the 2020 election of President Biden, who defeated former



President Donald Trump by over seven million votes, Trump's supporters have questioned the legitimacy of Biden's victory but have provided no evidence. Several Republican States Secretaries around the U.S. certified Biden's election victory. The Capitol was attacked by Trump's supporters on January 6, 2020 on the day Biden's election was to be certified.

The issue of whether Senators Manchin or Sinema will support a voting rights exception to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advance-

ment Act of 2021 isn't known. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) made it clear that the Senate would focus on voting rights in January. He made the affirmation days after Sen. Manchin announced he would vote against President Biden's signature legislation, Build Back Better.

On December 23, President Biden made his views on the issue clear.

"If the only thing standing between getting voting rights legislation passed and not getting passed

is the filibuster, I support making the exception of voting rights for the filibuster," President Biden said.

Advocates to protect the vote have been pushing Biden and Congress to move ahead affirmatively for months. On December 21, officials in Lincoln County Georgia, a county that is nearly one-third Black, proposed closing 6 polling sites for 2022. The decision comes after Republicans took over the local election board.

"SCOTUS decision gutting Voting Rights Act written by John Roberts is leading to greatest rollback of voting access & fair representation since end of Reconstruction," wrote voting rights journalist Ari Berman.

"Republican-led legislatures across the South have redrawn election districts using fresh census data, and the new maps will leave many communities of color in the Black Belt — a region of over 600 counties with large Black populations stretching from East Texas to Virginia — with less political power," wrote Billy Corriher in "Facing South."

The battle over voting rights is very likely to come to a head before March 2022.

DATA CLASSIFIED

Call 504-821-7421 to place your classified ad.

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!



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

f KMEZ 102.9 **@mykmez1029**
@kmez1029

www.kmez1029.com



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

f Heaven 106.7 **@heaven1067fm**
@heaven1067fm

www.heaven1067.com

This space can be

yours for only \$80

Call Now!

504-821-7421



**You
Are
Essential.**

On the job, and at home. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection.

**I GOT
MY COVID-19
VACCINE!**



Learn how you can get a COVID-19 vaccine.
cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines