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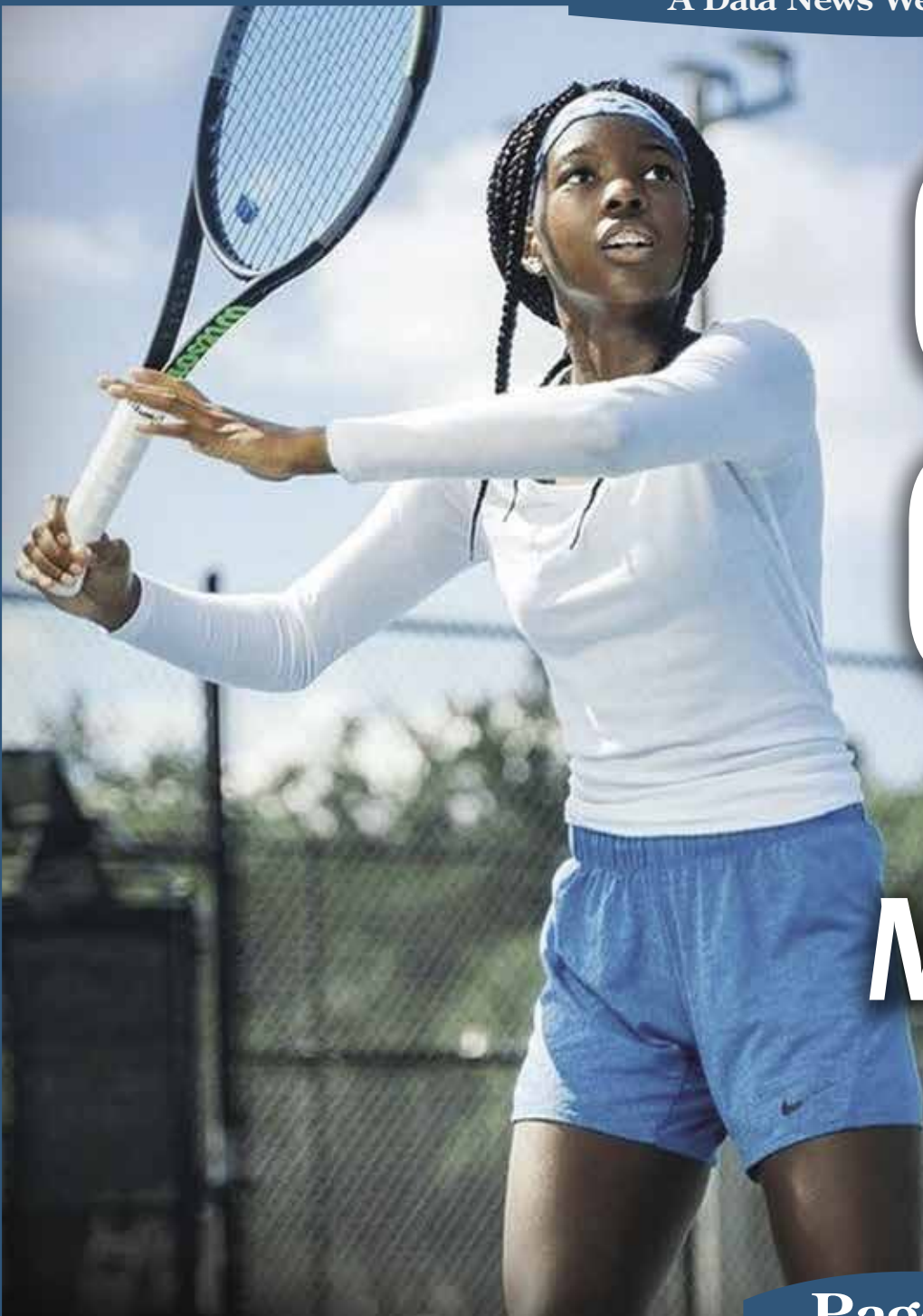
**Celebrating
the
Strength
of Women**

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive



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Carley Griffin Is Inspired to Make her Mark on Tennis



Tennis phenom Carley Griffin is taking the tennis world by storm. She is the next generation of greats following in the footsteps of Venus and Serena Williams.

Tyana Jackson
Data News Weekly Contributor

As the movement for more young women to engage in sports thrives, 12-year-old Carley Griffin’s rise in tennis has not gone unnoticed. Ranked number 1 in the State of Louisiana for two years, Carley is inspired

by many of the Black women who are making their name today in professional tennis, which was once a White, male-dominated sport.

“I really love the game, especially when I win,” Griffin said. “Serena Williams inspires me. I like that she hits with a lot of power and serves really well.”

Griffin’s story shares a lot of similarities with the

Williams sisters, whose father, Richard Williams, is a Shreveport, Louisiana native. His story is receiving critical acclaim in the Oscar-nominated film “King Richard” starring Actor Will Smith and co-produced by the Williams sisters.

Griffin started playing tennis at just 3-years old, when one day, her father, Jeffery Griffin, who has re-

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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	DNW Staff Writers	Production
Edwin Buggage	Tyana Jackson	Pubinator.com
Editor	Kristin Shelby	Editorial and
Sharonda Green	Culture Shock Intl. LLC.	Advertising Inquiries
Executive Assistant		datanewsweeklyad@gmail.com
June Hazeur	Dionne Character	Distribution
Accounting	Dr. Benjamin F. Chavus, Jr.	by Terrence Lee

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Carley Griffin pictured with her father (l) Jeffrey Griffin and sponsor (r) Samuel Jones, co-owner of Level Water.



Carley has a lot of support as she is a rising star in the tennis world where she is destined for greatness.

tired from the Navy, realized that this could really be a good outlet for her to excel in. A few years later she won Southern Winter 2-times in a row for ages ten and under. She then placed first at the EKS LLC Junior Open, level-14, an under-tournament where she played fifty-six games.

"When she's winning it's good. When she's losing it, it's like I am going to have a heart attack," said Jeffrey Griffin, Carley's father. "I also understand that you know, with tennis you can't coach from the sideline. You got to just sit there and shut up, you know," he said. "But if she's not having fun then it's not worth it."

The world of tennis is particularly tough on Black women players, especially if they aren't consistently winning. In March, Naomi Osaka was heckled at Indian Wells when she lost a match to Veronika Kudermetova. The heckler shouted at her defeat: "Naomi, you suck!" Osaka burst into tears, but she recalled in a press conference watching foot-

age as a younger player of both Venus and Serena being heckled at the same tournament. Osaka has spoken out about the mental health of athletes, and the pressure that is put on young female tennis players to constantly win. This is why when Carley fell from the number one spot a few days ago she said she decided to keep a positive outlook about her future games.

"I don't really feel any pressure yet, but I think I can come back and be number 1 again," Carley said. "It's hard to keep up with the other girls sometimes because they're at a higher level."

Her father provides her with a strong support system as she travelled around the country for tennis matches and tournaments in San Diego, New York, and Puerto Rico. Her accomplishments so far have led her to be ranked third in the nation in 2020.

"Her drive to want to play is one of her strongest attributes and she has come out here, shown she loves the sport, and wants to improve,"

said Jonathan Ames, her coach. "From over the past year of training her, physically she has gotten a lot stronger, taller and her stroke patterns have improved."

Despite a few game setbacks, Carley said she has not let any disappointments affect her overall goal. Her plans are to one day play in the Pros. She said it serves more than enough motivation for her to get better and to perfect her craft.

"We are in a transitional period at this moment and now she's gonna go to a tennis Academy in New York City. So, we're preparing to remove for six months during the summer and train at the USTA Billie Jean King Center. That's where you have the US open," said Jeffrey Griffin.

In New York, she will be able to train in an environment that physically and mentally challenges her for this next step in her career. It will give her opportunities that will benefit her in many different ways.

"I am excited but it's rough sometimes and it's not always going to be easy," Carley said.



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Celebrating the Strength of Women: Women's Month 2022



Diva Dionne Character
Female Empowerment
Columnist

As we move forward revisiting who we were just yesterday, we should stop picking ourselves apart and be grateful for where we are at this very moment, as we enter a new seasonal transition with spring being right around the corner.

It's time to open all your windows, letting go of the stale energy because you are free to live. Loving who you are and how you do what you do is one of the most important lessons we as woman have to learn as we continue to battle with being different and knowing exactly what we want. Let us stop now, comparing ourselves to others and realize that we have the strength of powerful sisterhoods beneath our beautiful feet.

Maybe God didn't mean for you to do some of the things you see yourself doing as you may not be mentally ready to run the world. Stop looking back and move forward. Remind yourself that tomorrow is promising because it is in fact a brand-new start. Tell yourself you are worthy and capable. Stop regretting every bad thing you've experienced and realize that you deserve as much as anyone else. You are filled with Black Girl Magic!

Your strength is love. Use it to make your way through the maze of life while being surrounded by beautiful, amazing women who are proud of whom you have become. Have the courage to go out there and get your dream.

It's all about you. Stop waiting on the world for it will never love you until you're dead and gone. Use your divine power to enjoy every gift you have as you share them with like-minded sisters. You are the strength the world needs. Live the life you have imagined and fly.

Dionne Character can be reached at www.characterhollywood.com.



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ad COUNCIL DOLLAR GENERAL LITERACY FOUNDATION

NOLA Global Youth Week Initiative

Culture Shock International, LLC in partnership with Kazi-Nia Baptist Church, N.O. Jazz & Heritage Foundation, Job1, Sheriff Marlin Gusman, HandsOn, NOPD, Carver High School, Youth Building New Orleans, Glory Garden, Urban League, Ben Lippen H. S., Senator Joseph Bouie, Councilmembers Eugene Green, Oliver Thomas, Freddie King, Councilmembers At Large JP Morrell, Helena Moreno, Groundwork NOLA, HI Ho Lounge and Neighborhood Engagement will be hosting a week-long of Youth and Community related events starting March 22nd – 27th, 2022.

We feel that the New Orleans Youth Community in the Upper 9th Ward Desire Community could be well served by a culture-business community outreach strategy that would galvanize, support, and encourage our youth to get involve in the rebuilding of a safe and prosperous Desire/Florida Community. Theme “9th Ward Desire Community Coming Together starting March 22nd -27th, 2022. These events are FREE and open to all segments of our communities. Expected attendance is 10,000 - 15,000 for the week!

The purpose of these community related events is to bring youth from the different neighborhoods from around the city to help combat cross-town violence & crime associated with wards disputes, inspire youth to step into their talents, create a platform for their future and pay attention to pressing community advocacy issues.

The nologyw will include: A week of youth & community events beginning tuesday, march 22, 2022

- Tuesday, 3/22, Sampson Park Cleanup & Revitalization Project. Create a Garden and Community Gathering Space. Sampson Park - 3100 Louisa Street 9AM – 6PM
- Wednesday 3/23, Carver Alumni Building Tour, followed by a Reception/Panel Discussion & Meet and Greet Graduates from all classes. Carver High School, 3059 Higgins Blvd 4PM – 8PM
- Thursday, 3/24, 9th Ward Desire Basketball Classic, also, celebrating Carver Men's 2022 Basketball Championship, Carver Gym, 4PM – 8PM



- Saturday, 3/26, 9th Ward Desire Community Day 10AM – 6PM Job1 Youth Job Fair, Sampson Park Track & Baseball Recruitment, Stage Performances by Voices of Congo Square, TBC Brass Band, Food & Crafts Vendors, Family

Fun & much more! 10AM – 6PM

- Sunday, 3/27, Revolution SAPC Parade, 9th Ward Desire Street Festival, Food Trucks and Arts & Crafts Vendors. 10AM-6PM
- Interested in participating as a ven-

dor, email: karlwash@gmail.com

This year, NOLAGYW will return to its original home, “the Upper 9th Ward Desire/Florida Community” to help continue the revitalization that has started.

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

Health Inequities Remain High for Black Women During and After Pregnancy

By Kristin Shelby
UNO Student and Intern
for the American Heart
Association

Dr. Jennifer Lincoln puts it nicely, “somebody’s skin color is not a risk factor for a disease or an outcome because there’s nothing about somebody’s skin or their organs underneath that puts them at risk. What does put them at risk is the world in which they live and the racism that they experience.”

Black women have many inequalities working against them, and these injustices pile on top of each other. The weight of it all can be felt by black pregnant women. Black women are 2-3 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women. It can happen when a provider dismisses real pain and writes it off by saying black women have thicker skin and a high pain tolerance. Subtle racism in the medical



system can be deadly.

But Black women should not be discouraged from being pregnant. There are steps to take to decrease the risks and to have a healthy pregnancy. Culturally, Black women can engage in more dialogue about illnesses in their family history. A person’s family history is extremely important to their medical health. By putting together, a solid personal and family history and being informed about pregnancy health, black women can



have successful pregnancies.

Pre-pregnancy health can be just as crucial as good health during pregnancy, which includes managing weight, cutting back on alcohol, and not smoking. Weight should be managed by eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and fiber and regular exercise, “even if that’s just walking 20 minutes a day,” Dr. Maria Sophocles said. “The human body can adapt seamlessly to pregnancy, but if you are out of shape or a smoker, you will struggle more with pregnancy-related changes to your cardiovascular health.”

Up to a year postpartum, women should stay vigilant of post birth complications like hemorrhage, blood clots, and hypertension. Black women can advocate for themselves more by asking for a different nurse or doctor if they don’t feel heard and see you as a person. Asking for help is not a weakness and it could save your life.

State & Local News

DA Williams Leads Prosecutorial Team in Court

Prosecutors Secure Guilty Verdicts on all Charges in all Cases Tried in First Week of Jury Trials for 2022, all Three Murder Trials end in Guilty Verdict.

Data News Staff Edited Report

Last week District Attorney Jason Williams personally led his prosecutors into court and secured guilty verdicts in all three murder cases that went to trial.

“All of these men received fair trials, and after the work of my Assistant District Attorneys in court, a jury of their peers found them all guilty as charged on each and every count,” said District Attorney Williams. “Reform, fairness, justice and safety all go hand in hand. I want to be clear on what reform truly means. Reform means focusing on the worst offenders so that we can safely walk in our neighborhoods. And that is what my entire team has been working on since I was sworn into office a year ago.”



New Orleans District Attorney Jason Williams surrounded by his team, where he vows to run an office that is reform oriented, but tough on criminals who prey upon the citizens of New Orleans. To win this fight, he is asking the city to provide more resources to his office.

Unprecedented Realities As Jury Trials Resume

After a COVID-induced hiatus, jury trials resumed in New Orleans. While OPDA prosecutors are ready to get back to court, the office is faced with some unprecedented realities. This includes an unprecedented case backlog with 150 cases scheduled for trial in March

2022 alone; this is compared to only forty-eight jury trials that took place in all of 2019. Additionally, this includes an unprecedented DNA backlog with the State; the DNA backlog across Louisiana includes over 2,000 cases. OPDA is waiting on key evidence in a number of cases. Additionally, OPDA is tackling some of the most difficult cases

inherited including retrying sixty reversals based on *Ramos v. Louisiana*, cases where the office was unable to procure unanimous jury verdicts when they were originally tried years ago.

As the caseload increases, OPDA needs additional staff, funding, and resources. District Attorney Williams continues to double down on his request to the New Orleans City Council and Mayor LaToya Cantrell to fund our requests for additional lawyers, more DNA testing analysts, and Cold Case funding to improve OPDA’s capacity and help prosecutors build stronger cases. The City of New Orleans has millions of dollars sitting in City coffers from the federal government that are earmarked for this exact need that are not being spent. OPDA needs immediate action to hire more people to handle

this increased workload.

“We are prosecutors. Trying cases in front of a jury is what we do, so we are excited to be back to court. However, we are faced with some of the most unprecedented challenges this office has ever seen. From an increased case load to a large DNA backlog, our office needs support, and resources from City leadership,” said District Attorney Williams. “These times are absolutely the most challenging we’ve faced in recent history, but we are holding those who commit violent offenses accountable and securing justice for the victims and their families. This office will be steadfast in restoring trust in our Criminal Legal System by securing convictions in some of the most difficult cases as well as addressing decades of indifference to the concerns of community.”

OP-ED: Robert F. Smith, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, Frank Baker and William Pickard Top List of Black Donors to HBCUs

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.
President and CEO, National Newspaper Publishers Association

Billionaire Philanthropist and Novelist MacKenzie Scott's \$560 million donation last year to 23 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) made headlines across the country at a time when racial equity has become front-page news. However, for decades Black leaders in business, entertainment, education, and other fields have been the main sources of philanthropic donations to HBCUs.

A recent Washington Post story found that Black Americans donate a higher share of their wealth than their White counterparts – to the tune of around \$11 billion each year. Given their cultural and educational importance to the Black community, HBCUs are the repository of much of these donations with a number of household names – and some you may not know – making big-dollar contributions to these institutions.

Here are some of the most prominent Black philanthropists to donate to HBCUs:

Robert F. Smith – Chairman & CEO, Vista Equity Partners

Smith, the billionaire investor behind the software private equity firm Vista Equity Partners, drew widespread praise in May 2019 when he announced that he and his family would pay off the entire student loan debt of the 2019 Morehouse College graduating class of 396 students. Along with paying off the student debt, Smith's \$35 million donation also helped establish the Student Success Program to reduce or eliminate debt for all Morehouse grads. The private equity guru also gave the school an additional \$1.5 million to create the Robert Frederick Smith Scholars Program and build a park on campus.

As board chair of the Student Freedom Initiative – a plan to provide STEM students at HBCUs with a family-centric, income-contingent payment alternative to high-cost, fixed-payment debt – Smith pledged \$50 million. Smith's



(From left to right) Robert S., Oprah W., Michael J., Frank B. and William P.

donation jumpstarted the initiative, which hopes to raise \$500 million for the effort and began operations in the fall of 2021 at eleven HBCUs.

"Each year, thousands of Black graduates from HBCUs across America enter the workforce with a crushing debt burden that stunts future decisions and prevents opportunities and choices," Smith said. "The initiative is purposefully built to redress historic economic and social inequities and to offer a sustainable, scalable platform to invest in the education of future Black leaders."

Oprah Winfrey, Television Personality, Philanthropist, Author, Entrepreneur & Actress

Most people may know the philanthropic acts of Oprah – who, like Beyoncé, Prince, and Zendaya needs no further introduction – through the infamous "You get a Car!" episode of her talk show, but she is also quietly, one of the biggest donors to HBCUs in the country.

In 2019, Oprah donated \$13 million to Morehouse College to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Oprah Winfrey Scholars Program at the HBCU. Overall, Oprah has donated at least \$25 million to the Atlanta school. "I felt that the very first time I came here," Oprah said. "The money was an offering to support that in these young men. I understand that African American men are an endangered species. They are so misunderstood. They are so marginalized."

Besides her gift to Morehouse, Oprah also donated \$1.5 million to the United Negro College Fund to

help pay for scholarships for Black students and general scholarship funds for 37 private HBCUs.

Frank Baker – Founder and Managing Partner of Siris Capital

Baker, the founder of private equity firm Siris, along with his wife, interior designer Laura Day Baker, donated \$1 million in May 2020 to establish a scholarship fund at Atlanta's Spelman College, the oldest private historically Black liberal arts college for women.

Initially, the scholarship paid off the existing spring tuition balances of nearly 50 members of Spelman's 2020 graduating class and the remaining funds are meant to ensure that future high achieving graduating seniors have the financial resources to graduate.

"We are all aware of the headwinds that people of color – especially women – face in our country, the challenges of which are made even more apparent by the economic and health impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic," the couple said in a press release. "We believe it is critical that talented women finish college and confidently enter – free of undue financial stress – the initial stage of their professional careers."

William F. Pickard – Businessman, Co-owner of Real Times Media

Detroit businessman and philanthropist Pickard has a long history of donating to HBCUs across the country. Most recently Pickard and his cousin, Cincinnati businessman Judson W. Pickard Jr., donated \$2 million to Morehouse College to

create the Pickard Scholars Program. This program will recruit and support Black students from metro Detroit, Flint, greater Cincinnati, and LaGrange, Georgia to attend the Atlanta HBCU.

"People have uplifted and helped me grow and I believe in blessing others," Pickard, whose children attended Morehouse, told the Atlanta Tribune. "Our gifts are given to where we are from and those who have invested in us and who we are."

The Pickard Family Foundation also donated \$100,000 to the National Black MBA Association to create the William F. Pickard Business Scholarship Fund. The fund is open to qualified business student members at several HBCUs who need help financing their education.

Michael Jordan – Former NBA Superstar

Michael Jordan is arguably the greatest basketball player of all time and is almost single-handedly responsible for transforming the game into the global phenomenon it is today. So, if anybody knows how to make an impact on HBCUs, it would be His Airness.

The six-time NBA Champion and five-time League MVP, along with Nike's Jordan Brand, donated \$1 million last year to Morehouse College to boost the school's journalism and sports-related studies program. The donation is meant to bolster a program launched thanks to the donation of another icon, Director Spike Lee.

"Education is crucial for understanding the Black experience today," Jordan said in a press release. "We want to help people understand the truth of our past and help tell the stories that will shape our future."

The donation to Morehouse is part of a pledge made by Jordan and his brand in 2020 to donate \$100 million over the next ten years to combat racism across the country.

The following video link highlights the transformative financial contributions to HBCUs by these African American philanthropists: <https://vimeo.com/687271086/670be7a4b6>

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