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Phenomenal Women of New Orleans



Asali Devan Ecclesiastes
CEO Ashe Cultural Center



Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton
Chief of Pediatric Hematology and
Director of the Hemophilia Treatment
Center at Mississippi Center for
Advanced Medicine and Louisiana
Center for Advanced Medicine



Attorney Lesli Harris
N.O. City Council



Takeshia Davis, MD, MPH
CEO New Orleans East Hospital

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Phenomenal Women of New Orleans



“Women’s History Month should be celebrated every month; I also feel this way about Black History Month. I believe that all people should be included in narratives of excellence that inspire future generations to follow,” says District B City Councilmember Lesli Harris, who is an attorney, and also served as Chief of Staff at Loyola University.



Takeshia Davis, MD, MPH is the CEO of New Orleans East Hospital. In addition to running the hospital, she is an advocate for Women’s Health, and works to empower young women across the city. Speaking of the women who inspire and motivate her she says, “I am inspired by many trailblazing women like Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Dorothy Mae Taylor, and Mayor LaToya Cantrell because of their groundbreaking accomplishments and empowerment of other women.”

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief
Data News Weekly

Celebrating Excellence

The late great Maya Angelou wrote a poem entitled Phenomenal Woman. Today these two words describe the aspirations and achievements of women across the globe. Moreover, New Orleans is a place where women are making the mark, sealing

their legacies, and inspiring the next generation of young girls to aspire to greatness.

While their numbers are many, Data News Weekly, in honor of Women’s History Month is featuring four amazing ladies from New Orleans, who embody the qualities of Phenomenal Women.

In the Spirit of Excellence

“Women’s History Month should be celebrated every month; I also feel this way about Black History Month. I believe that all people should be in-

cluded in narratives of excellence that inspire future generations to follow,” says District B City Councilmember Lesli Harris, who is an attorney, who also served as Chief of Staff at Loyola University.

Today as we watch history unfold, as many women are breaking through the glass ceilings and showing the world, they have the necessary tools to lead.

Another example of excellence is Takeshia Davis, MD, MPH is the CEO of New Orleans East Hospital. In addition to running the hospital, she is an advocate for Women’s Health, and works to empower

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Asali Devan Ecclesiastes, CEO of Ashe Cultural Center, who has also worked in lead roles in government and worked in communities advocating for equity remarking on her city and its impact on her life says, "New Orleans has provided me the opportunity in my upbringing to do all kinds of amazing things and exercising all kinds of power. It made me feel different about what I could do and become. I would define a Phenomenal Woman as a free woman. She is one who cherishes her freedom so much that she tries to help free others."

young women across the city.

Speaking of the women who inspire and motivate her she says, "I am inspired by many trailblazing women like Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Dorothy Mae Taylor, and Mayor LaToya Cantrell because of their groundbreaking accomplishments and empowerment of other women."

Continuing she says, "It is vitally important that as women to continue to break glass ceilings across the world, that we mentor and sponsor other women along the way to ensure that they are prepared to elevate those ceilings even higher. The historic nomination of The Honorable Katanji Brown Jackson to serve as the first African American woman as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in its over 200-year history, reminds us that there is much more work for us to do together. Therefore, I am inspired to keep fighting for health equity despite long standing, systematic health disparities and I am motivated every day by my Mother that the impossible is possible."

It Takes A Village

Being in a city like New Orleans, it marries the old a new world. This is something that has an impact on how women are viewed and treated. "Being a woman in New Orleans is different than being a woman in other parts of the world. There is a rev-

erence to how women are treated in the public space," says Asali Devan Ecclesiastes, CEO of Ashe Cultural Center, who has also worked in lead roles in government and worked in communities advocating for equity.

While acknowledging the city's problems, she feels that New Orleans and the support she received growing up gave her the wings to fly high. "New Orleans has provided me the opportunity in my upbringing to do all kinds of amazing things and exercising all kinds of power. It made me feel different about what I could do and become. I would define a Phenomenal Woman as a free woman. She is one who cherishes her freedom so much that she tries to help free others."

The Crescent City is one that houses many jewels, and one of those places is Xavier University. A HBCU that is the only Black and Catholic University in the Western Hemisphere. Throughout its storied history, it has produced many women who are making an impact in the City of New Orleans. Dr. Takeshia Davis and Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton are both alums of this august institution that continues a legacy of producing leaders.

"I received an amazing opportunity to attend Xavier University. During my time there, it gave me the strength to do what I do today, says Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton, who is Chief of Pediatric Hematology, and Director of the He-



Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton, who is Chief of Pediatric Hematology, and Director of the Hemophilia Treatment Center at the Mississippi Center for Advanced Medicine, and the Louisiana Center for Advanced Medicine. Indeed, she is accomplished, but speaks of her commitment to spirituality as a guiding force in her life, "The whole foundation of my life has always been God. It was the place where I solidified my interest in medicine. Where I solidified the belief that I could do it."

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Giving Back and Serving Others

While these women have all achieved success, they are dedicated to giving back and pouring into the next generation, so they can reach their full potential.

"On the City Council Helena Moreno and I are working on establishing a young women leadership academy. This is something that would be aimed at young women in college and girls that are in high school or younger. Shape them into great women who can accomplish great things in life."

Ashe Cultural Center has always been a place where community empowerment has been in the forefront of its mission and vision. Under the leadership of Asali Devan Ecclesiastes, she plans to expand on it to increase the center's impact on the residents of the city.

"Ashe had amazing programming for me to build on. I have a perspective around policy and from

interested in going into medicine and/or healthcare administration, "Excellence cannot be denied! No matter your gender, race, lived or learned experience, excellence cannot be denied so always strive for excellence. Strive for excellence in your studies, appearance, mentors, professional engagements, etc.... because unfortunately, only 2.6% of Doctors in the U.S. identify as Black or African American and less than 4% of hospital administrators...but excellence cannot be denied!"

Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton, who is a renowned physician in her field, says early in her career she was able to have a Black Female mentor. This is something that let her to know a career in medicine was obtainable. During my time in college, I was awarded several research grants. This improved my profile participating in research. My attending physician was a Black female name Dr. Renee Gardner, and at that time I saw very few Black physicians and certainly very few Black female physicians, I found her inspiring."

These bridges to opportunity and access are important in the lives of young people. Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton also belongs to the New Orleans Chapter of the Links Incorporated. Speaking of her work with the group she says, "It's been an honor and I love working with them because these are other amazing women who believe in God, family, and community. It is something that gives us as likeminded women an opportunity to give back."

The Definition of a Phenomenal Woman

While some women may achieve greatness in their jobs. But excelling in the marketplace is not the only way to be a Phenomenal Woman according to Lesli Harris, "We can be great in our own way, and that is an individual thing defined by each woman on her own terms."

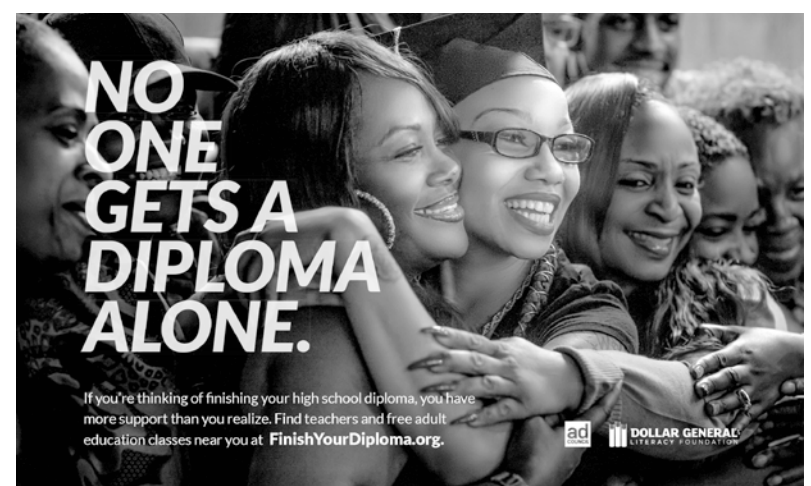
This sentiment is echoed by Dr. Tami Chrisentery-Singleton, "Being true to yourself, putting God first, living with passion and purpose. If you do this, you can't go wrong, and your life will be phenomenal."

Tyana Jackson Contributed to this story.

my time in government and how much policy and bureaucracy will shape our outcomes. I wanted to use the programming to build on what we have done to empower marginalized communities and being intentional around creating a dialog around access and creating spaces for equity to emerge."

Climbing the Ladder to Success the Need for Mentors

Getting to the next level sometimes is more than simply your ability. It is a professional networks that often time increase your net worth. Today women not only in New Orleans, but around the country are beginning to build professional networks to assist those following in their footsteps, preparing them to pursue excellence. Dr. Takeshia Davis says to students who are



Shopping with a Purpose



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

It's the ultimate shopper's experience.... finding amazing fashion deals and supporting a great cause at the same time.

Dress for Success New Orleans will once again open its stockroom doors to allow shoppers to peruse through their warehouse of incredible women's fashions ranging from frolic spring dress to fabulous cocktail dresses in sizes from 0 to 24.

The Fill-A-Bag (F.A.B.) Sale is a



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Seasonal Inventory Reduction Fundraiser Event that allows the organization to purge its overstock of fashions donated by the community, companies, and corporate sponsors such as Lane Bryant, Ann Taylor, and Talbots.

The shopping event will take place on Friday, March 25th, 4PM-7PM and Saturday, March 26th, 9AM-4PM at the Dress for Success facility located at 1700 Josephine Street. With the purchase of a single ticket this reserves the shopper their "Power Hour" to shop at their hearts desire for one hour, filling a 12X16X4 shopping bag to the brim with fabulous goodies. Shoppers can reserve their Power Hour shopping shift by purchasing a ticket for a nominal price and additional shopping bags can be purchased during their shopping hour for another low cost.

"It's a great way to build your wardrobe inexpensively and at the same time make a donation

to support the Dress for Success New Orleans mission of empowering women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life," explains Lori Byargeon, Executive Director. The services offered by Dress for Success are free and funding is continually needed to maintain the programs offered which include the suiting clients in professional attire, job readiness assistance through the Capital One Career Center, employment retention program and mentoring.

The goal to identify women who, with a hand up, not a hand-out, can gain employment and economic independence.

For ticket and more information on the F.A.B. Sale visit www.neworleans.dressforsuccess.org, call 504-891-4337 or email lori@dfsneworleans.org.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Super Sunday 2022

Back Like we Never Left

Glenn Jones
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Well, “it’s been a long time coming” to Quote Sam Cooke! March 19th, Saturday night was St. Joseph night and March 20th was Uptown Super Sunday and it was back Live and in Living Color. The Culture felt like it was given a breath of fresh air! Did I say Color. Oh yes and plenty of it! As the Injuns say, “Pretty Pretty”! The normal event and location don’t change (well if COVID isn’t in da air), Shakespeare Park where the Uptown Rulers (hold “Court”) Rule, as they say.



From Downtown, around town to Uptown every Tribe converged to Washington and LaSalle to celebrate the Culture, the never say die (NO UMBOW) spirit and paying homage to the Ancestors and Aborigine that came before them. The community was definitely out. The great weather provided a full day of community, culture, and family fun. You could smell bar-b-que smoke all the way to MLK. If this is any indication of the rest of Carnival season than the Downtown Super Sunday, will be one you won’t want to miss.

CHA WAAH!



Heart Disease and Mental Health Among Black Women

Stressful life events — such as the death of a spouse or other family members, divorce, abuse, job loss or financial problems — are linked to **HIGHER INCIDENTS** of heart attack, stroke and other types of cardiovascular disease in Black women.

Disparities in mental health are due to **STRUCTURAL RACISM** and conditions in which people are born and live called **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**.

Women are at least **TWICE AS LIKELY** to experience an episode of major depression as men, and **FEW AFRICAN AMERICANS** receive any form of depression treatment.

Rates of mental health among Black people in the U.S. are similar to other groups. But **SIGNIFICANT DISPARITIES** among Black people exist in mental health services.

Barriers to quality care include:



Stigma associated with mental illness



Distrust of the health care sector



Lack of providers from diverse backgrounds



Lack of insurance, underinsurance vii

ONLY 1 IN 3 BLACK PEOPLE
in America who need mental
health services receives it.vi

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2022 New Orleans UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball

Through Events like this, UNCF is Changing the HBCU Narrative Across the Nation by Helping more Students of Color get to and through College.

Data News Staff Edited Report

UNCF (United Negro College Fund) will host its Ninth Annual UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball in person Saturday, March 26th at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. Corporate partners, educators, religious leaders, and community influencers will be in attendance, including host the Honorable Mayor LaToya Cantrell.

"As America builds back better, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have never been more important to the nation's economic growth. HBCUs are major engines of Black social and economic mobility and the prosperity of state and local communities. Yet, they remain systemically underfunded," said Dr. Michael Lomax, President and CEO, UNCF. "Your support is needed more than ever as UNCF fights for increases in



Therese Badon, UNCF National Vice President of Development.

federal support for Pell Grants and other student aid and state support for our thirty-seven member institutions and HBCUs overall. I encourage you to invest in UNCF so together we can invest in and build future generations of Black college

students who will lead this nation and contribute to our economy. Events like the New Orleans UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball helps us do just that."

For 77 years, UNCF has strived to change the HBCU narrative across the nation by equipping more HBCU students with the resources necessary to transition into college, graduate and ultimately expand and diversify America's highly educated workforce.

The event is chaired by Michael O. Smith, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Hotel New Orleans. Och-sner Health will serve as the event's presenting sponsor. Marquis sponsors include Entergy Corporation, the Hyatt Regency Hotel New Orleans, Karen and Henry Coaxum, Donna and Paul Flower, Sherry, and Alan Leventhal (members of the Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences), Mardi Gras Productions, the New Orleans Saints/New

Orleans Pelicans, WDSU and other generous sponsors.

Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough, President, Dillard University, and Joel Vilmenay, President, and General Manager, CBS2 KCAL9 and CBS News Los Angeles, will each receive the Mayor's Masked Ball Award for their steadfast commitment to education and unwavering support of UNCF.

"We are elated that we're able to bring the UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball back, live! Like carnival season, this is one of the seasonal social events our community looks forward to every year. It's an opportunity for us to reconnect with our stakeholders and recognize those that are going above and beyond to create remarkable opportunities for our young people. We simply could not do the very important work that we do without the help of our caring and committed community partners. This event gives us the

opportunity to "party with a purpose," while we raise funds to support our HBCUs and the students who attend them," said Therese Badon, Vice President of Development - Southern Division, UNCF.

The New Orleans UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball Event has generated more than \$11 million over nine years in support of local HBCUs and scholarship support to help deserving students get to and through college successfully. With the help of the greater New Orleans community, more than \$1.2 million was awarded last year in scholarships and programs for UNCF-member HBCUs and other colleges and universities.

Entertainment for the event will be provided by Grammy® Award-Winner Stephanie Mills. The event will also feature student testimonials, silent auction, and a parade of masks.

Health News

Heart Healthy Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet

By Kristen Shelby
American Heart Association

A Mediterranean-style diet can play a big role in preventing heart disease and stroke and reducing risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. There is some evidence that a Mediterranean diet rich in virgin olive oil may help the body remove excess cholesterol from arteries and keep blood vessels open.

One of the best parts about the Mediterranean diet is that the meals can be delicious and enjoyable. It is a plant-based diet where the majority of the foods in the meal come from fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Meat and poultry are eaten in small amounts and olive oil is used as its primary fat source. Olive oil is very heart-healthy because it is one of the good cholesterol that helps clear out bad cholesterol. One simple ingredient swap is to replace your animal fats and margarine with extra virgin olive oil.



"Mediterranean diet" is a generic term based on the traditional eating habits in the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. There's not one standard Mediterranean diet. At least 16 countries border the Mediterranean. Eating styles vary among these countries and even among regions within each country because of differences in culture, ethnic background, religion, economy, geography and agricultural production. However, there are some common factors.

The main protein is in beans which are high in fiber and protein. The diet increases ingredients which include heart healthy omega three foods such as walnuts, salmon, greens, flax oil, and shrimp. It includes whole grains like farro, millet, oats, which are good for the digestive system. For desert time, replace processed sugary foods with sweet whole fruits.

A person from New Orleans can follow the Medi diet by eating what they already know. One of New Orleans' most common dishes is red beans and rice. It is a low-cost recipe that is packed with healthy protein even if you leave out meat. Use olive oil to coat the pan and add in more vegetables than normal- vegetables like celery, onions, minced garlic, and bell peppers. Substituting the canned kidney beans for the dried pack beans can help to control how much salt is added. Replace white rice with whole grain rice or quinoa and season it with herbs and spices like thyme, oregano, and cayenne pepper.

House Passes CROWN Act to End Discrimination Against Natural Black Hairstyles

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Connecticut Democratic Rep. Jahana Hayes sounded off to critics of legislation that would allow individuals freedom to express themselves by how they wear their hair.

"Natural hair should be worn without fear of discrimination," Rep. Hayes asserted moments after the U.S. House of Representatives passed the CROWN Act, banning hair-related discrimination.

The measure passed in a vote of 235-189 along party lines.

Introduced by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-New Jersey), the acronym CROWN stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair.

The measure outlaws discrimination based on an individual's texture or style of hair.

The bill will, which now heads to the Senate, states that "routinely, people of African descent are deprived of educational and employment opportunities" for wearing their hair in natural or protective hairstyles such as locs, cornrows, twists, braids, Bantu knots, or Afros.

Republicans strongly opposed the measure, and some used race-baiting words in expressing their opposition. "No to the nappy hair act," Georgia Republican Marjorie Taylor Green railed.

Civil rights groups applauded the passage of the measure.

"Passage of the CROWN Act by the House of Representatives moves our nation one step closer to federal protection for Black



women, men, and children from discrimination across the country simply because of their natural hair or hairstyle," stated Damon Hewitt, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

"We urge the Senate to quickly take up this important legislation, which would ensure that Black students are not prohibited from attending or participating in school events because of their natural hair, that Black employees are not subject to pretextual firing or negative employment actions because of their hair texture or style, and that Black people are accorded dignity and respect in choosing to embrace a natural hairstyle."

Hewitt said restrictions on Black hairstyles and textures in workplaces and school campuses are relics of white supremacy.

"This explicit protection against racial discrimination based on hairstyles is long overdue," he remarked.

In a statement, Congressional

Black Caucus Chair Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio) said Black women and girls face discrimination because of their natural hair each day at their workplaces and schools.

"So today, I proudly voted yes on the CROWN Act to finally end race-based hair discrimination once and for all," Beatty insisted.

"It's simple — discrimination against Black hair is discrimination based on race. I look forward to swift passage of this critical legislation in the Senate and standing with

President Biden as he signs it into law."

Rep. Beatty then delivered a message to Black youth.

"To every young Black girl and boy, I say to you, your hair — from your kinks to your curls, from your fros to your fades, from your locs to your braids — is a crown," she asserted.

"Be proud of your hair and know the Congressional Black Caucus is fighting for you."



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If you're vaccinated, **get the booster** for maximum protection. If you're not, **get vaccinated** so you don't get sick or pass the virus on to someone who is vulnerable like a tiny baby or an older adult.

**Whatever shoes you wear,
step up Louisiana and
give COVID the boot.**

To book your free vaccine or booster, visit **vaccines.gov**.
or call **855-453-0774** to speak with a trusted medical professional.

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LOUISIANA

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