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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Black Women Chefs Continue to Pioneer in Local Food Business



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Chef Leah Chase



Chef Zoe Chase



Chef Nina Compton



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Black Women Chefs Continue to Pioneer in Local Food Business



The late great Chef Leah Chase continues to set the bar for culinary excellence.

Madison Grant
Data News Weekly Contributor

The restaurant industry is at the heart of New Orleans life, and while at home, women often rule in the kitchen, but in the food business, there are still larger gender gaps, worsened by the Pandemic. In America,

about 20 percent of head chefs are women and 9.9 percent of head chefs are African American, according to census data. As restaurants reopen with the lifting of COVID-19 mandates, Black women chefs in the city hope the trends will turn in the industry as more Black women step out as entrepreneurs.

Chef Zoe Chase comes from a long line of family

members who are well known in the local restaurant business. Her great-grandmother, the late Leah Chase, was the “Queen of Creole Cuisine.” Chef has followed in the line of her family members, working her way through the industry in her family-owned business and now serves as the Head Chef for Dooky Chase, which has been operating since 1941 and is an iconic

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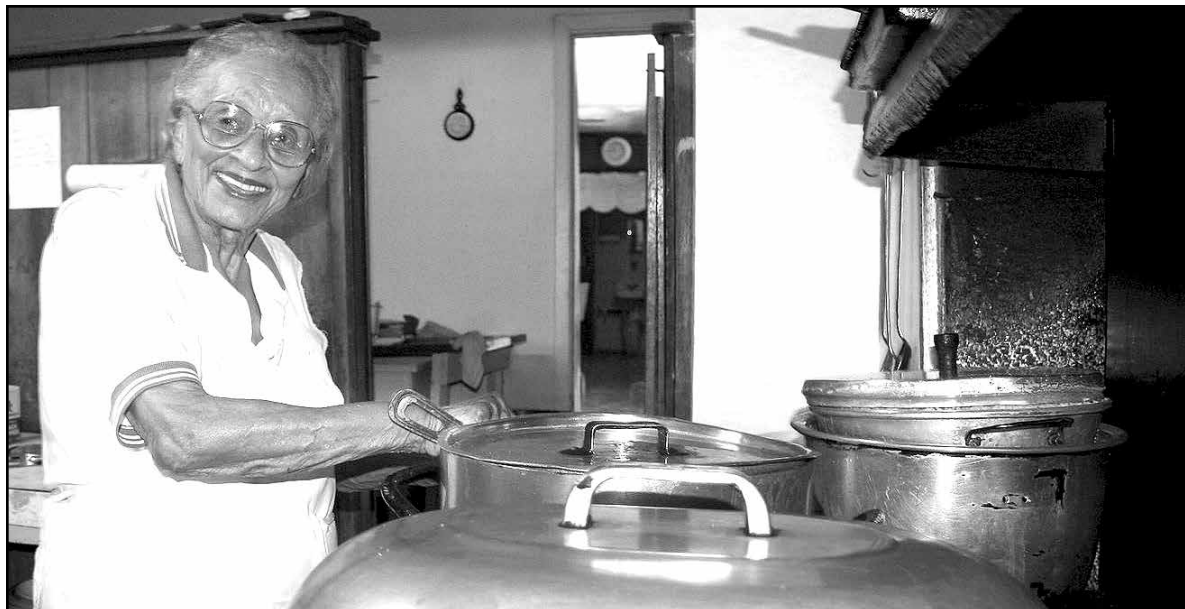
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The late Willie Mae Seaton, owner of Willie Mae Scotch House is another female chef who has blazed the trail for other women chefs to follow in her footsteps.



Kerry Seaton Stewart grew up watching her great-grandmother, the late Willie Mae Seaton run a successful business when there were not many. Today she is continuing the legacy, running the family business Willie Mae Scotch House.



Zoe Chase is the Head Chef at Dooky Chase, following in the footsteps of her great-grandmother, world renown Chef Leah Chase.

part of New Orleans civil rights and cultural history.

Zoe said she desires to continue the legacy of the late Leah Chase but aims to expand in new areas that keeps the old traditions of Dooky Chase alive while taking the family's namesake into a new era. She said her journey first began as a hostess for one day and after moving into the kitchen, she realized cooking was what she wanted to do with her life. Zoe said she works to continue her family's legacy. In the future, she plans to open a restaurant of her own.

"Women have always been at the forefront of the business," said Stella Chase Reese, Leah Chase' daughter and the Manager of Dooky Chase. "It's wonderful to see Chef Zoe who is the fifth-generation continuing the legacy of strong women," Reese said.

The networks of Black women chefs in the city are closely interconnected, primarily because there

are so few of them. The culture of supporting other women chefs within the Chase family is precisely how Zoe and Chef Nina Compton crossed paths. Compton was mentored and supported by Leah Chase when she arrived in New Orleans.

"She mentored me and told me you have to make it happen because other women are relying on you to also succeed, so it's not just about me it's about showcasing the path for other women," Compton said.

Compton is a James Beard Award-Winning Chef that hails from Saint Lucia serving up dishes in New Orleans at Compere Lapin and her newest restaurant Bywater American Bistro. Compere Lapin showcases her culinary journey and the fusion of Caribbean, French, and Creole food. Both chefs are not only tied through their passion for cooking but their culinary journey.

Compton did just that when Zoe decided to step into the culinary world and pursue her dreams of be-

coming a chef. Zoe recalls her interacting with more women in the industry than chefs before her which is progress within the industry.

"I've been around powerful women chefs and it's been an awesome journey to see women highly positioned in this industry," Zoe Chase said.

Compton said she has been cooking for 23 years and credits the joy food brings people as being a motivator for her culinary career. Her work has been recognized on a national scale. Compton said she plans to continue to cook food that displays her upbringing, and her new restaurant strives to provide her neighborhood with great food and a good time.

"I never thought I would have been selected by James Beard and then to win it is a tremendous achievement. I think not just for me but other women and to see other women be nominated and win feels great," Compton said.



Chef Nina Compton is a James Beard Award Winner hailing from Saint Lucia, serving up dishes at Compere Lapin, and her new restaurant Bywater American Bistro.

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Fashion Forecast Calls for Bright & Sunny



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

Each year Pantone introduces the colors for the seasons that become the key focus in fashion. This spring season will deliver some of the boldest colors yet, from neon green to hot pink. But the standout color that is grabbing everyone's attention is canary yellow. The color palette is bright, sunny, and vibrant. A color that inspires playful creativity and expressions that are full of life!

Executive Director of Pantone, Leatrice Eiseman, summed up the list of the Spring 2022 Colors as follows: "Our use of color is connected to the cultural mood. As we explore a new future, we are looking for opportunities to do something completely different." Colors that celebrate our desire to break the boundaries and satisfy our fervent need for unconstrained visual expressions we are seeking as we enter into this time."

It is a must have color of the season, from bold statements to tiny accessories; canary yellow is bound to find its way onto everyone's wardrobe in some capacity. However, when you wear this beaming ray of sunny color, one thing is for certain it will brighten your mood and that of everyone around you!

Fashions Featured from Macy's Lakeside: (BOLD)

- Canary yellow, curve-hugging, pullover crochet dress with flutter cap sleeves and fringe hemline by INC. Accessories include white seed beaded, tassel pendant necklace set in gold tone, faux suede espadrilles with rope wedge heel, and floral print cross body bag by Coach.

- Bright lemon yellow, floral print, pleated pull-on style skirt by Vince Camuto, paired with canary yellow square neck ribbed textured top by



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Continued on page 5.

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INC. Belt is added to accent the waist, ankle strap sandals with block heel, and Calvin Klein tangerine bucket bag adds a pop of color to complete the look.

- Yellow floral print, 100% cotton, button down shirt by Charter Club, bright blue t-shirt under; paired with white, slim cut Levi jeans and rounding out

the look with a pair of rainbow slip-on canvas sneakers by Ralph Lauren.

- Soft yellow, off-the-shoulders, body-con dress with bell sleeves by Calvin Klein; accented with yellow and gold-tone floral necklace and clear vinyl, pointy toe, sculpted architectural heels by Steve Madden.

Tracee Dundas Fashion Editor @fashionablyyoursnola
 Fashion Forecast Calls for Bright & Sunny
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 Models: Taylor Harry, Julianne King, Sean Mulligan
 Photographer: Leo Pearl

St. James Founder Sharon Lavigne will Receive the Laetare Medal for her Work as an Environmental Justice Advocate

Data News Staff Edited Report

Sharon Lavigne is the embodiment of service and commitment to her community. She is a retired Special Education Teacher turned Environmental Justice Advocate. For her work she will receive what the University of Notre Dame describes as the oldest and most prestigious honor for American Catholics.

The university will present the Laetare Medal to Rise St. James founder Sharon Lavigne on May 15th, during commencement ceremonies in South Bend, Indiana.



Sharon Lavigne

"Through her tireless activism, Sharon Lavigne has heeded God's call to advocate for the health of her community and the planet — and to help put an end to environmental degradation which so often disproportionately victimizes communities of color," Notre Dame President Rev. John I. Jenkins said in a news release.

"In awarding her the Laetare Medal, Notre Dame recognizes her leadership and her courage as a champion of the environment, a voice for the marginalized and a steadfast servant of our creator."

Lavigne created Rise St. James in 2018, a year that plastics companies

in China and Taiwan announced plans to build in St. James Parish, between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Wanhua Plastics planned a \$1.25 billion complex in Convent and Formosa Plastics got permits for a \$9.4 billion complex.

Wanhua canceled its application in 2019, saying it had scaled back its plans and was looking at another site.

Because of her impactful work, last year, a Pentagon official ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to make a full environmental study of Formosa Plastics Group Member FG LA LLC's plans for ten chemical plants and

four other major facilities. And Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan made the parish one of the stops in his "Journey to Justice" tour.

The Laetare Medal has been awarded annually since 1883 to a Catholic "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the Church and enriched the heritage of humanity."

Other Louisiana recipients have included was given in 2019 to retired Xavier University of Louisiana President Norman L. Francis in 2019, Singer Aaron Neville in 2015 and Sister Helen Prejean in 1996.

State & Local News

Data News Weekly interviews with Heaven 106.7 FM Radio Personality

Isabel Davis the Award Winning "Traveling Worshipper."

By: Glenn "Chayil" Jones
@hebrewstateofbeing
Data News Weekly
Contributer

Mrs. Davis is a well-accomplished Gospel singer who has traveled the world giving the gift of song known as "The Traveling Worshipper." After winning the 2018 Prayze Award for "Best International Album of the Year" she relocated to New Orleans from her Hometown of San Antonio and commutes back and forth to this day to bring her spirit, energy, and love of the Most high through the Airwaves via Cumulus Broadcasting first New Orleans FM Gospel Station 106.7 Heaven launched September 14, 2021. With her purpose filled, busy schedule Mrs. Davis made time to sit down with Data News Weekly to speak about her new endeavor, Radio and how the new cockpit seat fits and where is she driving her listeners to Monday thru Friday 9am till 2pm?

First, we asked how did her singing career and becoming a radio personality align?

Isabel expressed that her management (Safe Haven Mgt.) com-



Isabel Davis the Award Winning "Traveling Worshipper."

pany and J'Micheal Francois the Program Director and an on-air personality himself for 106.7 discussed talent for the soon to be launching 106.7 Heaven. Isabel says "This (radio personality) isn't something I said I wanted to be the next...but I always pray to God, if you are going to open that door, I won't be afraid, I'm going to walk through that door. I'm always praying to God for opportunities. So, when I see these things happening, I say ok I know you heard my prayers."

Now that the opportunities have aligned, and you are in a new cockpit how does it feel? (bold)



Glenn "Chayil" Jones conducts an on-air interview of Heaven 106.7 FM Radio Personality.

Isabel: I will say anything new can be scary. First, I was like ok God are you sure, you know all these little doubts, but as my father said if you feel those nerves that means you're still humble.

Isabel also expressed that early criticism and vulnerability served to only build her and make her stronger in trusting in Him.

Isabel: "So, here's the thing I have to start the day, every show with the Holy Spirit by inviting him into the show. Because I believe literally if he gives you a platform to use your gift, your voice than be sure to include him in that right?"

Where are you driving your listeners? (bold)

Isabel: My prayer was ok God as I do my part by studying the greats and learn what they do well, my other prayer is Lord teach me how to do it, because I don't want to be an imitation. God makes originals! right? So, it doesn't start out as this smooth thing as you say once you're in the driver seat, it's always knowing I'm not alone God you're with me, you're guiding me, leading me, I'm walking in step with you because you've already laid the path for me, I'm just walking in it. You always want to

put your best foot forward but as you mentioned there's the travel, I'm a mom to three little ones, a wife, a minister, and it's a lot and it feels like a lot of hats, but I always try to utilize everything that happens in my day and include it on the show. Because to me there is nothing more engaging than to be transparent. On days that it's not a going well (perfect day) and saying it just like that. I hope your morning is going well mine hasn't but we're going to get through this together. It's something to be said when people can just be who they are and show that and share that. Someone's going to relate to that, so they're tuned into the right place, and we are going to play all their favorite songs and we are going to encourage and uplift them and that's really the goal.

Last Question, what has surprised you the most?

Isabel: How much I love it and how I find it so exciting! What I love about it is the encouragement from listeners are so presently surprising. Encouragements like that comes when you least expect it. But for me it's always been at the right moment when I needed it.

The Royal Hearts Foundation Hosts its 7th Annual Root Out Child Abuse 5k Family Fun Run to Bring Awareness to Child Abuse.

Demetrice Morris CEO of the Royal Hearts Foundation

Bonnabel Boat Launch (bold)

The Royal Hearts Foundation invites New Orleans and surrounding Parishes to join them for their Seventh Annual "Root Out Child Abuse 5K Family Fun Run" on April 30, 2022, at the Bonnabel Boat Launch located at 1599 Bonnabel Blvd, Metairie, LA 70005. You may register for the walk at www.royalheartsfoundation.org or by contacting (504) 942-6111.

The goal of "Root Out Child Abuse" is to bring awareness to the war on our children. Oftentimes, Child abuse leaves victims ashamed and powerless. When kids are abused, they learn that people are not safe, and aggression is necessary. This event is designed to shine the light on abuse and bring awareness to our actions for endanger children and what we can do to stop it.

The Royal Hearts Foundation

The Royal Hearts Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing child abuse in all its forms through programs, services, public awareness, training and education, advocacy, networking, and enhancing the quality of life for children and families.

ROCA will not only shine a light on abuse but also bridge the gap to all the heroes who work tirelessly to protect our families and bring healing to our young people. The Royal Hearts Foundation will connect victims to services and provide outreach programs such as Darkness 2 Light, Human Trafficking Awareness, Recognizing and Reporting Abuse as well as the Art of Core Diving - A healing initiative for victims of abuse geared to bring wholeness and healing right here in New Orleans and the surrounding communities to stop this growing epidemic.

Registration

On-Site Registration begins at 7:15 am. Pre-Race Activities begins at 8:00 am. The Race begins at 8:30

am. Local businesses will be on-site. Music by the Wut it Do Network. Food by Sponsors of the Royal Hearts Foundation.

"When people are healthy mentally, physically, and spiritually, they

are less likely to harm others intentionally, crime decreases, and our communities experience less acts of violence equating more hope for the future." said Demetrice Morris, CEO of the Royal Hearts Foundation.

For more information, please visit www.royalheartsfoundation.org. Demetrice Morris 504-942-6111

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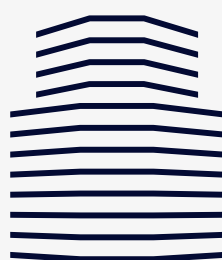
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