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"The People's Paper"

Julien Grayer Earns His Ph.D




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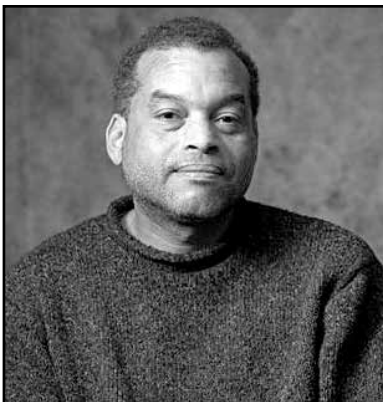
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Jamar Pierre

The Art and Soul of New Orleans



Jamar Pierre is a New Orleans based visual artist who tells the story of the city and its rich history, culture and heritage.



Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

The Gift of Art

Jamar Pierre’s colorful, poignant, and powerful artwork has been displayed all over the over world, but he continues to represent New Orleans, the city that’s given his birth to his creative gifts.

There is no genre, word or descriptor that can quite delineate New Orleans native J. Pierre’s style. Different industry jargon is fitting such as texture, outlines, abstract, expressionism, boldness, surrealism, conceptual, Rodrigue-esque and juxtaposition...however while all elements encompassed in Pierre’s strokes there are no single genre - bending word that totally enunciates the dynamic themes of vitality and vibrancy throughout J. Pierre’s art. It simply has and attracts joy to it, further invoking an emotional response from appreciators and his subjects alike. It is something that cannot be whittled into a label. It radiates life.

“I grew up without a lot of things materially but was rich in ways surrounded with so much creativity” remarks Pierre.

Citizen of the World

“I am a Citizen of the World, a Son of New Orleans. Culture plays a mighty role as my art is so heavily intertwined with its subjects. It is their vibrance, their vitality, their motion and their stillness that evokes something deeper from me to seek to educate, inspire and melt antiquated stereotypes using bold colors, rich histories, and dynamic contrasts, all in paint. My art is a translation of the rhythms of the life around me. In part it is soul, in part it is heart, and in full it is love.”

Telling the Story of a People

As a visual artist his work is historically and culturally relevant. He credits Jerome Smith, head of

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

Tambourine and Fan, for this outlook, “Jerome “Big Duck” Smith is a mentor and someone who influenced how I produce art and my world view. That art is not about painting pretty pictures, but to tell the stories of a people that record their history and to inspire them.”

Making His Mark in the Arts

Over the years he’s worked doing corporate and private commissions, album covers, public murals and artist-in-residence programs as far away as Canada, Iceland, and Costa Rica. Also, others he has worked with include, Essence Music Festival, Beyoncé, and HBO’s

“Tremé” have also been among his clients. But Pierre notes, that he will always find the time to work with the youth. “I believe that it is important that working with young people is what gives me the most satisfaction. I can say that working as an artist is something that kept me off the streets and gave me a

positive outlet and a voice. This is something I want to pass onto the next generation,” says Pierre.

The Making of History

Over the years he’s continued to be a cultural ambassador to the City of New Orleans. With his paintbrush, he is recording the rich cul-

tural heritage of a people. During the city’s 300-Year Anniversary of the Crescent City, Pierre was the official artist doing the painting for the official print.

“I am a gumbo,” says the artist, who celebrates the richness of

Cover Story, Continued on page 4.

Data Zone

Stop Shattering Your Own Glass Ceiling



Diva Dionne Character
Female Empowerment
Columnist

A many of us are still allowing others to hold us back from shattering our own glass ceiling. Blaming our mothers and fathers who maybe didn’t have the wherewithal to teach us as we continue to hold on to all the things that didn’t go right, as we close doors in our own faces not realizing that at some point, it ain’t your momma’s fault for your failure.

Ladies, wisdom lives within all of us. You have to make a decision to believe that there is a stronger force that surrounds you. A strength, that will never let you fall without cause. You have

to trust your own heart because if not, you will never be able to soar because your baggage will continue to prevent you from shattering your own glass ceiling of hope, love, forgiveness, dreams and creativity.

Don’t wait another minute or an hour to start loving you. Surround yourself with people who believe in you. Give yourself permission to be happy. Go out and meet more powerful Sistas.

Open your mind to fellowshiping with more women by attending a fundraiser. Start a circle, unite women together as you build your own community of glass shattering women who will continue to grow because you planted one seed.

Be brave and go help pave the way for another woman to rise. Give yourself permission to reach beyond the stars because all things are possible when you recognize your purpose.

Dionne Character can be reached at www.characterhollywood.com

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Cover Story

Cover Story, Continued from page 3.



Over the years Pierre continues to be a cultural ambassador for the City of New Orleans.

his life and heritage and teaches others to do the same. "I try to bring mindfulness and consciousness and self-awareness to kids. Through creating murals, they get a sense of ownership and learn to work together as part of the community."

Currently, he is creating a one-mile-long floodwall mural along the Tchoupitoulas Street Corridor that depicts a colorful timeline of this great diverse city and your organization can be a part of this monumental mural.

Also, he has had the privilege of partnering with four corporate sponsors and youth organizations to complete the first city block of the 10-block mural on Tchoupitoulas Street, as part of the city's Beautification and Visual History/Education Program.

But the full story of the rich and diverse history of New Orleans has not fully been told...yet!

Many supporters, community sponsors and cultural/art enthusiasts consider this iconic project to be New Orleans own "Eiffel Tower."

He is seeking supporters and hosting private tours of the floodwall mural. That way, he feels all can experience, in person, the impact this mural will have on the city for years to come!

Please join in on the historical Tchoupitoulas Street Corridor Floodwall Mural Project.

Jamar Pierre can be contacted by telephone at 504.656.5540 or E-mail: artbyjpierre@gmail.com, Noim504.com, Artbyjpierre.com



Currently, Pierre is creating a one-mile long floodwall mural along the Tchoupitoulas Street Corridor that depicts the 300 year colorful timeline of New Orleans.



Louis Armstrong blows his horn with a pianist accompanying him and patrons dance to the music.



Jamar Pierre produces art that reflect his world. While he's traveled the world with his amazing artwork, Pierre is always proud of the culture of his native city.

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

Data Zone, Continued from page 3.

Julien Grayer Earns His Ph.D

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

In a time where there are so many negative images of Black males, it is important to note that there are those who are doing amazing things and making a positive impact.

Julien Grayer is one such young man. He is a graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana alum (BS '13); University of Alabama at Birmingham (MS '15) and is the son of proud parents Ricardo Grayer and Dionne Peters.

His dissertation "When They See Us: Racial Criminalization, Stigma and Identity in a Midwest College Town" examines how African American Students navigate their identities and interactions in largely White contexts where they are often coded and socially marked as "suspect".

Dr. Grayer, has accepted a position at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater as a Tenure Track Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Criminology, and Anthropology.

Congratulations to Dr. Julien Grayer, he is a shining example of Black Male Excellence.



All in the family. Siblings Kennedy Grayer, Reagan Peters-Roussell, Cydney Grayer, and Dr. Julien Grayer celebrating his graduation.



Mother Dionne Peters, Julien Grayer and father Ricardo Grayer



Back row: Kennedy Grayer, Julien Grayer, Cydney Grayer. Front row: Siblings Ricardo Grayer and Alfred Grayer



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Bipartisan Agreement that Over-Criminalizing Tobacco will Disproportionately Impact People and Communities of Color, Trigger Criminal Penalties, and Lead to Negative Interactions with Law Enforcement

Recently, a bipartisan group wrote an open letter to Xavier Becerra, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Robert Califf the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to assist in helping our community understand the potential negative impact of this proposed policy. Data News Weekly has published this letter in its entirety. (smaller font)

Dear Secretary Becerra and Commissioner Califf,

Many of the undersigned organizations submitted a letter last year on April 26, 2021, detailing our deep concerns about banning the legal sale of menthol cigarettes to adults twenty-one and older and the impact that it will have on communities of color. As we said then, and repeat now, policies that amount to prohibition for adults have serious racial justice implications. Banning the legal sale of menthol cigarettes through licensed businesses will lead to illegal, unlicensed distribution in communities of color, trigger criminal laws in all fifty states, increase the incidence of negative interactions with police, and ultimately increase incarceration rates. There are far better solutions for reducing menthol cigarette use than criminalizing these products and turning the whole issue over to the



police.

We write today because it now appears the FDA is rushing forward with its menthol cigarette ban without concern for these issues. On February 25th, HHS issued a public notice that it had submitted to the Office of Management and Budget a proposed rule to “ban menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes.” FDA has said it intends to publish this rule at the end of April, despite government data showing cigarette smoking, menthol cigarettes smoking, and underage menthol smoking are at all-time lows. OMB now has the opportunity to review the proposed rule to determine if FDA has adequately assessed the full range of costs,

including the potentially massive social costs of criminalizing the sale and distribution of this product.

There is nothing in HHS’s Notice that reflects any awareness on the FDA’s part of the magnitude of the risk this rule would impose on communities of color from the standpoint of over-criminalization. Rather, the Notice says only that it expects the rule to “reduce the availability” of these products and “improve the health of menthol cigarette smokers by decreasing consumption and increasing the likelihood of cessation.”³ The Notice makes no mention – none – of the potentially gigantic impact this policy will have on justice issues in our communities, nor any men-

tion of alternative policies the FDA could pursue to drive smoking rates further down without resorting to criminalization.

Indeed, the FDA’s public statements on the menthol ban since our April 2021 letter suggest the FDA is paying no real attention to these concerns. None of the FDA’s public statements⁴ provide any real, substantive explanation for how this prohibition-based rule will impact police-citizen interactions, police-community relationships, mass incarceration, or violence in our communities. All the FDA has said on the matter is that the FDA itself will not enforce the specific federal statutory provisions the FDA is in charge of enforcing.

These statements are alarming, to say the least. The fact is, the illegal market problem will be principally one for state and local communities and law enforcement to deal with, not the FDA. In other words, the FDA will issue the rule – but the impact will be downstream, on communities and criminal justice systems in our cities, towns, counties, and states.

In fact, all fifty states already treat the sale and distribution of illicit cigarettes as a serious crime. In forty-four of these states, the crime is classified as a felony. In thirty-seven states, the crime is subject to mandatory minimum sentences. Mere possession is treated as a

crime in thirty-seven states.

And as those who are experienced in these issues understand, people caught up in the Criminal Justice System – especially if they are Black or brown – face enormous hurdles to escaping that system due to the web of criminal laws that compound the impact of any single arrest, prosecution, or conviction. Once this ban goes into effect, a person arrested for a menthol cigarette-related crime would face not only prosecution for that crime itself, but potentially even more devastating consequences:

Multiplied prison terms under three-strikes and other repeat offender statutes

Immediate revocation of parole and, thus, immediate return to prison

Disenfranchisement in the states that remove the right to vote for felony convictions

Deportation, even for persons with legally issued visas

One need only review the history of criminal law enforcement with crack cocaine, cannabis, opioids, or other drugs, and alcohol in the 1920s, to know that law enforcement is the wrong tool here, especially when there are others, far more helpful interventions the federal government could be emphasizing. Any proposal to effectively criminalize the sale and distribution

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State & Local News

Louisiana Senate Passes Bill to Prohibit Discrimination on the Basis of Certain Hairstyles

New Orleans Agenda

BATON ROUGE - On Friday, June 3, 2022, House Bill 1083, the CROWN Act, by Representative Candace N. Newell, D - New Orleans, passed the Louisiana Senate and will now head to Governor John Bel Edwards.

The bill prohibits discrimination on the basis of hair texture, natural hairstyles, and protective hairstyles, and passed with a vote of 29-4.

“This bill brings attention and



Rep. Candace N. Newell with CROWN Act advocates (Image via Citizen She United)

awareness to the fact that there are still people being discriminated against simply because of the way their hair naturally grows and because of the protective styles they decided to style their natural hair in,” said Rep. Candace N. Newell. “The CROWN Act would also allow these protections to be for all nationalities because in my district many women and men of all cultures

are sporting natural and protective hairstyles.”

Rep. Newell also thanked supporters for showing up to advocate for the bill throughout the legislative process.

“I want to thank all of my colleagues who supported this legislation, but more importantly, I want to thank all the advocates who called, emailed, and testified on behalf of the legislation. Thanks to you, the CROWN Act is now one step closer to becoming law,” said Rep. Newell.

Tone Deaf Corporate America Blasted for Trying to 'Own Juneteenth'

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

In 2021, President Joe Biden signed a bill to officially mark Juneteenth – June 19th – as an official federal holiday.

One year later, as racism continues to permeate the nation and many African Americans prepare to observe the country's 12th federal holiday, corporate America remains tone-deaf at best.

Social media users and others have lashed out at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis for offering a pre-packaged watermelon salad as part of its Juneteenth menu.

The museum circulated a photo of the salad as it invited the public to its Juneteenth Celebration.

"This is ridiculous and a mockery of Juneteenth," Twitter user @WishYaHadAlexis wrote. "I've never had a watermelon salad or even heard of it. SMH."

Another Twitter user, @MajorFactor2, said, "There can't possibly be any Black folks in these boardrooms when decisions like this are being made."

Initially, museum officials attempted to justify the offensive gaffe by noting that the watermelon salad has remained a staple in their food courts, managers family's Juneteenth Celebration.

Later, they released a statement apologizing.

"As a museum, we apologize and acknowledge the negative impact that stereotypes have on communities of color," officials wrote.



"The salad has been removed from the menu. We are currently reviewing how we may best convey these stories and traditions during this year's Juneteenth Celebration as well as making changes around how our food service provider makes future food selections."

The statement continued:

"There should have been a label explaining the history and meaning behind this menu item, and it should not have been on the shelf before that label was ready."

"We understand how this appears with no context, and we apologize. However, we are pulling it from our food court immediately until the sign

is ready to accompany it."

According to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, watermelon represents a racist stereotype that originated in the Jim Crow era.

Juneteenth recognized the date in 1865 when the last enslaved African Americans received official notice of their freedom.

That notice arrived two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation granting freedom to all enslaved people in Confederate states.

"First, the stupidity from Walmart and now the Indianapolis Children's Museum thought it was

okay to have a watermelon salad to celebrate Juneteenth," Twitter user @MrsCMitch wrote.

"This is unbelievably insensitive and inappropriate."

Walmart came under fire earlier after the chain issued a new flavor of its ice cream and called it "Juneteenth."

Immediately, Walmart received criticism for attempting to cash in on the newest holiday with the flavors that included swirled red velvet cake and cheesecake.

"We will remove the items as appropriate," Walmart officials said.

"Juneteenth holiday marks a celebration of freedom and independence. However, we received feedback that a few items caused concern for some of our customers, and we sincerely apologize."

Bridge, an organization that promotes improving diversity and inclusion, called on Walmart to remove the ice cream flavors.

"Would you launch an ice cream called January 27th? The day the world remembers the Holocaust. Or April 7th, the day that memorializes the genocide in Rwanda. Of course not," Bridge officials wrote in a letter to Walmart.

They also took Walmart to task for placing a trademark indication on the word "Juneteenth."

"Placing a TM and claiming ownership of the word 'Juneteenth' further exacerbates the lack of understanding of laying claim to something that represents so much to an entire population," they wrote.

"Juneteenth simply cannot be owned."

Newsmaker, Continued from page 6.

of a product used by eighteen million adults, particularly a product preferred by Black and brown citizens, must take these issues with the utmost seriousness, and undertake genuine efforts to find better policy solutions.

As we have said from the start, we completely support resolving inequities in health care. Systemic racism has indeed left communities of color behind – in health care, in the economy, and in the Criminal Justice System. But prohibition is not the answer. Harm reduction is. Rather than criminalizing this product, the FDA and the Administra-

tion should be massively investing in community-based health care solutions that make sense for these communities.

The evidence is conclusive that consumer education, public awareness campaigns, therapeutic interventions, and other non-prohibition-based policies work in driving down overall smoking rates (just as they do with drug use), including in communities of color. 6 Overall, we should be addressing tobacco use, drug use, and other issues with evidence-based solutions that move us forward, not with prohibition-based policies that move us backward.

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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!

Job Opportunity

Administrative Assistant Wanted

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