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Takes over #1 Spot**

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Traditions of New Orleans*

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Shaka Zulu

Carrying on the Rich Traditions of New Orleans



Recently, New Orleans Shaka Zulu, who is a major creative force (Black Masking, Stilt Dancing, Master Drummer, Theatre producer, Educator and Businessman) in the city received the coveted National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship.

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

Cultural Warrior

In a time where the city is changing demographically, some things threaten to change what is arguably the most African city in the United States, but people like Shaka Zulu, who is a New Orleans treasure, continues to represent the city and its rich cultural traditions around the world. Recently, he was one of several recipients of the prestigious National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship.

A master of New Orleans Black Masking, drumming, and stilt dancing, Shaka Zulu passes down the traditions as a teacher and culture bearer whose talents are celebrated nationally and internationally.

“One of the things I appreciate about it the opportunity to be on the world stage as it relates to cultural arts because there are a lot of great artists here, it will bring attention to what we do. In many cases some of our best creators must leave to be recognized, but to continue to live here and be part of the culture and to receive this award is an amazing thing, not just for me, but our city,” says Shaka Zulu.

Shaka Zulu is a master of Black Masking suit design, an art form specific to New Orleans, Louisiana, which originated as part of the Indigenous and African culture in the city. The intricate suit-building of the New Orleans Black Masking carnival tradition usu-

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ally involves sewing and designing for one full year, and are colorfully displayed during Mardi Gras, St. Joseph's Night, and Super Sunday in New Orleans. In addition to upholding the Black Masking tradition, Zulu is revered as a drummer and stilt dancer, both part of the city's West African traditions.

Shaka Zulu Receives NEA National Heritage Fellowship

In its 40th Anniversary of the program the National Endowment for the Arts is continuing its long history of recognizing and honoring our nation's folk and traditional arts and those who create it. Also, a film celebrating the 2022 class of artists and tradition bearers will premiere in the fall on arts.gov."

"In their artistic practices, the NEA National Heritage Fellows tell their own stories on their own terms. They pass their skills and knowledge to others through mentorship and teaching," said National Endowment for the Arts Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. "These honorees are not only sustaining the cultural history of their art form and of their community, but they are also enriching our nation as a whole."

Each fellowship includes a \$25,000 award and all of the recipients will be featured in a film that will premiere in November 2022 on arts.gov. Through the film, viewers will have the opportunity to visit the homes and communities where the fellows live and work, providing a connection to the distinct art forms and traditions these artist's practice. Stay tuned for more information about the film this fall.

Keeper of the Culture

Shaka's story begins in New Orleans in 1969, Zulu grew up immersed in African and Caribbean culture by being a part of his father Zohar Israel's performing arts company, Free Spirit, in New Orleans. He started drumming at an early age and became a master of African and African Diasporic Percussion Instruments, such as the djunjun, djembe, shakare, and congas. Under the masterful tutelage of his father, Zulu, at the age of fifteen, became a skillful and accomplished second generation stilt dancer. In 1995, Zulu and his wife Naimah formed the performing arts company, Zulu Connection, and toured their company of dancers, stilt dancers, and drummers nationally and internationally. Zulu has also toured internationally with NEA Jazz Master Donald Harrison Jr. as a masking performing artist and percussionist in Harrison's band Congo Nation.

In 1999, he studied under Chief



Shaka Zulu pictured with his wife and business partner Naimah Zulu.



Shaka Zulu, is an ambassador and keeper of the culture, who continues to give the world the best of what New Orleans have to offer in the arts.

Darryl Montana, son of Chief Tootie Montana (1987 NEA National Heritage Fellow). His talent for impeccable sewing quickly led to his significant stature within the Black Masking tradition. He continues the "downtown" suit-making tradition pioneered by Chief Tootie Montana, distinguished by its three-dimensional or soft-sculpture pieces with sequins, beads, turkey feathers, and a more abstract style. Zulu is now Big Chief of the Golden Feather Hunters established in 2018.

"The thing about preserving our culture and heritage is about respecting those who came before us. The beautiful thing about this award is that it's focused on many different art forms that I do, the preservation of African Stilt Dancing, the Black Masking Tradition and as a drummer and stage production with Voices of Congo Square, which brings all these things together in a stage play."

A thought-provoking lecturer on the origin and culture of the Black Masking traditions of New Orleans, Zulu has exhibited his suits both nationally and internationally at museums and festivals. Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Zulu lectured and exhibited his suits at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco. His 2015 suit was featured in Sounds of the City, an exhibit in Berlin, Germany, featuring the Culture of New Orleans. His suit "Shango" is currently on exhibit in the Netherlands at the Africa Museum.

"When you leave here you realize New Orleans sells to the rest of the world. Sometimes we don't see the value, which is also African and Caribbean culture. We don't only have to be performers but to be presenters of our culture and teach others. Also, it is important to think about the economics of our culture and how we can benefit more from what we create."

The Future of New Orleans Culture

A consummate teacher and culture bearer, Zulu has conducted workshops on masking, drumming, and stilt dancing nationally and internationally. On trips to Tanzania in 2009 and 2019, he engaged with the Masai and Meru communities about the connection between the African and New Orleans African American traditions. It was in Tanzania in 2019 that Zulu beaded his 2019 Suit "The Toucan" with the diligent assistance of the youth in the villages of the Masai and the Meru people.

"Working with Masai youth, I

Award-Winning R&B Singer K. Michelle Takes over #1 Spot on Adult R&B Radio with "Scooch"

It's two-step time, especially for R&B star K. Michelle as her new hit single "Scooch" takes over the #1 spot on both the Billboard (7M+ audience) and Mediabase (8M+ audience) Adult Radio charts for the first time in her career. Produced by Lil Ronnie, "Scooch" debuted in February and has worked its way up the charts, with airplay growing at radio stations across the country, including cities like Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, Houston, Charlotte, and more. In addition, the single has also amassed over 5M+ streams and views combined on DSPs (Apple, Spotify, YouTube, etc.). "Scooch" is K. Michelle's first single off her sixth and final R&B album, *I'm The Problem*, which releases this fall.

"I'm just excited about putting out music that everyone can relate to," states K. Michelle. "It's time for my new album, 'I'm The Problem,' and I can't wait for you guys to hear it."



K. Michelle, is taking over the airwaves with a new hit song "Scooch" and her upcoming album "I'm the Problem."



R&B Diva K Michelle continues to feed her fans with hits and inspiring generations with her soul stirring music.

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found there were many commonalities culturally. Also, in other places I have been around the world people recognize New Orleans as an international city that is a gumbo of people. This is what makes the city and its people special and influences other parts of the world."

As part of New Orleans' tricentennial in 2018, Zulu produced New Orleans Voices of Congo Square, a 30-cast member stage production featuring the Black Carnival Traditions of New Orleans, touring the show nationally and internationally, and making a film of the production.

According to Shaka Zulu's customs and traditions, he has passed down the Black Masking and stilt dancing traditions to his daughter, Sarauniya, who continues these practices.

"What I want to give back culturally is what was given to me, my father was a stilt dancer and musician, my grandpa was a musician, I had great uncles who were in the Black Masking Tradition (Mardi Gras Indians) all that was given to me by way of New Orleans."

"Even though this award is personal, I am proud to have received it on behalf of the City of New Orleans."



Shaka Zulu is passing on the culture to the young people of New Orleans, so the next generation can carry on and build on the rich cultural traditions of New Orleans.



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Vice President Harris Addresses NAACP Convention; Urges Black Voter Participation

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Vice President Kamala Harris appeared at the NAACP convention in Atlantic City on Monday, July 18, declaring that freedom, liberty, and democracy are on the ballot in the upcoming midterm elections.

She implored the large gathering at the Atlantic City Convention Center to make sure that all voices are heard.

"We're not going to be able to get these days back, so each one of these days we must, with a sense of urgency, ensure that the American people know their voice and their vote matters," Harris declared.

"It is their voice. The right to vote is something that the leaders of this organization and its founders knew to be at the core of all of the other rights and freedoms to which we are entitled," she further implored.

"So, we know what we need to do. And, in particular, to protect the freedom to vote and a women's right to make decisions about her own body, we need people who will defend our rights up and down the ballot, from district attorneys to state attorneys general, from local sheriffs to governors."

The vice president received sev-



Vice President Kamala Harris, recently spoke at the NAACP Conference, where she spoke of the importance of Civil Rights and civic engagement ahead of the November mid-term elections.

eral standing ovations as she spoke of the need to vote. The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a trade association representing 235 African American-owned newspapers and media companies, has teamed with the Transformative Justice Coalition in an effort to register 10 million more Black voters ahead of the midterm and 2024 general elections.

As Harris arrived in Atlantic City, Mayor Marty Small greeted her as she descended from Air Force Two.

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson spoke to the vice president and railed against politi-

cians and the U.S. Supreme Court for "the erosion of constitutional freedom, including the right of a woman over her own body."

Harris also decried the sharp increase in mass shootings and gun violence in the United States.

"There is no reason for weapons of war on the streets of America," she asserted.

With West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin repeatedly stopping the Biden-Harris administration agenda, Harris called on voters to participate in the U.S. Senate election.

"We will not, and the president

has been clear, we will not let the filibuster stand in our way of our most essential rights and freedoms," Harris declared.

"I visited Buffalo, New York, to attend the funeral of an 86-year-old grandmother who went to the grocery store after, as she often did, spending the day with her husband who was in a nursing home – Mrs. Whitfield."

Harris continued:

"I went to Highland Park, Illinois, where there were strollers and lawn chairs scattered up and down a street where there was supposed to be a parade for July 4th.

There – as in Uvalde, Texas; as in Greenwood, Indiana, just last night; and in so many communities across our nation – scenes of ordinary life have been turned into war zones by horrific acts of gun violence.

"Mass shootings have made America a nation in mourning. And it's not only the mass shootings. We see it in our communities every day, and it is no less tragic or outrageous."

"Think about it: Black people are 13 percent of America's population but make up 62 percent of gun homicide victims.

"This issue of the need for reasonable gun safety laws is a real issue when we are talking about the civil right, the right that all communities should have, to live in a place that is safe without weapons of war running those streets."

She concluded that the number of guns manufactured in the country tripled over the last 20 years. "Today we have more guns in our nation than people," Harris said.

"Earlier this month, the president signed the first federal gun safety law in nearly 30 years. And it was an important and necessary step. But we need to do more. We must repeal the liability shield that protects gun manufacturers. And we must renew the assault weapons ban."

NORD Celebrates 75th Anniversary with Inaugural Alumni Picnic and Community Events

City of New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS — The New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD) Commission recently announced its Inaugural Alumni Picnic as part of a year-long celebration commemorating NORD's 75th Anniversary. Last year the agency announced its plans to celebrate 75 years during the renaming celebration of Behrman Park to the Morris F.X. Jeff Sr. Park. The alumni picnic will take place from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 23rd, at Joe W. Brown Park, 5601 Read Blvd. The picnic is an opportunity for past and current participants, volunteers, employees, and supporters to come

out and celebrate NORD's impact on community and recreation in the City of New Orleans.

The picnic includes competitive games and relays, bounce houses, live performances, food trucks, outdoor programming, and a live activation hosted by the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans. Confirmed performers include The NORD Senior Choir, DJ Jubilee, Partners and Crime, T-Ray the Violinist, Asata Renay, and 7th Ward Shorty. Food vendors include FedNFull Food truck, BBBC Cooking, and JB's Softee Treats. Picnics, grilling, blankets, chairs, and 10x10 tents are also welcomed. The event is sponsored by Wright Gray Trial



Larry Barabino, Jr., NORD CEO says of the anniversary, "I look forward to having our residents participate in all the activities NORD is hosting to commemorate 75 years, and cannot wait to see what the next 75 years entail."

Lawyers and is free to the public.

"Wright & Gray is honored to partner with NORD for its 75th-Year Celebration and inaugural Alumni Picnic," said Wright & Gray Partner, Eric A. Wright. "NORD has been a vital program for the youth of the City of New Orleans for nearly a century. We look forward to celebrating this year and in years to come with those who contributed to NORD's success."

Other 75th Anniversary events include NORD's second Annual Race of Champions, and Wrap Soiree, all of which will take place throughout the year and are open

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Benefits of Participating in Clinical Trials for Diverse Patients

Jacksonville Free Press

A clinical trial is a type of clinical research. Clinical research is a process to find new and better ways to understand, detect, control, and treat health conditions. Through clinical studies, which involve people who volunteer to participate in them, researchers can better understand how to diagnose, treat and prevent diseases or conditions. Mayo Clinic conducts medical research with the goal of helping patients live longer, healthier lives.

When you visit your doctor, they diagnose and treat your current illness or condition. During clinical studies, researchers are trying to gather new knowledge that will help them improve medical care for people in the future.

Volunteers are an integral part of the research process. Researchers need volunteers for a broad range of clinical studies as it supports meaningful research to identify and address health disparities and to help ensure Mayo Clinic patients reflect the diversity of our communities.

People with a particular disease as well as healthy people both can play a role in contributing to medical advances. Without volunteers, clinical studies simply would not be possible. People volunteer for



clinical studies for many reasons. They may have a desire to improve medical care for future generations, connection to a certain disease or illness, whether through personal experience or through friends or family, or have a personal interest in science. There are research studies that match every interests.

Volunteering for a clinical study is a personal choice. You have no obligation to do so, and participation is not right for everyone. After enrolling in a study, you may leave at any time and for any reason.

Researchers conduct clinical trials to determine the safety and effectiveness of new therapies. Mayo Clinic is committed to encouraging

and promoting research to develop new treatments and some of those clinical trials have led to new or improved treatments for many conditions.

Mayo Clinic also recognizes the importance of not only sharing information about new advances in medicine and research with all members of the community, but also including communities in the research process as partners and advisers.

Mayo Clinic supports community-engaged research projects, education and training, and the reduction of disease burden in minority

or underrepresented communities. Staff also provides consultative support and guidance for researchers conducting research with multicultural communities.

Mayo Clinic staff in the Office of Health Disparities Research located in Arizona, Florida and Minnesota support meaningful research to identify and address health disparities and to help ensure Mayo Clinic patients reflect the diversity of our communities.

There are many ways to participate in clinical research at Mayo Clinic. Three common ways are by volunteering to be in a study as mentioned above, by giving permission to have your medical record reviewed for research purposes, and by allowing your blood or tissue samples to be studied. For more information on clinical trials please visit <https://www.mayo.edu/research/clinical-trials>.

Envision yourself working for a global leader in an industry fueled by innovation and growth. Mayo Clinic has opportunities for you. Join us at Florida's No. 1 hospital by visiting <https://jobs.mayoclinic.org/>. For more information on health care topics please visit Mayo Clinic Jacksonville at mayoclinic.org.

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to the public. Proceeds from NORD anniversary events go directly to the NORD Foundation, benefiting NORD programming. NORD also launched a webpage, www.nordc.org/75thanniversary, where residents can sign up for newsletter updates, shop the 75th Anniversary Collection of Memorabilia, shop park and playground t-shirts, and view a photo journey of NORD from 1947-today.

"The evolution of NORD over 75 years from a recreational outlet to now also being an essential arm of the city in post-disaster recovery and the Pandemic is outstanding. It contributes to our vision to be a sustainable and innovative organization that transforms lives," said Larry Barabino, Jr., NORD CEO. "I look forward to having our residents participate in all of the activities NORD is hosting to commemo-

rate 75 years, and I cannot wait to see what the next 75 years entail."

The New Orleans City Council created NORD through City Ordinance No. 16,630 on September 27, 1946, which went into effect on January 1, 1947. NORD has served as a space for community and youth recreation and programming activities. Today, NORD operates over 150 playgrounds, 17 swimming pools, 12 recreation centers, two tennis centers, five teen centers and five stadiums. NORD continues to offer programs including musical arts, visual arts, dance, athletics, summer camps for youth and teens and programming for seniors.

For more information on NORD 75th Anniversary events or NORD programming, please visit www.nordc.org or contact (504) 658-3052.



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Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. 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.

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