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Newly Elected Board of Dryades YMCA Names Erika Mann as First Female CEO to Lead the Organization.



Erika Mann with Congressman Troy Carter and Lesli Harris, Councilwoman District B.



Erika Mann is working with city, business, civic, faith and community leaders with the goal to have the Dryades YMCA make an impact in the City of New Orleans.

Benjamin Bates
Data News Weekly Contributor

The newly seated board, voted into office by the at-large membership of the Dryades YMCA, recently named Erika Mann, Chief Executive Officer of the Dryades YMCA. This is an historic marker as Ms. Mann is the first female to serve as the CEO of this

century old institution. Operating since 1905, this Central City Legacy Institution has been an integral part of New Orleans and the greater metropolitan area, which has historically provided educational, recreational, and social services to meet the needs of the African American community during segregation.

Erika Mann is a native New Orleanian, with roots growing up in the 7th Ward. She earned her bach-

elor's from Loyola University in Mass Communi- cations, and then pursued a master's in Education and Certification in School Administration. She is a mother of two daughters and a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

Erika Mann is no stranger to the Dryades "Y," as she previously served as the Head of School for the James Singleton Charter School. Upon her arrival at

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the Dryades YMCA in 2017, the school was faced with the looming threat of a revocation of its Charter. Mann was tapped to lead the school out of this peril, given her track record as a turnaround leader, earning this reputation from her work in Jefferson Parish schools. Her accomplishments made Mann ripe for the job at "the Y" where now she is charged with leading the over a century old organization.

Ms. Mann now gets to try her hand at turning around the parent organization as she did with Singleton Charter School. "It was a no brainer to name Erika as the CEO, she has a wealth of experience with turnaround management, and she has demonstrated it by what she was able to accomplish in her short tenure steering the school to stability," said Board Chair Bishop Tom Watson.

Prior to earning this appointment as the first female CEO of "the Dryades Y," Ms. Mann served in an interim capacity. Again, in this short period as interim CEO, "the Y" has seen constant progress under her leadership with its Early Childhood Program. Immediately, Mann



Erika Mann with District Attorney Jason Williams.

made notable upgrades to the facilities, curriculum, and advanced the professional development of the entire staff. This has created unprecedented demand for childcare placements that's resulted in an ev-



Erika Mann enrolling new members to the Dryades YMCA.

er-growing waitlist. Moreover, she has been instrumental in facilitating a strategic partnership between the City of New Orleans Office of Job 1 and the Dryades YMCA, which will bring Job 1's operations to the

Dryades Y Myrtle Banks Building on Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.

"I'm happy to see a female at the helm of this community institution for the first time. The Office of Workforce Development JOB

1 looks forward to furthering our partnership with Dryades YMCA in becoming a training provider for Central City where there is great demand. The organization has existing infrastructure and community reach to meet this need," said Sunae Vilavaso, who heads this city's department.

"I have never seen someone as tenacious and motivated as Mann, who is up for the task. Mann has formed an excellent working partnership with board members who are committed to transparency and operational excellence for the "Y," said Alex Dunn, board member. It is this working spirit that won unanimous support from the board, elevating her to this permanent role.

When asked her leadership approach, Mann believes that strong leadership is needed at this transformational period. "As the leader, I want to give power to staff and the community to reimagine the YMCA's potential. When power is placed with them, the return on investment is organizational growth and commitment to the vision of this mainstay institution," said Mann.

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Calling All Models!!!

Here's Your Chance to Slay the Runway!



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

As New Orleans Fashion Week approaches (September 17-23), the search for the fiercest models to slay the runway is set to take place. The one-day open casting call is seeking female models 5'7" and taller; and male models 5'11" and taller. While experience is helpful, it isn't a prerequisite or necessary. It's about having an amazing walk, great stage presence, confidence and a certain "je ne sais" that brings the fashions to life on the runway.

The seven-day fashion fete will showcase models draped in fashions from designers from the gulf coast region and beyond. Since 2011 New Orleans Fashion Week has provided a platform for designers to showcase their collections and bringing national attention and recognition to the amazing talent in the Crescent City. Additionally, NOFW has been a launchpad for designers and models; being cast for popular TV Shows such as Project Runway, America's Next Top Model, invitations to walk or show in NYC, Paris, and other Fashion Week events.

NOFW Model Casting Call is scheduled for Sunday, June 25, 2023, from 11AM-3PM at Paul Mitchell School of Cosmetology in Metairie, LA. Models selected from the casting calls will be given the chance to take their talents to the runway during NOFW and be seen by invited agents that are scouting for new faces to add to their agency board.

Interested models should pre-register for the casting at www.neworleansfashionweek.com/modelcasting.





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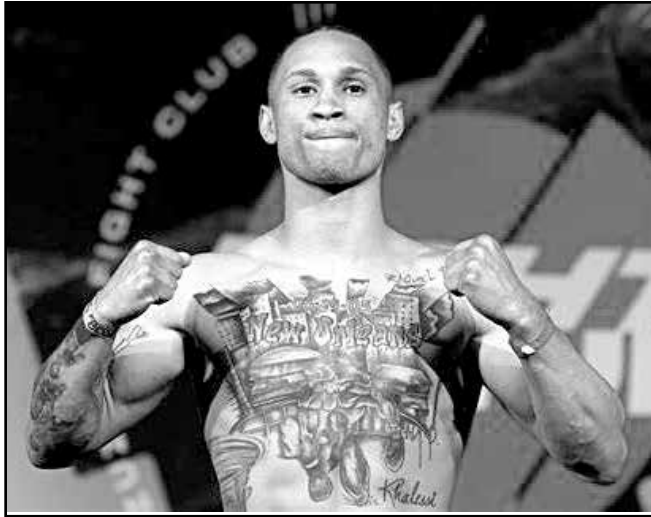
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Tracee Dundas Fashion Editor
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Photos Courtesy of New Orleans Fashion Week

WBC Super Lightweight Regis Prograis Retained his Title in Bout in his Hometown



New Orleans native Regis Prograis is presently the WBC super lightweight champion. Previously, he held the WBA super lightweight crown. Recently defending his title in New Orleans, the hometown hero was victorious.

**Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly
Contributor**

New Orleans own Regis Prograss recently won a close fight against Challenger Danielito

Zorrilla in a split decision at the Smoothie King Center.

The official scores were 118-109, 117-110 and 113-114. Boxing Junkie scored it 114-113 for Zorrilla.

Prograis won in the tough bout. While some believed it was not his best performance, it was enough

to secure a victory.

"I definitely was confident I would get the decision," Prograis said afterward. "I got the [knock-down] early. And I kept pressing the action. But you know he ran around the whole time. ... He tried to survive."

Prograis record is now (29-1,
24 KOs)

The New Orleans native and two-time titleholder returned home making the first defense of the WBC belt he won by knocking out Jose Zepeda in the 11th round last November.

He plans on continuing to defend his title and representing his hometown. Where his unmistakable swagger and accent is 5-0-4 ever.

After his victory, he stated, "There are a lot of big fights out there for me. We'll see what happens."

Commentary

Hate is Hate

Op-Ed by former Judge Arthur L. Hunter, Jr. and Caroline Good

**By Judge Arthur Hunter (Ret)
and Caroline Good
Board Member Anti-
Defamation League South
Central. Chair, Anti-
Defamation League South
Central**

June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month, but across the country state legislators are introducing bills to essentially make gay and trans people second-class citizens.

The American Civil Liberties Union is tracking nearly 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills in the U.S. seeking to criminalize parents and doctors for providing trans youth with gender affirming care, prevent trans athletes from competing on sports teams and banning teachers from discussing sexual orientation or gender identity with students.

This is up ten times from an already inexcusable 42 anti-LGBTQ+



Judge Arthur L. Hunter, Jr.

bills in 2018.

The Louisiana Legislature, unfortunately has joined this chorus, prompting the NAACP to issue a warning to use “extreme caution” when traveling in and to Louisiana.



Caroline Good

Such a warning could be devastating to our tourism revenue, but more urgently, we must consider what this means for African American and/or LGBTQ+ Louisiana residents. We are grateful to the

governor for his promise to veto this cynical legislation. However, this is not a remedy. We must all resist the temptation to look away and normalize hate.

Hate is hate, whether it's race,

gender, sexuality, religion, or nationality and you cannot cherry pick your way out of it.

As much as organizations like Forum for Equality, the ACLU, and our South-Central Chapter of ADL are doing the hard work to fight against these bills, the business community and particularly the hospitality industry, must also speak up.

We ask that businesses flex their influence because it is the right thing to do. And because these policies are harmful economically. And because we have a collective responsibility to ensure that the arc of the moral universe continues to bend toward justice.

Former Judge Arthur L. Hunter, Jr. was a New Orleans Police Officer and served as Chief Judge, and Judge of Mental Health Court, Reentry Court and Veteran's Treatment Court.

New Orleans Own Tyler Perry Reportedly Makes History as First African American to Acquire Two Major TV Networks

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

In a major development for the entertainment industry, BET has become Black-owned once again after 21 years, while VH1, for the first time, now boasts an African American owner.

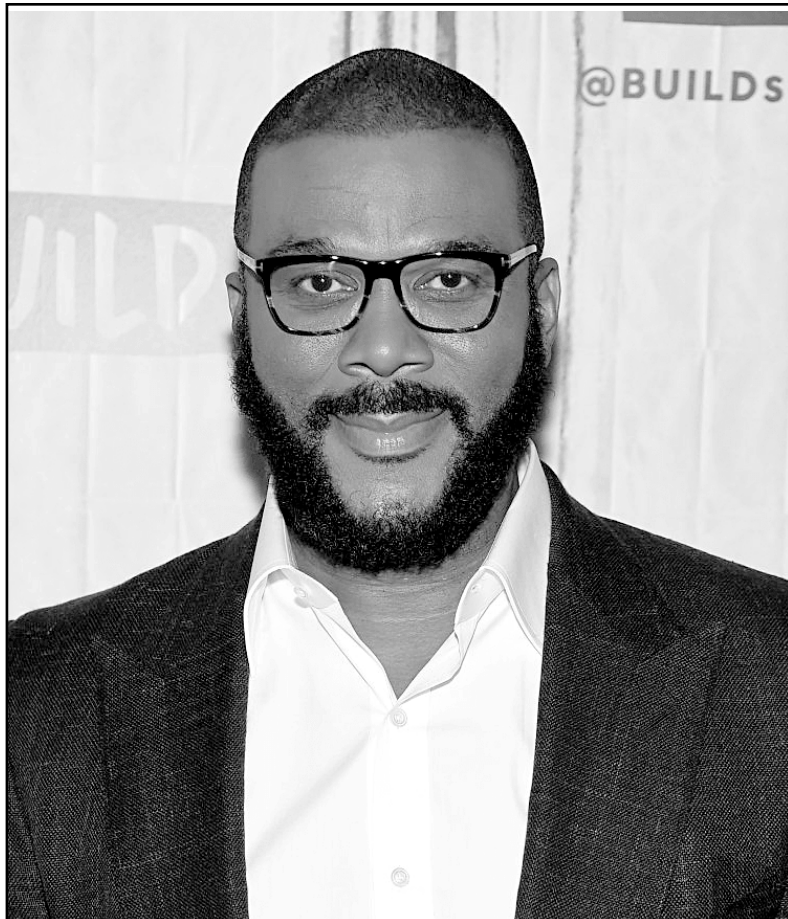
According to his longtime friend and television personality Rolanda Watts, Tyler Perry has cemented his place in history by acquiring the two major television networks, making him the first African American to do so.

The acquisition follows the news that Paramount Global has sought to sell a majority stake in BET.

Earlier this year, the renowned actor and filmmaker expressed optimism about purchasing BET, stating his keen interest if it were a possibility.

Perry, who had already enjoyed tremendous success in collaboration with BET, partnering with his Tyler Perry Studios banner to create the popular streaming service BET+, was no stranger to the network.

He acknowledged the unexpected nature of the acquisition, stating, "I've been there for four



Media Mogul and Philanthropist Tyler Perry.

years now and had tremendous success... If that is possible, I'm very, very interested in taking as much of it as I can."

The exact financial details of the deal have not been disclosed, but experts on this sort of transaction have placed a significant value on

the acquisition of the two networks.

With the purchase, Perry assumes control over BET Media Group, which includes other networks such as VH1.

Since its launch, the BET+ streaming service has experienced remarkable success.

In 2021 alone, BET+ was responsible for half of the subscribers and nearly all revenue growth for the channel.

The platform features a wide range of original films and series from the extensive BET program library, captivating audiences with diverse and engaging content.

The acquisition of BET and VH1 marks a significant milestone in the representation and ownership of the entertainment industry.

Perry's success as an African American entrepreneur and his commitment to showcasing diverse stories and voices have paved the way for increased opportunities and inclusivity in the media landscape.

As the new owner of these influential networks, Perry is poised to leave an indelible mark on the future of Black-owned media and further amplify underrepresented narratives on a global scale.

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