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**Chef Leah Chase's Birthday**

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# Legislative Auditor Report Highlights the Accuracy of Orleans Parish Assessor's Office Values



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# Legislative Auditor Report Highlights the Accuracy of Orleans Parish Assessor’s Office Values

*Properties of long-term residents found to be assessed at lower levels than newly bought homes.*



**Data News Staff Edited Report**

Property assessments in aggregate across Orleans Parish are accurate, below market averages, and lower for properties of long-time owners when compared to newly bought homes, according to a performance audit of Assessor Erroll G. Williams’

2024 quadrennial reappraisal released today by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.

The report highlights the remarkable strides the Assessor’s Office has made in improving its Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal or CAMA System to determine assessments in a fair and equitable manner for property owners in Orleans Parish.

According to the report, “OPAO’s Mass Appraisal System is capable of producing Appraised Fair Market Values within the acceptable ranges for appraisal level, variability, and vertical equity,” and shows “marked improvement” from prior years.

Additionally, the report shows that assessments, while in the range of accuracy, also remain somewhat

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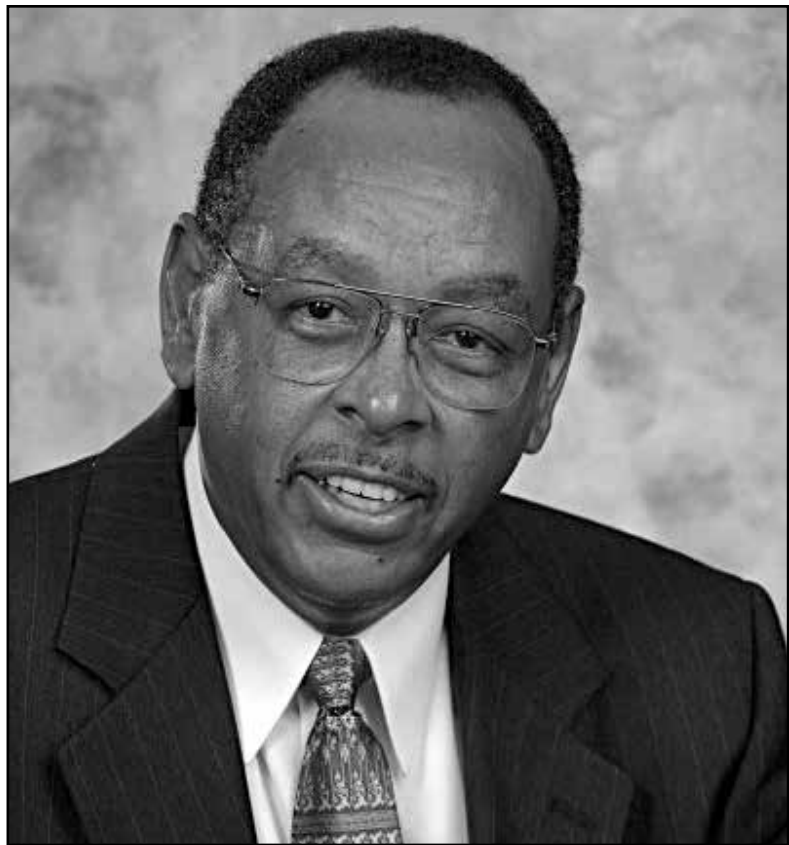
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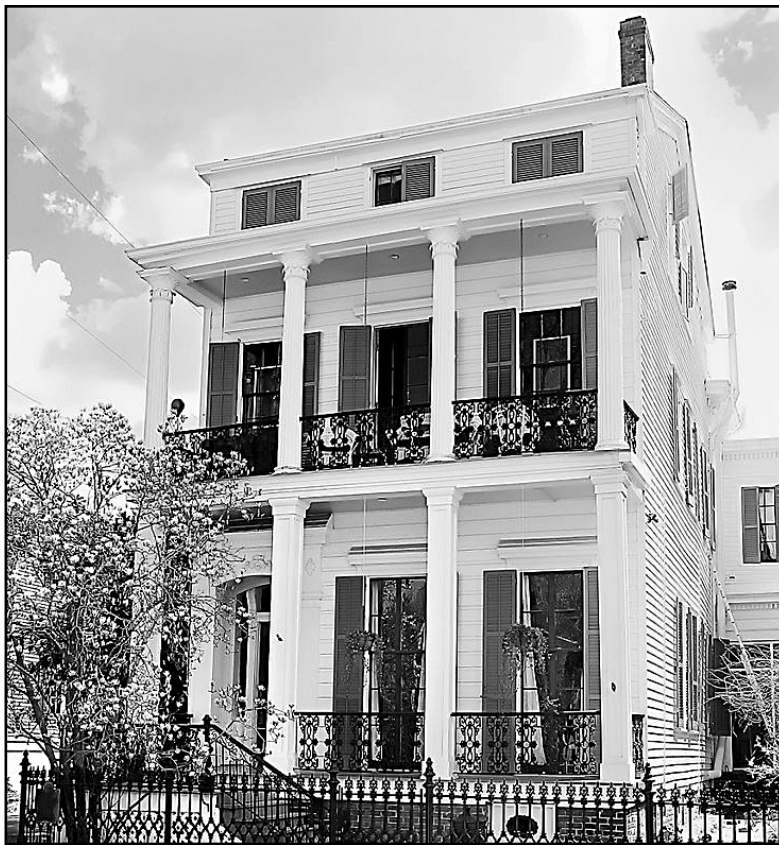
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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



New Orleans Assessor Errol Williams



port, Assessor Williams notes, "Sales data provides a wealth of information on the subject property we often would not otherwise have such as interior photographs, updated square footage, and a clearer picture of construction details and condition. These factors all contribute to a more accurate determination of value, and we would be foolish not to account all available information when revaluing property."

According to Assessor Williams, this premium placed on recently sold properties is a necessary adjustment to ensure fairness, accuracy, and to help account for changes in a property's character.

"Incidentally, this not only reflects the buyers' willingness and ability to pay a higher price," said Assessor Williams, "but it also serves as a measure to mitigate the impact of market volatility on long-term residents. By recognizing the true value of recently sold properties, the model used by the Assessor's Office addresses the impact of gentrification on the real estate market while providing a layer of insulation to protect our neighborhoods, culture, and community members."

below market values. The average sales price per parcel according to the Legislative Auditor's Report is \$374,459 or 16.5 percent higher than the average assessment of

\$312,690 in Orleans Parish.

This corroborates the last finding the report highlights: Properties that were recently bought are sometimes assessed at a higher

rate than properties owned by long-time residents.

The Legislative Auditor refers to this as "potential sales chasing." The Assessor's Office disputes that

assumption, arguing that the sales price is an important factor but not the only variable used in valuing recently sold property.

In his response to the auditor's re-

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# Dooky Chase's 5-Course Dining Experience In Memoriam of Chef Leah Chase's Birthday... Chef Leah Chase, "Queen of Creole Cuisine"

*Chef Leah Chase, "Queen of Creole Cuisine"*

## Data News Staff Edited Report

In the heart of the Treme', you'll rediscover Authentic Creole Cuisine served in a vibrant, art-filled space at Dooky Chase's Restaurant.

"Chase's original dishes would help pioneer the Creole food movement and her recipes for dishes like gumbo, jambalaya, and fried chicken have gone on to become kitchen staples" notes the James Beard Foundation.

Known as the "Queen of Creole Cuisine," Leah Chase has fed Quincy Jones, Lena Horne, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Duke Ellington, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, James Baldwin, Ray Charles, Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama and countless others as Executive Chef of Dooky Chase's Restaurant — one of the best-known and most culturally significant restaurants in New Orleans.

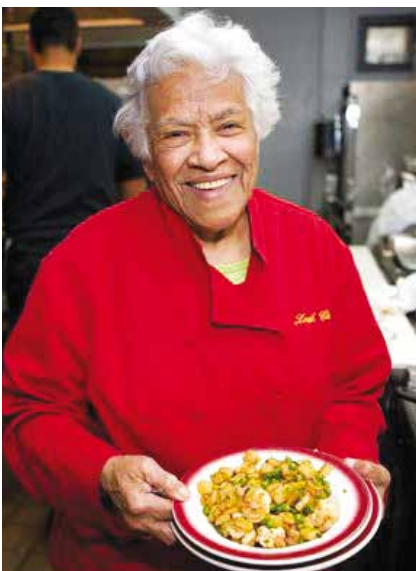
In a town deeply divided by segregation, Dooky Chase's Restaurant was one of the only public places in New Orleans where mixed-race groups could meet to discuss strategy for the local Civil Rights Movement.

Chef Leah Chase even served as the inspiration for the Character of Princess Tiana in Disney's Princess and the Frog.

The spirit of Edgar Dooky Chase, Jr. and Chef Leah Chase will remain with us forever.



This weekend will celebrate the Birthday of Leah Chase: The Queen of Creole Cuisine on Jan. 6 at Dooky Chase Restaurant. For reservations or tickets call 504.821.0600 or visit [www.dookychaserestaurants.com](http://www.dookychaserestaurants.com)



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# Saints Playoff Hopes Still Alive in Last Week of the NFL Season

**Fleur De Lis**  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

It all comes down to the final week as the fans of the Who Dat Nation awaits to see if the Black and Gold will make this year's playoffs. It's been an up-and-down season for the New Orleans Saints who handily beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers last week on the road with a 23-13 to keep their playoff hopes alive.

Showing signs of excellence, the Black and Gold defense "handled up" on Baker Mayfield and the Bucs offense, forcing them to turn over the ball 4 times, and contain their explosive offense.

In this week's game Derek Carr showed that Saints offense can put together a complete performance. In



the past few weeks veteran tight end, Jimmy Graham stepped up, and this week another tight end, Juwan Johnson led the team with 8 receptions for 90 yards and one touchdown. Also, the Swiss Army Knife, Taysom Hill playing tight end scored a 22-yard touchdown during this game to keep the Saints' playoff hopes alive.

They did it on both sides of the ball, where defensively Pete Werner led the team with 9 tackles and safety, Johnathan Abram contributed forcing a fumble and having an interception.

With this win, the Saints improved to 8-8 overall and will take on the Atlanta Falcons January 7th in the Superdome. This is a must-win game for the Black and Gold, also, they need the Bucs to lose to the Carolina Panthers to win the NFC South and enter the playoffs.

## State & Local News

## The 2024 Jazz & Heritage Concert Series Kicks off Next Week!



**JASEN WEAVER SEXTET**



**ROLAND GUERIN**

### New Orleans Agenda

The 2024 Jazz & Heritage Concert Series celebrating contemporary jazz kicks off next week at the George and Joyce Wein Jazz & Heritage Center, 1225 N. Rampart Street, New Orleans, Louisiana. Get your tickets before they sell out!

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 19TH – JAMES SINGLETON MALABAR - \$10  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 20TH – ROLAND GUERIN - \$10

Tickets are \$10. All proceeds from this concert series directly support efforts of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.

Doors open at 7pm and the concerts begin promptly at 8pm. Seating is general admission and limited, so please register in advance.

All performances will be livestreamed on [jazzandheritage.org/live](http://jazzandheritage.org/live) and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation YouTube Channel and the Facebook page.

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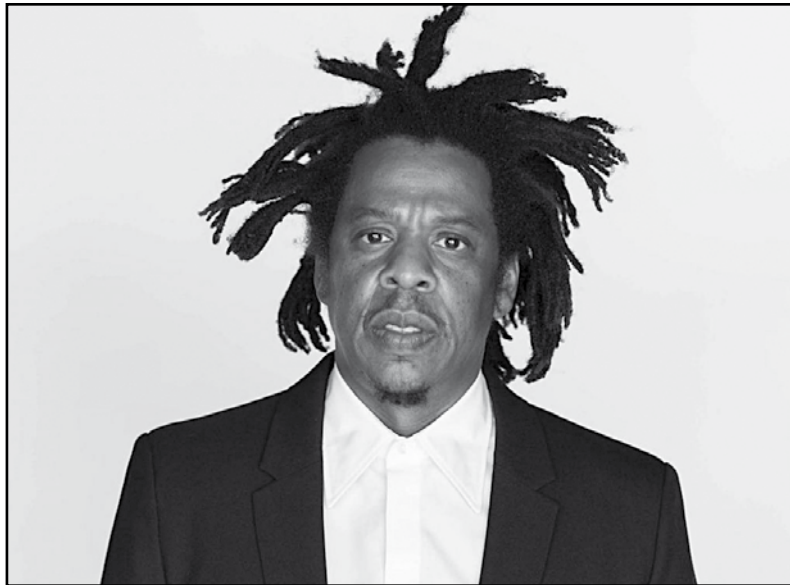
# Jay Z Day and the Erosion of Political Substance

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior  
National Correspondent

In the hallowed Chambers of New York City's Legislative Realm, a proposal has surfaced that could forever alter the way we perceive civic celebration. Farah Louis and other council members have proposed legislation to declare December 4th as "Jay-Z Day" in honor of Shawn Carter, the man who would later become a global phenomenon. While the intent is to honor Jay-Z's cultural contributions, it forces us to confront a disconcerting trend that has seeped into the very fabric of our political landscape—the fervent embrace of celebrity culture.

Jay-Z, undeniably a cultural juggernaut, has made quite a mark on music, business, and some of the social causes he's undertaken. However, the potential establishment of a dedicated day in his honor symbolizes a larger issue at play—a society where the boundaries between genuine recognition and celebrity worship are increasingly blurred. The question that looms is whether the nation's political leaders, those entrusted with the serious business of crafting laws and policies, should be actively courting the favor of celebrities.

In the aftermath of Watergate and the Vietnam War, Political Scientist Scott Edwards lamented the



shift away from the heroic political figure. Edwards argued that democracies require civic exemplars whose principled strivings serve as models for the average person. Fast forward to today, and we find ourselves in an era where politicians are not only courting celebrity endorsements but actively seeking approval from the glitzy entertainment world.

The erosion of American democracy has also given way to a culture of celebrity appeasement. The proposed Jay-Z Day is emblematic of this trend, where recognition is bestowed not for political prowess or principled leadership but for well-knownness. The danger inherent

in this shift is palpable, as surveys indicate a growing belief among Americans that celebrities make good politicians.

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Matthew McConaughey, Zendaya, and Beyoncé—names that routinely grace our screens—are now considered for political leadership. However, their appeal lies more in their celebrity status than in any demonstrated understanding of policy intricacies. The danger becomes even more apparent when we consider that politicians, instead of delving into the complexities of governance, are bending to the whims of fame.

We stand at a crossroads where

the allure of celebrity has infiltrated the very essence of governance. The desire to gain favor with well-known people increasingly influences decisions that affect citizens' lives. It's a perilous path where celebrity status triumphs over experience, wisdom, and a genuine commitment to public service.

As we contemplate the potential establishment of Jay-Z Day, politicians and everyday people should not merely celebrate cultural icons but critically assess how far Americans have strayed from the ideals that should define leadership. After all, shouldn't lawmakers resist the allure of celebrity, prioritize substance over spectacle, and reclaim a political landscape where true heroes are those dedicated to the service of the people, not those merely basking in the fleeting glow of the limelight?

In the grand tapestry of democracy, leaders are supposedly chosen for their substance, not just their celebrity status. Jay-Z Day should prompt a reflection on the kind of leaders Americans should want—either individuals who embody the principles of governance or merely revel in their name's well-knownness. The choices made will shape the future of American democracy and determine whether people set their priorities straight or continue down a path where fame eclipses substance.

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

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