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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

Introducing King and Queen Zulu 2024



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Introducing King and Queen Zulu 2024

Data News Staff Edited Report

The Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, founded in 1909, is New Or-

leans' largest predominantly African American Carnival Organization known for its iconic Mardi Gras Day Parade and the most

sought-after parade throw, cocoanuts. Inspired by theater, the Zulu Tradition started from humble beginnings with costumes designed

to pay homage to African ancestry. The history is illustrious, at times colorful but remains an integral part of the New Orleans culture.



King Zulu 2024: Melvin Louis Labat

Melvin Louis Labat is a kind-hearted, gentle giant. He is affectionately known as “ZO” to some and just “Mel” to others. He is the oldest and only boy of three siblings raised in the Metro New Orleans area. Presently, he resides on the Westbank in Gretna, Louisiana.

Melvin was the proud father of Melvin John Eric Labat, who was

MELVIN LOUIS LABAT CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.



Queen Zulu 2024: A. Angélique Roché

A. Angélique Roché, a Louisiana native, is the youngest daughter of Alvin Alphonse Roché, Jr., from New Orleans, and Queen Zulu 1996 Rose A. Lee Roché, from Port Allen.

From a young age, her parents and grandparents emphasized the significance of personal education, cultural preservation, and com-

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MELVIN LOUIS LABAT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

tragically killed in 2012. The memory of his son lingers in his heart and soul every day. Melvin fills this void in his life by spending countless hours with his nephews and nieces. He provides a positive male image to them, which strengthens their family bond. Through his Catholic faith and Christian bond at Blessed Trinity Catholic Church, Melvin continually pushes on.

Melvin received his education in the New Orleans Public and Parochial School Systems, attending Epiphany Catholic School, St. Augustine High School, and John F. Kennedy High School. He later attended Prairie View A&M University in Texas on an athletic scholarship, where he joined Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated. Melvin achieved academic success, earning dual degrees in Marketing and Business, along with a Master of Business Administration.

Community service holds a special place in Melvin's heart. As a Community Outreach Manager for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, he has facilitated financial contributions to educational institutions including Lafayette Academy Charter School, McDonogh 35 Senior High School, Patrick F. Taylor Science, Technology Academy, Xavier University of Louisiana, and Southern University of New Orleans. He is actively involved in inspiring students in programs like STARBASE and the University of New Orleans Upward Bound Program.

As Melvin reflects on what he has done, representing Zulu as King in 2024 will be the crowning touch of his life. Melvin's son, "Lil Mel," would always say, "Ace" (that's what he called his dad), I want you to be KING one day," and would now say, "Job Well Done, Ace."

A. ANGELIQUE ROCHÉ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

munity enrichment. Having a father from Gretna, a grandmother from the 7th Ward, a paternal grandfather from McDonoghville, and a maternal grandfather who graduated from Xavier University in New Orleans; she developed a deep affection for the Crescent City and a profound understanding of New Orleans' cultural impact around the globe.

Her mother also ensured that her daughters understood the significance and importance of the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, Inc.; each was presented as a Zulu Maid during their senior year of high school. Angélique was part of the Zulu Royal Court of the late King Roy E. Glapion, Jr. and Queen Desire Glapion-Rogers (2000). She also served as a handmaid for her mother during the reign of the late King Louis Rainey, Jr (1996).

She graduated with honors from Southern University and A&M College (BA, Mass Communications, Print Journalism), the ARMY Cadet Leadership Training Institute, the Southern University Law Center (Juris Doctorate), and The George Washington University Law School (LL.M, International and Comparative Law).

After earning her final degree, she worked for Senator Mary L. Landrieu as a Legislative Aide (2008-2012). In 2012, she transitioned to campaign politics

working on the re-election campaign of President Barack Obama and serving as the Associate Director of Volunteer Operations for his 2013 Inauguration. And in 2014, she was the Campaign Manager for then-State Senator Nina Turner's Campaign for Secretary of State in Ohio. The next year she joined the leadership team at the Ms. Foundation for Women serving as Director of Communications and the Vice President for External Affairs from 2015-2018.

She is currently a consultant, writer, and host. In 2018 she joined the team at Marvel Entertainment as a host and producer. In 2020 her work expanded to include being a Member of the Marvel Editorial Team and as a Consultant for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

A lifelong Catholic, Angélique is a member of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in St. Roch, the OLSSCC Choir, the Archdiocese of New Orleans Gospel Choir, and serves as a Lector for the Parish. She is also a member of several service, social, and honors organizations, including Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Phi Alpha Delta, American Inns of Court, and Sigma Alpha Iota Music Fraternity. She is a member of the Louisiana State Bar Association and currently resides in the St. Roch Neighborhood in New Orleans.

Zulu Ball Feb. 9, 2024, New Orleans Convention Center Halls G, H, I
Lundi Gras Celebration, Feb. 12, 2024
Zulu Parade, Feb. 13, 2024

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Phat Tuesday Fashions

Tracee Dundas
Fashion Editor @
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Photos Courtesy of Each Store

Unleashing the spirit of Mardi Gras and show your true colors by dressing for what is crowned the largest free party in the world. When you step onto the lively streets of New Orleans, you'll find yourself engulfed in a whirlwind of colors, music, and revelry. Therefore, to fully immerse yourself in this vibrant celebration, choosing the perfect attire is essential. And although you can expect to see a range of styles from festive fun fashions to flamboyant costumes; you can be certain all will embrace the Mardi Gras colors: purple, green, and gold. These hues represent justice, faith, and power, respectively. From fringe skirts to bold stripe shirts if you're not dressed for the occasion let just say you'll feel like a fish out of water. But remember comfort is key, add your unique style and add a touch of mystery with a captivating mask. With the perfect attire, you'll be ready to dance, cheer, and celebrate all day long. So, don your most vibrant outfit and let the excitement of Mardi Gras take hold as you join the lively procession of parades and revelries. And laissez les bons temps rouler!



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Dan Packer, Former CEO of Entergy New Orleans, Passes Away

Data News Staff Edited Report

The family of Dan Packer advised recently that the former Entergy New Orleans CEO has died.

The family released a statement, saying:

"It is with a saddened heart that we announce that the patriarch of our family made his transition to be with the Lord at 8:02 a.m. peacefully at home. He was surrounded by his wife, children and grandchildren. Dan Packer was known for his role as President and CEO of Entergy New Orleans during and around the Hurricane Katrina era. Funeral arrangements are pending."

Entergy issued the following statement regarding Packer's death:

"In remembrance, we celebrate the remarkable life of Dan Packer.



Business leader Dan Packer recently passed away. His life was one filled with impact and purpose. He leaves behind a great legacy, touching many lives and influencing the next generation of business leaders.

Dan chartered his career path with a steadfast commitment to success since joining the company in 1982. He became President of Entergy New Orleans in 1996 and assumed the duties of CEO in 1998 — going on to lead the company during a uniquely challenging era that included response to Hurricane Katrina.

"Packer inspired his colleagues and community with his exceptional leadership, and served as a trailblazer who paved the way for future leaders.

Present National Urban League President and Former Mayor of New

Orleans Marc Morial released a statement on Packer's passing:

It is with deep sorrow and a heavy heart that I extend my condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Dan Packer. His passing leaves a void that is felt profoundly by all who knew him.

As the first African American to serve as President and CEO of the New Orleans Public Service Incorporated (NOPSI) now known as Entergy New Orleans, Dan was a highly respected leader in the utilities industry.

I cherish the fact that Dan was known for his dedication, kindness, and unwavering commitment to New Orleans. His contributions to the local business community, public safety and police reform during my administration were invaluable, and his impact will be remembered fondly.

Statement From Terry Jones: Publisher of Data News Weekly

During this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with all those mourning the loss of such an exceptional person. May the memories of Dan's warmth and accomplishments provide comfort to those who grieve.

I Terry Jones and the entire staff of Data News Weekly sends their condolences to the family of Dan Packer. Dan was committed to the New Orleans community especially during his time as CEO of Entergy New Orleans. We worked many projects together such as the Data Dolls Community Project for uplifting young Black Females; The Trailblazer Awards, recognizing unsung heroes in the community, and The Scoop Jones Scholarship Fund.

Anytime Data reached out to the community Dan was there. We all will miss him as a Historic Community Leader, and I will miss him as a friend.

Congressman Carter and Higgins Introduce Bipartisan TWICE Act

Data News Staff Edited Report

Last week Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D-L.A.) and Congressman Clay Higgins (R-L.A.) introduced the bipartisan TWIC Efficiency (TWICE) Act. This legislation will improve access to the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Program by supporting those currently in Federal, State, or local prisons by helping them apply in advance or get ready to apply for TWIC Cards and assisting individuals who are appealing or requesting exceptions if they are initially deemed ineligible for the program.

"I am passionate about making sure our Criminal Justice System is fair and that returning citizens have every possible opportunity for success when they come home," said Rep. Carter. "So many jobs in the United States require a TWIC Card just to work behind



Louisiana Congressman Troy Carter

a secure facility's gate. Louisiana's industry is begging for this workforce. This bill will help make re-entry more successful and ensure that workforce training can improve people's lives."

The TWICE Act would require

the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to: (BOLD)

Develop guidelines to improve returning citizens access to the TWIC Program.

Develop guidelines to assist individuals in custody to pre-apply for TWIC Cards and to assist those requesting an appeal or waiver after issuance of a "Preliminary Determination of Ineligibility."

Provide a briefing to Congress within a year on improvements to access the TWIC Program.

"I've often observed, in the course of my life, that a man's character shouldn't be measured by how he falls, it should be measured by how he stands back up. Americans are loving and compassionate, we believe in second chances, and this bill will help men that want to help themselves," said Rep. Higgins. "I'm thankful to my Louisiana Brother Congressman Troy Carter for his leadership on TWICE, and I'm prayerful that my colleagues

in the House and Senate will agree that every child of God deserves a chance to work, to earn an honest living."

"The TWICE Act not only increases economic mobility for citizens, it also improves the movement of goods across the country," said Michael Hecht, President and CEO of Greater New Orleans Inc. "More Louisianians will now be able to play meaningful roles in fueling and feeding the world due to the state's established leadership in energy, advanced manufacturing, trade, and logistics. These efficiencies equally benefit American workers and employers by increasing access for a qualified, yet underutilized talent pool to good jobs within Greater New Orleans, and at over 3,000 facilities across the nation. We thank Congressmen Carter and Higgins, as well as the TSA for their collaborative work to improve administration of this critical credential."

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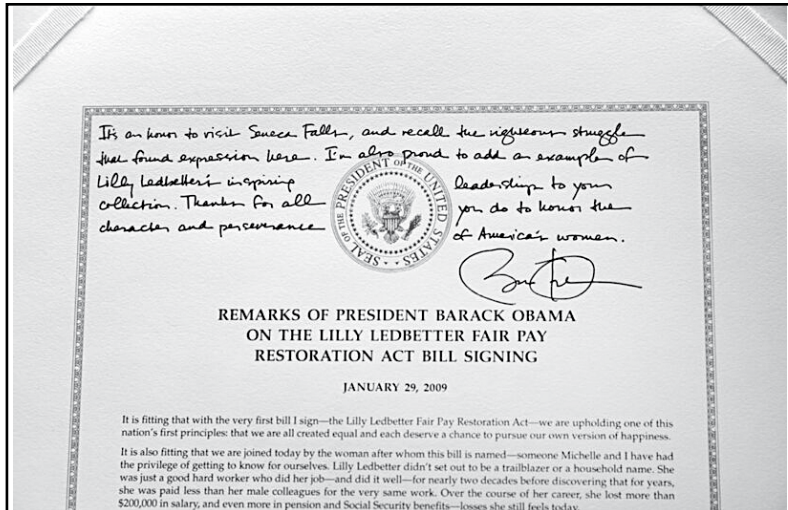
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Biden-Harris Administration Take Steps to Address Racial Wage Gap

Stacy M. Brown NNPA
Newsire Senior National
Correspondent

Taraji P. Henson's powerful statement that highlighted the glaring wage disparities faced by Black women in Hollywood perhaps pales in comparison to the meager salaries those in America's workforce historically contend with. And on January 29th, the Anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the Biden-Harris Administration unveiled comprehensive measures to tackle persistent gender and racial wage gaps in the United States.

Henson recently emphasized the inequities, stating that "the math ain't mathing" when it comes to the disproportionate pay differences for Black women in the entertainment industry. Her poignant observation underscored the broader issue of unequal pay in that industry. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris reaffirmed their commitment to equal pay as a fundamental component of their mission to ensure fairness and opportunity for all workers by observing the law that Barack Obama signed in 2009.



On January 29th, the Anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the Biden-Harris Administration unveiled comprehensive measures to tackle persistent gender and racial wage gaps in the United States.

The administration said it recognized that women are paid, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar paid to men. The wage gap is even more pronounced for women of color, where African Americans earn only 64 cents and Latina women earn a mere 55 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts.

Obama's legislation, signed on January 29, 2009, responded to the Supreme Court's decision in Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., which stripped protections against pay discrimination.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act reinstates prior law and emphasizes that pay discrimination claims based on sex, race, national origin, age, religion, and disability 'accrue' whenever an employee receives a discriminatory paycheck," Biden remarked.

"This is a crucial step in rectifying historical injustices and creating a fairer future for all."

Building on the law's foundation,

the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is finalizing a rule to eliminate the consideration of an individual's current or past pay when determining federal employee salaries. Simultaneously, the Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council proposes measures to prohibit federal contractors from seeking and considering applicants' compensation history during the hiring process.

"The wage disparities faced by women, particularly women of color, are not just statistics; they represent real challenges that demand real solutions," Harris emphasized. "Our actions today are a commitment to building a more equitable future."

The Department of Labor's (DOL's) Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs will also provide guidance to clarify existing protections against discrimination in hiring or pay decisions for federal contractors.

"Today's announcements build on our commitment to closing wage gaps, creating a fairer economy, and ensuring that every American has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their gender or race," Biden declared.

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