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# Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

The Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans Mask Soirée



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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# The Making of History

*King Kimlee Rodgers LXXII*

*A Krewe Party of Majesty*

*A Historic Reign for the Knights of Sparta*



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# The Making of History

*King Kimlee Rodgers LXXII*

*A Krewe Party of Majesty*

*A Historic Reign for the Knights of Sparta*



Kimlee Rodgers (top on stage) has made history by becoming the first African American King of the Knights of Sparta.

**Story and Photos by Glenn Summers**  
**Data News Weekly Contributor**

Kimlee Rodgers has made history as the first African American male elected King of the Knights of Sparta for 2025. Founded in 1951 as a ball masque organization, the Knights have delighted audiences with elaborate tableaux at the Municipal Auditorium and

now at the Pontchartrain Center in Kenner. Since beginning to parade in Orleans Parish in 1981, they have embraced tradition while innovating with their street parade on the first Saturday of the Carnival Season. Rodgers' election symbolizes a significant step toward inclusivity and diversity within this esteemed tradition, marking a new chapter in the Knights' Legacy.

Rodgers, a native of New Orleans, has been honored

as King Sparta LXXII by the Knights of Sparta for the 2025 Carnival Season. With 34 years of experience in education, he serves as the Lead Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Educator at Schaumburg Elementary School, providing specialized instruction and support. Rodgers earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Dillard University in 1987 and a Master of Arts Degree from the College of Notre Dame in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2007. Beyond

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### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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his professional commitments, he actively contributes to his community through senior programming and various charitable events.

### Coronation of A King

In a night of grandeur and celebration, King Kimlee Rodgers LXXII of the Knights of Sparta hosted an unforgettable Krewe Party, marking a historic moment in New Orleans' rich cultural tapestry. The event brought together community members and revelers, showcasing the spirit of unity and inclusivity that defines the Knights, all while honoring the vibrant traditions of Mardi Gras. This joyous occasion set the stage for a spectacular Carnival Season ahead.

In recognition of his dedication, Rodgers was featured as a ReNEW Charter Schools' Feature Teacher for the 2022-2023 Academic Year.

Rodgers' lifelong motivation is encapsulated in his belief: "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."



Kimlee Rodgers 2025 King of the Knights of Sparta



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# Celebrating Community and Academic Success

## *The Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans Mask Soirée*

Photos by Glenn Summers  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

In a vibrant convergence of culture, camaraderie, and creativity, the faculty and staff members of the Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans (LFNO) gathered for an enchanting Mask Soirée, a celebration that showcased their unity and dedication to fostering the French language and culture in the Heart of New Orleans. This notable event not only highlighted the artistic flair of the LFNO Community but also reinforced the connections among educators playing a pivotal role in shaping the minds of future generations.

### A Night of Elegance and Culture

Held at the historic BK House & Gardens, a National Historic Landmark built in 1826, the Mask Soirée turned into a splendid evening filled with laughter, music, and artistry. Staff members donned a wide array of masks, ranging from intricate designs that echoed traditional local and Parisian elegance to whimsical creations inspired by the rich cultural tapestry of New Orleans. This theme of masking allowed the participants to express their individuality while fostering a sense of togetherness as they celebrated their shared commitment to education and cultural exchange.

The ambiance of the soirée was rich with the sounds of French Chansons and Classic New Orleans Jazz, intertwining to create an atmosphere that was both sophisticated and joyful. Attendees enjoyed a delightful spread of hors d'oeuvres and beverages, with thoughtfully curated selections that honored the dual heritage of French and Creole Cuisine. This culinary experience served not only to satisfy the palate but also to reflect the school's mission of embracing diverse cultures.



Revelers having a great time at the Lycee Francais Mask Soiree.



Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events.





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# Victor Jones

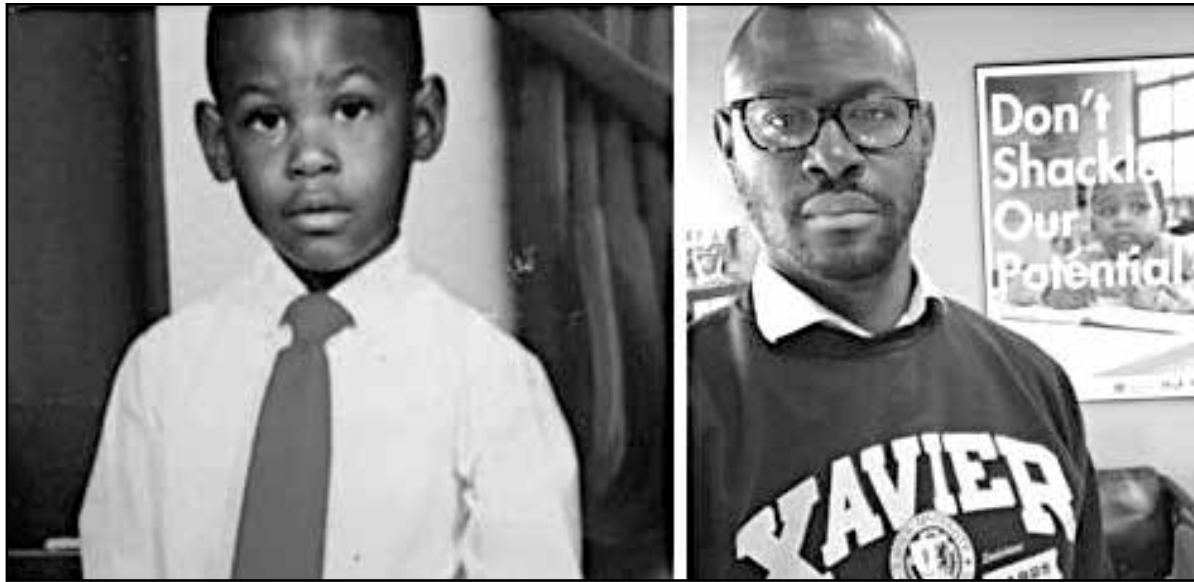
## *From Head Start to HBCU to Harvard: One Man's Story*

### National Head Start Association

Victor Jones graduated from Head Start over 30 years ago. Since then, Victor has built a career around his dedication to fighting for children, a passion he credits to his early education in Head Start. He has translated the Head Start Mission into his work, first as a kindergarten teacher and today as an accomplished Social Justice Attorney. Victor's commitment to lifelong learning and his everyday efforts to make the world a more equitable place for children makes him a true inspiration for the Head Start Community. Victor shared his story with the National Head Start Association.

### We are excited to learn about your Head Start Story, Victor! When and where did you attend Head Start?

I'm a 1989 graduate of West Tampa Head Start, located in Tampa, Florida. My mother and I only lived in Tampa for two years, and these were the two years I attended Head



Victor Jones as a student (left) and a recent photo (right)

Start. Thereafter, we returned to where I was born and raised, in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

### Do you have any memories from your time in Head Start? Favorite activities, classmates, teachers?

I remember my class was always out and about — going on field trips

to Busch Gardens to see the animals, going to the park, taking trips to the grocery store, and learning about fruits and vegetables. I also remember the times when doctors would visit us and check our eyes, ears and hearts, and I'll never forget the day a giant toothbrush walked into our classroom, and we learned about the importance of dental hygiene. I still remember a few of my

classmates' names, though this was 30 years ago. Head Start was also one of the very, very few instances from my pre-K to 12th-grade journey in which I was taught by teachers who looked like me. I think having such vivid memories of my experiences in Head Start is a testament to just how positively impactful the program was for me.

### How do you think Head Start impacted your later school years, or even your goals and career accomplishments beyond school?

Head Start directly impacted my professional trajectory. Because of the program, I've always wanted to serve children in some capacity. Before practicing children's rights and disability law, I was a public-school kindergarten teacher!

### What did your educational and career journey lead to your current position look like?

After graduating from high school in Mississippi, I attended Xavier University of Louisiana, a Historically Black College located in New Orleans, where I majored in Literature and double minored in History and Political Science. I then received a Master's Degree in Education from Harvard University. I then taught kindergarten, and, thereafter, returned to New Orleans

**Newsmaker, Continued on page 7.**

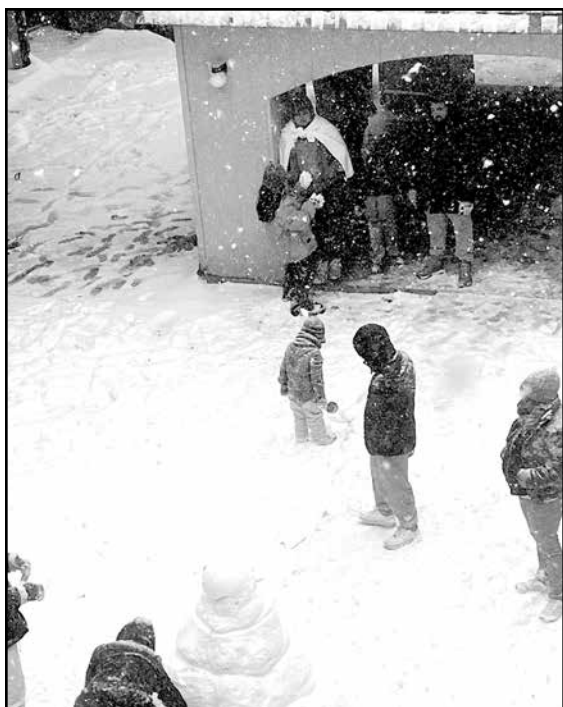
## State & Local News

# Snow in New Orleans

### Edwin Buggage Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

On January 21, 2025, the people of New Orleans woke up to the sound of snow flurries, howling winds and snow on the ground. A rare and historic winter storm impacted New Orleans and the broader Gulf Coast region, bringing significant snowfall and icy conditions to areas unaccustomed to such weather. This event has led to the issuance of winter storm warnings, a rarity for New Orleans, which hasn't experienced measurable snowfall since 2008.

New Orleans received a record-breaking 6-8 inches



A record amount of snow fell in New Orleans on January 21, 2025, and people of all ages went out to enjoy the snow.



Data News Weekly Editor-in-Chief Edwin Buggage enjoying the snow-filled day.

of snow, significantly departing from its typical winter weather patterns. The last significant snowfall in New Orleans occurred on December 11, 2008, when 1-2 inches blanketed the area.

State and local officials declared a state of emergency for the severe weather, where there were multiple roads and business closures. Additionally, residents experienced power outages and freezing temperatures.

People were out enjoying the wintry weather and having fun. It was a rare occasion... Snow in the 5-0-4.

# Trump Outlines America First Agenda

## *What It Means for Black Americans*

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior  
National Correspondent

President Donald Trump has unveiled his American priorities, which include measures addressing border security, economic policies, government restructuring, and social values. While the policies aim to bolster what the administration calls “American values and safety,” they carry profound implications for Black Americans and other marginalized communities.

### Border Security and Immigration

The president plans to reinstate hardline immigration policies, including ending “catch-and-release,” reinstating the “Remain in Mexico” program and expanding the border wall. The proposed suspension of refugee resettlement could disproportionately affect Black migrants from African and Caribbean nations who seek asylum in the U.S. Increased deportation operations targeting undocumented immigrants, including those with minor infractions, may further contribute to fears of racial profiling and discrimination in Black and immigrant communities.

Additionally, deploying the military, including the National Guard, to the border raises concerns about the militarization of immigration enforcement. The designation of certain cartels as foreign terrorist organizations could lead to broader enforcement measures that risk



President Donald J. Trump being sworn in as the 47th President of the United States.

overreach and collateral harm to immigrant populations, many of whom are Black.

### Economic and Energy Policies

Trump’s plan to “Make America Affordable and Energy Dominant Again” centers on reducing costs through expanded energy production and deregulation. While these measures aim to lower living expenses, they could have mixed consequences for Black Americans. Communities of color often bear the brunt of environmental harm caused by deregulated industries and fossil fuel expansion, raising questions about long-term health and environmental justice.

The administration’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord and rejection of renewable energy investments could also slow progress in creating green jobs, an industry where Black workers have

begun to gain traction.

### Government Reform

In his pledge to “Drain the Swamp,” Trump proposes freezing hiring in non-essential areas of the federal workforce, with a specific focus on reducing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This could result in fewer opportunities for Black professionals and reduced attention to addressing systemic inequities in federal agencies.

Plans to reduce remote work among federal employees could disproportionately affect Black workers, who often rely on flexible arrangements to manage systemic disparities such as longer commutes and caregiving responsibilities.

### Social Policies

Under “Bring Back American Values,” the president has vowed to uphold traditional gender defini-

tions and push back against what he terms “radical gender ideology.” While the policy may resonate with some, critics argue it risks undermining protections for LGBTQ+ individuals, including Black transgender and nonbinary people who already face high levels of discrimination and violence.

Additionally, the administration’s promise to rename American landmarks to “appropriately honor” U.S. history raises concerns about erasing the recognition of Black leaders and historical figures in public spaces.

### Implications for Black Americans

Trump’s America First agenda presents a mix of challenges for Black communities. Policies targeting immigration, environmental regulations, and government reform could exacerbate existing inequities, while the rollback of DEI programs threatens to stall progress toward racial justice.

As the administration prepares to implement these policies, the impact on Black Americans will depend on how federal and state agencies carry out the president’s vision. Critics warn that many of these proposals risk further marginalizing Black communities in an era of increasing social and economic disparities.

“No administration can ignore the lasting impact of its policies on communities already fighting systemic barriers,” a civil rights advocate said.

### Newsmaker, Continued from page 6.

to attend Law School at Loyola University. While in law school, I took courses in Civil Rights and Child Advocacy. I spent six years as a private practice attorney at Multidisciplinary Law Firms in New Orleans, and then, in 2018, I returned to my original passion for serving children as an attorney representing their interests.

### Victor, what advice do you have for current Head Start children and families?

Know that your child’s involvement in Head Start will be the best investment in their educational experience that you can offer them. The Holistic Approach to Learning — physical

care for self, care for your peers, and learning how to exist in the world around you, is an approach that I, as a former early childhood educator, can say is unique. I’m now the father of two daughters and I always say that I wish that they were able to have received a Head Start education like I did.

### Anything else you would like to share with the Head Start Community?

I always say that I went from “Head Start to HBCU to Harvard.” I’m eternally grateful for Head Start because it shaped me into someone who aspires to be a fierce advocate for marginalized children.

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