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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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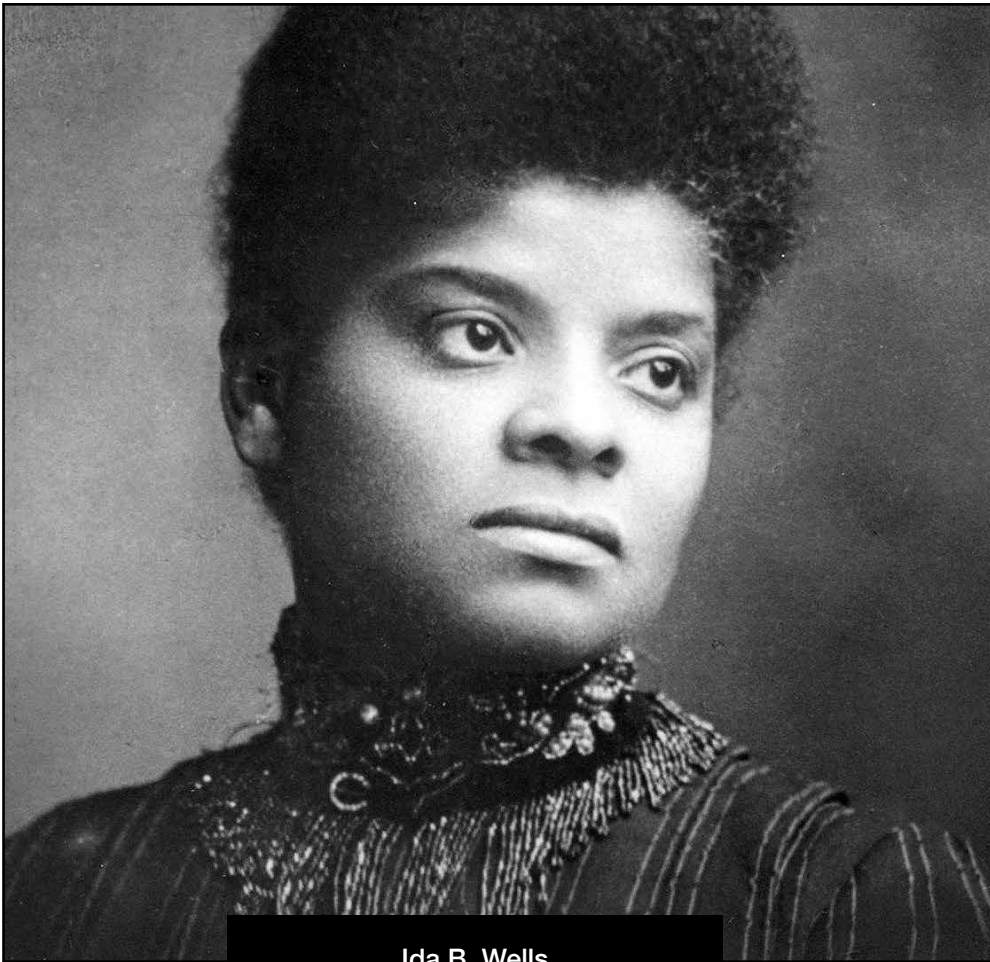


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Black Women’s History is American History



Rosa Parks



Ida B. Wells

Glenda Bell
Data News Weekly Contributor

The story of America cannot be told without the contributions of Black women. From the fight for abolition and civil rights to breaking barriers in politics, science, and the arts, Black women have shaped the

nation’s history with resilience and leadership. Yet, their impact is too often overlooked in mainstream narratives.

Pioneers like Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells championed justice and equality at a time when their voices were largely silenced. Civil Rights Icons Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer courageously fought for

voting rights and racial justice, laying the foundation for future generations. Today, Black women continue to redefine leadership—Kamala Harris shattered glass ceilings as the first Black woman Vice President, and countless others hold key roles in government, law, and activism.

Beyond politics, Black women have left an undeni-

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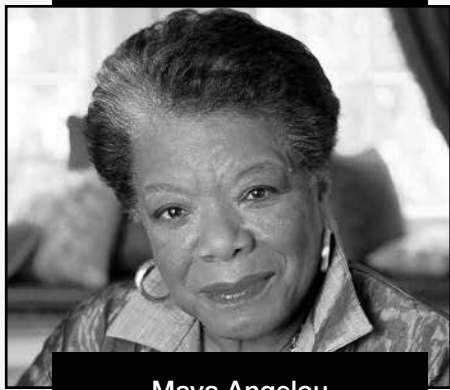
Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



Nina Simone



Mae Jemison



Maya Angelou



Toni Morrison

used their voices to inspire and challenge society.

In science and technology, Black women have been at the forefront of groundbreaking achievements. Dr. Mae Jemison became the first Black woman in space, Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett was instrumental in developing the COVID-19 Vaccine, and NASA Mathematicians Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson—whose work was highlighted in *Hidden Figures*—helped send astronauts to space. Their brilliance and perseverance continue to push the boundaries of possibility.

These are just a few of the countless Black women whose contributions have shaped the United States. Their history is not a footnote but a central thread in the American story. Recognizing their achievements ensures a fuller and more truthful understanding of the nation's past and future.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us honor the Black women who have defined progress in America—because their history is, and always has been, American History.

able mark on American culture. Literary giants like Toni Morrison and

Maya Angelou shaped the national consciousness with their power-

ful words, while legendary musicians—including Nina Simone,

Aretha Franklin, Roberta Flack, Alicia Keys, Beyoncé, and Ledisi—

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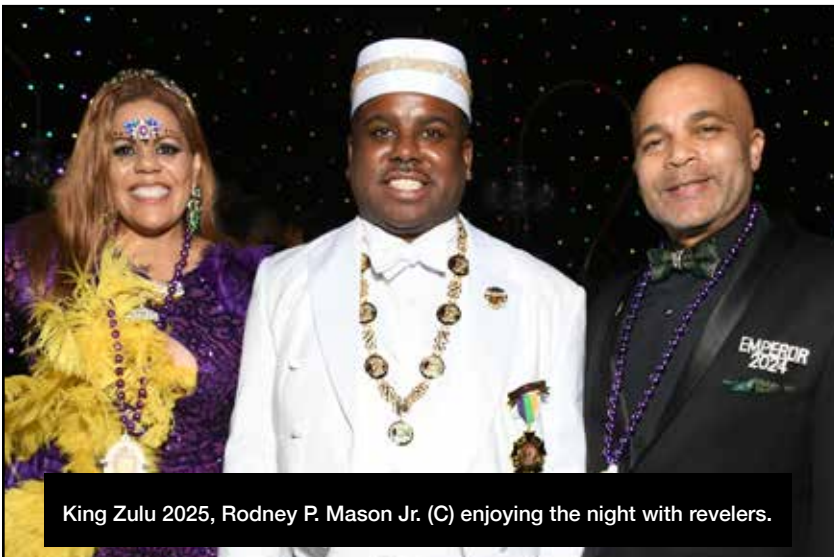
Zulu Ball 2025 Highlights

Photos by
Glenn Summers
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The 2025 Zulu Ball was an amazing night with its signature blend of elegance and cultural pride. Held at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the event attracted a dazzling array of attendees, from local luminaries to visiting celebrities, all adorned in their finest attire. It was filled with music, food, and fun. Data News Weekly was there to capture the highlights!!!



Thousands from all walks of life came out to the 2025 Zulu Ball. It was an amazing night enjoyed by all.



King Zulu 2025, Rodney P. Mason Jr. (C) enjoying the night with revelers.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events.



Severe Storms Disrupt Mardi Gras Festivities in New Orleans

Eric Connerly
Data News Weekly
Contributor

New Orleans' iconic Mardi Gras celebrations were disrupted as severe storms swept through the South on Tuesday, bringing powerful winds, heavy rain, and the threat of tornadoes. What was supposed to be a joyous day of parades, music, and revelry quickly turned into a race against the elements as city officials scrambled to adjust event schedules to keep attendees safe.

As forecasts grew increasingly dire, several parades were rescheduled for earlier times, while others were canceled outright. The National Weather Service in New Orleans issued multiple warnings, cautioning that the storms could bring wind gusts exceeding 60 mph and the potential for small hail. Meteorologists also warned that tornadoes could reach EF-2 strength,



packing winds between 111 and 135 mph, posing a significant threat to the region.

Dangerous Winds Batter the City

While strong winds persisted throughout the day, it wasn't until

around 6:30 p.m. that the most intense part of the storm arrived, unleashing violent gusts and torrential rain over the city. Residents and visitors braced themselves as the weather deteriorated rapidly, leaving streets slick and visibility low.

Authorities are set to assess the

full extent of the damage once the storm passes. However, early reports suggest widespread power outages due to downed trees and power lines. Emergency crews have been placed on high alert to respond to any storm-related incidents.

Parade Adjustments and Cancellations

Two of the most anticipated Mardi Gras parades, Zulu and Rex, attempted to move forward despite the forecast, starting earlier in the day and following shorter routes to minimize exposure to the dangerous conditions. However, for many other festivities, the weather proved too great a risk.

Officials in Jefferson Parish made the difficult decision to cancel all carnival parades in the area due to safety concerns, disappointing both locals and tourists. The decision was met with understand-

ing, as high-profile floats and large crowds could have been particularly vulnerable to the strong winds.

A Mardi Gras to Remember

Despite the disruptions, revelers did their best to celebrate before the worst of the storm hit, embracing the spirit of Mardi Gras even as Mother Nature had other plans. The event may have been cut short, but the resilience and dedication of the people of New Orleans were on full display.

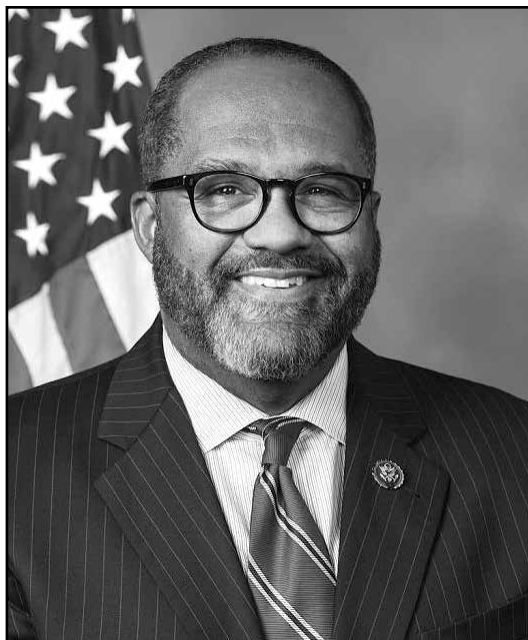
As the city assesses the storm's impact, the focus now shifts to recovery efforts and ensuring that those affected by the severe weather receive necessary assistance. While this year's Mardi Gras was unlike any other, the spirit of the celebration remains strong, and New Orleans will undoubtedly bounce back to host another unforgettable carnival in the years to come.

State & Local News

Congressman Carter Announces Social Security Benefit Increases and Retroactive Payments

Data News Staff Edited Report

Last week, Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D-LA) as First Vice Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), working alongside Rep. Garrett Graves (R-LA) as an original cosponsor of the bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act, announced that approximately 94,000 Louisiana public servants hurt by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) will immediately begin receiving Social Security benefit increases and retroactive payments from the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA). Congressman Carter worked tirelessly to mobilize a discharge petition and force a vote on the House floor for this legislation and has been advocating for these provisions to be repealed since before he was elected to



U.S. Congressman Troy Carter

Congress. Congressman Carter brought nearly 60 of his fellow CBC members to this effort.

The Social Security Fairness Act,

which fully repeals the two unfair Social Security provisions, WEP and GPO, was signed into law on January 5, 2025, by President Joe Biden.

"Our teachers, firefighters, police officers, and countless other public servants in Louisiana and around the country must receive their hard-earned benefits," said Rep. Carter. "Public servants dedicate their lives to our communities, and it's only right that they receive the full retirement compensation they deserve as quickly as possible. After a long journey, I'm happy to see the SSA moving forward with these payments."

"However, I am deeply con-

cerned by reports that the Musk-Trump Administration is shutting down offices and firing critical SSA staff. Dismissing the people who process Social Security checks means seniors won't get the benefits they earned, plain and simple. Democrats won't let this happen. We are doing everything in our power to protect hardworking American taxpayers."

The Social Security Fairness Act passed in the House of Representatives in November 2024 with a vote of 327 - 75 and in December 2024 in the Senate with a vote of 76 - 20.

Beginning this week, the SSA will start issuing retroactive payments and will increase monthly benefit payments beginning in April. Many beneficiaries will be owed a retroactive payment because the WEP and GPO offset no longer apply as of January 2024. Most people will receive their one-time retroactive payment by

the end of March, which will be deposited into their bank account on record with Social Security. Many of these people will also receive higher monthly benefits, which will first be reflected in the benefit payment they receive in April. Depending on factors such as the type of Social Security benefit received and the amount of the person's pension, the change in payment amount will vary from person to person.

Anyone whose monthly benefit is adjusted, or who will get a retroactive payment, will receive a mailed notice from Social Security explaining the benefit change or retroactive payment. Most people will receive their retroactive payment two to three weeks before they receive their notice in the mail.

You can visit the agency's Social Security Fairness Act webpage to learn more and stay up to date on its progress.

Rest In Power

Singer Angie Stone Dies in Car Accident at 63

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

@StacyBrownMedia

The music and entertainment world reacted in shock and sorrow after the tragic death of Angie Stone, the pioneering singer-songwriter and hip-hop trailblazer who was killed in a car accident early Saturday morning in Montgomery, Alabama. She was 63.

Stone's Publicist, Deborah R. Champagne, confirmed the devastating news, stating that her family is heartbroken. "A number of her loved ones had just spoken to her last night," Champagne told TMZ.

Born Angela Brown, Stone first rose to prominence as a member of The Sequence, hip-hop's first all-female rap group. Their 1979 hit Funk You Up became one of the earliest rap records to break into the mainstream, later sampled in Bruno Mars' Uptown Funk and Dr. Dre's Keep Their Heads Ringin'. After her years with The Sequence, Stone launched a solo career in the late 1990s, earning Grammy nominations and releasing celebrated R&B hits like Bro-



Singer Angie Stone

tha, No More Rain, and Wish I Didn't Miss You.

Stone's career spanned decades, seamlessly blending hip-hop, soul, and R&B. Her debut solo album, Black Diamond, achieved gold status. She earned multiple Grammy nominations, including Best Female R&B Vocal Performance for U-Haul and Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Joe for More Than a Woman

and with Betty Wright for Baby.

Several of Stone's peers offered tributes following the devastating news.

Chuck D, the legendary Public Enemy frontman and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee, called Stone a foundational figure. "Angie Stone [was] a powerful pioneer whenever I thought of her," he told Black Press USA. "A foundation of modern soul and hip-hop and women

empowerment that she's still uncredited for. A terrible loss."

Rocky Bucano, executive director of the Hip Hop Museum, described Stone as a groundbreaking force. "As a member of The Sequence, Angie B helped pave the way for generations of women in hip-hop," Bucano said in an email to Black Press USA. "Her impact on hip-hop culture is immeasurable, and her presence will be deeply missed. Rest in power, Angie Stone. Your voice and influence will never fade."

DJ Ralph McDaniels also told Black Press USA that Stone's artistry mainly was unmatched. "Peaceful journey to our sister Angie Stone," he said. "Her voice was unique and direct from hip-hop's female group Sequence to her solo soul songs."

Dr. Mario Dickens of Mario Dickens Ministries also offered condolences. "We are saddened to hear of the passing of one of this era's greatest memorable voices," he said. "We pray for her loved ones and fans," said Dickens, who extended his company's memorial printing services to Stone's family at no cost.

Black General in Charge of Military Health Care Forced to Resign: Report

Black INformation Network

US Army Lieutenant General Telita Crosland, who heads the military's health agency and is one of the most senior Black female Army officers, was reportedly forced to end her career.

On Friday (February 28), Crosland was forced to retire from her military role just a week after President Donald Trump fired the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other senior officers, sources told Reuters.



US Army Lieutenant General Telita Crosland

Crosland's retirement was publicly announced Friday, but Reuters reported that the senior officer was told she must resign.

"I want to thank Crosland for her dedication to the nation, to the Military Health System, and to Army medicine for the past 32 years," Stephen Ferrara, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, said in a statement Friday.

The sources, a current and former official, said Crosland wasn't given a reason why she had to re-

tire. The Pentagon also declined to provide a reason why Crosland allegedly resigned.

Crosland's departure comes amid Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's efforts to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at the Pentagon. Last month, Hegseth said he believed that "diversity is our strength" was the "single dumbest phrase in military history." The defense secretary also moved to end commemorations for Black History Month, Women's History Month, and more.

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