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# JUNETEENTH

*Honoring Freedom and the Continuing Struggle for Justice*



Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day enslaved African Americans in Texas were finally informed of their freedom, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. The holiday honors the end of slavery in the United States and stands as a powerful symbol of Black resilience, liberation, and the continuing struggle for justice and equality.

**Benjamin Bates**  
Data News Weekly Contributor

As communities across the country prepare to celebrate Juneteenth on June 19th, the day resonates deeply in a city like New Orleans, where the legacy of enslavement, resistance, and Black cultural brilliance is woven into the very fabric of its identity. Juneteenth, now a federal holiday, honors the moment in 1865 when Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce the end of slavery, more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln

issued the Emancipation Proclamation. While the official Proclamation of Freedom was delayed in Texas, the broader struggle for liberation and equality was already being fought in communities like New Orleans. A vital port city and cultural crossroads, New Orleans was home to one of the largest populations of free people of color in the Antebellum South. Here, African, French, Spanish, and Caribbean Traditions shaped a distinct Creole Identity, rich in art, language, spirituality, and activism. Juneteenth’s resonance in New Orleans is not only about commemorating the formal end of slavery, but

about honoring the city’s role in Black resistance, education, and self-determination. The city produced institutions like Xavier University of Louisiana, the only Historically Black and Catholic University in the U.S. and served as a hub for Civil Rights organizing throughout the 20th Century. From Congo Square, where enslaved Africans gathered to preserve their heritage, to present-day second lines that celebrate resilience and joy, New Orleans reflects the Spirit of Juneteenth every day. Historically, Juneteenth began with modest gatherings, barbecues, church services, and family

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reunions in Black communities across Texas. But the tradition soon spread across the South, including Louisiana, as African Americans carried its message of freedom with them. In New Orleans, modern Juneteenth Celebrations include music festivals, panel discussions, youth workshops, film screenings, and spiritual gatherings, all designed to educate and inspire.

The holiday's recognition as a federal observance in 2021, a decision spurred by the momentum of the Black Lives Matter Movement and nationwide protests following the murder of George Floyd, marked a significant step forward. Yet, activists and educators stress that Juneteenth must be more than symbolic. It must spark ongoing action to address systemic inequities in edu-

cation, healthcare, housing, and criminal justice that continue to impact Black communities disproportionately.

"Juneteenth reminds us that freedom is not a fixed point in history, it is an ongoing struggle," said one New Orleans educator involved in organizing this year's celebrations. "As we honor those who came before us, we must also fight for the world our children deserve."

This year, New Orleans will host a range of community-centered events leading up to and on June 19th, inviting all residents and visitors to learn, celebrate, and reflect. From Tremé to Central City, from the steps of historic churches to local parks and community centers, Juneteenth is an opportunity to uplift voices, reclaim narratives, and recommit to justice.

For New Orleans and cities across the U.S., Juneteenth is not just about what happened in 1865, it is about what still must be done to make freedom real for everyone. And in the Heart of the Crescent City, that call to action is met with music, memory, and movement.

## Juneteenth Celebrations In New Orleans

### NOLA Juneteenth Festival

When: Thursday, June 19, 2025, 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Where: Louis Armstrong Park / Congo Square

### Juneteenth Freedom Festival at Whitney Plantation

When: Saturday, June 14, 2025, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Where: Whitney Plantation (near New Orleans)

### Voices Reclaimed: A Juneteenth Celebration

When: Thursday, June 19, 2025, 6 p.m.

Where: Mount Zion Baptist Church, 2200 Dumaine St.

### Juneteenth Freedom Gala: Black Tense

When: Friday, June 20, 2025, 7 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Where: Andre Cailloux Center, 2541 Bayou Rd.

### Juneteenth Community Block Party & Fundraiser

When: Friday, June 20, 2025, 3 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Where: Café Istanbul, 2372 St. Claude Ave.

### Songs of Victory: A concert by OperaCréole celebrating Edmond Dédé's Historic Opera "Morgiane"

When: Sunday, June 22, 2025, 3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Where: New Marigny Theater, 2301 Marais St.

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# Perfect Gentlemen Hosted Annual Father's Day Second Line Celebrating Community, Culture, and Black Fatherhood

Photos by Dimitriy Pritykin

Story by Edwin Buggage Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly

The Perfect Gentlemen Social Aid & Pleasure Club brought music, movement, and meaning to the streets of New Orleans on Sunday, June 15, 2025, as it hosted its Annual Father's Day Second Line in celebration of Black fatherhood, family, and community pride.

This year's theme, "For Our Fathers, For Our Future," centered on men's health, family unity, and community empowerment. The second line highlighted advocacy efforts around prostate cancer awareness, fatherhood mentoring, and anti-violence initiatives across the city.

In a show of unity and shared purpose, the Perfect Gentlemen partnered with the Nation of Islam (NOI) to promote healing, prayer, and peace. Members of NOI joined the second line to distribute health information, offer prayers, and encourage continued dialogue around supporting Black men and strengthening families.

Travis Lyons, President of the Perfect Gentlemen and a longtime community advocate, emphasized the meaning behind the celebration:

"This wasn't just about dancing in the streets—it was about honoring the men who hold families together, mentor our youth, and step up in our communities. The second line is our cultural expression of love, respect, and responsibility."

Families, community organizations, and supporters of New Orleans' Black Cultural Traditions turned out in large numbers to celebrate and uplift the contributions of Black fathers.



Travis Lyons (center) leads the Perfect Gentlemen Social Aid and Pleasure Club Father's Day Parade in partnership with the Nation of Islam, centered on men's health, family unity, and community empowerment.





# Bo Dollis Jr. Celebrates Album Release at The Broadside with Family, Friends, and Fans

Photos by Rechaun French  
Eskridge Data News Weekly  
Contributor

Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. of the Wild Magnolias celebrated the release of his highly anticipated new album, *Chip Off the Old Black*, with a lively and heartfelt party at The Broadside. Surrounded by family, friends, and longtime supporters, the event honored the next chapter in the musical legacy of one of New Orleans' most iconic Mardi Gras Indian tribes.



"Chip Off the Old Black" is the name of the new Album by Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. and the Wild Magnolias. The album is a collaboration with Memphis Hi Rhythm Section, best known for their work with the legendary Al Green. It Blends traditional Mardi Gras Indian funk sound with Memphis Soul.



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



# Aubrey Brumfield Becomes First Black Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival Queen

Glenda Bell  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

In a milestone moment for diversity and community pride, Aubrey Brumfield has been crowned the 2026 Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival Queen, making history as the first Black woman to hold the title since the festival's founding.

The announcement was made at the Festival's Coronation Ceremony on June 15, 2025, marking not only Brumfield's personal achievement but also a powerful cultural shift in one of Louisiana's largest and longest-running festivals.

Held annually since 1972, the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival celebrates the region's Agricultural Heritage and is known for drawing tens of thousands of visitors to Tangipahoa Parish. It showcases local



Aubrey Brumfield (center) makes history becoming the first Black Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival Queen.

Brumfield's crowning represents a historic step forward for the festival, which has deep roots in the region's identity. While the event has long been a symbol of local pride and tradition, Brumfield's selection highlights a growing commitment to equity, inclusion, and representation.

Festival organizers expressed enthusiasm and support for the historic moment, calling it "a celebration of progress and community unity."

"I'm thrilled and deeply honored," said Brumfield. "This is more than my victory—it's a moment for our community to celebrate representation, empowerment, and the boundless possibilities for young Black women."

As queen, Brumfield will serve as a public face of the festival, making appearances throughout the year and promoting Louisiana's Strawberry Industry. Her win has already sparked praise across social media and local media outlets, with many noting its significance for future generations.

farmers, food vendors, musicians, and artisans, with the festival queen traditionally serving as an ambassador for the event and the broader Strawberry Farming Community throughout the year.

## State & Local News

### The Louisiana Creole Research Association presents "The History of Black Catholicism in Creole Louisiana"

Geraldine Lamar  
Data News Weekly  
Contributor

In celebration of the recent news that Pope Leo XIV has ancestral roots in Creole New Orleans, the Louisiana Creole Research Association (LA Creole) will present a special community event titled "The History of Black Catholicism in Creole Louisiana." The program will take place on Saturday, June 21, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the Civic Center in Xavier University's Library Resource Center (1st Floor). The event is free and open to the public.

Co-sponsored by Xavier's College of Arts & Sciences, the gathering will explore the deep-rooted legacy of Black Catholicism in Louisiana's Creole communities. This tradition has shaped the cultural, spiritual, and social fabric of New Orleans for generations.

For two decades, LA Creole has remained dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of Louisiana's Creoles of Color through oral storytelling, archival preservation, and community mentorship. With this upcoming program, the organization invites genealogists, historians, families, and all interested community members to join in learning more about this vital chapter of Louisiana's past.

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with scholars, cultural leaders, and historians who will highlight the Intersection of Creole Identity and Black Catholic Faith. LA Creole encourages the public to attend, connect with its members, and explore resources on Creole Genealogy and Cultural Heritage.

To learn more about the event or the work of LA Creole, visit [www.lacreole.org](http://www.lacreole.org).

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# Juneteenth 2025

## Chavis Urges America to Confront the Enduring Legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

### Black Press USA

As the nation marks Juneteenth, commemorating June 19, 1865, when federal troops enforced the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas—Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. calls for a deeper reckoning with the global and generational impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Chavis, a renowned civil rights leader, former executive director of the NAACP and President and CEO of the Black Press of America, co-authored *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: Overcoming the 500-Year Legacy* (October 8, 2024; ISBN 978-1-59079-569-9) with Stacy M. Brown, an accomplished journalist and author and senior national correspondent for Black Press USA.

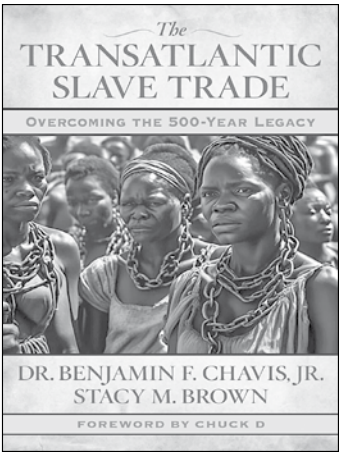
The book features a powerful foreword by hip-hop legend Chuck D and is endorsed by NBA Hall of Famer Isiah Thomas.

Public Enemy's legendary leader Chuck D writes a powerful foreword in the book/Wikimedia commons

### A Legacy That Still Shapes Lives:

Environmental Racism: Dr. Chavis coined the term "environmental racism" in the early 1980s. His 1986 study, *Toxic Waste and Race*, revealed how hazardous waste sites disproportionately impact communities of color—leading to widespread health disparities and environmental injustice.

Mass Incarceration, Inequality, and Systemic Racism: "The chains of slavery may have been broken,"



Chuck D writes, "but the shackles of systemic racism are still very much intact." The book links mod-

ern injustices—from police brutality to education gaps—directly to slavery's legacy.

Global Repercussions: The transatlantic slave trade left marks not only on American soil but around the globe, influencing foreign policy, economic disparity, and racial inequality from the U.S. to the Caribbean and beyond.

Modern-Day Consequences: From gentrification and poverty to voter suppression and underfunded schools, Black communities continue to face barriers rooted in this centuries-old system of oppression.

"Too many still refuse to connect the dots between slavery and

today's racial injustices," said Dr. Chavis. "This book is a wake-up call—a demand for awareness and a call to action."

### A Must-Read for a Nation in Reflection:

*The Transatlantic Slave Trade: Overcoming the 500-Year Legacy* is a timely, urgent, and unapologetic look at how the horrors of the past continue to shape present-day realities. It honors the resilience of Black people while demanding America finally reckon with truth and justice.

Available here and wherever books and e-books are sold.



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If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: [terrybjones@bellsouth.net](mailto:terrybjones@bellsouth.net) and [datanewseditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewseditor@bellsouth.net).

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### Job Opportunity

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# Juneteenth

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## *Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr.*

Would like to share some  
Inspirational Juneteenth quotes to honor the day.

“Juneteenth has never been a Celebration of Victory  
or an acceptance of the way things are. It’s a  
Celebration of Progress.”

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing  
can be changed until it is faced.” - **James Baldwin**

“You can separate Peace from Freedom because no one  
can be at Peace unless he has his Freedom.” - **Malcolm X**