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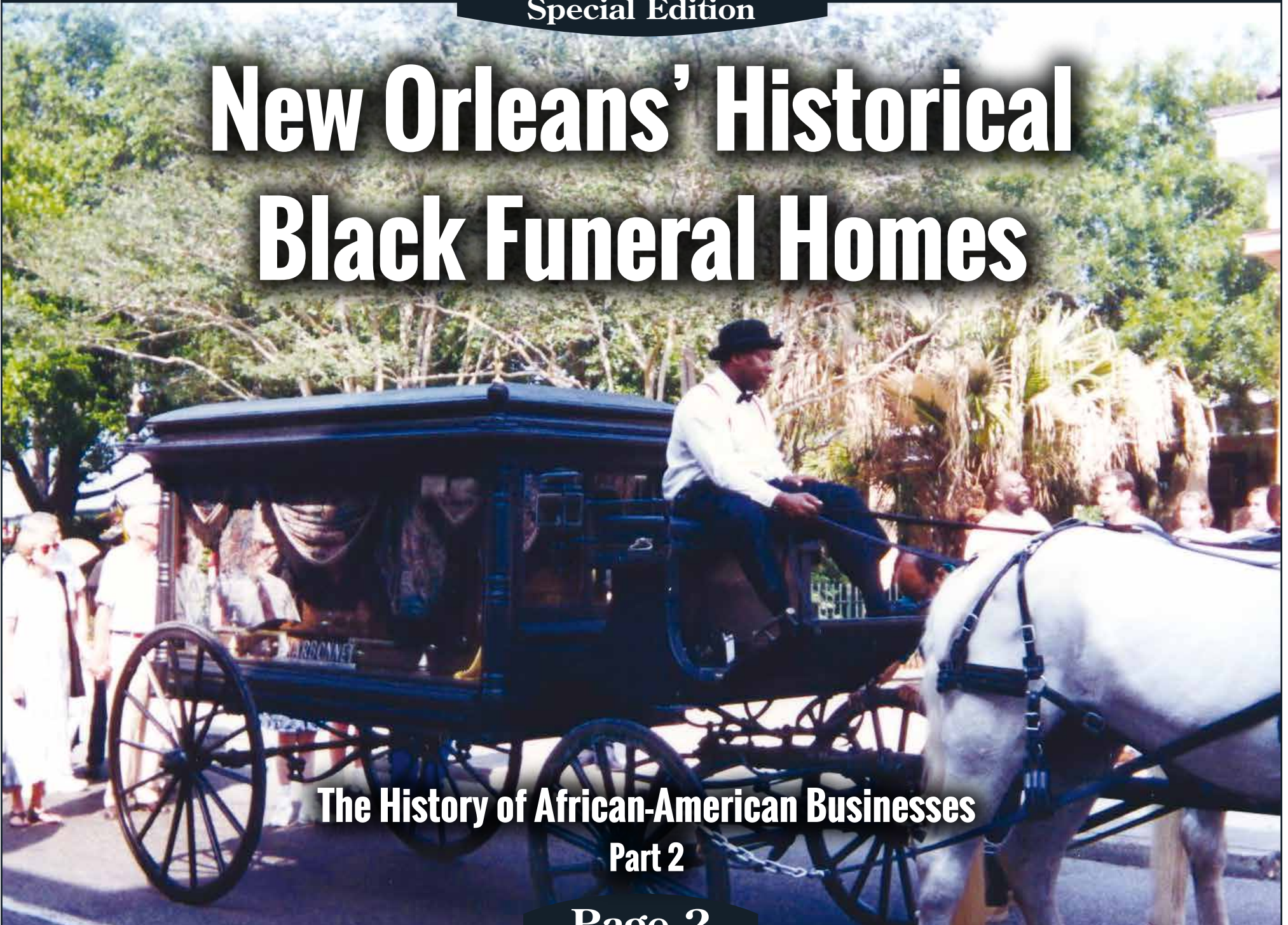
Sights and Sounds of Super Bowl 2013

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Special Edition

New Orleans' Historical Black Funeral Homes



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The History of African-American Businesses

Part 2

Black Owned Funeral Homes and Keeping Dollars in the Community



Pictured above is a traditional New Orleans horse drawn funeral procession by Charbonnet Funeral Home, an historic African-American Funeral Home serving residents since 1883. (file photo)

By Edwin Buggage

African-American Businesses 1619 - ?

As the City recovers, one of the most important aspects is the continuing presence of African-American owned businesses. In many fields of endeavor African-Americans throughout our rich history have carved a niche for ourselves. From slavery until today we have been an industrious people. We can look back in the

not so distant past of the dark days of segregation and in spite of the many obstacles that existed for social equality and access; African-Americans had a class of entrepreneurs that serviced consumers in a broad range of businesses. What was once a burgeoning business class and people supporting African-American owned businesses are not as existent as it was in the past; now is a time where many entrepreneurs struggle to keep their doors open or are being bought out by others.

One area that continues to be a place where African-American spends their money inside the community is with African-American funeral homes. It is a rich tradition where families start businesses that today are still going strong. In New Orleans there are over a dozen funeral homes owned by African-Americans. Names such as Gertrude Geddes Willis, Rhodes, Charbonnet Labat Glapion, Estelle J. Wilson, Dennis and Boyd are just a few of the names African-Americans look to when they lose a loved one and are seeking a place to plan their

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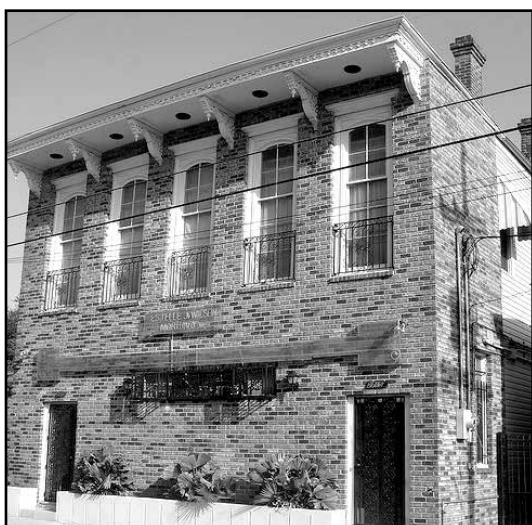
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Funeral Directors of D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home carry on the tradition of providing mortuary services to families in their time of bereavement.



The Boyd Family Funeral Home



The Estelle J. Wilson Mortuary Service was founded in 1964 and is the first female owned Black Funeral Home in New Orleans.



Dennis Mortuary Services has been serving New Orleans families since 1930.

burial arrangements. Charbonnet and Rhodes Funeral Homes have been in existence since 1883 and 1884.

Funeral Homes: A Family Business

During these tough economic times where starting a business for anyone was tough in the war torn southern economy, but this did not stop Duplain W. Rhodes from starting what's now been serving families in their time of need for over 125 years. "We continue to reinvest and reinvent our business, I feel it is important to keep up with what is going on in business to innovate and expand. That is what we're doing, we have other parts of our business that includes limousine services, we hold celebrations of life, we sell life insurance and we have a chapel, in addition to staying on top of technological advances that help keep our business relevant and competitive," says Kathleen Rhodes Astorga one of the siblings that are the present owners says about how they maintain a strong and profitable business.

Along the busy thoroughfare on Louisiana Avenue, since 1930 Dennis Mortuary has been a place that has given according to its motto dignified, personal service. The business was founded by C. L. Dennis and then run by his son H.L. Dennis and now is being run by his widow Leontine Dennis who took over running the business after Hurricane Katrina. Talking about the funeral home and their philosophy she says, "Unlike some we try to make it where our business is accessible to everyone regardless of their economic circumstances." Continuing she says, "We also feel that whether it is an expensive or not so expensive funeral we provide the same level of quality and care to our customers and that is something my

husband and father-in-law always stressed and something I continue to do."

Dennis is a woman of faith who believes in God's grace and does whatever she can to help families during their time of mourning. "I try to keep my prices affordable for people because I know that what I am doing is bigger than me, I could not do this without God; to provide comfort for families during a time of loss, so whatever I can do to help them I will," says Dennis.

In 2007 Donavin and his wife Linear Boyd opened the Boyd Family Funeral Home. Speaking of how he got involved in the funeral home business, "I grew up in Tuskegee, Alabama and my stepfather's family owned a funeral home. I was fascinated by it, but I decided I would go to college to study pre-med, but it was something about the funeral home business that kept pulling at me, so I left college in Alabama moved to New Orleans and enrolled in Delgado's Mortuary Science Program, then I worked with several local companies before starting my own business."

While African-Americans spend much of their money with businesses owned by other ethnic groups for many services; when it comes to burying their loved ones something that is a tough time for a family they seek out African-American morticians. "I believe there is a greater level of comfort, and a high regard for our traditions, we grieve differently and families need someone who can relate to those customs and traditions and that's why they come to us," says Boyd.

What are the Keys to African-American Prosperity?

Maintaining a business is tough for any entrepreneur,

but especially for African-Americans. Some of the problems are rooted in the economic challenges businesses face to stay competitive, also issues of marketing and advertising their businesses; and sometimes it is lack of support from African-American consumers. While these things are true Leontine Dennis is optimistic but feels there must be a shift in how African-Americans view the way they spend money, "We are in a great position now as it relates to the amount of money people have to spend on products and services, but it is time to begin spending our money to build wealth in our own community."

Many businesses fall behind by not innovating while others forge ahead by being creative figuring out their niche, sifting out its market position and executing a strategy to make their business have a competitive edge. "I think sometimes small businesses don't spend enough of their time and resources re-investing their businesses because sometimes there just isn't enough capital to do that; but I think there are ways to do that where it does not cost a lot. Also I feel some businesses get caught up in how things were always done and are inflexible to change and a business must always be willing to change to survive and thrive," says Donavin Boyd.

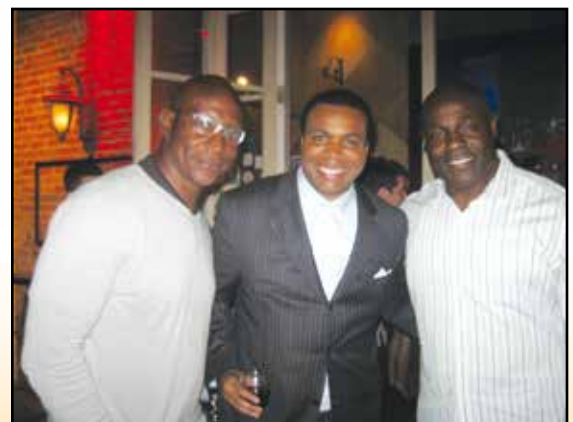
Businesses working together to build on each other's strength is keys to their survival. A point not lost on Kathleen Rhodes Astorga, "We must begin to build a network between us, and work together to make each other stronger; also we must as consumers begin to spend our money wiser and support Black owned businesses because in the end when we do, we are creating the foundation to rebuilding our community by keeping dollars circulating in our neighborhoods."

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

The Sights and Sounds of Super Bowl 2013

Photos by Data News Weekly Photographers

Super Bowl XLVII - 2013 rolled through New Orleans last week bringing with it parties, concerts, corporate events, and of course the "super showdown" between the Baltimore Ravens and the San Francisco 49ers. And while the teams put on a world class duel, the Ravens came out the victors, but New Orleans was the real winner because of the hospitality and great time we showed the world. And for every second of the action, Data was there!



Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Datazone/Continued from page 4.



For more photos from Super Bowl week, visit www.ladatanews.com.

Staying Game Ready



Dr. Eric Griggs, MD
Data News Columnist

world's largest football game. When described in this fashion, it clearly makes the holiday season in New Orleans appear a grueling gauntlet of festivity at best. The focus which is laughter, food, fun, family and good times. However, what helped make this year's culmination of fun different from years past is the inclusion and focus on something important to each of us, our health.

Amid the numerous flyers, emails, and advertisements about parties, concerts, and Super Bowl related activities, this year there was a much needed added dimension, The Dorsett Health Spectacular. The event took place on Wednesday, January 30, 2013 at the Xavier University Convocation Center from 2pm to 8 pm. It included \$1000 worth of health screenings from



The Dorsett Health Spectacular featured health screenings including dental screens, HIV testing, bone marrow donation registration, lung screens, nutrition counseling, and blood pressure readings.

head to toe, including dental screens, HIV testing, bone marrow donation registration, lung screens, nutrition counseling, and blood pressure readings to name a few. Participants were treated to entertainment by Gina Brown and Line Dancing with Lady D, all the while be-

ing broadcast live-remote by the team at WBOK. This was the second event of this nature put on by the Dorsett Group, who began the community outreach event in Indianapolis at last year's Super Bowl. The event was truly "spectacular".

The numbers of festivities that

take place during the time of year coinciding with a record spike in the incidences of flu are no matter of chance. Excessive parties, festivities, and game watching can all equate to fatigue, insomnia, mental drain and weakened immune systems if care is not taken to prepare for the season. Are you game ready? If your health is important to the Champions of the NFL, why not make it a top priority for yourself. Take the smart and healthy route. Eat wisely. Stay hydrated. Get rest (as much as reasonably possible during this season). And most importantly, be safe.

Prescription for the Week: During this festive season, of excess. Live like a champion! Be safe and be smart. Get checked. Get fit. Get moving!

Pipeline to the People

By Corey Anderson

Question: What impact if any did the lights going out at the Super Bowl have on people's impression of the City? And what was the best part for you of the Super Bowl and are you ready for Mardi Gras?



Britney Weary

"It had a negative impact on the City because everyone views the City as if nothing can go right here. People will come back; but they do look negatively on the City. Halftime was my favorite part since I didn't keep up with the teams this year. I'm ready for Mardi Gras, but I'll be out of town so I'm going to miss it."



Garrett Jones

"The lights made it seem like the City is broke, poor, and made people remember Katrina, and basically just a bad impression. My favorite part was when Jacoby Jones scored the kickoff return and did the Ray Lewis dance. My birthday is about two weeks after Mardi Gras so it's my favorite time of the year."



Allen Anderson

"A lot of people look negatively on New Orleans. It's going to cause a lot of conspiracy as far as the Sean Payton suspension. My favorite part was being on the Ravens' sideline when they won the game; that was the experience of a lifetime. I'm ready for Mardi Gras and to have a good time. I just want to barbecue."

Talk to us on Facebook; let us know how you feel.



Leslie Ellison Writes New Chapter for Historic Algiers Community

Residents of all generations from the Tunisburg Square/McClendonville neighborhood in Algiers gathered inside of the gymnasium at Edward Hynes Elementary School this week to witness the swearing-in of one of their own—Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) Member and Vice President Leslie Ellison.

Carrying the responsibilities of a new generation of leadership in Algiers, Ellison emerges as a daughter of the community and Tunisburg/McClendonville's first Black and first female elected official, according to one local historian.

With family roots in the community as deep as 200 plus years, Ellison, 46, is a life-long resident of the historic Tunisburg/McClendonville neighborhood, which was established in 1850. Her forefathers arrived to the community as sharecroppers around that time, and her grandfather, the late Rev. Samuel J. Ellison, Sr., served as pastor of Olive Branch Baptist Church in



Tunisburg/McClendonville for 50 years.

Embracing that mandate of leadership, Ellison ran swiftly to claim the victory in OPSB'S District 4 race last November. Since that time, she has been working with community members and leaders to assess the state of education throughout her District.

"This is a historic moment for

our community. We have watched Ms. Ellison work gracefully and selflessly throughout our community in ways one could never imagine for many years. We are proud to have her represent us on the school board," says Anna Burrell, community leader.

On Monday, January 14, Ellison was one of seven recently elected OPSB members sworn into office.

The inaugural ceremony was a part of the new board's first official board meeting of 2013, during which the board voted unanimously to have Ellison serve as vice president for the next two years.

"I am truly thankful to the citizens of District 4 for entrusting me to share their voice and vision for education on this board," Ellison said. "I started this journey with desires to see youth fulfill their purpose in life and to see my community arise. The work has already started at the community level, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the board to see all of our schools become education beacons."

"I am also humbled beyond words at my colleagues' selection of me to serve as vice president and look forward to working alongside them," Ellison added.

Photo 1 (Above): Community members, family, friends and colleagues celebrated with Hon. Leslie Ellison, during OPSB's 2013 Inauguration Ceremony.

Lucille Hunter Celebrated 103rd Birthday



Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., established June 1938.

For 75 years Lucille Hunter and Alpha Gamma Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. has helped provide community service, scholarships, exemplified finer womanhood, and demonstrated sisterly love.

Ms. Lucille Hunter was one of the first ladies inducted into this sorority 75 years ago. She was the 12th President; 1962 Zeta Phi Beta Honoree, Regional Director, 1983-1986. She is a Life Member.

Hunter still attends sorority meetings when she is able. She is alert and very aware of her sorority sisters.

Once again, Congratulations, Lucille Hunter.

Congratulations to Ms. Lucille Hunter. This January 2013, Hunter turned 103 years old.

Ms. Hunter is the proud member of Zion United Methodist Church and is a founding charter member of the Alpha Gamma Zeta Chapter of Zeta



NFL Hall of Famer Franco Harris (pictured on the left) hosted the "Immaculate Reception & Dinner Presented by Hennessy V.S" in New Orleans during Super Bowl weekend. The exclusive event raised funds for two charities, Warriors to Citizens & Clearview Legacy Foundation. Photo by Leo Getz

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