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SUMMER 2012

NABJ

journal



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Thomas
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Reflection

The 1983 NABJ Convention in New Orleans shaped the current association as we return 29 years later



Meet the Honorees

The 2012 Special Honor Awardees are the best and brightest in the journalism industry



A Changing Industry

Latest ASNE survey shows that African-American newsroom jobs are on the decline for the fourth year



table of contents



Journalist of the Year

From the President	4
Recovery slow for New Orleans	8
NABJ Short celebrates 20 years	24
Members on the move	25

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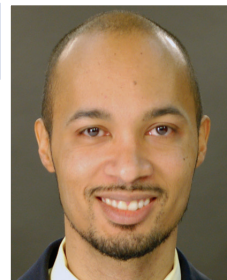
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From the President



Dear NABJ Family,

Welcome to the summer edition of the *NABJ Journal*!

We are proud to host our 37th Annual Convention this summer in my beautiful hometown of New Orleans.

This edition of the *Journal* is our Convention Issue. Throughout these pages you will see NABJ's 2012 award winners, recipients of our highest honors. These journalists truly are the best and brightest stars in the industry, and we are proud to celebrate their achievements this summer at our national convention.

You will read about our Journalist of the Year, Pierre Thomas of ABC News. Pierre and his team led ABC's coverage of many of last year's top stories, including the shooting and wounding of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz), as well as the capture of Osama Bin Laden. We are proud to recognize Pierre for his work.

In this issue, you will also read about NABJ Founder and Past President, DeWayne Wickham, the recipient of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. DeWayne has had an impressive career in journalism and he has achieved distinction at the highest levels.

We are also proud to honor our Legacy Award winner, veteran news anchor, Monica Pearson. This year she retires after 37 years of serving as the longest-running anchor in the Atlanta market. She is one of the most honored and most watched anchors in Atlanta, and a role model for generations of journalists of all races and creeds who have come after her.

Also check out the great piece written by Wayne Dawkins. He offers a look back to the last time NABJ's annual convention took place in New Orleans, in 1983, while illustrating NABJ's professional growth over the past 29 years. I would like to especially thank Journal editor, Bonnie Newman Davis and Managing Editor April Turner for putting together this issue in short time.

This is truly a great issue, and this year promises to be one of the best conventions to date. In addition to awarding these honors, our annual convention is an invaluable opportunity to receive thousands of dollars worth of training through our workshops and learning labs, a chance to reconnect with your friends and colleagues from across the country, and a time to kick back and relax in the Big Easy!

Together, let's recharge our mind, body, and spirit—and lastly, remember to let the good times roll!

Onward,

Gregory Lee Jr.
President

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From the Executive Director



To my NABJ Family,

As we enter into what promises to be yet another great convention for NABJ, I could not be more excited about our Convention edition of the *Journal*.

NABJ has had a great year, and for that we thank you. We head into our annual convening stronger than ever. We have a great program line-up, a high number of attendees, a sold-out career fair exhibit hall, and a sold-out hotel. Thank you for always supporting NABJ. It is gratifying to know that we can always count on you, our members.

I also want to thank all the sponsors who continue to support this great organization. Without their support, our work would not be possible.

This year, NABJ hosted an amazing Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, and an educational Media Institute on Health: Health Policy and Health Inequities, which included a special briefing on health for NABJ members. We also recently celebrated our 20th Anniversary of the NABJ Short Course at North Carolina A & T University, and we have given away unprecedented amounts in scholarships and fellowships this year. We have also supported our professional and student chapters throughout the country in their programming efforts.

Our second half of 2012 will be just as ambitious as our first. Look for information soon on our upcoming programs, media institutes, and the events we have planned for our members covering the elections this season, as well as our September event, held in conjunction with the U.S. Presidential Congressional Black Caucus Conference. NABJ has been extremely successful in partnering with other organizations to meet our shared goals, and we will continue to link forces with organizations that value the ideals most important to us, more diversity in our nation's newsrooms.

NABJ strives to be indispensable to our members. Know that 365 days a year, NABJ is advocating on your behalf.

Thank you for all that you do to make NABJ an industry leader. We are at the top of our game—and we are only going up!

Yours in Service,

Maurice Foster, Esq., CMP
Executive Director
National Association of Black Journalists



Up Close

THE OTHER BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS



NABJ file photos

1983 NABJ Convention in New Orleans: Eddie Williams, Carl Holman and Julian Bond

NABJ's stormy '83 visit created the modern association

By Wayne Dawkins

The 1983 New Orleans conference was most memorable for its mishaps, and also for bruising changes that ended formative years and created the modern National Association of Black Journalists.

New Orleans' streets sweltered in the early September heat. Pavement in the center of town and in the French Quarter was broken and excavated. The city was preparing to host the 1984 World's Fair.

Some visiting conferees overlooked the inconveniences and enjoyed the cosmopolitan Southern city a little too much. "Even panelists would skip workshops and go to the French Quarter," said Gayle Pollard Terry, then of the *Los Angeles Times*. "They got back late from Chez Helene, Dookey Chase and Antoine's. There was a constant comparison of where they ate. It was fun, fun, fun."

At the Fairmont Hotel, the host hotel site, meeting rooms were cavernous, making general sessions and workshops look less well attended. Air conditioning required to cool the rooms turned the spaces into iceboxes.

Special events during the social hours had degrees of discomfort, too. NABJ members were bused to the other side of town for a nighttime reception. They consumed steaming bowls of gumbo, red beans and rice, and bourbon-flavored bread pudding. They sat in an amphitheater to watch

William Marshall perform a one-man show as Frederick Douglass. Marshall gave a heartfelt performance, but that was hard to tell by looking around the audience. The thick night air, humidity and rich cuisine made many people doze in their seats.

The conference of 334 attendees was an election-year meeting. Since 1981, Les Payne of *Long Island Newsday* and NABJ's fourth president, had lifted NABJ intellectually, but as a leader he was divisive force rather than consensus builder. In New Orleans he changed rules on the spot and ignored election instructions approved by the board of directors.

Parliamentarian Karen Howze resigned the previous year in order to devote her total energies to the new national newspaper *USA Today*. The board did not replace Howze. Reginald Stuart, a *New York Times* national correspondent, was drafted as parliamentarian.

In trying to be even handed, Stuart angered colleagues and annoyed hotel staff. Shortly after agreeing to help with the election, he recognized a serious flaw: There were no ballots.

So Stuart made an unusual request. He asked the Fairmont Hotel management for dozens of index-card-size telephone memo pads for use as make-shift ballots [that time was a dozen years before e-mail, The Internet and cell phones were ubiquitous tools].

The scheduled 2 ½ hour business meeting that Saturday took five torturous hours.

Payne yielded often to ad-hoc parliamentarian Stuart. Stuart decided he would let all members have their say. The election, he told me in a 1990 interview, was too important to abridge debate.

What ensued were NABJ members challenging each other over bylaws and resolutions. The meeting degenerated into grandstanding and nitpicking.

As the meeting grew tedious and irritating, decorum shattered. A news-woman from the *Washington Post* strutted demonstrably into the tense room

Continued on **page 7**

Up Close

Continued from **page 6**

hoisting a tray of cocktails for her friends. The over-the-top gesture touched off a cacophony of arguments.

A member stood up and chastised everyone for allowing the meeting to run so long that it would delay the awards banquet and keynote speech by author Maya Angelou.

The woman who caused the stir with the tray of cocktails, along with other folks, obtained their adult beverages from a reception downstairs. As the meeting was going on, a tuxedoed Albert Fitzpatrick, longtime NABJ member, Knight Ridder news executive and Pulitzer Prize winner, stood in the reception area. He was the greeter and other Knight Ridder execs [*Miami Herald*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, et al] were with him. NABJ members were late and host Fitzpatrick stood there, fuming.

"The business meeting began at 1 p.m.," said the future sixth president [1985-87]. "They were trying to have the membership legislate the direction of the organization. It dragged into the reception time. Members started to go into the reception area and get snacks and drinks. I was not happy about this of course.

The meeting was so long it virtually destroyed our reception."

The presidential election was a three-way race among Acel Moore, a founder and associate editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mervin Aubespain, a reporter with the *Courier-Journal* of Louisville, Ky., a Louisiana native, and remembered fondly by many members for staging a successful 1981 conference in Louisville, and Bob Reid, NABJ's third president [1979-81], who initiated staples such as NABJ News [renamed NABJ Journal] and the scholarship program.

Many of the Northern and East Coast journalists appeared to favor Moore, while the Southern members appeared to favor the populist Aubespain, who famously called NABJ a family and urged its members to "roll up their sleeves and check their egos at the door."

Records of the official count were unavailable. Audrey Edwards, a former New York-based *Essence* editor who succeeded Payne when he ascended to the presidency, said Aubespain beat Moore 125-100, with Reid receiving eight votes.

In a 1992 interview, a former officer's recollection was that the election was closer; Aubespain won by only 11 votes. If the former officer's memory was accurate, the election was so close, the win could have gone to Aubespain or Moore because at least a dozen members, disgusted with the delays at the business meeting and election, stormed out of the room and did not vote.

Votes just walked out of the door, said the former officer.

Under Aubespain's watch, the fifth president established a national office with a reliable mailing address and phone number where members could call and receive services. Aubespain irrevocably changed NABJ's focus and openly courted white news executives and many in turn were persuaded to hire more black journalists at mainstream news outlets.



Convention Attendees, Caro Sutton and Ron Thomas.



Loretta Glickman and Vernon Jarrett.

As important as the election of a new president, the New Orleans meeting marked the end of old NABJ. The last of the founding members left the board and 30ish Baby Boomer-aged men and women who became 21st century editors, news directors and analysts became NABJ leaders.

The rowdy, testy New Orleans conference was a wake-up call for the 1984 Atlanta hosts.

"We learned from every mistake New Orleans made," said Stan Washington, then news director of WCLK-FM, Clark Atlanta University. "Registration was chaotic; papers were not there or lost. (As a result) people came to [our] registration with chips on their shoulders. We handled things right there and there were no fights. We set the bar that year. New Orleans really made Atlanta look good."

Dawkins is an assistant professor at Hampton University Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications. Some of his account was excerpted from chapter 10 of "Black Journalists: The NABJ Story."



COMING BACK

New Orleans tourism thrives, but residents say recovery is slow

By Autumn Arnett Jones

After experiencing two crippling disasters less than five years apart, the city of New Orleans seems to be returning to its pre-Katrina stature, with 8.75 million visitors spending \$5.47 billion in 2011, setting a record for tourism in the city.

But residents say that the city, which will host the 2012 NABJ conference and recently announced it will be home to the 2014 NBA All-Star game, is still engulfed in the rebuilding process.

"There's a saying here: 'It aint dere no mo' when referring to your favorite 'pre-Katrina' businesses," says Kristian Wilson, a 25-year-old graphic designer and lifelong New Orleans resident. "The city hasn't recovered, per se. It may look like the city is back to 'normal' but it's not. From the outside, the major things have reopened, like your tourist spots or your major businesses, but the important things like our healthcare facilities or our school system has yet to be resumed like it should."

Asia Bradley-Stephens has lived in New Orleans for the last eight years. "This is a city of love. Because it is so laid back, people come out here to get 'lost in the party.' They are more open

to new experiences. I find that this city will always represent that for me. Laid back, the 'laissez faire les bon temps rouler' [laid back, let the good times roll] theme will always resonate with me ... this a place I will always come back to, when I need to feel carefree and love," She says.

Deahn Dennis, a writing staff instructor at Xavier University agrees. "In my opinion, New Orleans still has a long road to recovery. New Orleans was not built over night, so recovery cannot move that fast either," Dennis says.

As with everything, money is an issue for residents of the city. Despite the money New Orleans received in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the oil spill, residents have yet

“The climate of the city of New Orleans today is a checkerboard. Some parts of the city are very comforting, while other parts of the city are treacherous.”

DEAHN DENNIS
Xavier University writing instructor

Continued on **page 26**

Emerging Journalist of the Year



Photos by MIKI TURNER

RISING FROM THE RANKS

Hard working. Determined. Laser focused. These are the words that came to mind during an interview with Gerrick Kennedy, NABJ's Emerging Journalist of the Year.

By Benét J. Wilson

Gerrick Kennedy decided he wanted to be a journalist at age 11, despite a contradiction pointed out by his grandfather.

"He was always reading the newspaper and publications, but he always said 'never believe what you read,' Kennedy recalls his grandfather saying.

Growing up in the Kennedy household, reading was used as a reward tactic. "If I got good grades, I'd get to pick my favorite magazines, which were *Right On* or anything music related," says Kennedy. "At the time, I didn't know you could get paid to do [write]. My mom finally said 'you know this is a job?'"

But Kennedy did not get his first journalism experience until he enrolled at Ohio State University. "I went to the school newspaper [the *Lantern*] in the first quarter of my freshman year for an interview," he said. "I was told they had never had anyone so young on their staff."

A review of the movie "Brokeback Mountain" was his first assignment. "As the year went on, I kept getting clips by reviewing concerts and CD's and doing interviews," said Kennedy. "My first interview was with Afeni Shakur (the mother of Tupac Shakur), who agreed to do one campus interview. It was great. She was so revealing."

From there, Kennedy was on the short list to become editor during his sophomore year. Instead, he applied for a *Rolling Stone* magazine reality television show. He placed in the top 20 out of more than 15,000 applicants.

When Kennedy didn't get the job, he returned to Ohio University to become Arts & Life editor at the *Lantern*. "I dedicated six days a week to the school newspaper for the entire four years," he said. He also began applying for internships.

"I kept getting rejected because they said I was 'too young,' so I decided would work four times as hard," Kennedy recalled. "I got my first internship at the *Newark Advocate* during my sophomore year despite the fact that they wanted a junior." He eventually became managing editor then editor of the *Lantern*. He also in-

terned at the State Journal and participated in the New York Times Student Journalism Institute.

After graduating from OSU in 2009, Kennedy became an intern at the *Los Angeles Times*, where he contributed to the metro and online entertainment teams as part of the paper's Metpro training program. After completing his internship, he was hired by the paper to be its music reporter, covering pop, R&B/soul and hip-hop, along with contributing to the Pop and Hiss blog.

Kennedy encourages future journalists to prepare to work hard and do more. "I didn't mind doing an internship after college, and it worked for me. Never turn down opportunities. Do whatever you can, because you might meet someone who may know someone."

Benét J. Wilson is a freelance aviation journalist/blogger and chairs the NAB Digital Journalism Task Force and the 2012 Program Committee.

Journalism Educator of the Year

LEADER OF THE NEW SCHOOL

Richardson is an academic power in mobile journalism

By Danyell Taylor

When an award-winning journalist steps into the world of academia, students should be prepared to get schooled. That is exactly the level of excellence Allissa

Richardson, assistant professor of communication studies, brought to Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland more than five years ago.

Like many of her contemporaries in academia, Richardson started her career in the newsroom working hectic hours while also completing a graduate degree at Northwestern University in Chicago.

Early in her career, she landed at *JET* magazine under the tutelage of its and *Ebony* magazine's founder, John H. Johnson. According to Richardson, *JET* was her first real classroom.

"I was writing cover stories when I was 22 years old...I was interviewing celebrities and dignitaries [most notably Senator Hillary Clinton]. Just all those opportunities before turning 25 - I don't think would have happened anywhere else," Richardson said.

After practicing magazine journalism and freelance writing for four years, Richardson decided she didn't see enough journalists of color in the newsroom. Perhaps students didn't have enough teachers letting them know journalism was a viable career. She reflected on professors at her alma mater at Xavier University in Louisiana and at Northwestern. Their influence in her life-along with their involvement in NABJ, were contributing factors when she approached Morgan State University to teach as an adjunct professor.

Richardson noted that NABJ has "always been a part of me since undergrad. So it was a no-brainer when I went and decided to teach first part-time and then full-time it would be at an HBCU."

Today, as the Morgan MOJO Lab's founder and director, Richardson is revolutionizing traditional journalism teaching with the introduction of mobile journalism or MOJO. Admittedly, MOJO is her most popular class. Richardson is equipping students with mobile devices such as iPod Touches to capture, report and edit full news stories.

The idea was birthed while watching protests



File photo

in nations such as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. Richardson discovered the only footage received was from cellphones. She wanted to bring this cutting-edge style of journalism to her students. Awarded a \$25,000 grant by the Knight Foundation's Institute for Interactive Journalism to purchase iPod Touches, Richardson created a 16-week mobile journalism curriculum.

Not one to stop short of excellence, the professor saw the potential for "cross pollination of stories" affecting people of color globally.

"As a professor it has been very important to me to show students that the world is truly global now and we can't just report on local issues," Richardson explained. "While hyper-local is a trend that a lot of newsrooms are adopting, we can still relate to what people in other countries are experiencing and then we can draw parallels at home."

One example was the high HIV rate for people of color in the United States, specifically in Baltimore, MD and similar cases affecting South African cities such as Johannesburg. In 2011, Richardson flew to South Africa to teach 10 HIV-positive girls MOJO to bridge the gap in news coverage.

Richardson is adamant about preparing her students for their future inside and outside of the newsroom. She insists that her students be persistent, accurate, excellent and entrepreneurial in the process of gathering and reporting news through mobile journalism. Giving them new mobile skills is just the first step.

Danyell Taylor is a Howard University graduate who lives in Washington, D.C., where she aspires to do something smart with fashion every day.

Student Journalist of the Year



Photo by MIKI TURNER

THE BIG TIME

Inspired by his hometown local news, Eric Burse continues his climb to one day inspire younger journalists to follow in his path

By Treye Green

Eric Burse follows a strict rule of not answering his phone while working as an intern at NBC's Burbank bureau.

But when he received a call from NABJ President Gregory Lee during his shift with NBC Nightly News, for once, he didn't screen the call.

"I usually don't pick up the phone, so I was surprised to find out I won the student journalist honor," says Burse. "I feel that it was pretty fitting that I would hear the news during the middle of my work day."

Burse is a digital journalist studying broadcast journalism and political science at the University of Southern California and aspires to be a political reporter or international correspondent for a news network.

Originally from Prospect, Ky., Burse's interest in journalism first was sparked during his years at duPont Manual High School in Louisville, Ky.

He was initially interested in print journalism, working his way up duPont's Crimson Yearbook staff, becoming editor-in-chief as a senior.

As a first-year student at the University of Southern California, Burse continued to build on his passion for journalism, becoming active in campus news outlets such as the campus newspaper, the *Daily Trojan*.

He also joined USC's Annenberg TV news station, where he had started as a news technician and assignment desk editor, before landing his current position as a reporter and multimedia journalist.

Although he initially was in print journalism, Burse's exposure to local television news in his hometown inspired him to change his focus.

"Seeing how my city is small and everyone focuses on local news, I saw big change going on and that I could be a part of it," says Burse. "From there on I knew I wanted to be in television news to make changes happen and inform people."

During his tenure at USC, Burse has covered several major news events ranging from the trial and conviction of Michael Jackson's doctor Conrad Murray to the opening of the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

He has also reported on several community topics, such as the Los Angeles Public Schools system's negotiations with the local teachers union.

Despite his achievements, Burse still views mentoring and encouraging the next generation of journalists as his most important role. To reach young journalists, Burse volunteers with the Urban Media Foundation in South Central Los Angeles where he teaches journalism courses to youth who have expressed a passion for communications and media. He also speaks at high school journalism conventions every semester.

"I want to inspire a younger generation of journalists just to become interested in the industry," says Burse. "I really want to use this honor to figure out how we can get people interested in journalism at early age and get them involved immediately."

Treye Green is a fashion blogger and news content specialist at WBTV News 3 in Charlotte, N.C.

Percy Qoboza Foreign Journalist Award

THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE

Ghanaian Journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas goes to great risks for his stories

For more than a decade, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, the deputy editor of Accra, Ghana-based *The New Crusading Guide*, has defied the trend of compliance and apathy among journalists in Ghana by conducting hidden-camera investigations, resulting in legal and criminal action against police, health officials, human traffickers and gangsters. One of his investigations led to the freedom of 17 Chinese sex workers in West Africa. He also exposed the infamous “Soldier Bar” brothel for teenagers, the criminally poor treatment of patients at the Accra Psychiatric Hospital and cocoa smuggling at the Ghana-Ivory Coast border.

In a congratulatory phone call with NABJ President Greg Lee, Anas said “sometimes you sit on this continent and do think that nobody’s looking. It is heartwarming that all dangers we go through to help impact on society is being recognized. I feel very proud receiving and honored receiving this. I can assure all of my readers and viewers that this award will not induce in me a sense of complacency.”

Anas, whose nickname is “FBI,” has received numerous awards for his investigative work both at home and abroad, though he avoids being photographed as part of the secret to his success. On a trip to Ghana in July, 2009 U.S. President Barack Obama praised him for exposing the Chinese

human-trafficking syndicate at the risk, of his own life.

Anas continues to expose himself to great risk and has already been threatened and assaulted by police in the course of his work.

It is Anas’ ability to produce groundbreaking work in the face of tremendous obstacles that truly makes him deserving of this year’s Percy Qoboza award. The award is named for the late editor of *The World* newspaper in Soweto, South Africa, whose powerful columns ranged from coverage of the 1976 Soweto Riots to the tragic horror of apartheid.

—Compiled By NABJ Journal Staff



File photo

Community Service Winner

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

For Albert Knighten, winning means never giving up

By Terry Davis

Community activists come in many different forms. Some lead rallies, others speak out against injustices within the community, and others unknowingly become activists.

Albert Knighten, affectionately known as “Big Al,” did not set out to change the world; he just wanted a stamp of identity for his community.

Knighten, a 20-year retired U.S. Navy air traffic controller, is a native of Fort Myers, Fla. While in the military, he would use his leave time to approach local radio stations managers in Fort Myers about ways to create programs for the black community. Knighten even went to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offices to seek information about starting a black-oriented community radio station.

Knighten 44, vowed to himself and to the Fort Myers community that if there wasn’t a local radio station catering to the mostly black Dunbar Community in Fort Myers by the time he retired from the Navy that he would start one himself. When he retired in 2005, Knighten used \$4,000 of his own money to purchase broadcasting



File photo

equipment. He made good on his promise by starting the Dunbar Community Radio (DCR) at 107.5 FM, a 100-watt station with a 10-mile radius.

The flagship program of the station was “Counter Strike,” a political-based talk show hosted by Ron Jenkins, aka “RJ,” a community leader and activist. Due to some of his political views, initially RJ was not well received by the station’s listeners. RJ ultimately gained the respect of listeners and gained a loyal following. Although RJ leans toward the conservative Republican side, he is a strong Obama supporter, and believes in improving the community through education and communication.

Others concur.

“The station made people feel like they had a chance to express their opinion and have a voice in their tomorrow,” said Willie Green, a member of the Lee County chapter of the NAACP.

The station operated under the radar of the mainstream community until a controversial discussion led to a county code enforcement. It

turned that the station was operating without a license and order Knighten to shut the station down. The police and the FCC arrested Knighten and seized his equipment in December 2011, charging him with operating a station without a license. All charges against him were resolved in early 2012. Knighten hopes to get back on air in the near future and plans to petition

Congress passed the Local Community Act of 2010, which cleared the way for the expansion of low-power, non-commercial FM radio stations confined to small communities and rural areas, with a transmitter power limited to 100 watts reaching three to five miles.

The FCC will be issuing licenses for community radio stations beginning in the fall of 2012. With the assistance of the Philadelphia-based Prometheus Radio Project, a nonprofit organization that helps people create micropower stations, Knighten will apply for an FCC license to get back on the airwaves so he can continue to serve his community.

Terry Davis reports for the *Austin Villager* in Austin, Texas

Best Practices Award



Photos courtesy of TVONE

NABJ HONORS TV ONE FOR ITS GROUNDBREAKING, ORIGINAL SERIES, “FIND OUR MISSING”

Hosted by S. Epatha Merkerson, “Find Our Missing,” an hour long docu-drama series for TV One, puts names and faces to people of color – young and old – who have disappeared without a trace. Each riveting episode features a dramatic and emotional tale that places the viewer within the lives of the missing person, along with reflecting the pain of their loved ones, while confronting dead ends at every turn.

From the moment of their disappearance the story back tracks to learn about the missing person from the people who knew them best – who they were, what made them tick and how they touched those around them. With each break’s cliffhanger and each new twist unearthed, viewers will be more than just engrossed in the story being told; they will want to help solve the case.

NABJ salutes TV One for this bold series



and for venturing to tell the stories that would otherwise go untold.

“This series counters the media’s tendency to not focus on missing people of color. Local outlets in these cases usually make a good effort to publicize these stories, but the cases rarely rise to the level of national media attention. Find Our Missing allows us do something about that,” said NABJ President Gregory Lee Jr. “TV One is worthy of this recognition for making sure these stories get told.”

Although blacks comprise only 14 percent of the total U.S. population, they account for nearly 40 percent of all reported missing persons cases.



TV One has entered into a partnership with the Black and Missing Foundation as well as created a micro-site on our their website where visitors can obtain numbers for the law enforcement agencies related to the cases, see status updates on current missing persons cases, test memory and observation skills, and get tips on how to better protect loved ones.

At the end of each episode Merkerson signs off by saying, “Be safe and keep an eye out,” a reminder to be aware, be responsible, and be involved in being part of the solution.

— Compiled by NABJ Journal Staff

Lifetime Achievement

PEOPLE'S CHAMP

DeWayne Wickham: Fighting for all of us

By Rachel Huggins

NABJ founder DeWayne Wickham knows with certainty one thing: No one knows you better than you know yourself. That's what Wickham told himself when, at age 32, he gathered his belongings and left *The Baltimore Sun* for good. "I knew there was no future at my hometown paper so I just quit," Wickham says in his customary, fast-paced matter-of-fact way of speaking.

After years of championing diversity in the newsroom, Wickham had been demoted, deemed incompetent and eventually stripped of his beat.

Yet he kept pushing.

"I had a rage that fired inside of me for diversity and change. They forced me out the paper, but they couldn't stop me from helping other black journalists."

Wickham, who writes a nationally syndicated column in *USA TODAY*, has been fighting on the frontlines for African-American journalists for the past four decades and that's not about to change. As one of NABJ's founders in 1975, and a former NABJ president, he has helped initiate student and local chapters in Greensboro, N.C., Norfolk, Va. and Delaware. His direct advocacy efforts have launched the careers of journalists across the nation and in several countries.

Michael Feeney, president of NABJ's New York chapter, says his mentor is what every NABJ member should aspire to be.

"He's always displayed a sincere commitment to helping prepare and mold young journalists," recalls Feeney who, as a freshman, met Wickham at Delaware State University. "If it wasn't for him, I probably wouldn't have become a member." He recalls his former instructor bringing in seasoned media professionals to run weekend journalism boot camps and nurture students.

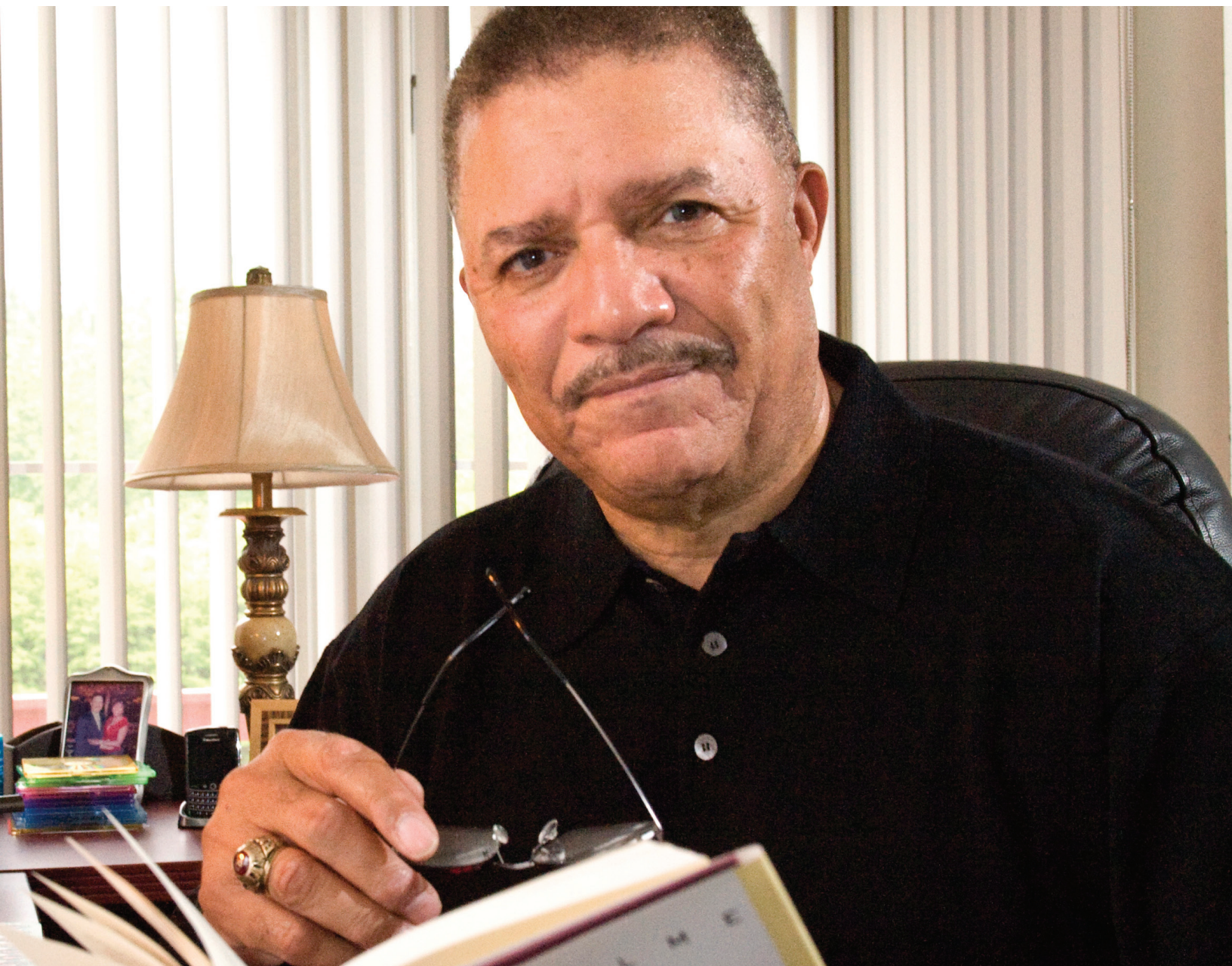
For his unending work, Wickham will receive the NABJ Lifetime Achievement Award, one of the organization's top honors, during the organization's annual convention.

"This award holds a special place with me and I appreciate the fact that NABJ has chosen to honor me in this way. I cherish this recognition," Wickham



Photos by MARK GAIL

“I’m very passionate about my blackness and I feel very strongly about challenging America to be all that it has promised to be.”



says humbly.

Since leaving *The Baltimore Sun* in 1978, Wickham's career has been the ultimate front row seat to the world's most exciting events. He traveled across the U.S. with Nelson Mandela during his first trip to this country following his release from a South Africa prison; was on the State Department plane that returned President Jean Betrande Aristide to Haiti and had a 6-hour dinner meeting with Fidel Castro. He's been to every Democratic Party convention since 1988. In his current role as a columnist, he challenges Americans with edgy, thought-provoking commentary that easily stirs debate.

"He paints a picture and you can visually see yourself in his story. He can be controversial but he's going to tell you the truth as he sees it," says Ovetta Moore, who has known and worked with Wickham for more than 30 years. "You might not

like what he says, but he's going to back it up with facts."

One of Wickham's greatest achievements, he says, has been broadening horizons for the next generation of newsmakers. In 2002, he founded the Institute for Advanced Journalism Studies, a program where he's led dozens of journalists throughout South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. The program is housed at North Carolina A&T State University, where Wickham also serves as interim chairman of the university's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Tonyaa Weathersbee, a Florida columnist and senior project manager of the Institute, credits Wickham for giving her an opportunity to travel outside of the country, one she wouldn't have had otherwise. Through Wickham's program she has led delegations of black journalists to Brazil,

Grenada, Haiti, Panama, Mexico and Canada to report the impact of people of African descent on those countries. Just as Wickham has created opportunities for African-American journalists, he's extended his outreach to all people, especially the nation's underclass. He was chairman of the Woodholme Foundation, which raised more than \$1 million in its 10-year existence, to pay total freshman-year college costs of more than 50 underprivileged students.

"I'm very passionate about my blackness and I feel very strongly about challenging America to be all that it has promised to be," Wickham says, again in his customary direct manner.

And that is exactly what he continues to do.

Rachel Huggins is an online editor for USA TODAY.

Journalist of the Year



Photos by MARK GAIL

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Pierre Thomas never sought a broadcast journalism career, it sought him. His decision to move from print to broadcast, a decision he mulled for three weeks, has reaped rewards and awards, including the National Association of Black Journalists' 2012 Journalist of the Year award.

By Kimberly N. Alleyne

Thomas, who is senior justice correspondent at ABC News, keeps a red, patchwork quilt that his mom made neatly folded on his office couch, where he sometimes sleeps when he cannot get home to his wife Alyson and son, Nathaniel, 9.

Thomas used that quilt and couch several nights in 2011.

"Last year, there were about 14 nights where I got zero to two hours of sleep," says Thomas.

Stories such as the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden, the capture and arrest of fugitive gangster Whitey Bulger, and the Tucson, Ariz., shooting where then-Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot led to those long nights. That body of stories is also why he received NABJ's esteemed award.

While many awards line the window sill behind his desk, the NABJ honor evokes a deluge of emotions in Thomas.

"I cannot tell you how gratifying it is to be honored by your own peers and for it to be NABJ, my emotions are intense and I am very thankful," Thomas offers in a near-whisper.

The award reminds him of the privilege to do a job that he says "when done well, is a public service." The recognition also adds another level of gratification for that job.

"There was a point late last year that I was thinking, 'I am really tired,' and I thought about all of those stories, and I thought about those nights with little or no sleep. For NABJ to honor me for that work is like putting a nice bow on all of it," Thomas says.

Thomas, 50, grew up in Amherst County, Va., in a neighborhood where he says everyone knew everyone. It is where he learned the value of hard work, which still fuels his push for excellence.

"I learned my work ethos from my father. He was a hard-working man and I remember there was one stretch that he did not miss a day of work for 10 years," marvels Thomas. "That just instilled in me to show up and do the job."

Continued on **page 17**

Thomas's reputation is not for merely showing up. His talent for unearthing big-picture stories such as how high school drop-out rates contribute to crime rates have earned him a reputation as a hard-hitting, but fair journalist.

Before joining ABC News in 2000, the Virginia Tech graduate first worked at the *Roanoke Times*, and then the *Washington Post*, where Thomas says he "grew up."

"I started at the *Washington Post* when I was 24, and now I realize how inexperienced I was. The *Washington Post* is where I figured out what kind of journalist I wanted to be, and I figured out what my ethics and standards were going to be," Thomas recalls.

Jack Date, a senior producer at ABC News, says Thomas has been a friend and a mentor. Date also worked with Thomas at CNN, where Thomas first made the transition from print to broadcast journalism.

“I cannot tell you how gratifying it is to be honored by your own peers and for it to be NABJ, my emotions are intense and I am very thankful.”

"Pierre has taught me a lot about fairness, accuracy, ethics, and sourcing," Date says. "I have carried those lessons with me throughout my career and they have made me a better journalist. He is the embodiment of fair and accurate journalism."

Thomas does not neglect mentioning the diverse cadre of colleagues who mentored him and help shape him as a journalist.

"At the *Post*, I had Bob Woodward and David Broder. At CNN, I had Bernie Shaw. At ABC, Peter Jennings trusted me to be on his show early on and that, I think, was really critical to my success at ABC News," Thomas says.

"I take my job really seriously, and that may sound old-school, but think about it: We get to inform people about things that may be important to them, and that is a very serious job," he continues. "I want my legacy to be that I operated at a high level and pursued excellence as a general course of action."



Legacy Award

TO BE REAL Pearson pierced racial barriers to cement broadcast career

By Danyell Taylor

When Monica Pearson began her career in 1968 she admits it was an “unusual time.”

“Other than black media, I didn’t see people like me on television other than Julia, and she was a nurse,” Pearson says, referring to actress Diahann Carroll’s late 1960s television role.

Pearson, the first woman and person of color to anchor the 6 p.m. news in Atlanta for WSB-TV, acknowledges it was a changing of the guards spurred by social unrest that allowed for her career in broadcast.

In 1968, The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, as known as the Kerner Commission, released a report suggesting that the race riots affecting urban areas were directly related to the lack of minority representation in mainstream press and other white-dominated institutions. Shortly thereafter, Columbia University’s Summer Program for Minority Journalists welcomed young, aspiring journalist of color for news media training.

For Monica Pearson, a participant in the 1969 print class, this was just the beginning.

“When I look back at my life, I was getting the training,” she says. “I just didn’t realize it was going to be my avocation, my calling because I didn’t see people like me doing it.”

After 44 years in the industry, the veteran broadcast journalist and former print journalist has broken through barriers that existed well before she began her career in Louisville, Ky.

Pearson credits her longevity in the business to the personal connections she has made with viewers since her start in 1975. She emphasizes the importance of being “authentic” on-air because viewers can tell a phony.

“I think the reason I was able to last so long on air is because I stopped trying to be Walter Cronkite or [my co-anchor] John Pruitt and allowed Monica to show through,” says Pearson. “I learned it is important to tell stories, to be a good story teller with context and content and talk to people to the point they want to respond to you through the television.”

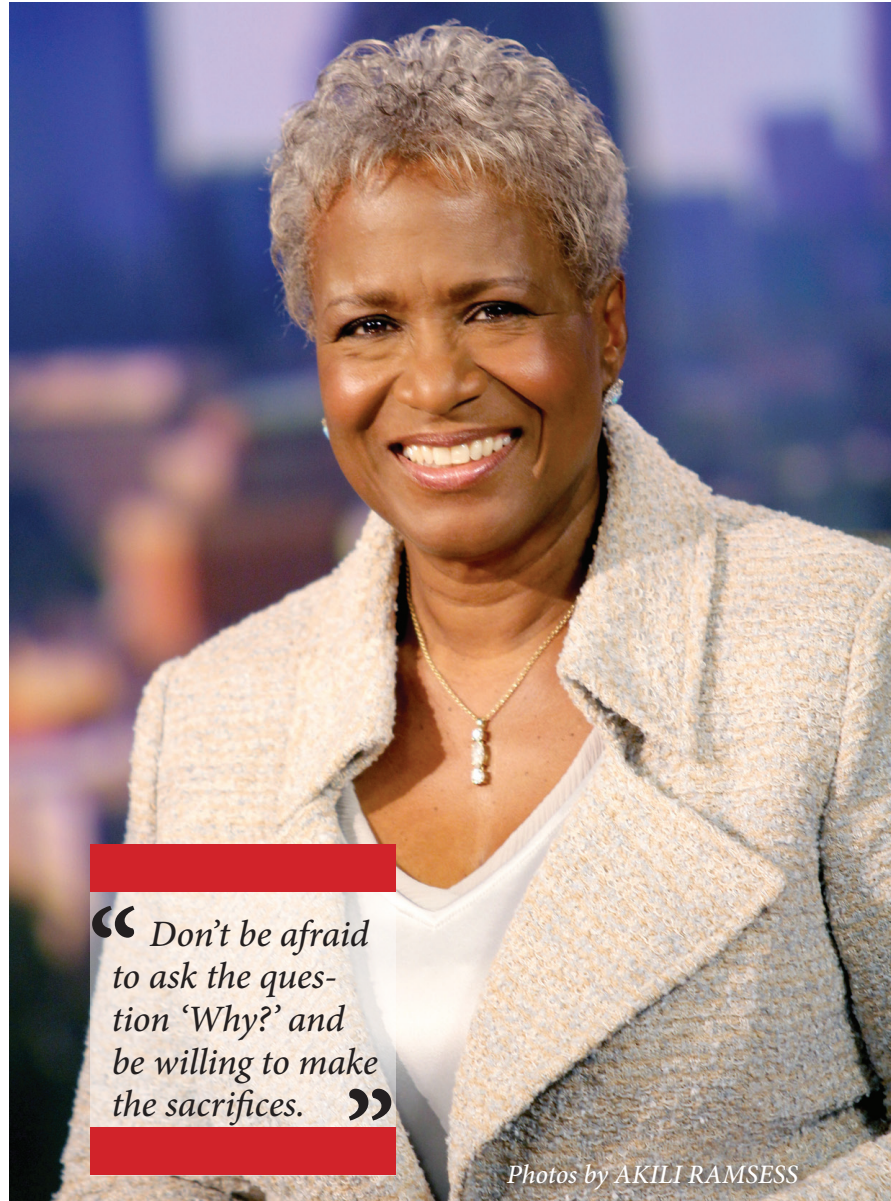
This connection to her viewers and community is a cornerstone of Pearson’s success. Her advocacy for children, women and people of color is evident in the stories she has reported on throughout the years.

“Stories I have done... they’ve made a difference in people’s lives,” she says. “Girls’ soccer is a championship sport in Georgia because of a report I did. Women were added to the board of the Georgia High School Association, which literally oversees all competition in the schools. They had never had a woman on the board until I did my report.”

Her passion for reporting is simple. According to Pearson, by bringing attention to a story, you cause people to move. It’s the way you tell the story through the people who are most affected that is the hallmark of an icon.

As Pearson looks forward to retirement, she reflects on her historic career.

“In my lifetime I have watched history being made. Even the most recent history when Barack Obama was nominated for



“Don’t be afraid to ask the question ‘Why?’ and be willing to make the sacrifices.”

Photos by AKILI RAMSESS

president by the Democratic Party, and then to be there for his swearing in and to cover it. To be in Oslo, Norway, with former president Jimmy Carter when he received the Nobel Peace Prize. I have sat down and interviewed people like Coretta Scott King. I have touched history. I just pinch myself sometimes,” Pearson says.

When people ask what it takes to be a legacy, Pearson has this advice: “Never be shy when people ask you who you are. Give them the facts. Don’t be afraid to ask the question ‘Why?’ and be willing to make the sacrifices.”

“Loyalty is a major component,” Pearson continues. “When you are in a position, remember you are not there for yourself, but for others. Lastly, it is not just the amount of time you serve in a position, but what you have done with that position so give back to your community.”

Danyell Taylor is a Howard University graduate who lives in Washington, D.C., where she aspires to do something smart with fashion every day.

Pat Tobin Media Professional Award

MAKING HER MARK

NABJ Honors CNN's Janet Rollé with Media Professional Award

Rollé is the executive vice president and chief marketing officer for CNN Worldwide, overseeing the positioning and promotion of CNN's multiple networks and services, including CNN, CNN.com, CNN International, HLN, CNN.com/Live, CNN Mobile and all other CNN services. Rollé is responsible for brand strategy, consumer and trade communication, audience development, and sales communications supporting CNN brands and programming.

"NABJ is proud to honor Janet Rollé. She represents the very essence of this award; the behind the scenes force helping to create on-air successes," NABJ President Gregory Lee Jr. said. "Rollé is one of our industry's brightest stars. We are delighted that we have the opportunity to recognize her contributions."

Before joining CNN, Rollé was at BET where she served as executive vice president and chief marketing officer. She led brand strategy and marketing efforts, including on-air promotions, off-channel and digital marketing as well as affiliate and trade marketing. In her final months as chief marketing officer of BET, Janet Rollé helped the network make cable history with the premiere of "The Game," the highest-rated original sitcom in cable history.

"Janet has been an inspiration and a driving force for CNN as she continues to create innovative opportunities to reach a diverse range of potential viewers. We are pleased that NABJ has recognized her contributions by awarding her the Pat Tobin Award," said Jim Walton, president CNN Worldwide.

Advertising Age magazine named her one of "10 Who Made Their Mark" in 2010 for her brand development work at BET.

Before joining BET Networks, Rollé worked at AOL as Vice President and General Manager of AOL Black Voices and AOL Women's and Lifestyle Programming from 2005-2007. She has led marketing strategy and execution for MTV Networks and HBO.

The Pat Tobin Media Professional Award is named for NABJ member Pat Tobin. Tobin passed away in 2008, and was president and CEO of Tobin and Associates, a prominent minority, woman-owned public relations firm. Based in Los Angeles, she was a dedicated activist for causes that impacted minorities, women and youth.



Photo courtesy of CNN

“Janet has been an inspiration and a driving force for CNN as she continues to create innovative opportunities to reach a diverse range of potential viewers.”

Professional Chapters of the Year

THE FINAL CHAPTERS

Professional and Student Chapters vie for organizations top spot

By William J. Ford

Several members of the Hampton Roads Black Media Professionals HRBMP in Southeastern Virginia rode bicycles in April, raising about \$700 to help fight diabetes.

Some 500 miles south, the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists AABJ hosted a conversation the same month with CNN anchor Suzanne Malveaux.

NABJ student chapters at the University of Georgia, North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Howard University conducted similar events in their communities, including sessions with well-known journalists such as Goldie Taylor and Robin Roberts.

HRBMP and AABJ are the two finalists for NABJ's Professional Chapter of the Year. The other three finalists are competing for Student Chapter of the Year. The winner will be determined during NABJ's 37th Annual Convention and Career Fair in New Orleans.

PROFESSIONAL CHAPTERS

AABJ's history dates back to 1976, just one year after the national organization was established.

It's a legacy in which AABJ President Tenisha Bell can take pride, particularly since several of the chapter's founding members remain active with the chapter.

AABJ has annually awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to three aspiring journalists. For the first time this year, the chapter will present a President's Award in July to Monica Pearson. Pearson is retiring after serving years as an anchor on WSB-TV in Atlanta.

Meanwhile, AABJ's membership nearly doubled from 104 paid members last year to 206 today.

Bell praised the chapter's 14 committees for being assertive and proactive. For instance, the conventions committee organized a bus trip for students to attend this year's event in New Orleans. The price: \$26 round-trip.

"Our Volunteer of the Year award winner



HRBMP members and scholarship winners



AABJ members



AABJ members



AABJ members

"We treat this like a second job. We love NABJ. We take it seriously."

TENISHA BELL
President OF AABJ

Tracy Bryant said it best: "We treat this like a second job. We love NABJ. We take it seriously," Bell said.

The Hampton Roads chapter is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and will highlight several accomplishments:

- Holding two town-hall style meetings about diversity coverage in the media and high school dropout problems among black students in Newport News;
- Membership increased from 30 two years ago to nearly 50 today;
- Awarding no scholarships two years ago to six scholarship last year totaling \$4,600.



HRBMP members and scholarship winners

HRBMP President Cheryl Ross said the chapter's scholarship program struggles two years ago and a possible NABJ probation following an auditing issue have been resolved.

The chapter's immediate goal is to conduct a diversity audit in Hampton Roads' newsrooms. "The members of Hampton Roads Black Media Professionals have been truly committed for more than a year to our goals of reaching out the community and making a difference," Ross said.

Each chapter conducted at least one unique program within the 2011-12 school year. Their secret? Networking via Twitter, Facebook and email, fund raising and collaborating with other

Continued on page 21

Student Chapter of the Year

Continued from **page 20**

student groups on campus.

The Howard University Association of Black Journalists created a multiplatform newsletter for students to analyze, write and create stories for radio, television and online. Its membership doubled in one year from 50 to 100. HUABJ President Denise Sawyer said students received support from NABJ Region II Director Corey Dade, who also discussed his work at National Public Radio (NPR) during a chapter meeting.

The 25 members of the Carolina Association of Black Journalists from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill hosted a session on the use of Skype with J-school alums. Panelists included Tiffany Black, director of social media at CBS Sports.com; C.J. Cash, business manager at CNN.com; and Jason Lucas, a sports reporter with News-14 Carolina.

Meanwhile, longtime Atlanta Hawks sportscaster Bob Rathbun spoke to student members of NABJ's University of Georgia chapter. He also discussed being a "one-man-band," using social media, writing and shooting video. The Georgia chapter, which had 20 members last year, now has about 30 student members.

"We love what we do," said Crissinda Ponder, president of the NABJ Georgia student chapter, which last year won NABJ Student Chapter of the year. "Journalism is necessary in our society."

William J. Ford is a correspondent with Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine based in Fairfax, Va.



Carolina Association of Black Journalists members



Howard University Association of Black Journalist members



University of Georgia Association of Black Journalist members

Of Note

LAST HIRED, FIRST FIRED

African-American newsroom jobs continue to fall, according to ASNE Census

By Benét J. Wilson

The number of African-American journalists declined for the fourth consecutive year, with those in the newsroom workforce falling from 4.68 percent in 2011 to 4.65 percent in 2012, according to the latest newsroom census released by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) and the Center for Advanced Social Research (CASR), a unit of at the Missouri School of Journalism.

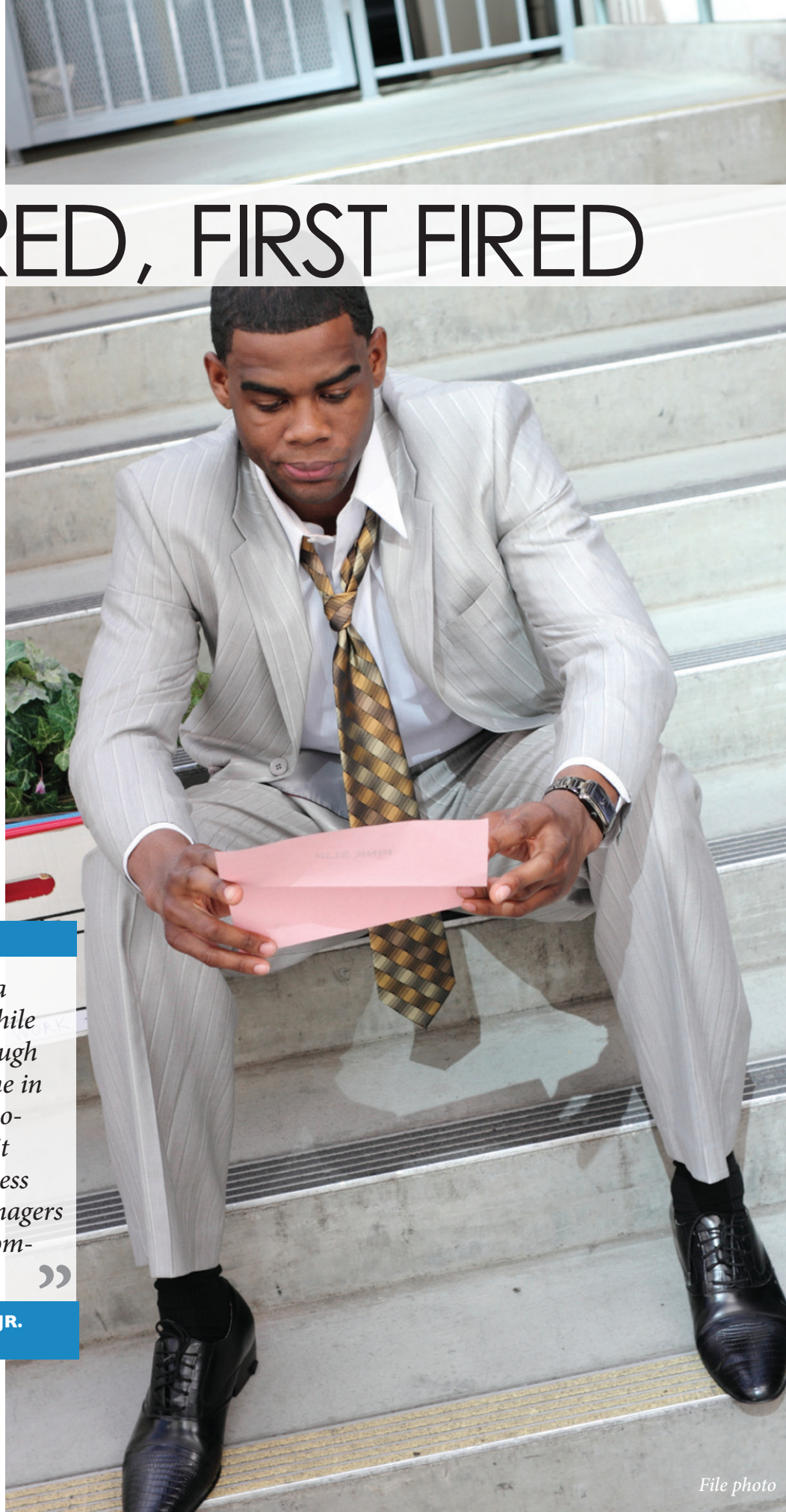
Since 2002, African-American journalists have lost 993 newsroom jobs – more than any other group of minorities, including Hispanic, Asian and Native American, according to the census.

“A diverse newsroom should be an economic as well as a moral imperative,” said National Association of Black Journalists President Gregory H. Lee Jr. “Diversity is a choice, and while it may be a tough choice for some in challenging economic times, it should be no less valued as managers consider bottom-line priorities. NABJ members are tired of seeing these depressing numbers annually. They demand more action about a problem that has existed for many years.”

Overall newsroom employment has dropped 2.4 percent since the last ASNE census, from 41,600 to 40,600. But among minorities, the loss has been more than double — 5.7 percent — from 5,300 to 5,000. Nearly one out of three newsroom job cuts removed a journalist of color. And as hiring rebounds, news organizations continue habits that confirm the adage: “Last hired, first fired.” Of the 1,565 journalists who landed jobs in 2011, 1,313 or 84 percent were white. Minority journalists accounted for just 16 percent of those hired.

“Diversity is a choice, and while it may be a tough choice for some in challenging economic times, it should be no less valued as managers consider bottom-line priorities.”

GREGORY H. LEE JR.
NABJ President



File photo

Of Note

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

NABJ Media Institute monitors health care policies, inequities

By Kelcie C. McCrae

Over the course of three days in late March, physicians, health care administrators and journalists dissected and tackled issues such as the Affordable Health Care Act, black women's health and diabetes during NABJ's annual Media Institute on Health Policy and Health Inequities.

This was the fourth year that NABJ has presented the conference, which provides training and information to journalists and others in health care industries and examines medical issues affecting people of color. By attending a series of collaborative discussions, participants gained knowledge and tools to more accurately report issues in minority and at-risk communities throughout the United States.

Conference attendees gained an extra dose of information this year by attending a White House press briefing with U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius.

"On the heels of the Affordable Care Act Supreme Court hearing, this is a perfect time for our attendees to have the opportunity to talk with Secretary Sebelius," said Cindy George, NABJ's Parliamentarian and health care conference chairwoman. "Our goal is to give journalists access to thought leaders to help them shape better stories on these important issues."

For a little more than an hour during the White House briefing, Sebelius discussed the state of the Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare." The bill not only is beneficial, but necessary for the people of the United States, she stressed.

"We are confident that this law is constitutional," Sebelius said. "We have been confident from the beginning. Our job is to make sure to implement the law in a timely fashion, and there's a lot of work to be done."

Just two years ago, the institute's annual health care disparities conference took place right after the controversial health care bill was introduced in Congress. Ironically, this year's conference convened as the Supreme Court heard opposing arguments about the legislation, which has been embroiled in criticism and lawsuits since it passed.



NABJ Founder and veteran news anchor Maurren Bunyan (WJLA-TV) speaks with attendees at the 2012 NABJ Media Institute on Health.

Photo by BRITTANY JONES

“Our goal is to give journalists access to thought leaders to help them shape better stories on these important issues.”

CINDY GEORGE
NABJ Parliamentarian and Health Care
Conference Chairwoman

Despite the continuing challenges, Sebelius said she is confident that the bill will eventually close inequities of health care among racial groups.

"African-Americans have long gotten a bad deal in our health system. They are more likely to be affected by obesity, more likely to go without preventative care, and more likely to be uninsured," the secretary said. "Because African-Americans are more likely to fall through the cracks of our old system, they stand at the front of the line on gaining a lot from the new system that is intended to close those gaps."

The Affordable Care Act will give more than 50 million U.S. citizens who are uninsured proper health care options. The law also allows

those under the age of 26 to stay on their parents' insurance plan, as well as be guaranteed coverage even with pre-existing conditions.

Attendees also received an update about HIV and AIDS from a coalition of scholars, activists and doctors.

"Last November, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton (delivered) a speech about an AIDS-free generation," said Phill Wilson, founder and executive director of the Black AIDS Institute. "We now have the tools to end the AIDS epidemic, particularly in the United States. No longer is it a conversation of can we end it, but instead when will end it."

This July, thousands of people will flock to the nation's capital for the International AIDS Conference. This is the first time that the gathering will take place in the United States.

"This is huge," said Wilson. "The entire world will be looking on Washington, D.C. This will be the largest AIDS event in the world."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, African-Americans equate 14 percent of the U.S. population, yet are account for 44 percent of all new HIV infections. CDC estimates that 1.2 million people are living with HIV, and one in five are unaware of their infection.

Kelcie C. McCrae is a journalism student at North Carolina A&T State University who serves as editor in chief of The A&T Register.

STILL STEPPING

NABJ Multimedia Short Course celebrates 20 years

By Georgia Dawkins

There's only one word to describe the 20th Annual NABJ Short Course, epic! Forty-two students traveled to Greensboro, N.C. in April to step their careers up a notch. Nearly half a dozen veteran short course mentors met them at North Carolina A&T State University to help them on their journey.

"They come with a greater sense of what they want to do," said program coordinator Gail Wiggins.

These students are no doubt the crème de la crème, but the short course serves as a reality check for some. The short course day begins with breakfast, newspapers, tweets and morning newscasts. Students can be found next to their orange juice, buried in a newspaper preparing for the current event quiz that's waiting for them in the newsroom.

"The multimedia short course was an exceptional experience for me because I was able to experience and thoroughly understand every facet of the television industry," said Ameena Rasheed, who has awarded top honors during the workshop. The 22-year-old Texas Southern University student said her hard work paid off when she received the award for Outstanding Reporting and Outstanding Stand Up.

Veteran instructor Damany Lewis of KCRA-TV, said, "I think the future is bright for young journalists!" Lewis not only journeys to NC A&T every year, he also gets over to his alma mater, Florida A&M University for its multimedia short course.

These NABJ babies are works with seasoned journalists who show up to give them some tough love. Even keynote speaker Paula Madison sat down to offer a few one-on-one critiques. Madison was the 2011 NABJ Legacy Award recipient. The CEO of Madison Media Management and former NBCUniversal Chief Diversity Officer joined the crew on Saturday for the award reception and poured on the wisdom.

"They too can get to where [Madison] is from where they are now," Wiggins told NABJ Journal. "But don't forget the hard work and dedication."

Reflecting on the last two decades, Wiggins realized that time has flown by. "We do it every year. We don't think any differently." But the program has grown, whipping hundreds of aspiring journalists into shape over the years. Over the time the focus has expanded from just cracking the diversity ceiling to teaching students how to be multimedia and multiplatform journalists. "They come with the essential skills," said Wiggins. "We have to make sure the students are able to produce for these different platforms."



WIGGINS



File photo



File photo

“The multimedia short course was an exceptional experience for me ... I was able to experience and thoroughly understand every facet of the television industry.”

AMEENA RASHEED
Texas Southern University Student

NABJ Members on the Move

ANGELA ROBINSON WINS SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY 2012 ORANGE CIRCLE AWARD



Award-winning veteran broadcast journalist, Angela Y. Robinson, President and Chief Executive officer of A.R.C. Media, LLC, a full-service media company, is the recipient of Syracuse University's 2012 Orange Circle Award.

The Orange Circle Award recognizes altruistic members of the Syracuse University community who have done extraordinary things in the service of others.

Robinson is currently host and executive producer of the award-winning news and public affairs talk show, *IN CONTACT*. The first of its kind, the program is produced by the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists, and airs on PBS station WPBA. *IN CONTACT* is Atlanta's only news and public affairs talk show covering topics from an African American perspective.

— Courtesy of Syracuse University

NABJ CONGRATULATES FORMER PRESIDENT CONDACE PRESSLEY ON WINNING AABJ'S 2012 PIONEER AWARD HONOR



She has been a fixture in Atlanta's radio news scene for more than a quarter century. Now, Condace Pressley will be honored by her peers as she joins a choice group of journalists known as "Pioneers."

Members of the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists (AABJ) chose Pressley for the high honor among an elite slate of nominees. She will receive the recognition during the 30th Pioneer Black Journalist Awards on July 29, 2012.

Pressley, is a native of metro Atlanta, says that she always knew she wanted to be in news. She has been an active member of the Atlanta journalism community since she graduated from the University of Georgia's Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication in 1986. And anyone who has heard her melodic speaking voice could guess that radio would be her passion.

The award-winning journalist is currently the assistant program director for News/Talk WSB-

AM and is credited with shaping news and programming at the station.

Pressley is a former president of NABJ, and currently serves as chair of the NABJ Finance Committee.

— Courtesy of the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists

NABJ CONGRATULATES GREGORY MOORE ON ELECTION AS PULITZER PRIZE BOARD CO-CHAIRMAN



NABJ member Gregory Moore, editor of the *Denver Post*, has been elected co-chair of the Pulitzer Prize Board.

Thomas L. Friedman, bestselling author and foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times*

will serve as Moore's co-chair.

Moore has served on the board since 2004, and has been editor of the *Post* since going to Denver in June 2002. He joined the newspaper after 16 years at *The Boston Globe*, the last eight as managing editor.

A Cleveland native, Moore graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1976 with a degree in journalism and political science. Later that year, he became a reporter for the *Dayton Journal Herald* and covered a number of beats, including city hall. In 1980, Moore returned to Cleveland, where he spent six years and covered county and city government before being named state political editor and then day city editor for the *Plain Dealer*.

Under Moore's editorship, the *Post* won Pulitzer Prizes for Feature Photography in 2010 and 2012, and for Editorial Cartooning in 2011. It also was a finalist for Breaking News Reporting in 2007 for its coverage of severe back-to-back blizzards, and for Investigative Reporting in 2007 for stories on the destruction of evidence in criminal cases.

In 1996, Moore was named Journalist of the Year by the Boston Chapter of NABJ. He is a former board member of NABJ and of the American Society of News Editors. He has taught at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and the American Press Institute.

— Courtesy of the Pulitzer Prize Board

RODNEY & SHEILA BROOKS SPONSOR GRAMBLING STUDENTS FOR 2012 NABJ CONVENTION

Sheila Brooks, CEO of SRB Communications in Washington, D.C., extended the offer at the end of a two-day visit to the university's mass communication department as a part of the



Reynolds Visiting Professional program. She and her husband, *USA Today* personal finance editor Rodney Brooks, visited Grambling State University in April as the third installment of the Reynolds Visiting Professionals Program, part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Business Journalism visiting business journalism professor program. SRB Communications will pay for the three Grambling students to attend NABJ 2012 Convention & Career Fair.

Mass communication majors Andrea Beasley, Lacey Mayo and Christopher "Reneaux" Ruffin will be the recipients of the NABJ grant. All three are NABJ student members, active in the Grambling NABJ student chapter and participants in the optional Reynolds Tigers workshop. The program has a business journalism focus for students who go above and beyond class work to improve.

"She gave me a shot," said Beasley, a business journalism major. "I'm beyond excited."

"The opportunity is a blessing," Beasley continued. "I'm looking forward to being able to learn more, meet great people, attend the seminars and eat good food." Beasley, a multimedia journalist who works with the campus television network, is the only business journalism major at Grambling.

Mayo said surprise registration "humbles me more and more and I understand that this is something Ms. Brooks is not obligated to do, but does it out of the kindness of her heart and I respect that extremely."

— Courtesy of Justin Madden, Grambling State University

Up Close



Continued from page 8

to see much impact on the economy of the region.

“It’s all about a dollar when it comes to rebuilding. A lot of those who lost homes and/or businesses were on their last leg trying to survive and [Hurricane Katrina and the BP-Gulf oil spill] were the last low blow,” Wilson says. “Jobs are scarce here in the city so it made no sense to come back and rebuild with nothing. The insurance companies were giving natives a hard time with trying to rebuild so no one had the means to do what they needed to do.”

Overall, residents of the city are more likely to say the quality of life in New Orleans has become better over the last five years than they are to say it has gotten worse, according to a study conducted by the University of New Orleans.

“The climate of the city of New Orleans today is a checkerboard. Some parts of the city are very comforting, while other parts of the city are treacherous. New Orleans has wonderful days of celebration and positivity, but some days are clouded by the overt crime and violence,” Dennis adds.

The UNO study found that twice as many residents mention crime as the biggest problem facing the city as indicated such in 2006. Since 2010, 26 percent more people believe that crime is increasing, and the residents have also begun to lose faith in the quality of police protection since the 2008 survey.

Dennis suggests these perceptions may be a little exaggerated, that crime is nothing new in the city. “Between 2004 and 2012, the climate of the city has changed. Since the population dwindling of 2005, businesses and tourists have a curiosity about New Orleans. Crime is still prevalent; as long as I’ve been alive, New Orleans has always had a crime problem,” he says.

Another issue residents face is insufficient healthcare and access to public education. The UNO study reported that residents’ perception of the public school system has improved since 2004, but Wilson is not optimistic about the outlook for public education in New Orleans.

“The important things like our healthcare facilities or our school

systems [have not been restored] like it should. ... My family suffers from different mental health problems, and getting the care that they need down here is a complete joke,” Wilson says. “The school system is set up like a lottery here so a lot of the kids suffer severely in that area. ... As a parent you want to be reassured that your child will get a quality education as well as proper care if something was to happen.”

While the UNO study found residents to have improved their perception of employment prospects and industry in the last few years, many residents, it found, still maintain a negative outlook about employment in New Orleans.

Mayor Mitch Landrieu took office in the wake of the gulf oil spill (he was sworn in May 2010), catapulted by overwhelming African-American support, and has been tasked with revitalizing the city and reviving its tourism and economy in the post-disaster climate. The UNO study reports that Landrieu has seen his support in the African-American community decline, as members of the community are increasingly disheartened over the jobs situation in the city. Evaluations of employment prospects are “increasingly negative,” it says, reporting that African-Americans’ growing concerns over

crime in the city also contributes to the decline in support for Landrieu in the Black community.

Even in spite of these issues, Dennis contends, “New Orleans has an overwhelming amount of history that coincides with the great food and entertainment. Southern hospitality flows through the city and there is something for everyone to enjoy.”

“Since one of the largest attractions to New Orleans for tourists is food, specifically seafood, the oil spill definitely affected those two industries: food and tourism,” Dennis says. “The lasting effects of the oil spill will not be seen for several years. New Orleans will be in recovery mode from both disasters, Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill, for several years.”

“This city is very rich in culture it goes beyond Bourbon Street,” Bradley-Stephens says. “There is a lot to get into about the city. It should not be reduced to the recovery site following Katrina.”

“There’s a saying here:
‘It aint dere no mo’ when
referring to your favorite
‘pre-Katrina’ businesses.”

KRISTIAN WILSON
New Orleans resident



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Chuck Stone
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