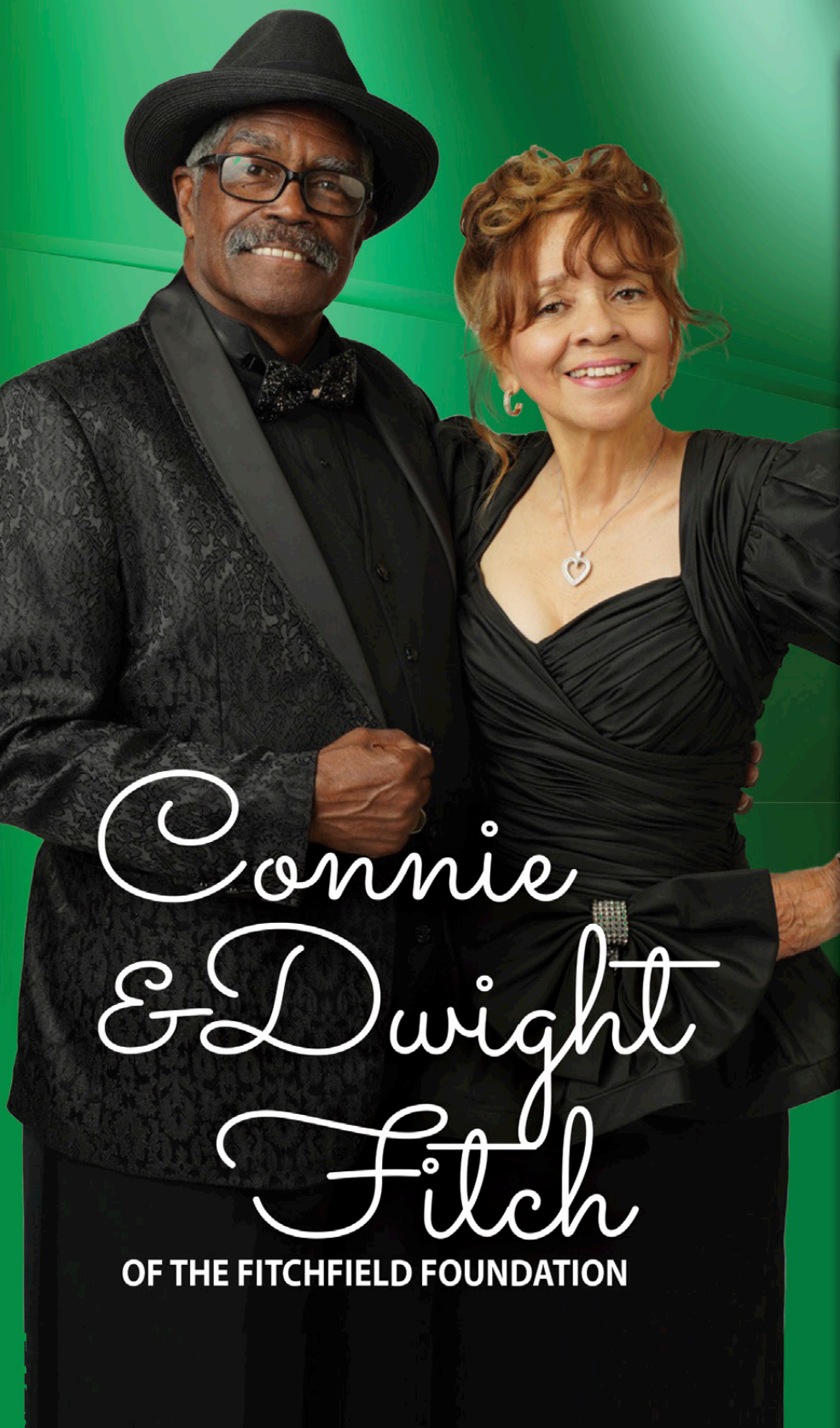


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Reuben DeTiege



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THURSDAY

11AM-4PM

Registration



11AM

Power to Exhale Shopping
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9AM-5PM

Explore New Orleans
(continue to explore)

7PM-UNTIL

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Registration

4-7PM

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Band featuring Sharon Martin,
Tara Alexander, Rechelle Cook,
Caren Green and Chrisira

6:30PM

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decorated umbrella for the
contest.

7PM

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Regency. Bring your decorated
Umbrellas. Wear walking shoes.

8PM-UNTIL

Explore New Orleans
Free Time. Enjoy Bourbon
Street and local festivals

10PM-MIDNIGHT

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white and white mask- no
jewelry and no makeup)



SATURDAY

BEFORE 8AM

Breakfast on your own

8AM

Power to Exhale Shopping
Exhibit Hall Re-opens

8AM-4PM

Real Power Summit Day
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Panel Discussions,
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7PM-UNTIL

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Masquerade
Exhale Gala
& Real
Power
Awards
Ceremony
After Party
with Gina
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SUNDAY

9AM-12NOON

Power to Exhale
Worship Experience
w/ Le'andria Johnson
and Melanie Pichon
Exhale Great Release
Ceremony



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“Father of the Virtual Office Concept”

Reuben DeTiege reigns as an innovator and trusted advisor to the small business community

By Dean M. Shapiro



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REUBEN DETIEGE

In New Orleans there are thousands of small businesses, ranging from those that occupy brick and mortar facilities employing dozens of people to those individuals who operate sole proprietorships and work out of their homes. Although the focal points of these small businesses may vary widely they all have one thing in common: ambitious people behind them who nurture a dream of running their own operation and being successful at it.

Reuben J. DeTiege II is one of those ambitious sole proprietors but he is even more than that. He is also an innovator and a respected small business consultant and advisor; a mentor to those just starting out on their own ventures.

As he explained during a recent interview, “I tell people, ‘The way to financial freedom is not going to be with a job. It’s going to be working your own business.’ I’ve done that for years.”

This philosophy and sound business sense, acquired over several decades of experiences in various types of enterprises, has given Reuben the skills necessary to share his advice with other aspiring entrepreneurs. His online consulting firm, SmallBusinessNOLA, gets plenty of hits on Facebook and its page is filled with success stories of those who followed their dreams of owning their own businesses.

“I put thousands of people in business,” Reuben proudly stated. “I got them started. I can point to a lot of successes



Reuben DeTiege, Adonis C. Expose, Terry Scott | PHOTO COURTESY OF REUBEN DETIEGE

and I'm proud of those who took my advice and succeeded."

Astutely monitoring changing trends in the business world, especially those changes made by major companies that reflect advancements in technology, Reuben perceived the need for new business models. He was able to foresee – nearly 20 years ago – that the time would

“Reuben is a good man. He works hard, he’s done a lot and he never complains. He is dedicated to the cause of making this community better.”

*Ronald Coleman
President, NAACP New Orleans Branch*

come when it was no longer essential for office workers to “sit at a desk for eight hours a day in order to do their jobs.” Reading about how multinational corporations in the Far East and Western Europe were requiring employees to spend more time out in the field, he envisioned the same things being done here in the United States.

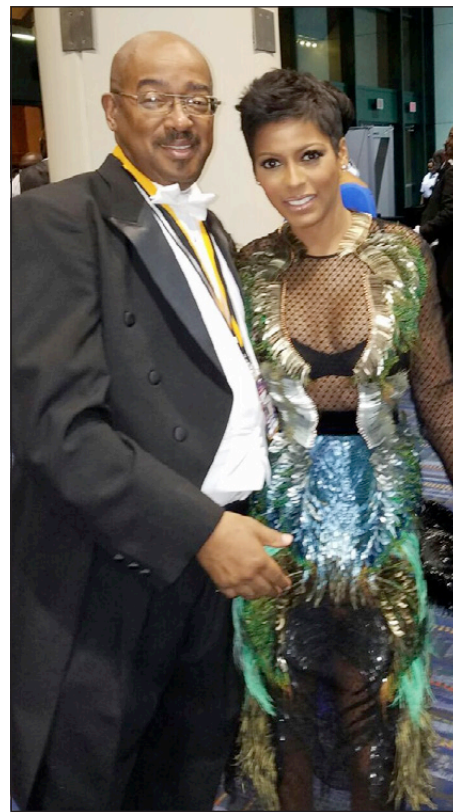
“They had these little pods out in the field and that’s where these people would go,” Reuben explained. “They’d have access to a fax machine, desktop computers and a printer and they’d get their jobs done there more quickly than if they had to do it over the phone from their offices.

“So I came up with this concept and it was kind of like a hybrid of what those other places were doing,” he continued.

Renting space in the New Orleans Regional Business Park in New Orleans East, Reuben used this European and Asian business model to set up the Virtual Office Suites Entrepreneurial Development Center, described as “a comprehensive, well-equipped business assistance center for small and emerging businesses.” The center was furnished with computers, printers, fax machines and featured conference rooms for conducting businesses. Renting the facility for \$99 a month, the center, at its peak, had 74 clients which was nearly three-fourths of its goal of 100. Regional Business Park Director Eugene Green served as a fiduciary agent for grants written by the center which raised about \$335,000.

In an article written about Reuben for the Small Business Exchange, he was hailed as “The Father of the Virtual Office Concept.” He was also the subject of favorable articles in nearly every New Orleans-based publications at that time.

However, the operation was interrupted by Hurricane Katrina which flooded the area and made the center inaccessible for nearly six months. By that time the remote workplace concept that Reuben introduced had taken root closer and more



Reuben DeTiege, Tamron Hall
PHOTO COURTESY OF REUBEN DETIEGE

convenient to the New Orleans Central Business District. That’s when he knew it was time to move on and he did.

Once again, finding a unique niche for which there was no competition, Reuben founded a company that specialized in cleaning solar panels, A1 Solar Panel Cleaning Service, which he still runs today. “As far as I know right now, I am Louisiana’s only solar panel cleaning service,” he said. “I did the research and nobody else said they did it. So I’m pretty much the only game in town right now.”

In addition to this and his consulting business, Reuben is also the Economic Development Committee Chair for the New Orleans Branch of the NAACP, as well as a television producer at Access Television and the owner of a small internet gospel radio station, WSBN.

Additionally Reuben served as vice president of 100 Black Men, vice president of the Black MBAs Association and he is the Small Business Committee Chairman

for the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club with whom he also volunteers as a parade marshal for the Krewe of Zulu on Mardi Gras Day. He did consulting work for the former Good Work Network, founded and led by the recently deceased Phyllis Cassidy. He taught Management Information Systems for four years at Southern University at New Orleans and was active with the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts when his two sons were members.

Growing up in the Carrollton area and the outlying neighborhoods of Gert Town and Hollygrove, Reuben attended private schools, including De La Salle and St. Augustine, before graduating from Alcee Fortier High School in 1976. He received his B.A. and his Master's, both in Business Administration.

Civic activism is in the DeTiege family bloodline. Reuben proudly related the saga of his grandfather, Mandeville L. DeTiege, a local icon of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s through the 1960s.

"He was the one who integrated City Park," Reuben said, recounting the sequence of events that led up to a landmark court decision. Mandeville L. DeTiege, a New Orleans barber who enjoyed playing golf, was chased off the course in City Park which was segregated at the time. He later volunteered to be arrested and he challenged the law in court, represented by renowned civil

rights attorney A.P. Tureaud. He lost the case but the lower court's decision was eventually overturned by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Today Reuben is proud of his four children ranging in age from 17 to 40. He has two sons, the youngest of whom plays football for St. Augustine, and two daughters who have followed their father's example and ventured into the world of small business.

Summing up his life and career, Reuben takes inspiration from some of the iconic figures of the Civil Rights Movement, including his grandfather. He quotes a saying from Benjamin Mays that proclaims, "The tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach."

"I carry this quote around with me," Reuben said. "And, as I reflect on Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech I am reminded that, although we may have a long way to go in terms of realizing the kind of world he so eloquently described, this too is achievable. My theory always is, 'If you don't try you'll never know.'"

Reuben DeTiege can be contacted at his email address, rdetiege@hotmail.com. His office number is (504) 298-9240 and his cell is (504) 940-8964. You can also follow him on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Smallbusinessnola/> and at LinkedIn and other social media.



Reuben DeTiege



Eugene Green, Reuben DeTiege



Reuben DeTiege

PHOTOS COURTESY OF REUBEN DETIEGE

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Reuben
since
my days
as the head of
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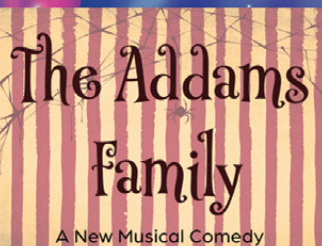
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by: Saba Kagani, Xavier College of Pharmacy;
Eric D. Griggs, MD; William R. Kirchain, PharmD, CDE

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No matter what time of year you travel there are certain precautions you should always take before hitting the road. Traveling increases your risk for getting sick or injured so it is important to be **Proactive, Prepared, and Protected**. The CDC’s “Three P’s of Safe and Healthy Travel.”⁵

Be Proactive

If you are planning to travel you should schedule an appointment with your physician around 6 weeks before your trip to get checked up. You should also ask about diseases native to the area to which you will be traveling and discuss the activities you have planned while you are there.² It is also important for you to start exercising several months before a trip to prevent injuries during your vacation.⁴

Be Prepared

Pack smart and plan ahead. Make sure to pack healthy snacks³ for the trip because sugary drinks and fast food can

lead to feeling sluggish. If you are taking any medicines you should make sure to keep taking them. Pack them in each medicine’s original container.⁴ It can help to have a copy of the original prescription as well.

Be Protected

During long trips, you might be sitting for long periods of time which increases your risk for blood clots.¹ To keep your circulation going, flex and move your legs from time to time during the trip.^{3,4} If you are on a flight, get up and walk around. If you are driving, make pit stops to stretch and walk.

Have you heard of traveler’s diarrhea? It happens to about 30 to 70 percent of travelers. To protect yourself you should eat food served hot or fruit you can peel yourself. You should drink water or liquids from sealed containers or served hot. You should avoid salads and ice.⁴

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"The First Musical Couple of New Orleans"

Dwight and Connie Fitch unveil a new foundation for musicians

By Anita Oubre

When Connie Whitfield and Dwight Fitch first met at a St. Mary's Academy talent show back in the late 1960s, little did they know that they would become a couple for the next 50-plus years as well as a team. A team that would not only

find them singing and performing together for more than half a century, but also one that would start a foundation whose mission would provide music services for the bereaved, burial assistance for indigent musicians in underserved communities and support for music education.

The couple recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a star-studded gala during which they unveiled their nonprofit Fitchfield Foundation that will service the New Orleans community that has embraced them for decades. The name is a combination of their two surnames.

“We had a fabulous kick-off with a full house that was very encouraging,” said Connie.

On hand to support the foundation at its inaugural fundraiser was a who’s who of local musical icons, including John Boutté, Blair Haley (“The Blairisms”), Kermit Ruffins, Naydja CoJoe, Wanda Rouzan, Phillip Manuel, Sharon Martin, Jessica Harvey and The Difference, as well as the Foundation Band that was comprised of many talented musicians who came together to donate their time and talents.

“The Foundation Band has a great sound and we are going to keep them going,” Dwight proudly stated. “I am excited about it. They are all very accomplished, professional, talented and prepared musicians,” he added.

Connie and Dwight have used their musical platform to share love and light with the New Orleans community for the last 50-plus years. Dwight is a music minister with Xavier University of Louisiana’s Campus Ministry Office. Connie is the alumni director at St. Mary’s Academy. Together they are widely known as “The First Musical Couple of New Orleans.” In addition to their regular jobs, they also serve as music ministers at Saint Raymond/Saint Leo the Great church.

Over the most recent Christmas holiday, they released their fifth CD together, “A COVID Christmas,” which includes the single, “Where’s Your Mask, Rudolph?” The album cuts include mixes of traditional, contemporary and jazz arrangements.

Over the years the Fitches have worked on 12 albums in collaboration with family and friends and they have performed at numerous venues. These



include residencies at the 544 Club, the Downtown Sheraton and The Mystic Den room at The Royal Sonesta hotel in the French Quarter. The couple continues to enjoy performing duets, working on rearrangements, composing originals and performing as the trio Quiet Storm, featuring Joe Saulsbury.

Between holding their unique professional positions, as well as fostering and presenting gospel music for decades, it was only natural that they would decide to form the foundation and give back to the community that has supported their successful and joyous musical journey.

Visiting with the couple in their beautiful home, surrounded by the sound of a babbling grandchild, the Fitches shared the importance of music in their life

and how music comes into play in life’s trials and tribulations. Though they have enjoyed performing pop, R&B and various other styles of music over the years, they emphasized that the essence of who they are has come from a strong Catholic upbringing, as well as from performing in gospel choirs for over forty years.

Growing up in musical families helped create the bond and mutual love of music that brought Connie and Dwight together. Connie’s father sang and Dwight’s father played the piano. Both educated in Catholic schools – Dwight at St. Augustine and Connie at St. Mary’s Academy – they share the same ideals, resulting in a happy home and family life. All five of their adult children are musicians. At the center of their long marriage is faith.

"It takes three to make a marriage successful," Dwight stressed, adding, "With God being first and then come the husband and wife." Both agreed that "God is the glue that makes the marriage stick." To celebrate their long union and make it especially memorable, the couple renewed their vows and gifted the foundation to the community on their Golden Anniversary.

Connie explained the reasons behind the Fitchfield Foundation's mission. "We are in the trenches of funerals here in New Orleans and we wanted to do this for our musicians," she said. "Our children have encouraged us and this is something that we had been wanting to establish. The pandemic gave us the time to settle down and build our foundation."

Dwight reiterated, "We may perform at thirty to forty funerals a year. There is a need for bereavement service in any denomination. We want to help with the music side of bereavement, especially when people cannot afford the cost associated with it." He emphasized that this calling brings him "great joy" but he cannot possibly service each funeral to which he is called.

And so, to fill that gap, he explained, "We want to employ other musicians to play for funerals. Most of the musicians I work with love what they do but they need to make a living as well, and this will be another aspect of the foundation - providing employment opportunities."

Connie added that, "Having musicians on hand to comfort the surviving family and friends through song and music is a big part of the healing process." She and Dwight both know firsthand how music comforted them during the passing of their own loved ones.

"I have been there," Connie said. "We have been seated in those seats when we lost Dwight's father; when we lost my mother, my brother, Dwight's brother and my dad. To have the musicians comfort and uplift you is a glorious feeling. Funerals are a big part of our culture. During this time, it gives the family a

release. When you can celebrate a life in this way, it helps in the grieving process," she emphasized.

The Fitchfield Foundation will also assist in supporting the educational aspects of the music business. Being able to provide this valuable service is important, as Dwight described countless instances in which musicians are taken advantage of because "they were not making informed decisions." The foundation's vision includes providing scholarships to promising musicians, as well as hosting workshops that will focus on being able to not only read a contract, but to understand the language of the contract and the importance of copywriting and publishing original musical works.

"Generally, down South things are a little bit slower," Dwight said. "A lot of our musicians leave home to expand and we want them to have a fair shot to grow here in New Orleans."

The couple further envisions acquiring funeral property that will cater specifically to indigent musicians. Connie stresses that, "Everyone deserves a dignified funeral and it is our hope that, through the foundation, this wish will be carried out." She emphasizes the fact that, for as many musicians who are successful, there are just as many who perform on the streets as well as those who go from gig to gig without any type of insurance.

And so, as this dedicated and empathetic couple works to get the word out and build their foundation, they will continue to foster their

music ministry and share their love and passion for Christ. They will also keep busy as they await the much-anticipated October 2021 return of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival for which they have scouted and coordinated music for the Gospel Tent for many years. Serving the community that they love through music will continue to drive Dwight and Connie Fitch as they nurture, educate and give dignity to those who deserve it.

To order the Fitches' Christmas CD or their other CDs go to www.connieand-dwight.org. For more information on how to donate to the Fitchfield Foundation or for other sponsorship opportunities, please contact Dwight Fitch at (504) 239-9571.



Councilman Jared Brossett, Dwight Fitch, Judge Ellen Hazeur, and Connie Fitch



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DWIGHT & CONNIE FITCH

Fitchfield Foundation

We Need Your Support



Our Mission

The mission of Fitchfield Foundation is to provide music services for the bereaved, burial assistance for indigent musicians in underserved communities, and support for music education.

Connie and Dwight have held a music ministry in New Orleans for over five decades and thereby have developed a deep understanding of the healing power of music. Music and service are the essence of this dynamic couple. Fitchfield Foundation solidifies their commitment to this ministry by

providing the structure and resources that improves the quality of life for those living in underserved communities. It will also enable them to expand their music services by deploying other local musicians for bereavement services so that families in need can have the ministry of music at their loved one's funeral.

For more information on how to donate or for other sponsorship opportunities, please contact Dwight Fitch, 504-239-9571 or visit our website

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Following in his father's footsteps

Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. leads the Wild Magnolia Indians

By Dean M. Shapiro



Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Mardi Gras will be back in full swing in 2022 after a one-year hiatus and no one could be happier than Big Chief (Gerard) Bo Dollis Jr. of the Wild Magnolias Mardi Gras Indian tribe.

"I made a beautiful, brand new Indian suit for last year and only wore it one time: on Mardi Gras Day," Bo Jr. lamented. "By the time St. Joseph Night on Super Sunday came around (in March 2020) the Coronavirus hit and we had to shut it down. I wasn't too happy about that."

But, if there can be an up-side to the pandemic which forced people to self-quarantine for much of the time, it gave Bo Jr. more time to work on his next suit which he is eagerly looking forward

to finishing and wearing. "Our people are busy sewing away and getting ready for next year's Mardi Gras on March 1," he said, adding that the Wild Magnolias will also be taking part in Super Sunday events several weeks after that.

Before all of that happens, however, Bo Jr. is also looking forward to the upcoming release of the tribe's latest CD, a two-sided vinyl record and a double CD with the same material as the record.

"This one is going to be a little bit of everything that's New Orleans," Bo Jr. proudly stated. "Some second-lines, some zydeco, some blues, funk and everything else. One side is traditional with the bass drums, the tambourine and the like. All the instruments we perform with on Mardi Gras. And the other side is the funk." The funk side will feature such iconic guest artists as Rockin' Dopsie Jr., Cyril Neville, Leo Nocentelli, Big Sam, Donald Harrison and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band.

"It's a whole gumbo of sounds. That's the best way I can describe it," he explained.

The Wild Magnolias are considered to be the pioneers of recording New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian music. "Handa Wanda," pressed as a 45 RPM single in 1970, has become a local classic and is standard fare for live performances by the tribe and others throughout the city during festive occasions.



The new recordings will be available in local record stores and other locations in early August 2021. It will be the Wild Magnolias' second recording under Bo Dollis Jr.'s leadership.

The Mardi Gras Indian tradition runs prominently through the Dollis clan. Bo Jr.'s famous father, Theodore "Bo" Dollis, reigned as the Wild Magnolias' Big Chief for more than 50 years and he suited up with two other tribes for several years before that. When he passed at age 71 in January 2015, Bo Jr., having been designated his eventual successor in 2006, followed - literally - in his father's footsteps, parading on foot with his tribe from Uptown to Treme and back on Fat Tuesday.



The years in between his designation and when he actually took charge of the group were a learning experience for Bo Jr. Having his father still officially leading the tribe gave him the opportunity to learn the tribal customs, rituals, music and, above all, the skills that go into creating a Mardi Gras Indian suit. In accordance with tradition, a new outfit has to be created from scratch every year and all of the work must be done manually. Every bead, button, sequin and feather must be sewn into the fabric material by hand.

Bo Jr.'s early years with the tribe were the later years of his father's reign and his father was gradually slipping into declining health. "He couldn't walk distances and so I was really taking charge of the Indians parading together," Bo Jr. said. "But he was still the Chief and I gave him that respect," he added.

And even though it had become a struggle for the Chief to parade and perform onstage at festivals and other special events, when he did so he remained upbeat and positive, Bo Jr. recalled. "He never really was the grumpy kind. He could be feeling bad but you would never know it because he was always just in a good mood. Nothing bothered him."

Since taking over as Big Chief, Bo Jr. has made some small modifications to the tribe's traditional rituals and offerings while still keeping the basic structure intact. "For one thing, it's gotten bigger since my daddy last masked," he said, noting that the tribal membership has grown from 4 or 5 to 16 members. "I've got more music into it now, especially more funk," he added.

One of the things that hasn't changed is the route the group follows from Uptown to the Treme and back on Fat Tuesday. They start out at 2nd and Dryades streets, then go down Jackson Avenue, passing by and paying respects to the house where Big Chief Bo Dollis lived. Eventually they reach Claiborne Avenue and follow it all the way to Hunter Field at Claiborne and Orleans avenues in Treme. Then they return by the same route.

Now 40 years old, Bo Jr. has already begun passing on the family legacy to his two daughters, ages 8 and 3. "Both of them have masked almost since they were born," he said, noting that the tribe brings along a wagon or a stroller for when



the kids get tired. Bo Jr.'s mother, Big Queen Rita (Laurita) Dollis, also masks and parades with the group "as far as she can," he said.

Bo Jr. continues to own and operate the barber shop at the corner of Baronne Street and Louisiana Avenue that he inherited from his father and he spends his spare time working on next year's outfit. Eagerly looking forward to the occasion when he can wear it after a year's absence, he predicts, "Next year is going to feel like it was after Katrina."

"When everybody came back from Katrina, it was just like a joyous type of Mardi Gras," he said. "So I'm thinking that this one is going to be bigger and better because everybody who has been inside is really just starting to get out. Now all of this is starting to come back up again and it's going to be better than ever."

For more information on Bo Dollis Jr. and the Wild Magnolias follow them on Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms. A review of their upcoming CD will appear in the next issue of Breakthru Media magazine.

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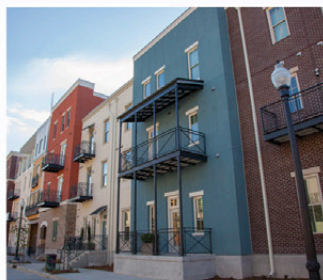
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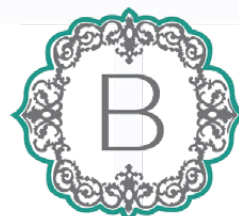
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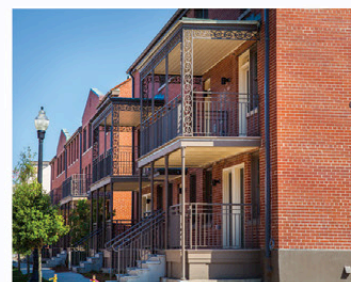


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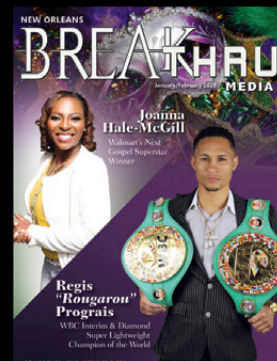
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