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LOS ANGELES SENTINEL



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"For Seventy-Five Years The Voice of Our Community Speaking for Itself"

THURSDAY, AUG. 26 - SEPT. 1, 2010

Katrina: August 29, 2005-a Natural Disaster



Katrina, five years later!

Five years ago, Black residents of New Orleans died from the ravages of a natural disaster and the disregard by a callous federal government; now a man-made disaster, the BP oil spill is in full force; what's next?

BY YUSSUF J. SIMMONDS, *Managing Editor*
NIELE ANDERSON, *Sentinel Religion Editor*
DR. FIRPO CARR, *Sentinel Contributing Writer*

After the Hurricane disaster had killed over 1000 Black residents in New Orleans and displaced thousands more on August 29, 2005, noted film maker, Spike Lee did a documentary, "When the Levees Broke" to record what had taken place, and what could have been prevented. Now five years later on August 23 and 24, Lee is doing a follow-up titled "If God Is Willing and Da Creek Don't Rise."

Tavis Smiley did a PBS Special, "New Orleans: Been in the Storm Too Long" premiered July 21. "We see two sides of the city: the tourist areas that have been redeveloped with federal funds, and the devastated neighborhoods where everyday people have taken it upon themselves to get their homes rebuilt, their schools reopened, and their lives back," Smiley stated. The footage used was from Smiley's travels back to New Orleans over the past 5 years, revisiting and tracking families that have been devastated by the tragedy. "It's a pretty amazing look at the city, the residents and these people who are trying to exercise their right to return, rebuild and revitalize their homeland," Smiley said.

Soledad O'Brien is documenting Hurricane Katrina's five-year anniversary with "New Orleans Rising." She returned to the Crescent City for an in-depth look at the historically Black neighborhood of Pontchartrain Park. O'Brien spoke with neighborhood residents, like

BP Oil Spill: April 20, 2010-a Man-made Disaster



actor Wendell Pierce ("The Wire"), whom she calls the "accidental developer" about their plight in rebuilding their neighborhood and their city. In focusing on Pontchartrain Park, O'Brien said, "We were interested in Pontchartrain Park because it allowed us to examine the racial politics of the neighborhood which was created in the 1950s as segregation's answer to White neighborhoods. We also wanted to dip into the question about race, which people in New Orleans will tell you is always percolating under the surface." It was a metaphor for all the neighborhoods.

Called Black America's agent provocateur, Lee found that even though there have been political changes and a Super Bowl-winning team, the region is still reeling from the catastrophe, in addition to the man-made tragedy—the BP oil spill—which makes the Exxon Valdez oil spill look like a minor leak. Not one to be shy or to shy away from controversy, Lee, with trademark humor and wit, touched on the federal government's role thus far relative to the promises that were made by the previous administration immediately after the disaster.

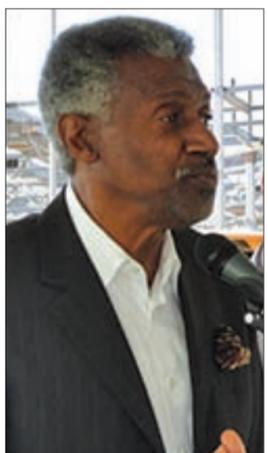
In an interview, Lee said that all the work he has seen done in the area of housing in the Lower Ninth Ward has been done by private groups: Brad Pitt's group, "Make It Right," "You got Common Ground" and "Lower Ninth Ward NENA." They are not the federal government, not the state government, nor the local government. He emphasized, "I don't know what they (government) are doing. I don't think there is any great urgency to get Black people back into New Orleans."

The National Bar Association recently met in New Orleans and issued the following report titled, "Five Years of Commitment: Providing Legal Assistance in the Gulf Post Katrina." The report details the organization's commitment to low-income and minority communities disproportionately affected in both Louisiana and Mississippi fol-

{See KATRINA / BP A-17}

What's Next for the Black People of New Orleans?

Inglewood School Board Members Showcased New School Construction



Inglewood School Board President, Arnold Butler

Hosting an Open House, the School Board introduced the Construction Team that is building the New La Tijera School, with input from the community

BY FRANCIS TAYLOR
Sentinel Contributing Writer

With great pride and deference, Arnold Butler, president of the board of the Inglewood School District unveiled the site that will be the home of the New La Tijera School. He said, "On behalf of my colleagues, I am pleased to introduce the construction team that is building this landmark, which I know the community will be pleased with. This project demonstrates our commitment to

improving the quality of life for our children and their children for years to come." The construction site of the Inglewood Unified School District's (IUSD) new LaTijera K-8 School, was the location for a recent community briefing where local residents, prospective students and parents, school officials, and current and former IUSD Board Members received an update on construction progress. The project construction and management team were also present.

In addition, Butler was representing his colleagues on the board and the new Superintendent of Schools, Gary McHenry, who was out of the area attending a

{See INGLEWOOD A-3}

Crisis in Education in the Black Community

Over 50 years since the landmark Supreme Court Decision, "Brown v Board of Education" and the Black community nationwide is separate and still not equal.

BY YUSSUF J. SIMMONDS
Sentinel Managing Editor

Last week, distinguished panel of educators including Larry Aubry (former board member, Inglewood Unified School District) Arnold Butler (president of the board, Inglewood Unified School District), Dr. Owen Knox (former Los Angeles area school superintendent), Marguerite La Motte (board member, Los Angeles Unified School District) and

Samuel Richard (associate editor, *New L.A. Watt Times*) met with Randi Weingarten (president of the American Federation of Teachers) and her assistant, Tina Flournoy at the *Los Angeles Sentinel*. The meeting lasted over an hour and a half and at times the debate between the panel and the AFT president was caustic but passionate. The main issue was the status of public education as it relates to Black children.

There is no doubt that Black children receive sub standard education in the nation's public school. There are many organizations, elected officials, educators and parents who see the problem but are unable to come together to

{See CRISIS A-16}

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