



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS



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NABJ names, funds five black journalists to report on aftermath of Katrina and Rita; Fellowships to encourage deeper coverage of disasters wake

Related links:

- **FACTS CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS: Katrina victims diverse White, non-poor people died along with black, poor**
- **LETTERS: Readers Want Press to Focus More on Hurricane Damage**
- **'E&P' in New Orleans: 'The Press Has Moved on Too Fast'**

WASHINGTON -- The National Association of Black Journalists has named five NABJ Gulf Coast Fellows, journalists who will travel to the region to tell the ongoing stories of blacks and others affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Selected were freelance photographer **Gina Gayle** and magazine editor **Delphine Fawundu-Buford**, both of New York; **Derrick M. Dennis**, a reporter at WDIV-TV in Detroit; **Annette L. Walker**, a Denver-based reporter from Pacifica Radio and New Orleans native **Chandra Thomas**, a staff writer at Atlanta Magazine.

Months after Katrina and Rita, there are stories that need to be told, said NABJ President Bryan Monroe, assistant vice president/news at Knight Ridder. Were happy that NABJ can be a conduit for helping to tell those stories. Our journalists will bring personal insights and deep connections to those still living the nightmare down there.

NABJ is providing each fellow with financial support to cover expenses while reporting on the ongoing stories along the Gulf region, particularly those stories about and of interest to African Americans. NABJ will make their coverage stories, photos, video and multimedia available through www.nabj.org, the NABJ Journal and other distribution methods.

Having this fellowship creates five more ways to deliver deeper coverage; there are still voices that need to be heard," said NABJ regional director Russell LaCour, whose area includes Louisiana and Texas.

In the application process, each fellow provided a plan of coverage:

- **Gayle** may return to New Orleans as soon as January, to tell the story of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, the oldest black club formed in 1908 to give everyday people a chance to participate in Mardi Gras. If they're going to be absent, that's a very big cultural and social statement, she said.
- **Fawundu-Buford**, editor-in-chief of Say it LOUD!, plans to publish first-person accounts from young people affected by the tragedy. I would love to know, as a teen, how do you process this? she said.



Gina Gayle

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- **Thomas** plans to do several stories including an in-depth feature called "My First Year as an Atlantan." The city is hosting an estimated 29,000 victims. Another story tentatively called Higher Learning would focus on the three major historically black schools and universities. If you have fewer black people returning, what will that do for enrollment overall, Thomas said. Some of the black schools are struggling now. (Related link: **First Person: Where the Heart Is Since Hurricane Katrina obliterated my native New Orleans, my family calls Atlanta home this holiday season** by Chandra Thomas)
- With approximately 2,000 evacuees living in Denver, **Walker** will focus on their adjustment to a new city and their futures. Will they return to New Orleans or stay in Denver? What happens next?
- **Dennis** will use video to follow the theme of coping. His stories will be about real people coping with bureaucracy, tragedy and hopefully, some triumph in the face of nearly impossible adversity. But most of all, I want my viewers back in Metro Detroit to be reminded and reconnected to what is really an American failure. I believe those failures become easier for the rest of the world to forget. I can do my part to make sure my community never forgets this national disaster.

An advocacy group established in 1975 in Washington, D.C., NABJ is the largest organization of journalists of color in the nation, with more than 4,100 members, and provides educational, career development and support to black journalists worldwide.



Delphine Fawundu-Buford



Chandra Thomas



Annette Walker



Derricke Dennis

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