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Playing His Own Game: Ernest 'Dutch' Morial's 1977 Mayoral Campaign for Citizen Participation in New Orleans

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Playing His Own Game: Dutch Morial's 1977 Mayoral Campaign for Citizen Participation in
New Orleans

A Thesis

Submitted to the Department of History
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

by

Eric Marshall

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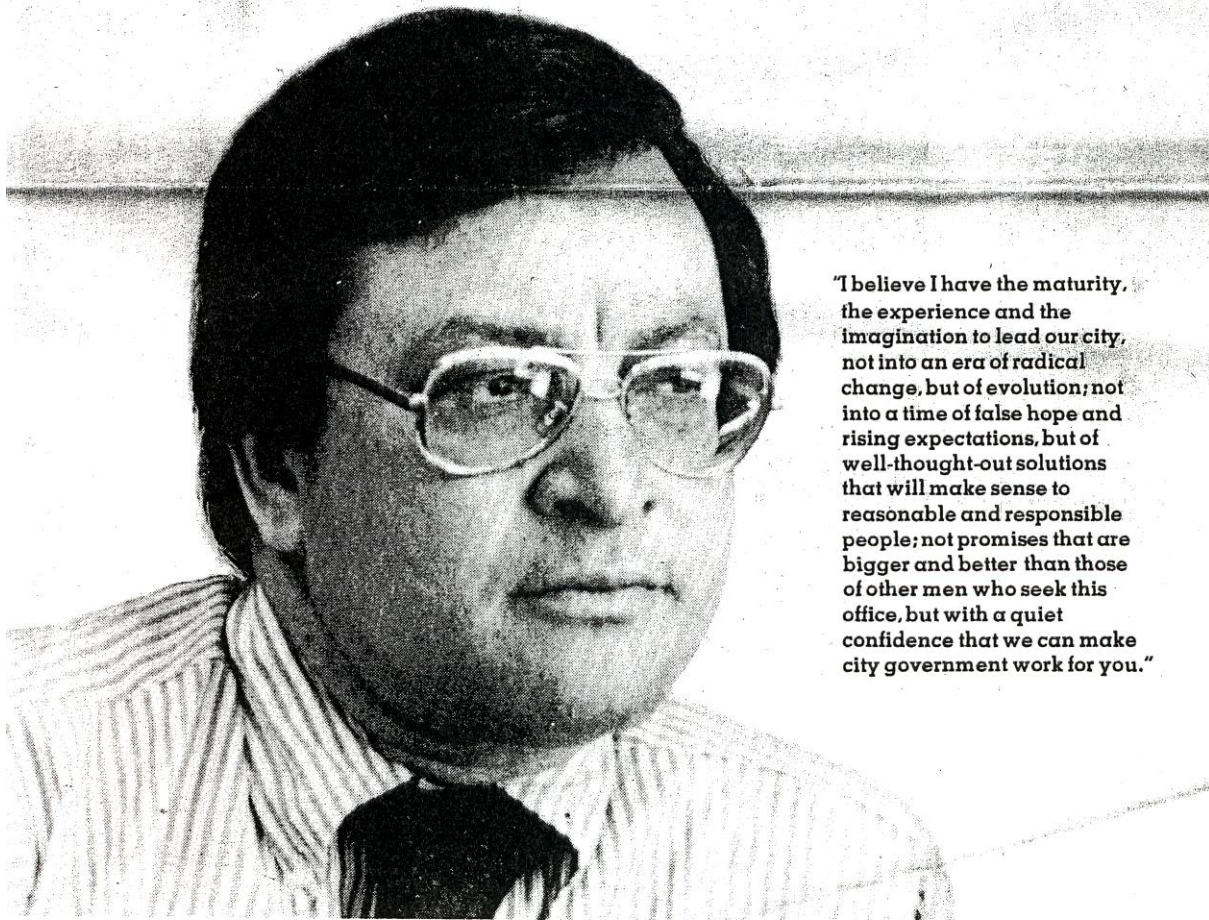
ABSTRACT

Ernest “Dutch” Morial’s 1977 grassroots mayoral campaign disrupted the political status quo in New Orleans with his message of citizen participation. Morial’s citizen-driven campaign reached over the constituencies of established Black Political Organizations, capturing an eager audience with his message of political, social, and economic equality. With the help of volunteers, and other community organizations, Morial created a grassroots campaign that focused on making city government more inclusive. Unattached to the traditional patronage structure, Mayor Morial empowered the black community, reducing the constraints of their political access. Although his legacy is difficult to discern in New Orleans current political realities, Morial’s first campaign and administrations represent a departure from the political status-quo and the powerful patronage structures critical to their status.

New Orleans History, Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, African-American Mayors,
African-American Politics, 20th Century politics, African-American History

Morial: Mayor Morial: Mayor Morial: Mayor

A RECORD OF COMMITMENT...TO YOU



"I believe I have the maturity, the experience and the imagination to lead our city, not into an era of radical change, but of evolution; not into a time of false hope and rising expectations, but of well-thought-out solutions that will make sense to reasonable and responsible people; not promises that are bigger and better than those of other men who seek this office, but with a quiet confidence that we can make city government work for you."

Figure 1: Campaign advertisement. Morial: Mayor, Ernest "Dutch" Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Morial:



"Dutch" at 2½ years old.



Morial as quarterback for the famous "Iron Men" of McDonogh 35.



Ernest Morial, first black graduate of LSU Law School in 1954.



Dutch as insurance and business administration professor at Xavier University.



Judge Israel Augustine swears in Judge Morial with Mayor Landrieu looking on.



Former Governor John McKeithen signs a Morial sponsored act into law.



Judge Herbert Christenberry swears in Ernest Morial as the first black assistant U.S. Attorney in Louisiana.

Figure 2 Morial: Mayor , Ernest "Dutch" Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1963, a young, black lawyer named Ernest “Dutch” Morial sent off a press release following his defeat in a Louisiana Democratic State Committee race. It read,

Negro democrats must communicate within the Democratic Party structure if we are to remove from the party in Louisiana the callous indifference toward Negro democrats. Political gains for the Negro will be accelerated by the Negro’s entry in to the policy making body of the Democratic Party.¹

For Morial, the best way for the black community to continue its fight for civil rights was to occupy the political structures that relegated black citizens for so long. Appeals to power through protest or persuasion could only accomplish so much. To affect change, black citizens would have to participate in the processes that governed their lives.

After 1965, the Voting Rights Act had changed the nature of black political access and involvement. Black mayors and legislators began to win elections all over the country. In New Orleans, every mayor elected after 1969 did so with the majority support of the Black community. Black Political Organizations (BPOs) representing the major neighborhoods—9th Ward, Treme, and Central City—joined forces with a progressive white Democrat, Moon Landrieu, to take control of city hall and the power and patronage their status provided. During Landrieu’s administration, the BPOs proved they were just as good at playing the game as their white predecessors, capitalizing on their access and receiving lucrative contracts with the city. This ascent to power was not what Morial envisioned when he called for the black community to communicate within the political structure. A decade later, in 1977, the contest to replace Moon Landrieu pitted the well-known judge Dutch Morial against three white candidates: Nat Kiefer, DeLesseps “Toni” Morrison, and Joe DiRosa. Attempting to transfer the power they accrued under Landrieu to a new administration, the BPOs backed white candidates who

¹ 1963 Press Release, Ernest “Dutch” Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

guaranteed future access and patronage. Without the endorsement of the BPOs, Morial won the primary, beating out Morrison and Kiefer, eventually becoming the city's first black mayor. This thesis argues that Dutch Morial's grassroots campaign strategies, message of citizen participation, and his campaign promise to reform the structure of city government undermined the power of the previous political establishment created by the BPOs.

Historians have explored the tradition and structure of black protest in New Orleans and how it relates to electoral politics. Kent Germany in *New Orleans After the Promises*, provides an informative discussion of community activism and the impact of the Great Society funding and legislation. It also details the relationship between Black Political Organizations and the Landrieu administration.² Arnold Hirsch has made many contributions on the subject of race and politics in New Orleans, including a study of Dutch Morial's early life and mayoral administrations. Although a book has not yet been written on the subject of Morial, Hirsch's work provides a detailed background on his career and city. In "Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans" Hirsch discusses Morial's connection to the tradition of Creole protest and civil rights activism as well as the evolution of black political participation from the paternalism of the Jim Crow era to full black political participation following 1965 legislation.³ In "New Orleans: Sunbelt in the Swamp," Hirsch looks at the Morial administration's and its economic policy in the context of the Southern economic region of the Sunbelt.⁴ Hirsch discusses the school system, economic development, and other areas in relation to other cities in the region. He then compares Morial to

² Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans after the Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

³ Arnold Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, by Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

⁴ Arnold Hirsch, "New Orleans: Sunbelt in the Swamp," in *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II*, by Richard M. Bernard and Bradley Robert Rice (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

another black mayor, Chicago's Harold Washington. In "Harold and Dutch: A Comparative Look at the First Black Mayors of Chicago and New Orleans" Hirsch discusses Morial's and Washington's relationship with the entrenched political establishment of New Orleans and Chicago respectively.⁵

The academic discussion around Black mayors is difficult to place in the context of the oversimplified national memory on the civil rights movement. Carl Stokes in Cleveland, Coleman Young in Detroit, Harold Washington in Chicago, all came to power by reacting to the unique challenges of their local political situations. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's framework of the "long civil rights movement" complicates the "short" narrative often confined to *Brown v the Board of Education*, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.⁶ Hall's larger framework complicates the downward arc that normally follows King's assassination. This allows for a more nuanced discussion of Black political organizing in the 1970s and Ernest Morial's successful mayoral campaign.

This paper uses oral histories to show how Morial's vision of black political participation was realized through his own grassroots campaign for mayor. The Ernest "Dutch" Morial Oral History Project, collected in 2004 by members of the Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans, focused on the 1977 campaign and first administration of Ernest "Dutch" Morial. Narrators included a wide variety of campaign and administration members like Paul Valteau and Dr. Anthony Mumphrey, volunteers Ken Ducote and Russell Henderson, civil rights leader Dr. Raphael Cassimere, and legendary New Orleans

⁵ Arnold Hirsch, "Harold and Dutch: A Comparative Look at the First Black Mayors of Chicago and New Orleans," ed. Roger Biles, in *The Making of Urban America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

⁶ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233-4.

campaign consultant Jim Carvin.⁷ This testimony provides a new context to the strategies and realities of the 1977 campaign. How did Morial's message reach black and white voters? How did Morial win the primary without the endorsements of the black political establishment? What grassroots strategies made his victory possible?

A Tradition of Civil Rights in New Orleans

Morial's ascendance to the mayor's seat was marked by the civil rights activism and community advocacy that surrounded him as a young, black Creole growing up in New Orleans' Seventh Ward.⁸ Before black residents of New Orleans could fully participate in the city's political system, community members organized to challenge the system of Jim Crow. This struggle created a wealth of political and civil rights experience within the black community, including the Creole-dominated Seventh Ward.⁹ By the time Morial entered the race for mayor, he was well acquainted with the exclusionary structure of the 20th century political system. Growing up, Morial was mentored by one of New Orleans' most prominent black leaders—attorney, and NAACP President A.P. Tureaud. From this environment, Morial would form his own political perspective, marking his own path of protest. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, black community leaders and civil rights activists in New Orleans had already advocated for desegregation of public spaces, pushed for voter participation, anti-

⁷ Also available to me was a significant archive of primary and secondary materials compiled by Dr. Arnold Hirsch on the subject of Morial's life and administration.

⁸ For the majority of its colonial history, New Orleans operated under a three-tiered system that placed Creole people of mixed heritage in between whites and the black enslaved population. These Creole elites, often light-skinned, could have passed as white in other American cities. Arnold Hirsch details a period of "Americanization", beginning after Reconstruction, that combined the black Creole population and the African-American population into a "racial dualism" under the eyes of the law.

⁹ Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 311.

discrimination laws, and other social protections.¹⁰ Morial joined in the fight working for a few victories of his own, leaving Louisiana State University Law School as its first black graduate. This brought him into a career as a lawyer where he became the first black Assistant United States Attorney. In 1967, he became the first black member of the Louisiana State Legislature since Reconstruction. In 1969, Morial lost a close race for an at-large position on the New Orleans City Council. One year later, he become the first black judge to serve on the Juvenile Court before being appointed the first black judge to sit on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.¹¹ By being “the first” in so many instances, Morial made a name for himself all over New Orleans.

Morial’s career was a product of the community structures created by the black community of New Orleans after Reconstruction. With legal boundaries keeping the black community from fully participating in the political system, groups formed within the black community to provide services that the state actively denied, advocating for equal rights and challenging the oppression facing their community. The major groups were the social aid and pleasure clubs, church congregations, and civic leagues.¹² Each played a role within the black community during the fight against Jim Crow. Some of the most prominent figures in New Orleans came from these groups. The civic leagues were by far the most influential and dynamic force of the three groups.

¹⁰ Germany, *New Orleans After the Promises*, 66.

¹¹ Hirsch, "Harold and Dutch," 267.

¹² Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 265. Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are one of the most visible participants of the Mardi Gras parade season, however, this is not their primary function. Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are a vital part of New Orleans neighborhood structure. Club members are regularly engaged in community organizing and other advocacy. Like the church and other institutions, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs provided services and support for their community when the city was unwilling or unable to provide.

Following WWII, the black community increasingly participated and communicated with the white political system through organization and protest. Until 1944, legal means of denying black people the right to vote were explicit. After the Supreme Court declared these laws unconstitutional, local and state governments altered their voter registration process creating onerous and unequal requirements for black voters. All these laws and practices put in place by racist local governments were created to keep people of color from direct participation in the political process. Because of these legal barriers, the black community could not build sufficient political capital and had to find other ways of influencing the system that governed over their lives. One of the main ways they accomplished this was through the creation of civic leagues and advocacy groups. These groups, often formed by elite members of the community, were tasked with lobbying the white-controlled government. It is from these community advocates that Morial received his education in politics and civil rights. During this period from the turn of the century to 1965, New Orleans would undergo consistent change to its political system. Years spent fighting the system from the outside gave black New Orleanians the experience they would utilize when their full rights were won. With the end of the system based on the denial of black access and the changing demographics of New Orleans, black citizens would galvanize their power and elect a candidate for mayor that gave them a voice and place at the table.¹³

Black community leaders regularly came together across professional lines in order to further the goals of the black community as a whole. Arnold Hirsch writes in *Creole New Orleans* that “more than a legacy of the slave era, the paternalism of Jim Crow flourished because of renewed black needs for white patrons within a system built on the denial of black

¹³ Ibid., 265.

power.”¹⁴ Direct actions and civil protest produced tangible results in the integration of lunch counters and other public places; however, Hirsch argues that valuable to future advances in civil rights was the political experience gained by members of the black community during the era of paternalism.

Where the government failed to provide services such as education, civic leagues and community advocates were finding new strategies to serve the black community. As the Depression hit New Orleans, civil rights would become a new place for the black community to challenge the racial status quo. One such lawyer and advocate was A.P. Tureaud, who returned to New Orleans in the 1920s, after graduating from Howard Law School. At the time, entering professional networks meant joining various social aid and pleasure clubs and civic leagues. During this time, one of the most influential groups was the Autocrat Club—of which Tureaud would later serve as president. The Autocrat Club and other groups, such as the Seventh Ward Civic League, did not focus solely on politics. Instead, Tureaud and his contemporaries used the resources available to them to make their own improvements within the black community.¹⁵ One of the issues they worked on was education. With their access to official representation denied, the local public black schools suffered under the ‘separate-but-equal’ system. Where the state would not provide, the civic leagues stepped in. Actions such as these showed the black community that neighborhood organizations and civic leagues could be relied upon to advocate for the rights of the community.

This community activism regularly intersected with the mayor’s office. DeLesseps “Chep” Morrison created the Crescent City Democratic Association (CCDA) to combat the

¹⁴ Ibid., 263.

¹⁵ Ibid., 267.

entrenched power of the Regular Democratic Organization (RDO). Morrison won the mayor's office with promises to reform the city government. However, when it came to segregation, Morrison was very much a part of the status quo. Morrison was happy to receive the endorsement of black community leaders, but placed a high degree of importance on not upsetting his base of segregationist white voters. He helped double the number of black registered voters shortly after WWII. However, he counted on those votes with his sights set firmly on protecting the small city-wide majority over the RDO. Once in office, Morrison was determined to stay there, even if it meant ignoring the black community's call for justice and representation. Morrison, who served from 1946-1961, described his duty as mayor: "I represent the majority of citizens and they are overwhelmingly for segregation. This has been true for more than a hundred years."¹⁶

Morrison failed to change the amount of political access available to the black community, although he continued to speak with leaders of the black community. In particular, he communicated with A.P. Tureaud, A.L. Davis, and C.C. Dejoie—three black community leaders representing the law, the ministry, and the press of black New Orleans.¹⁷ When the black community pressed the mayor for more access to public services, Morrison's administration used patronage to smooth the arc of progress. During his tenure, Morrison refused to openly empower the black community at the risk of upsetting his white base. Morrison was responsible for creating the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD) which was a tremendous success around the city. New playgrounds and other community facilities opened to service the black community. Morrison also worked to improve roads in black

¹⁶ Edward F. Haas, *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform: New Orleans Politics, 1946-1961* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974)

¹⁷ Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 275.

neighborhoods. This was how the government functioned in the black community before mass voting rights were passed.¹⁸ When A.P. Tureaud asked Morrison to desegregate the golf course in City Park, Morrison told Tureaud he had no way of influencing the independent commission that wanted to keep the black community off the course. This structure gave the black community no avenues for recourse. Their fate was in the hands the white patrons, or the arduous road of civil protest.

The black community saw the Morrison administration as a step forward because he broke up the major political machine in New Orleans. However, he failed to pass significant legislation to remove racial barriers around the city. Victor Schiro followed Morrison as Mayor. Despite being in control for the majority of the turbulent 1960s, Schiro did not attempt to break up any segregated areas in the city. Schiro consistently defended the city's racist policies; however, he offered minimal opposition to black residents and local civic and civil rights organizations demanding the right to organize and assemble.¹⁹ Hirsch writes that the combination of Schiro's resistance to the racial discourse created greater political involvement in the black community.²⁰ Again we see how the black community responded to the racist government policies of segregation. When the government ignored the rights of the black community, advocates like Tureaud, Davis, Alexander, and Dejoje kept fighting. When one avenue of participation was blocked off by the white establishment, these leaders and their community moved to other tactics. With the advent of the civil rights movement, the deals

¹⁸ Haas, *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform*, 67-9.

¹⁹ Edward Haas has written the majority of the political history immediately preceeding Landrieu and Morial, including this biographies of both Mayors Morrison and Schiro. Haas Edward F. Haas, *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform: New Orleans Politics, 1946-1961* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974); Edward F. Haas, *Mayor Victor H. Schiro: New Orleans in Transition, 1961-1970* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2014).

²⁰ Hirsch, "New Orleans: Sunbelt in the Swamp," 101.

once made in backrooms of City Hall would be negotiated on the streets in protest and votes at the ballot box.

In 1961, Dutch Morial participated in a collaboration between civic leagues and civil rights organizations. As the Advisor to the NAACP Youth Council, Morial joined the black Citizen's Committee, alongside Norman Francis of Xavier University, Leonard Burns of the Urban League, and Reverend A.L. Davis representing the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance.²¹ Together, this group negotiated alongside a similar white Citizen's Committee to desegregate the lunch counters and improve employment opportunities for black workers on Canal Street. While the two Citizen's Committee negotiated in the suites above the busy urban center, Raphael Cassimere and members of the NAACP Youth Council, an independent arm of the NAACP, lead protest and picket lines with members from the Congress On Racial Equality (CORE). During one moment in the negotiations, Morial and Cassimere combined their efforts against the racial status-quo.

Morial played a very interesting role [in the protests]... The Youth Council may have had 25 or 30. And I think CORE might have had five or six people involved. But about six o'clock the first day-- I don't know if it was Oretha Haley herself, but she was the chairman of the local CORE—either Oretha Haley, or somebody came down and said that the New York offices had told us to take the signs down. And we started taking the signs down. Then Morial comes up, and I remember, because he had a little Volkswagen [he said] "Don't take the signs down." He was suspicious of that request. He said was going to send a *night letter* to New York to find out if in fact they had ordered the signs down.²²

Morial was more concerned with the solidarity and effectiveness of the protest than the comments from committee members arguing he shouldn't be coordinating with protestors. The

²¹ Germany, *After the Promises*, 34.

²² Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Interview with Dr. Al Kennedy, 2004.

dedication to the process and preserving the momentum of the protest depended on the working relationship between grassroots protestors like Cassimere, and the established community leaders like Morial. Protestors ended their picket of Woolworths after the retailer met their demands. Other businesses soon followed, wanting the picket lines in front of their businesses to disappear. The relationship and coordination between young black protestors, businessmen, lawyers, and community advocates was an integral part in the fight for equal rights and participation. As those rights expanded, so did the power held within the black community and the organizations that represented them.

A New Era of Participation

The *Voting Rights Act*, the *Civil Rights Act*, and other ‘Great Society’ legislation marked a paradigm shift in black politics in the United States. Black communities all across America gained real access to the voting booth, and the higher offices of the government. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other national organizations saw the ballot as the best opportunity to continue their fight for equal rights. Black residents of Louisiana previously fought to gain greater access to the polls after WWII—Ernest Wright and the People’s Defense League won a victory in 1941 that increased the number of black registered voters by over 25,000 people. The last legal barriers to black voter registration were removed by the Supreme Court in 1944, in the decision *Smith v Allwright*. Twelve years later, however, only 30 percent of black Louisiana residents were registered.²³ An article titled “The Negro Voter in Louisiana” published in 1957, described the obstacles to

²³ John H. Fenton and Kenneth N. Vines, "Negro Registration in Louisiana.," *American Political Science Review* 51, no. 03 (1957): 704.

black access to the political process was impeded at the time. “If the white community is strongly and unalterably opposed to Negro voting, the sheriff or other politicians will rarely seek the Negro vote. Instead, as in the Mississippi delta parish with no registration, the sheriff will help keep the Negroes away from the polls.”²⁴ Physical intimidation was not the only way the white establishment restricted access to the polls. If a registration form had any mistake, the registrar would be allowed by law to disqualify a voter—and moreover would not be required to reveal the mistake, making it possible to fabricate a mistake without scrutiny. Black residents trying to register were required to bring with them two character witnesses. Even after black voters had registered, their status could be challenged and revoked within ten days—all without the knowledge of the voters themselves.²⁵

Fenton and Vines also note that these stubborn, racist sheriffs, cautious to maintain their political power, also used their power to encourage registration and access if they thought it would be to their advantage. But some groups utilized their strong influence on the community by contributing to the black voter registration movement. Following WWII, the Catholic Church in particular was an early force in registering black voters to the extent that in many parishes, including Orleans, the black vote began to affect the balance of power.^{26,27}

As restrictions on the black electorate were signed away, a debate emerged as to how to best represent and coordinate that new power. Political organizations such as Crescent City Democratic Association (CCDA), Regular Democratic Organization (RDO), and Orleans

²⁴ Fenton and Vines, “Negro Registration in Louisiana”, 707.

²⁵ Fenton, “The Negro Voter in Louisiana,” 265.

²⁶ John H. Fenton and Kenneth N. Vines, “Negro Registration in Louisiana.”, 712. In French-Catholic parishes the number of registered black voters was 70,488—51% of the potential 138,000 voters. Non-French Parishes had only 90,922 registered black voters—23% of the potential 390,000.

²⁷ John H. Fenton, “The Negro Voter in Louisiana,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, ed. Charles Vincent, vol. XI, C (Lafayette, La: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 2000), 263.

Parish Progressive Voters League (OPPVL) always survived on the idea that they held influence over a certain set of voters. They derived their power from their ability to deliver voters for their endorsed candidates. Out of these three organizations, the CCDA and RDO were historically white dominated organizations that attempted to court the black vote on occasion prior to 1965. The OPPVL, a black political organization started by Rev. A L Davis, focused its efforts on expanding voter access and the task of building a constituency through arduous voter registration drives. Because there were so few registered black voters, OPPVL had little ability to influence an election by delivering their voters to a given candidate. By 1969, changing demographics and increases in the number of registered black voters, these specific organizations to lose control over their constituencies, their own structure, and the emergent black voting bloc showed itself to be a new force in municipal elections.

The 1969 citywide election displayed a city transitioning into a new era of campaign and electoral politics. The mayoral election placed former city councilman Jimmy Fitzmorris against Maurice “Moon” Landrieu. Farther down the ballot was the City Council At-Large contest between Joe DiRosa and Dutch Morial. These races would highlight the chosen strategy of the new Black Political Organizations, the power of the black voting bloc, and its limitations.

Moon Landrieu, a liberal Democrat with a solid record in support of social programs, ran his mayoral campaign focused on economic growth and garnering federal aid for funding city projects. For the first time in the history of New Orleans, the mayor won office because of a majority-black-voter-coalition.²⁸ Fitzmorris failed to deviate at all from centrist racial positions which showed he completely misunderstood the changes in population and political

²⁸ Germany, *After the Promises*, 247.

capital. When Fitzmorris refused to consider black candidates for city department heads, Landrieu took the opposing position promising to increase the number of government and civil service jobs available to black residents.²⁹ These policy positions were part of Landrieu's strategy to gain the support of black voters, which now made up 30% of the voting population. Helping his campaign were the new Black Political Organizations which had ambitions to enter into the power structure of city hall.

These BPOs organized themselves by neighborhood and differed from earlier black community advocacy groups because they were explicitly political. These BPOs maintained operations consistent with the previous white political organizations. They promoted candidates for office, whether from their own membership or candidates willing to support their positions.³⁰ BPOs relied upon campaign funds for their survival. In exchange for campaign contracts worth tens of thousands of dollars, BPOs would flyer and advocate within the community for their candidates. If they supported the winning candidate the established leaders and other members would receive various forms of official and unofficial patronage such as jobs, contracts with the city, and increased access. The precarious arrangement made BPOs and their community simultaneously indispensable to and completely dependent on the success of their chosen candidate.³¹ It was this structure that made them successful, but also contributed to their later failures.

²⁹ Ibid., 262.

³⁰ Kent Germany utilizes the term Black Political Organization (BPO) to identify the expressly political organizations created by activists and community members involved in local anti-poverty programs of the 1960s. He focuses on what he considers the three major groups—COUP, BOLD, SOUL. However, the term BPO also applies to the dozens of other groups that formed during this time—TIPS (Treme), DAWN, BlackPAC, BOBUAC (Central City), BUC, BLAC, BYP, GAVEL, BUENO, and PACT. More can be found in Chapter 12 “Acronyms, Liberalism, and Electoral Politics 1969-1971” of Kent Germany's *After the Promises*.

³¹ Arnold R. Hirsch, "Race and Politics in Modern New Orleans: The Mayoralty of Dutch Morial." *American Studies* 35 (1992): 466.

Three most influential groups were the Southern Organization for Urban Leadership (SOUL), the Congress On Urban Politics (COUP), and Black Organization for Leadership Development (BOLD). SOUL claimed the entire Ninth Ward including the Lower-Nine, Desire, Florida, and Gentilly.³² As civil rights organizers and community leaders, SOUL had a membership and purpose focused on action, but did not ignore politics. Their members were part of the black working class, and their leadership included Nils Douglas and Don Hubbard who were part of a wave of university-educated black organizers who previously worked on “War on Poverty” projects within the Ninth Ward. A smaller organization than its Ninth Ward counterpart, the Congress On Urban Politics (COUP) represented the largely Catholic and Creole communities of the Seventh Ward and Treme. Their membership represented the downtown Creole culture that had been separated to some extent from the activist and protest traditions of the nearby Seventh Ward.³³

Like the other BPOs, SOUL began as a result of community members organizing to support political candidates. Each organization entered into the political arena with the goal of placing more black candidates in elected positions. SOUL participated in elections beginning in 1963 when its president Nils Douglas ran for office. COUP organized later and built its first ticket in a similar fashion, campaigning for Charles Elloie, a member of their leadership, for State Representative.³⁴ The Black Organization for Leadership Development (BOLD) began as a vehicle to promote the 1969 Black Primary, itself a vehicle to find the most qualified black

³² Germany, *After the Promises*, 252.

³³ Ibid., 252-4.

³⁴ Ibid., 254.

candidates to run for office in Central City, eventually transferring that momentum into support for Moon Landrieu.³⁵

Landrieu's campaign displayed a strategic understanding of these new BPOs and their growing political role and influence. Landrieu campaigned for their support and built a coalition that would ensure his victory and cement support for his re-election in four years. Landrieu built a ticket around the down-ballot endorsements requested by the new BPOs, as well as maintaining a flavor of racial progressivism acceptable to potential white supporters. Landrieu secured the endorsement of both COUP and SOUL—in return both organizations received campaign fees around \$20,000.³⁶ This translated to a strong primary victory for Landrieu over his opponent Jimmy Fitzmorris who publicly refused to consider black department heads in his administration.³⁷ Landrieu was the first mayor to benefit from the power of the new black voting block. Landrieu received 90% of the black vote and nearly 40% of the white vote in 1969—making him the first mayor to win an election with a higher number of black supporters than white supporters and win the election.³⁸

However, not all other candidates received the endorsements they needed to win. Dutch Morial lost his City Council At-Large fight against the former police chief Joe DiRosa. In their hopes of securing their political capital, SOUL and COUP did not endorse Morial as a candidate for fear it might call into question the legitimacy of their organization. Morial

³⁵ The 1969 Black Primary was organized by BOLD leaders James Singletary and Oretha Castle Haley, two prominent community activists involved with War on Poverty legislation. That year James Singletary ran for city-council.

³⁶ Germany, *After the Promises*, 252.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 262-3.

³⁸ Baodong Liu and James M. Vanderleeuw, *Race Rules: Electoral Politics in New Orleans, 1965-2006* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 57.

benefitted from the 75% black voter turnout, but couldn't "pass on his enthusiasm to the public" and would lose by 5,000 votes out of 160,000 cast.³⁹

During the Landrieu administration, members of the BPOs enjoyed the access granted by their loyalty. Members of COUP and SOUL were given paid positions within publicly-funded organizations such as the Family Health Foundation. However, Superdome Services Inc., a corporation created to provide staffing for the new sports arena, would be the patronage project that best represents the Landrieu Administration and the BPOs. For the most part, the black community understood the rules of the game, and the terms of their representation and took their place at the table. *The Louisiana Weekly* noted that "We must 'play the game' just as others have played it. We know that in order to rise within the system you must use the system to your advantage."⁴⁰

"Playing the game" ended up getting BPO members in trouble and hurting their public image. The boldest example of the BPOs foray into major political patronage was the formation of Superdome Services Inc. (SSI). Created by the Landrieu administration, SSI was directed by Sherman Copelin and Don Hubbard and included many prominent black supporters of Landrieu. SSI had control over 250 permanent positions, and many more part-time employees. This patronage machine was a symbol of the political power that the black community built following 1965. However, towards the end of the Landrieu administration, corruption scandals plagued SSI and were ultimately detrimental to the city's black leadership.⁴¹

³⁹ Paul Valteau interview with Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies New Orleans, Louisiana.

⁴⁰ Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White", 299.

⁴¹ Ibid., 301

Not all of the new political capital in the black community was transferred to these BPOs. The black community used the advantage they'd gained from their newly critical mass of voters when they fought against an effort to reapportion the city council seats. They challenged the seven man, all-incumbent, all-white City Council's plan to redraw the districts to add four more seats. The City Council stated that they wished to respond to the growing black political voice by awarding more seats. Although this plan would have added black seats to the council, many, including the NAACP, argued that reapportionment would have cemented a white majority, effectively gerrymandering the city in favor of white residents. Furthermore, the NAACP rejected of the proposal, stating that "blacks don't need re-districting to ensure participation [in electoral politics]." ⁴²

This was a step forward for black political equality. While individual groups and their constituencies faltered in their critiques of the Landrieu administration, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) showed that the black community was now in a position of power to set their own terms of their increasing access. All the political power they had created through the Landrieu administration was essentially hollow. Hirsch notes that the structure of the BPOs made them dependent on the "patron-client relationship" utilized by black community advocates in the past. ⁴³ Once elected, they could pass on to their community the benefits of their office through patronage. But, if they supported the wrong candidate, and another candidate won the prize of city hall, then the community would be estranged from political access and power. This display of force, however, showed that the black community could still organize outside of their new political establishment—a power made even more obvious during the 1977 mayoral campaign.

⁴² Cassimere, "Polarity Politics and Race Relations in New Orleans", 1-3.

⁴³ Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 301.

During the Landrieu administration, the BPOs power to affect policy was limited by their political and economic structure. BPO members were in a difficult position to criticize the mayor if their candidate was elected. They needed the civil service jobs and other patronage that came from the office. So when the NAACP and local civil rights leaders marched against Landrieu's lack of progress concerning police brutality, political groups like SOUL and COUP were absent.⁴⁴


Since their power came from those who held office above them, Morial saw that BPOs paid little attention to the communities they served outside the election cycle. This initial form of BPOs mirrored that of the pre-'65 civic and community organizations that utilized a system of patronage to create a constituency, and depended on white politicians for advocacy within the system. While the black community benefitted from increased access to the political system, they gained no equity or capital. This structural relationship enriched the BPOs before the people. For Morial, this was expressly the problem. This structure of government was neither accountable to the people, nor were the interests of the people represented in any significant way. Black residents had every right to be represented by government officials who would listen to their protests, protect their interests, and work to improve the city as a whole and not disperse the benefits of power through an inefficient political machine. When Landrieu's second term ended in 1977, a plan to retain political power was in place; however, Dutch Morial understood the need for change. Morial's campaign would focus on the gap in representation created by the out-of-touch BPOs with a message centered on citizen participation.

⁴⁴ Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White," 303.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION ASSOCIATION

NEWS

VOL. 1 NO. 1
A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
NEW ORLEANS, LA.
FREE



ERNEST N. "DUTCH" MORIAL (center) pictured with Rev. Martin Luther King during Civil Rights Movement/

After Carefully evaluating all of the Candidates, CPA Believes the following Candidates to possess the Dedication and Leadership Ability to successfully move New Orleans Forward:

FOR MAYOR ERNEST N. "DUTCH" MORIAL IS BY FAR THE MOST QUALIFIED CANDIDATE IN THE FIELD. HIS RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF:

- FIRST Black to attend LSU Law School
- FIRST Black Legislator in modern history
- FIRST Black in U.S. Attorney's office
- FIRST Black Juvenile Judge
- FIRST Black Appellate Court Judge
- Former President - N.A.A.C.P.
- Noted Civil Rights Leader
- (Desegregated Public Service Buses-brought about hiring of Blacks by local merchants, and many others)

FOR BLACKS, THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE . . .

VOTE ERNEST N. "DUTCH" MORIAL, NO. 9 October 1.

PUBLISHED BY
CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION ASSOCIATION
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

HE AIN'T BLACK ENOUGH??????

During the course of this campaign, CPA have often heard the opinion voiced that, "Dutch ain't black enough, he doesn't relate to black folks." This attempt to disillusion the Black community of New Orleans is totally unsupportable and only serves to distract Blacks from the real issues in this campaign.

He was "black enough" when he fought the local merchants until they agreed that if our money was good enough to spend in their stores, then we were good enough to work in their stores at good paying, respectable jobs. He was "black enough" when he fought N.O.P.S.I. to desegregate their Public Service buses. He was "black enough" when he challenged the discriminatory policies of our State Education System. Believe us Brothers and Sisters - "Dutch" may look white, but he lives and breathe BLACK!

To those among us who have chosen to support one of the white candidates, we simply ask - WHY??? Irregardless of race, "Dutch" is without a doubt the best qualified candidate. The fact that he is black should only serve to solidify your support. What did Kiefer, Morrison and DiRosa promise you to sell out your black Brothers and Sisters?

There is no reason why "Dutch" Morial should not enjoy total support from the Black community. Do not be confused by the irresponsible lies promulgated by those political lackies whose only concern is their own self-interest.

WE CAN DO IT NOW! VOTE OCTOBER 1

ERNEST N. "DUTCH" MORIAL, No. 9

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION ASSOCIATION
OFFICIAL BALLOT

<i>Mayor</i>	
ERNEST N. MORIAL	# 9
<i>Councilman-At-Large</i>	
SIDNEY J. BARTHELEMY	# 13
<i>Councilman-At-Large</i>	
ROBERT H. TUCKER, JR.	# 22
<i>District C. Councilman</i>	
MIKE EARLY	# 36
<i>District E. Councilman</i>	
PHILIP C. CIACCIO	# 39
<i>Assessor, 3rd Municipal District</i>	
WM. P. (CY) HICKEY, JR.	# 46
<i>Clerk, Criminal District Court</i>	
HERMAN BUSTAMANTE	# 70
<i>Clerk, Civil District Court</i>	
RICHARD J. GANUCHEAU	# 64
<i>Sheriff, Civil District Court</i>	
MILTON A. STIRE	# 69
<i>Sheriff, Criminal District Court</i>	
CHARLES C. FOTI, JR.	# 75
<i>Register of Conveyances</i>	
GASPER J. SCHIRO	# 79
<i>Clerk, First City Court</i>	
NAT GROS	# 82

The law permits you to take this ballot into the Polls.

Figure 3: Citizen Participation Association News, Ernest "Dutch" Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

A Rumble from the Grassroots: The '77 Primary

From 1960-80, more than 150,000 white residents of Orleans parish left for the surrounding area. During that time, the black population increased by 70,000 people giving black voters 55% of the total population.⁴⁵ Combined with the increased access afforded by the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the growth of the black population further increased the potential political power of the black vote in New Orleans. By 1977, 91,416 out of 219,328 total voters were black—nearly 41.6% of the popular vote.⁴⁶ That year, Dutch Morial hired Walter DeVries, a professor at Harvard's Kennedy School, to conduct a poll of New Orleanians to see whether or not he could win the mayor's seat. Moon Landrieu's two previous mayoral victories made it clear that no mayoral candidate could win without the black vote. During Landrieu's administration, the voting demographics continued to show a growing black electorate. At the time of the 1977 election there were approximately 220,000 (59%) White registered voters and approximately 130,000 (41%) registered black voters.⁴⁷ After consulting with DeVries, Morial saw that he had a chance to win, if he could force a run-off.⁴⁸ This was a serious possibility considering three major candidates, Nat Kiefer, "Toni" Morrison, and Joe DiRosa, had already entered the race. All three of these white candidates held well-established records and strong voter bases that included both white and black constituents. According to DeVries's poll, Morial's presence in this race put him alongside Morrison as a front runner. The results put Morrison in

⁴⁵ Beverly Hendrix Wright, "New Orleans: A City That Care Forgot," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette, La: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 2002), 484.

⁴⁶ James H. Gillis, "Kiefer Appears To Be In Lead," *Times-Picayune*, October 1, 1977, sec 1 P 23..

⁴⁷ "What Run-Off Combo D'ya Pick?", *Times-Picayune*, 9-25-77.

⁴⁸ Paul Valteau Interview with Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

first place with 18%, Morial got 17%, Joe DiRosa received 15.9%, and Kiefer showed the most vulnerability with 7%.⁴⁹

At his campaign platform announcement, Morial stated that the “keystone” of his campaign would be “citizen participation, to provide citizen input” and that his administration would “[build] a government that worked for all people.”⁵⁰ Morial understood that all residents of New Orleans had problems that needed solving. His plan began with the notion that a more efficiently organized city government would be able to respond better to the needs of the people than the current bureaucracy that focused on maximizing profits and payouts. He did not offer solutions similar to his opponents. His campaign promised to reform city government and have it focus on the people. On the campaign trail, Morial pushed forward against the establishment candidates with his message of citizen participation.

Nat Kiefer was Morial’s biggest competition from the start. Kiefer, a Louisiana State Senator representing the 9th Ward, had a strong black voting base and a strong political network thanks to the work of SOUL. “Toni” Morrison had name recognition as his father was former mayor deLesseps Morrison, and incumbent Mayor Moon Landrieu endorsement him in the primary. The last significant challenger, and the only Republican, was At-Large City Councilman Joe DiRosa, who already proved in 1969 that he could beat Morial in a city-wide election. However, nearly ten years later Morial stood a better chance against DiRosa.⁵¹

Reactions to Morial’s candidacy varied across the city. A *Times-Picayune* article in March of 1977 stated that “the white candidate likely to benefit most in the open primary is

⁴⁹ James H. Gillis, "Black Aspirant to Help DiRosa," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), April 23, 1977, sec. 1.

⁵⁰ Ed Anderson, "Mayor Candidate Morial Reveals Election Platform," *Times-Picayune*, September 7, 1977, 1 P 10 sec.

⁵¹ Paul Valteau Interview with Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans. This model suggests that Morial will cut into Kiefer’s black support and Morial’s opponent would be the establishment choice of the young Morrison. It should be noted also that the nearly obsolete OPPVL also endorsed Morrison in the primary.

Councilman-at-Large Joesph V. DiRosa. The two white candidates who almost certainly will be injured most are State Sen. Nat G. Kiefer and State Rep. de Lesseps S. “Toni” Morrison.”⁵² This is exactly the strategy Morial would need to work on throughout the election. Morial could win if he could garner enough black votes from Kiefer’s SOUL support and from Morrison’s support by COUP and Landrieu. Morial would get more early encouragement from New Orleans’ burning heart of urgency and social progress, civil rights leader Avery Alexander, who famously had to be carried out by all limbs as he protested against segregation at the City Hall cafeteria in the 1950s. The minister was excited about the potential power of a unified black voting bloc when he told the *Times-Picayune* about a letter he wrote to Dutch Morial telling him that if Morial didn’t run, Alexander would himself.⁵³

Race would play an important role in the mayoral contest. As a black candidate, Morial believed his toughest task would be to win white voters from the Uptown neighborhoods. However, during his first meeting with political consultant Jim Carvin, Morial learned the black vote was not a given either. In fact, many black voters didn’t even know Morial was black.

We found was that a lot of people-- a lot of black people—were not aware that he was black. He had been prominent in the civil rights movement, but, you know, the ordinary guy in the street doesn't know that--or didn't know that at the time. So, when Dutch wanted to hire me for the campaign, we had lunch at Antoine's, and his question was: "well, how are you going to get me the white vote?" And I said, "well, Dutch, the problem is: how are we going to get you the black vote?"-- which totally stunned him. He said, "what do you mean?" I said, "well, we just polled it, and a lot of black people don't know you're black." And he was shocked.⁵⁴

⁵² James H. Gillis, "Black Aspirant to Help DiRosa," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), April 23, 1977.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Jim Carvin Interview with Eric Schmidt and George Winston, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

As a light-skinned Creole, Morial could have easily been mistaken for white outside of his hometown of New Orleans. Carvin's news that even his own identity was unknown to parts of the city shocked Morial. Throughout the campaign, advertisements targeting black voters showed Morial surrounded by civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, and New Orleans' A.P. Tureaud, and A.L. Davis.⁵⁵ To win the primary, Dutch Morial needed to convince black voters that he could win. The political establishment believed that the black vote was still heavily influenced by the BPOs because of their successful campaigning for Moon Landrieu in '69 and '73. For Morial to be successful in the primary, he would have to take votes from the black support of the SOUL-backed Kiefer and the OPPVL and *Louisiana Weekly*-endorsed Morrison. In the runoff, Morial would need to galvanize the black voting bloc Landrieu had created without the cooperation of the Black Political Organizations that previously delivered voters on election day.

Eleven candidates spent more than \$1.5 million dollars.⁵⁶ Kiefer had the most money and the strongest black support of any candidate other than Morial.⁵⁷ Despite his strategic need for black votes, Morial knew the structure of the BPOs well, and he refused any of their demands for patronage. Larry Lipsich noted in a *Figaro* article that

Morial has something of a problem when it comes to getting the black political establishment to back him. He refuses to play the game. If you want a political organization to support you—any political organization, white or black—you give them two things. Money and the promise of patronage.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ See Figure 3.

⁵⁶ Alvin J. Schexnider, "Political Mobilization in the South: The Election of a Black Mayor in New Orleans," in *The New Black Politics: The Search for Political Power*, by Michael B. Preston, Lenneal J. Henderson, and Paul Lionel Puryear (New York: Longman, 1987), 227.

⁵⁷ James H. Gillis, "Kiefer Appears to Be In Lead," *Times-Picayune*, October 1, 1977.

⁵⁸ Larry Lipsich, *Figaro*, March 23, 1977.

Other candidates were more than happy to pay organizations for their endorsements. As in previous elections, Kiefer's greatest support came from SOUL and the 9th Ward's 26,000 black registered voters.⁵⁹ He spent heavily trying to secure a percentage of the black voting bloc. These payments were not just for picture taking services. In exchange SOUL canvassed neighborhoods pushing the State Senator's lengthy progressive legislative record. After all, Kiefer's strength was his consistent support of black constituents.⁶⁰ Kiefer had worked with SOUL since early on in their organization. As Kiefer's standing as a lawmaker grew, so did SOUL's power as a decisive political force, one that would be tough for Morial to overcome.

Morial's grassroots strategies worked hand and hand with his political philosophy. Casual face-to-face events like "funraisers" played into Morial's record as a politician and his skills delivering a personal progressive message. With no cover or required donation, these campaign get-togethers were organized at local bars, lounges, and social clubs. The first "funraiser" was only supposed to be a food reception with resources and information about the campaign available to the 25 guests. Paul Valteau, who organized many events explained how these "funraisers" sprung up organically.

It was a very low-budget campaign at the beginning. We operated out of the Claver building. Actually, I can remember the first *funraiser* we had. If my recollection is correct I think we raised about six thousand dollars at the first fun raiser and that was because Phillip Baptiste got up and passed a hat. We had a little wine and cheese reception at the Claver building... We had about 25 people there. Nothing on the invite said that we were going to do a fundraiser, but after everyone was there for a while and they'd had some wine and cheese and sandwiches, Phillip got up and insisted that people needed to contribute money and so we raised a few dollars there.⁶¹

⁵⁹ James H. Gillis, "Kiefer Appears to Be In Lead," *Times-Picayune*, October 1, 1977, 1 P 23 sec.

⁶⁰ James H. Gillis, "Kiefer Is Hurt Most by Morial," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), May 14, 1977, 1 Pg 19 sec.

⁶¹ Paul Valteau interviewed by Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans. Saint Peter Claver Lodge on Orleans Avenue in Treme

“Funraisers” were often held at bars where the business owners benefited from the events. The campaign raised money when a donation bucket was passed around, but more importantly these events gave Morial a chance to explain his vision for the city in a setting that amplified his ability to connect with people.⁶² Morial and his campaign understood that black-owned businesses were at a steep disadvantage to their white counter-parts. Small loans and city contracts were out of reach for these businesses. Laws and business practices put in place during Jim Crow severely limited the professional networks at the disposal of black-owned businesses. Evidenced by the Superdome Services Inc., BPOs were another system that kept black businesses and black workers from the full benefits of city contracts.⁶³

Morial did not have the campaign funds to ingratiate himself with the BPO community. Instead he called on the support of organizations that already knew his character. In an invitation to a group of taxi operators, Morial reminded them that “it was Dutch Morial who organized taxi drivers and citizens for the successful lawsuit which eliminated segregated cabs in the City of New Orleans.”⁶⁴ Morial’s career as an activist and community leader connected him to communities and the issues that mattered to voters. This was the structure he would rely upon throughout the entire campaign.

Morial’s previous loyalty to grassroots causes afforded him access to pre-existing grassroots organizations. As a Judge on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, Morial ruled in favor of the United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO) right to collectively bargain with the school district. Nat Lacour, the groups president, gave Morial a network of volunteers and

⁶² Paul Valteau Interview with Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁶³ Hirsch, “Simply a Matter of Black and White,” 300.

⁶⁴ Mailer to Taxi Operators, Ernest “Dutch” Morial Collection at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

boost during the primary. “We supported him. We supported him with financial contributions, and we got the teachers involved in his campaign, doing street canvassing, running phone banks, and the usual kind of things, helping with mailings.”⁶⁵ UTNO’s contribution was a commitment to Morial’s message. While BPOs were holding out for their favors, UNTO teachers mobilized for a candidate who had supported their right to enter into arbitration, and who was someone they believed in. “What’s different from us is that the political organizations ask candidates for money. We have never received a single penny from any candidate. We have our own PAC, and from those PACs we gave the candidates money. But, in addition to giving them money, we were able to give them what no one else could—that was man-power in sufficient numbers.”⁶⁶ This manpower provided Morial with the tools needed to execute his campaign and deliver his message of civic participation.

Morial’s staff was small, and he would only spend only \$225,000 during his entire campaign—a third of what Kiefer spent, and half of what Morrison spent in the primary alone.⁶⁷ Morial used his independent candidacy as his greatest strength. Morial could not win with the same talking points on schools and crime and lower taxes used by his opponents. Instead, Morial’s message attempted to show him as someone willing to take on both the structure of political representation, and the structure of the government itself. From the beginning of his campaign, Morial spoke his mind and made it clear that the system was on trial. At a meeting of the New Orleans Coalition, Morial put his message up against his fellow challenger Toni Morrison. Vying for the groups’ endorsement, Morrison laid out his plans to improve the foundation of the local economy, and “rebuild” the school system and the police

⁶⁵ Nat LaCour Interview with Al Kennedy, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ James H. Gillis, "Kiefer Outspent Other Candidates in Primary," *Times-Picayune*, November 4, 1977.

department. Morial took a different approach. Instead of sugar-coating the city's economic situation, he warned that, in addition to the shrinking tax-base, the city might also see a decline in federal funds they relied on so heavily during the 1960s. Morial stated that his solution to both these problems was to re-organize the government to more efficiently meet the needs of the people.⁶⁸

At the same event, Morial had another chance to build his unapologetic mayoral brand. *The Times-Picayune* reported that Morrison "attacked Morial's radio campaign speeches as "polarizing" the community," saying they were "volatile." They quoted Morrison further pressing Morial on the issue of race. "When do we ever put this idea of race behind us? The mayor's election should not be contingent on who's black and who's white." Morial took obvious offense to this issue. Morrison's main supporter was the sitting Mayor Moon Landrieu, whose position he received on a wave of black support. Morial saw little tangible progress for the black community under Landrieu's administration and the BPOs. In his response, Morial made it clear he understood the connotations of Morrison's statement. He replied strongly, "If white candidates have always appealed to white voters, there is no prohibition against black candidates appealing to black and white voters, especially when white candidates have prostituted black political organizations for [their own] temporary gains and benefits."⁶⁹ Morial would not apologize for his candidacy, or his message. He was determined to share his vision of a cooperative city government that served the people, before themselves. Central to this was the white establishment's place at the top of the BPO system.

During the primary, BPOs and other black organizations were hesitant to throw their support behind Morial. The plan was simple according to Carvin,

⁶⁸ Lovell Beaulieu, "Hopefuls Seek Nod of Group," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), August 12, 1977.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Well, we didn't try to go around them too much. But we just tried to go over them. The decision was to make an appeal to black voters... without turning off white voters. It gets kind of tricky when you do this, but, we were able to do that. And, we did work with, in the runoff, some black organizations, because my feeling was all along, and I told Dutch, if we get to the runoff, that's critical. Because once blacks see that you could be elected -- that a black man could really win in New Orleans, they'll come to you in droves. They don't want to throw their vote away on some ideological thing. They want to vote for a winner.”⁷⁰

The Morial campaign knew the structure of the BPOs. Jim Carvin was a lead consultant on the Landrieu campaigns that gave the BPOs relevancy. Because of this they knew they could not win by competing for the support of the existing BPO structure. Carvin’s strategy of going “over” the BPOs meant Morial would be playing by his own game with his own rules. Morial’s message of civic participation offered an alternative for voters who saw gains under Landrieu, but who wanted changes to the way the city handled their business. Morial promised his administration would answer to the people first.

This message reached voters who felt abandoned by their government. Black residents of New Orleans had real problems that could be solved by the government. More than jobs, they needed opportunity. A study commissioned for a previous Morial campaign stated, “A clear pattern emerges: black people want improvements, economic opportunity and security.” The study also found that people were “averse to raising taxes because their money hasn’t been spent wisely.” Less than half of the people who responded to the city-wide study agreed that political leaders were helping the city’s problems.⁷¹ This was the group of voters that Morial

⁷⁰ Jim Carvin Interview with Eric Hardy and George Winston, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁷¹ “Perspective on New Orleans: The Background for Issues, an analytical study dealing with the social, economic, and political problems of the city of New Orleans.” July 1969 Louis, Bowles, and Grace Inc. Ernest “Dutch” Morial Collection at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

was trying to reach—people who had lost faith in the government and could no longer see how the government was helping their lives.

New Orleans voters were skeptical of those in pursuit of power. Politics in Louisiana is big business, and the mayor's seat can lead to big things. Morial was a judge while running for mayor in 1977. He was a polarizing political figure, and his opinions could put you on either side of him, but he had a connection with people. Jim Carvin wanted to show that connection to the average voter in a television commercial for the '77 campaign. Carvin needed to show Dutch to the voter in the best possible light. "It's still a question of how you project the candidate. And Dutch projected well under the method that I used to get the performance out of him." Carvin's first struggle, was getting the charismatic Morial to relax in front of the camera.

It was a funny thing about Dutch. He was very personable in a room like this. But you put a camera in front of him, and he changed personality. He stiffened up. And this created a problem for me because I'm not getting...I know if I can get the personality across, I'll reach the voters. But the personality he was giving me in front of the camera was not that. That was his television personality. So I decided that the way to do it was to put him in a room, in a studio, with an audience of people and let them ask him questions. We did this for about three hours. And then I edited out the question-and-answer into a whole series of spots. And he was very good because he wasn't talking to the camera. Or he didn't think he was talking to the camera. He was talking to you who asked him this question...⁷²

Morial's connection to the voter was his greatest strength. His message of citizen participation spoke to those residents who felt abandoned by their city. There was one commercial taken from this town hall that stood out to Carvin. "Somebody asked him a question about what he really wanted to be, or something. I guess it was implying that he wanted to use

⁷² Jim Carvin Interview with Eric Hardy and George Winston, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

the office of Mayor to run for something else. And he said, ‘I don't want to be king. I just want to be Mayor.’ And there was this pause, and there was a dramatic... you know, ‘I don't want to be king, I just want to be Mayor.’ And the way he delivered it... got across.”⁷³ Voters wanted a mayor who worked for them. Carvin displayed that empathy and connection Morial had with the common man.

Morial wanted to win voters by showing them they were the focus of his campaign. It was common in this time for civic clubs, from commerce boards all the way to canoeing clubs, to ask platform responses from candidates. Usually five or six questions ranging from those specific to the club to general inquiries about the city. When responding to a local club named the Metropolitan Forum Morial outlined an uncompromising economic plan. He wrote that any talks of adding to the city’s industrial areas would be “focused on the net impact increased industry would have on the workers and the general population.” He promised that there would be “no subsidies for private industry,” and that his focus would be on “creating an economy that would work for them.”⁷⁴

SOUL had already endorsed Nat Kiefer at the start of the race. But the other BPO, COUP, had spent most of the primary trying to parlay their influence into the next administration. Just a month before the primary, COUP offered a hesitant endorsement of Morial. Far from a fervent backing, the endorsement came with many qualifications after multiple ballots by the board. The problem, COUP members explained to the *Times-Picayune*, was that they were already supporting a black candidate in a city-wide election—Sidney Barthelemy, a COUP member running to be the first black at-large city councilman. The

⁷³ Jim Carvin Interview with Eric Hardy and George Winston, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁷⁴ Ernest “Dutch” Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

prospect of supporting two black candidates was a problem for Monk Dupre and the other members of the organization.⁷⁵ They were concerned that their organization would lose legitimacy in the eyes of the public if they were seen as endorsing any black candidate running for office and that “a solid black ticket will not sell in New Orleans right now, especially because Barthelemy and Morial are so different in many ways.”⁷⁶ Morial certainly could not identify with their cautious approach to the duties of political representation. His campaign certainly didn’t expect much to come from the endorsement. COUP was late to support Morial, largely because Morial’s reluctance to pay their organization for their services during the election. Morial was not willing to pay the fees, partly because he didn’t have the money to spend, but also because Morial had larger plans for the black community that would be hindered by the structure and demands of BPOs.

Morial would not make the promises of previous candidates. The promises of patronage and access were counter to the central theme of his campaign. At campaign events, he stayed on the offensive, separating his platform and candidacy from the establishment supporting BPOs as a central part of his campaign message. In public, neither the BPOs nor Morial hesitated when expressing their antagonism towards one another—the press knew, and the voters understood what was at stake. During campaign events, Morial continued to speak out against the alliance built between BPOs and white politicians and how that had affected progress in the black community. At a campaign event at Xavier University attended by young black students and community members, Morial, alongside Morrison and Kiefer made the case for his candidacy. Morial did not deny that his campaign was actively seeking black votes as a bloc, but argued that his economic platform benefitted everyone in New Orleans. Kiefer kept to

⁷⁵ Lovell Beaulieu, "COUP Endorsement of Morial a Blunder?" *Times-Picayune*, September 12, 1977.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

his solid talking points about his service to the black community in the 9th Ward for over 10 years. Morial struck a different tone from Kiefer or Morrison. When pressed by a Morrison supporter about the role of black political groups Morial responded, “White politicians have made prostitutes, have made whores... of the black political groups... It is a form of indenture.”⁷⁷ Morial spoke out against these groups in a setting where they would have enjoyed considerable support. Morial was a man of conviction and constitution, who would not appease others for their own comfort and sensibilities. In the 1977 election, Judge Morial came to win, and the system was on trial.

On primary day, Dutch Morial led the field with 41,182 votes. After differing reports over who had captured second place, it was determined Joe DiRosa beat Nat Kiefer by 265 votes.⁷⁸ Morrison came in a close fourth place following his endorsement from the *Times Picayune*.⁷⁹ The *Times-Picayune* lauded the Kiefer campaign for having “easily run the best organized political campaign of any of the candidates for mayor.”⁸⁰ However, on election day, neither he or Morrison could convince a black electorate that they were the best choice of leadership moving forward. Morial’s received 58% of the black vote and just 7% of the white vote. His opponent in the general election, Joe DiRosa, got 38% of the white vote while only getting 3% of the black vote. Kiefer and Morrison had similar breakdowns, with the former getting 28% of the white vote and 19% of the black vote, and the latter getting 23% of the white vote and 17% of the black vote.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ed Anderson, “3 Defend ‘Black’ Records”, *Times-Picayune*, September 9, 1977, sec 1.

⁷⁸ “Official Returns in Citywide Races,” *Times-Picayune*, October 2, 1977, sec 1.

⁷⁹ James H. Gillis, “Kiefer Appears to Be In Lead,” *Times-Picayune*, October 1, 1977, sec. 1.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Joe Massa 10-4-77 “Only 7 Percent of White Vote Goes to Morial,” *Times-Picayune*, October 4, 1977, Sec 1 p 1.

Morial's showing in the primary proved his message of black empowerment and disruption of the status-quo connected with New Orleans residents. Morial finished first in every majority black district, including SOUL and Nat Kiefer's 9th Ward voter base.⁸² Now he would need to build on the enthusiasm of the primary for the general election. Sixty percent of the black vote would not win him the mayor's office. Luckily, his general election opponent, Joe DiRosa, did little to attract black voters in the primary, and would have difficulty attracting the young white voters Morial needed to persuade.

⁸² James H. Gillis, "DiRosa Led in White Precints," *Times-Picayune*, October 5, 1977, Sec 1 p 23.

MESSAGE TO VOTER

Dear Voter:

At this time the Board of Directors and members of BOLD* Inc., would like to thank those of you who supported our efforts in the first primary. At that time, we urged you to support a group of responsive individuals who sought office: this Saturday, these men will need your help again. "Dutch" Morial and Jim Singleton have prove that they fight for the people in our community. We urge that you vote "Dutch" Morial #9 for Mayor and Jim Singleton #33 for Councilman.

One thing about these men is for sure; they won't forget you after the election. Vote Singleton #33 and Morial #9.

vote the entire BOLD Ticket.



Mayor
Ernest "Dutch" Morial

OFFICIAL
bold
SAMPLE BALLOT
Sat., Nov. 12, 1977



Councilman District B
Wards 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12
James "Jim" Singleton

9 ☒

**PROVEN
DEDICATED
LEADERSHIP**

33 ☒

REGISTER of CONVEYANCES

GASPER SCHIRO

79 ☒

The proposed amendment to Chapter of Article V of the Home Rule Charter of the City of New Orleans relative to the composition and function of the Public Belt Railroad Commission

☒ **FOR**

Black Organization
for Leadership Development
ELLIS P. SMITH, PRESIDENT
2201 Louisiana Ave. (corner of Loyola)
Phone: 895-BOLD
For a ride to the polls, call 895-2053

"To serve the political interests of the community"

VOTE THE ENTIRE BOLD TICKET

Figure 4: BOLD Sample Ticket, Ernest "Dutch" Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

DRAFT Morial/Mayor

**I'd like to help Dutch Morial become
Mayor of New Orleans and would like
to help as follows:**

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CANVASS | <input type="checkbox"/> FINANCE | <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RESEARCH | <input type="checkbox"/> BUMPER STICKER | <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRIBUTE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COFFEE PARTY | <input type="checkbox"/> YARD SIGN | <input type="checkbox"/> MAIL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRIBUTOR | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER | |

Name: _____
Home Address: _____ Home Phone: _____
Ward: _____ Precinct: _____
Signature: _____

Mail To: DRAFT MORIAL/MAYOR CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE, INC.
1821 ORLEANS AVENUE NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70116

PAID FOR BY MORIAL/MAYOR CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE, INC.

Figure 5: Morial Campaign Supporter Card, Ernest "Dutch" Morial Collection, Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The 1977 Mayoral Election

There was enthusiasm around the city following the primary. Both conservative white voters and eager black voters hurried to register for the general election. In eight days of voter registration following the primary victory, over 9,400 people registered.⁸³ 5,591 of those newly registered voters were black. By the time of the general election, black registration had increased two percentage points, bringing them up to 97,110 total, or 43.6% of the vote.⁸⁴

Morial's campaign needed to reach every voter they could—especially progressive whites who voted for Morrison and Kiefer. Wanting to ensure a DiRosa defeat, Nat Kiefer's campaign headquarters opened their doors to Morial and his campaign. The difference between the two campaigns startled campaign committee director Paul Valteau. In an oral history interview with Dr. Raphael Cassimere, Valteau remembered the sophisticated operation of Nat Kiefer. "We went over to Nat Kiefer's headquarters and at that point he had the most sophisticated operation I had ever seen. I mean they had everything, computers. To the extent that computers were being used to map everything out." Once in the car on the way home Valteau could not believe what they'd accomplished. He asked Morial, "How the hell did we beat those guys?"⁸⁵ The two campaigns were operating on different frequencies. Kiefer had structure on his side, while Morial was focused on getting his message of civic engagement to the people. Kiefer's computers were filled with banks of information about potential voters. When they wanted to target a certain area, they could reference their research and find a solution. Valteau and the Morial campaign did not have a computer, or any technological advantage, instead they carried around business cards with them at all times. Voters would fill

⁸³ "Voter Interest Rises," *Times-Picayune*, October 15, 1977, Sec 1 p 14.

⁸⁴ James H. Gillis, "Will Litigation Affect Vote?," *Times-Picayune*, November 11, 1977

⁸⁵ Paul Valteau interview with Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

out the card with their name and address before selecting what materials they wished to receive from the campaign—posters, flyers, platform descriptions, or buttons.⁸⁶ Morial brought in a wooden 24-bottle Coke carrier as a file cabinet—with the letters ‘X’, ‘Y’, and ‘Z’ sharing the final slot.

I remember he came in—you remember those wooden coke containers. He came in one day, and he had this little orange card that he’d give out to people. We’d give them out all the time. Everybody had to carry some with them at all the time. And you’d give them out and people would fill in and say, I want to put a sign up, or I want some material to pass out.

So one day he brought that coke thing in and he said *This is gonna be our filling cabinet.*

I looked at him, I said What? (Laughs) He said *We’ll start with A, B, C, D, E...*

There were 24 slots, and there are 26 letters in the alphabet, so XYZ were all in one. And it was a great little thing (Laughs). We used it throughout the whole campaign to keep our stuff in order.⁸⁷

What they lacked in funding and resources, they more than made up for with message and volunteers. They didn’t need anything fancy, as long as it worked and connected them to the people. Volunteers were easy to come by, and they were an integral part of the Morial campaign. “People had the feeling they were participating in a historical event... Wanted to be able to say to their children, their grandchildren, that they were a part of that. And it was out of that feeling that we had strong support.”⁸⁸ People believed in the cause. There was only money for signage and commercial time, so any one who gave their time did so willingly.

Many of these volunteers ended up as precinct captains, like Ken Ducote who was responsible for the 13th Ward and 15th Precinct in his neighborhood of Broadmoor. Ducote and

⁸⁶ Paul Valteau interview with Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

other captains were instructed by Morial campaign members like Paul Valteau and Jim Carvin, to identify 65 votes. black or white, young or old, Morial needed votes.

People made assumptions that blacks were going to vote one way. Whites were going to vote one way. And people over 65 were going to vote another way, and so on. And you start targeting those particular people according to what your perceived constituents were. But, in that case, you know, it was assumed that everybody was a potential Morial supporter, and our function was to canvass all the neighborhoods, you know, get a sense of what the people were concerned with, and whether or not they were going to vote for Morial or not.⁸⁹

This was the “coalition of all voters” Morial wanted to build. Moon Landrieu’s administration showed the people of New Orleans the progress that could be made when the city invests in itself. Morial identified the same city problems as Landrieu’s administration. Although his tactics and philosophy differed from Landrieu, Morial’s vision of a more inclusive city government appealed to White Uptown voters. They saw Morial as the next step in the progressive economic development and anti-poverty programs started under the Landrieu administration.

Well, my neighborhood was, as I said, was still mostly white, and it was mostly older white—50 and above. A lot of people in their eighties, and so on. And it was very interesting because, there was one particular block, I think it was on Upperline Street, between Prieur and Claiborne. It was about a two block area. And, so, it would... I guess the New Orleans version of Archie and Edith Bunker on that block... And I asked them how they felt about the election. They looked around, and they said, " Look. We're for Morial. He's for the neighborhood. We think things are going to be better with Morial. We're for Morial. Don't tell any of my neighbors I'm for Morial. Don't put a sign. I don't want anybody to know. I don't want any trouble with the neighbors. But, don't worry about it. We're going to vote." So, I counted those two people in my 75, go to the next door. Knock on the next-door...They start looking around. "We're for Morial. We think DiRosa is not good

⁸⁹ Ken Ducote interview with Al Kennedy, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

for the neighborhood. We're for Morial. We don't want anybody else to know. Don't put a sign." This happened like three houses in a row. And I started to say, well, this is... this is looking good for the campaign because it was kind of like an underground movement of people. people really... thought about supporting him and were voting for him, or a combination of *for* him and *against* DiRosa.⁹⁰

Having Joe DiRosa as an opponent played into Morial's message of inclusive city government. DiRosa's campaign for Mayor wasn't so much against Morial as it was against the city of New Orleans. DiRosa had long campaigned on the issue of the city-owned utility company, New Orleans Public Service Inc. This was off-putting to voters who knew the city already had trouble funding repairs to the infrastructure and wanted city projects to continue. White voters were not always willing to openly advocate for the black mayor from the 7th Ward, but on election day they would cast their ballots.

As the general election grew closer, Morial's campaign received a more traditional wave of endorsements. Morial received the belated endorsement of SOUL and COUP, as well as many other neighborhood political organizations and community leaders.⁹¹ However, Paul Valteau doubts the flyers and signs they delivered ever left their boxes.

The result was historic. More than 75% of registered voters cast their ballot in the 1977 mayoral race. Dutch Morial received 21.6% of white votes, and 94.7% of black votes.⁹² Dutch Morial's grassroots campaign and message of civic involvement capitalized on the newly critical mass of black voters. The Voting Rights Act guaranteed their vote, but did not guarantee their place at the table. White politicians like Moon Landrieu successfully courted

⁹⁰ Ken Ducote interview with Al Kennedy, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁹¹ James H. Gillis "Choosing Sides is Nearly Over," *Times-Picayune*, November 5, 1977, sec 1 p 19.

⁹² Alvin J. Schexnider, "Political Mobilization in the South: The Election of a Black Mayor in New Orleans," in *The New Black Politics: The Search for Political Power*, by Michael B. Preston, Lenneal J. Henderson, and Paul Lionel Puryear (New York: Longman, 1987), 229-231.

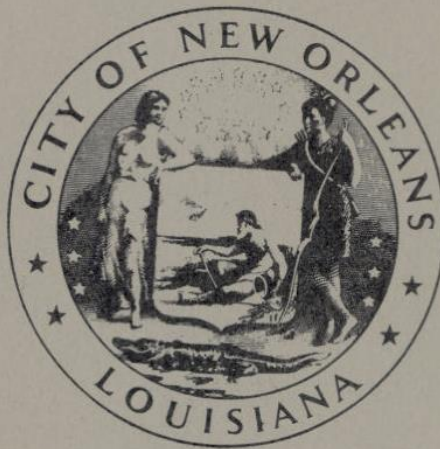
and served the black population dutifully, but fell short when it came to his pursuit of black political goals. Dutch Morial promised action. He spoke to their need for real political representation in New Orleans. During his administration, Morial continually halted business as usual and let it be known that the business of the city would be open to all people regardless of class or color.

After the election Morial showed his commitment to his campaign of civic participation and continued to keep his door open to the black ministers. Dr. Cassimere recalled, “They weren’t looking for anything other than if they had a little problem with zoning, [or someone] putting a bar too close to the church or needed street paving he’d write that down... and suddenly you had a mayor who could take care of things from you.”⁹³ This was Morial’s main campaign promise. He wanted to open up city government to involve the people. He felt he had a duty to the black community. “By being first, and this is one thing that he understood, by being first, he was the first, not just for himself but for people who he represented. And he understood that pretty well.”⁹⁴

⁹³ Paul Valteau interview with Raphael Cassimere, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

⁹⁴ Rapahel Cassimere interview with Connie Atkinson and Eric Hardy, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

**BLACKS IN
CITY GOVERNMENT
1981**



Ernest N. Morial
Mayor

Figure 6: Blacks in Government Cover Page, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans

City government is a microcosm, which should represent the community it serves and provide all citizens, regardless of race, sex, religion or ethnicity, an equal opportunity to participate in it.

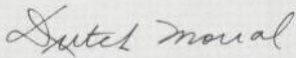
The City of New Orleans strives to fulfill that goal. We continue our conscientious affirmative action effort to afford increased opportunities for employment of Black citizens in municipal government.

Traditionally, however, Black and other minority employment has not extended to higher administrative positions. That is a tradition which my administration has consistently worked to end.

This booklet presents to you some of your fellow Black citizens who are serving New Orleans with their talents, their time and their dedication. There are many Black employees working in all levels of government to assure that your city government functions well and in the best interest of all citizens.

On the following pages are some of these employees. There are many more who join them daily to serve you, the citizen. They are dedicated to making New Orleans the City that works for you.

Yours for a greater New Orleans,



Ernest N. Morial

Mayor

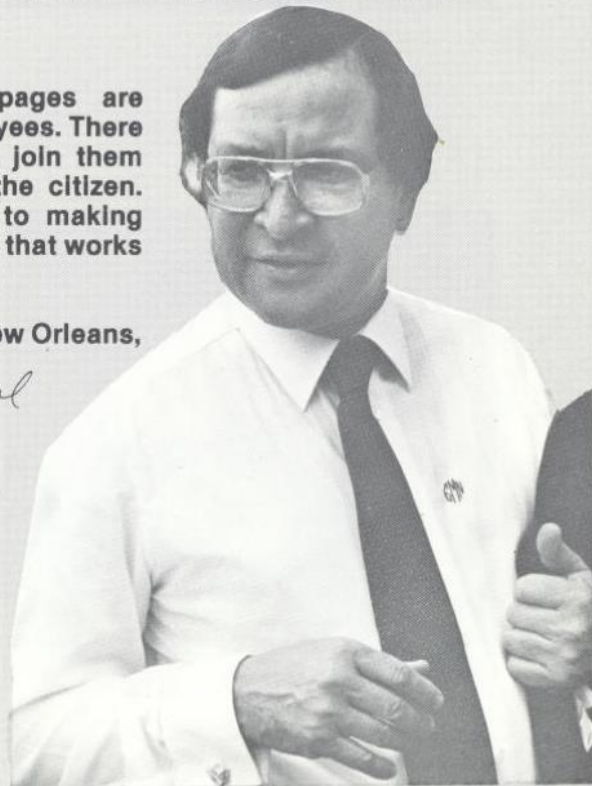


Figure 7: Foreword to Blacks in Government, Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans.

Conclusion

Achieving solutions as mayor is far more difficult than promising on the campaign trail to make city government more inclusive. Police brutality was a long-standing issue with the black community. Morial struggled, as did previous mayors, to find solutions and change patterns of abuse in NOPD. After discussions with a search committee, Morial selected James Parsons, formerly of the Birmingham Police Department, as the new Chief of Police. At the press conference, Morial kept Parsons from answering a question from a *Louisiana Weekly* reporter about plans to curb police brutality.⁹⁵ Morial and Parsons set up a series of public forums that engaged black residents on the subject of police brutality. Victims came forward and shared their stories—something the city denied them previously. Parsons could do little to solve the pervasive racism throughout the NOPD.⁹⁶ Several high-profile incidents of police brutality occurred during Morial's administration, including the killing of Lawrence Lewis by NOPD in the Desire community.

The tenacity that served Morial during the election caused problems when negotiating with the entrenched powers at the NOPD. Morial agreed to give officers a raise. However, Morial's fiscal plan mandated a reduction in officer's vacation time, and sick leave. The Patrolmen's Association of New Orleans (PANO), an informal officer's union with a moderate membership, threatened to strike during Mardi Gras unless Morial negotiated the terms of the raise. Not yielding to the public pressure to keep Mardi Gras and the revenue it generates for the city, Morial refused to negotiate with PANO and instead recognized another group, the Fraternal Order of Police. In turn, PANO struck, prompting one group of officers to burn their uniforms in

⁹⁵ Leonard N. Moore, *Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism from World War II to Hurricane Katrina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 146.

⁹⁶ Moore, *Black Rage*, 151.

front of NOPD headquarters. That year, 1979, Morial was forced to cancel Mardi Gras parades after the administration could not come to terms on arbitration.

Regardless of the problem, Morial believed that the way to foster better government was to engage the people. This was the philosophy that guided Morial's campaign and administration. At the end of his first term as mayor, Morial published a booklet titled "Blacks in Government." Just over 50 pages, it was filled with photos and biographies of black municipal workers from almost every level of government. It was a clear statement—a return on a campaign promise. Morial wrote the introduction himself. "City government is a microcosm, which should represent the community it serves and provide all citizens, regardless of race, sex, religion or ethnicity, an equal opportunity to participate in it." Morial had run into the expected governing delays and debates during his first term. However, he did keep his central campaign promise of making the government accessible and accountable to the residents of New Orleans. He went on, "Traditionally, however, Black and other minority employment has not extended to higher administrative positions. That is tradition which my administration has consistently worked to end." Morial transferred the energy and enthusiasm that powered his campaign into a focused and accountable administration. As he concluded his introduction, the pride he had in the City of New Orleans and the black community became apparent. "There are many Black employees working in all levels of government to assure that your city government functions well and in the best interest of all citizens." It was their city, as it always had been.

Dutch Morial's 1977 mayoral campaign disrupted the political status-quo represented by Moon Landrieu's alliance with the BPOs. Morial's campaign utilized grassroots strategies to get out his message. Volunteers canvassed neighborhoods across the city, spreading the

word about Morial's plans for an inclusive administration. Residents of New Orleans, regardless of race, identified with Morial's message of citizen participation and promises to open up the government. When Morial travelled to Xavier and spoke to black students and professors, participation meant an opportunity for an equal seat at the table. When Morial spoke to white voters in Uptown, participation meant transparency and accountability. When he spoke to the entire city, participation meant that everyone's voice would be heard. After defeating Morrison and Kiefer, two white politicians with significant black voting support, Morial received 97% of the black vote in the general election. Morial's administration was famously scandal-free, a first in New Orleans politics, but the lasting affects are harder to discern. Once in office, Morial's administration kept their promise of creating an inclusive government and opened up the community review process surrounding police brutality. However, they were not able to get a conviction in the high-profile Desire incident. Morial's commitment to opening up city contracts to the black community hurt his re-election campaign. It is difficult to track Morial's influence on New Orleans politics. Morial's message of citizen participation was an outlier. After his second term ended, COUP member Sidney Barthelemy became the next black mayor of New Orleans, marking a return of the BPO's political power.

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VITA

Eric Marshall was born in Houston, Texas. He graduated from Hampshire College, where his thesis project was an oral history on people who relocated away from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. His masters thesis at the University of New Orleans is an investigation into the political career of New Orleans' first black mayor Dutch Morial. He thinks that mensa is a support group for people who like talking about themselves, bad at parties, and should think about retiring. This, like all of his projects, show a commitment to the use of oral history. After graduating, he plans to fight for better wages for restaurant and hotel workers.