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DR. NORMAN C. FRANCIS: *• A Legacy of Leadership •*

LIVING LEGEND DR. NORMAN C. FRANCIS HONORED IN NEW WYES DOCUMENTARY

New Orleans, LA — When the New Orleans City Council voted unanimously to rename Jefferson Davis Parkway in Mid-City to Norman C. Francis Parkway in August 2020, it confirmed what many across the country knew: the retired Xavier University of Louisiana president is a living legend, an icon worthy of every tribute he has earned during a more than 70-year long career.

In a new WYES-TV documentary, **DR. NORMAN C. FRANCIS: A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP**, Dr. Francis will reflect on his monumental life in a one-on-one interview. Archival photos, video and interviews with Dr. Francis' family, friends and colleagues will document his career of service and leadership. The one-hour documentary narrated by former WWL-TV anchor Sally-Ann Roberts will premiere on **Tuesday, September 27 at 8:00 p.m. on WYES-TV**, wyes.org and on the free WYES and PBS apps. It will also stream for a limited time on the WYES YouTube channel.

Among those interviewed for the program are National Urban League President & CEO Marc Morial, former New Orleans First Lady Sybil Morial, former Mayor Moon Landrieu, journalist/historian Walter Isaacson, Xavier University president Dr. Reynold Verret, former Tulane University president Scott Cowen, City Council president Helena Moreno and Liberty Bank President Alden McDonald and CEO Todd McDonald.

During Dr. Francis' 47 years as president of Xavier (his alma mater), the school's enrollment nearly tripled. The nation's only Black Catholic university became the leading producer of Black undergraduates who complete medical school and ranked first nationally in the number of Black students earning undergraduate degrees in biology and life sciences, chemistry, physics and pharmacy

A U.S. Army veteran and the first Black graduate of Loyola University School of Law, Dr. Francis was a civil rights leader. He showed his moral courage and vision by housing the Freedom Riders at Xavier in the 1960s and representing civil rights activists as a young lawyer.

As Xavier's president, Dr. Francis advised eight U.S. presidents and earned more than 40 honorary degrees. As a civic leader, he co-founded Liberty Bank, where he remains chairman of the board, and co-chaired the Louisiana Recovery Authority after Hurricane Katrina while also leading Xavier's hurricane recovery. Dr. Francis and his late wife Blanche – who met on the Xavier campus as students – also lost their own home to the storm.

As a result of his service during and after Katrina, President George W. Bush called Dr. Francis "a man of deep intellect and compassion and character" when he presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation's highest civilian honor – in 2006.

The documentary is produced by Thanh Truong. The production team also includes associate producer Dionne Butler and videographers Lenny Delbert and Tom Moore. For additional airdates and times, visit wyes.org.

WYES would like to thank the following generous program sponsors:



Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Goodyear IV, Angela Vallot Charitable Trust, Operation Restoration, Xavier University of Louisiana, Loyola University, Delgado Community College, Dillard University, University of Holy Cross, Lori & Bobby Savoie and WYES Producers Circle.

About WYES:

WYES is the storyteller for New Orleans, southeast Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. For 65 years, WYES has earned a reputation for quality PBS programming, award-winning local documentaries and cooking series. Thank you for making WYES a vital source of education, information and entertainment — on air and online. For more information, call (504) 486-5511 or visit wyes.org.