



**Councilmembers Fielkow and Clarkson Bring History of Plessy v. Ferguson  
To February 19th Regular Council Meeting**

*Presentation Commemorating  
Historic Supreme Court Case Plessy v. Ferguson  
Will be Broadcast on NOA-TV*

**News Release**

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New Orleans, LA - February 16, 2009 - Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow and Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson, together with their Council colleagues, will offer New Orleans citizens a special opportunity to learn more about New Orleanian Homer Plessy and his central involvement in the landmark United States Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson. The case is customarily cited as the beginning of the modern civil rights movement in the United States.

In a special presentation before the February 19th Regular City Council meeting, Professor Keith Weldon Medley, author of *We As Freeman*, will lead the program with his narrative and visual presentation that explores Homer Plessy's life and the Plessy v. Ferguson 1896 Supreme Court case. Narratives and a PowerPoint presentation will offer the viewing public an extraordinary opportunity to hear this intriguing story, perfectly timed to coincide with Black History Month.

Council Vice President Fielkow said, "The Plessy v. Ferguson court case is one of the most important events in our nation's history and drastically affected civil rights in our country for years. New Orleans played a central role in this history and I feel strongly that we must share this rich history with all New Orleans citizens, especially our youth."

Invitations to attend the presentation in the City Council Chamber have been extended to the schools of the Recovery School District (RSD), Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the Algiers Charter School Association (ACSA).

"I hope our remembrance of this landmark civil rights case, which originated in New Orleans, will foster a renewed commitment to equal rights and opportunity for all people in our City," commented Council President Clarkson, who since 1992 has been involved in the effort to have the site of Homer Plessy's planned arrest on a New Orleans railcar commemorated.

Descendents of Mr. Plessy and Mr. Ferguson, Keith Plessy and Phoebe Ferguson, came together and formed the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation for Education and Outreach, with a mission to use public programs and the arts to teach the history of civil rights and the role of this particular case in American and New Orleans history. They have been invited to participate, as well.

The presentation will start at 9 a.m. on Thursday, February 19th in the City Council Chamber. New Orleans Access Television (NOA-TV) will broadcast the program on the government access channel.

#### **New Orleans City Council**

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans City government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.