

Nagin picks leader for recovery office

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - More than 15 months after Hurricane Katrina, Mayor Ray Nagin is ready to open a city office to direct New Orleans' recovery, with a leading regional planner and disaster recovery expert in charge.

Ed Blakely, who helped coordinate recovery planning in California after two natural disasters and in New York City after Sept. 11, has been chosen to lead what is expected to be a five-person office and to serve as the leader for marshaling a recovery process that critics have derided as too slow.

City Hall planned a formal announcement Monday. Blakely's appointment was confirmed Sunday by a Nagin spokesperson.

The mayor also has hired Becca O'Brien, a former policy director for the federal government's Gulf Coast recovery operation, as his executive counsel.

In September, Nagin marked the first 100 days of his second term by announcing the city would create a recovery office. Last month, he told the city council he had a high-profile person in mind to lead it.

For the last two years,



New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin

Blakely has been a professor of urban, regional planning and policy at the University of Sydney in Australia, and he has been involved in regional planning projects around the world. He helped coordinate planning in California, after the 1989 Bay Area earthquake and the 1991 Oakland wildfire, and in New York, after the 2001 terrorist attacks.

The California native also made an unsuccessful bid for mayor of Oakland in 1998.

Blakely said he has been to New Orleans several times since Katrina hit in August 2005. He told The Associated Press on Sunday that he sees tremendous challenges facing the city, ranging from

improving its bond rating — to inspire confidence in the private investors, whose money will be key to helping fund future projects — to completing and implementing comprehensive recovery and long-range master plans.

Blakely said he knows from past experiences that "leadership makes all the difference." In New Orleans, he said, the recovery has been bogged down by the number of bureaucracies and people involved and by the lack of a modern, citywide master plan.

Nagin said in a recent interview a recovery director previously didn't make sense because "I couldn't really communicate to the person their authority, how the money was flowing, how (the recovery) would be set up. All that clarity is in place (now)."

The city has made strides, Nagin said. "I just need somebody to take me to the

next level."

Blakely said he plans to set up a coordinating council to ensure local government leaders are working together. He also wants his office to provide regular updates on its work.

He said he's been assured he will have the authority to name his staff. Nagin proposed spending about \$497,300 for the office next year.

Some of those who have worked with Blakely say he is a consensus builder and a visionary with a thick skin.

"He's a pillar of integrity," said Robert Yaro, the president of the Regional Plan Association, a New York-based urban policy and planning group. "He has this amazing, Zen-like calm in this sea of emotion."

John Renne, a professor in the department of planning and urban studies at the University of New Orleans, called Blakely a "power-

house in urban planning," but noted he is stepping into a difficult role.

"Really, you need a special person that would be able to perform in this type of job, because if the person fails to deliver it's greater than the individual," Renne said. "It's really about, is the city going to recover?"

Blakely said he feels pressure because the world is watching what happens. In Australia, Blakely's local

newspaper routinely carries stories on New Orleans, many of which aren't flattering to the United States, he said. How the United States takes care of its own people affects how it's viewed by other countries, he said.

"In New Orleans, we have to look like we know what we're doing," Blakely said.

Blakely, 69, said he is taking a leave of absence from his other-work to lead New Orleans' recovery.

Race

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posed segregation, were under federal court supervision for 25 years. The Jefferson County Board of Education, which encompasses Louisville, came up with its own plan to maintain integrated schools shortly thereafter.

But the policy denigrates children's self-worth by color-coding them throughout their school years, said the legal brief for Crystal Meredith, the Louisville parent who sued after her son was denied his first choice of which school to attend.

The cases are Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, 05-908; and Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education, 05-915.

Guards

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ists, and reviewed "all investigative reports and medical records for Martin Anderson," in addition to examining the boot camp's surveillance video that had been enhanced by NASA, Adams stated that he came to the conclusion that Anderson's death was caused by "suffocation due to the actions of the guards at the boot camp." The suffocation was caused by manual occlusion of the mouth in concert with forced inhalation of ammonia fumes that caused a spasm of the vocal cords, resulting in internal blockage of the upper airway.

Reacting to the news that the seven guards and one nurse faced eminent arrest, Gov. Jeb Bush stated that he hoped at the end of the day justice will be served and that "Martin Lee Anderson's family will have the answers to the questions they legitimately have."

K. Chandler writes for the Westside Gazette.

Campbell

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world a perspective that is uniquely hers," said University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark Nordenberg, who appointed her an alumni trustee of the University last year.

Campbell is survived by her husband of 22 years Ellis Gordon Jr.; her mother, Doris Moore; her two children, daughter Maia Campbell, and son, Ellis Gordon, III; one son-in-law, Elias Gutierrez; one daughter-in-law, Monica Gordon; two granddaughters, Elizabeth Elisha Gutierrez and Zakariya Gordon and a host of other relative and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that donations be sent to two of her favorites, NAMI — Urban Los Angeles and The United Negro College Fund.

C. Denise Johnson writes for the New Pittsburgh Courier.

Your Horoscope Says... Dec. 7-Dec. 13

ARIES

This week romance begins to percolate. Enjoy your feelings and let your brain relax. Suspend all judgments of others. Being stern won't work for you this week. Be guided by love and you'll never get lost.

Soul Affirmation: I go along to get along.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 6, 19

TAURUS

Romance will find you this week. Don't be looking the other way. Your "rap" is especially strong. Make as many of those important phone calls as possible. Make some of your calls focus on love.

Soul Affirmation: Friendships are shock absorbers on the bumpy roads of life.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 13, 20

GEMINI

Don't take any big gambles this week; the time is not right for a flight into the unknown. A newfound harmony is in store for you and your mate. Your mate will understand your fears. Give thanks for that understanding.

Soul Affirmation: New insights create new directions and a new cast of characters.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 48, 51

CANCER

The air can be cleared easily. Admit your need for help. Seek understanding. You'll help another by seeking help from them. Communication problems will smooth themselves out.

Soul Affirmation: Moving slowly might be the fastest way.

Lucky Numbers: 33, 52, 54

LEO

This week should bring an opportunity to further your education, don't pass it up. Pay special attention to details at work. A friend needs your support. Find joy in giving it. Look for opportunities to love.

Soul Affirmation: All things work together for good.

Lucky Numbers: 26, 35, 43

VIRGO

You and your mate should increase your saving for the future this week. Spotlight future plans. A relationship is likely to take a serious turn. Be open to making an unusual purchase.

Soul Affirmation: Sing "I can see clearly now the rain is gone. There are no obstacles in my way."

Lucky Numbers: 10, 30, 50

LIBRA

You and your partner are on the same wavelength. If you are presented with a contract this week, it's an ideal week to reach an agreement. Make the important phone call to set things up. Make love, not war.

Soul Affirmation: What I've been waiting for has been here all along.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 6, 33

SCORPIO

Beware of financial pitfalls that you've set for yourself. Strengthen all your relationships by understanding motivations of others. Spend time at home. Enjoy what you already have. Looking for something new is not what you should do right now.

Soul Affirmation: Often it's not what I say, but the way I say it that gets the message across.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 6, 47

SAGITTARIUS

Don't expect to win every battle, especially with your lover. This week winning is losing. Backing down is winning. Shyness produces a bold result. It's easy to collect that long-standing debt. Thank the universe for what you have.

Soul Affirmation: I keep money on my mind this week.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 25, 39

CAPRICORN

Possibilities of hearing good news about home are greatly expanded. Savor the news rather than thinking about other annoyances. Travel is on the horizon. Plan the trip this week.

Soul Affirmation: Jewelry reflects the beauty of my feelings about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 26, 44, 52

AQUARIUS

Feather the nest. Stock up on stuff for the long haul. Cement relationships. A friend needs your support. Enjoy giving it. You will receive good news about a pal. Make sure you send congratulations. Celebrate others.

Soul Affirmation: Cheerfully handling what comes at me is the test of who I am.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 22, 31

PISCES

Your mate has a sweet surprise. Open up to receive it. Choose your words carefully around a sensitive pal. Listen for good news about a loan or financial matter. Leave plenty of time for love.

Soul Affirmation: I let others toot my horn this week.

Lucky Numbers: 27, 28, 41