

FAITH: Loyola University president has audience with Pope Leo XIV **4D**



LOUISIANA INSPIRED: Bonnabel theater teacher gives students a professional edge **5D**

LIVING



Jan Risher

The dinner party I threw for more than a year finally happened

For more than a year, I threw a dinner party that didn't happen.

I threw it in the car on the way to pick out tile. I threw it while standing in what had been our living room, looking at blackened studs, left by the fire that took our home in August 2025. I threw it on the nights the contractor called with the kind of news nobody wants from a contractor.

The menu changed. The guest list changed. The party never got canceled.

I've never been one to focus on bracing for the worst. Musicals I watched as a kid taught me a different approach. I lean on a "spoonful of sugar" and "my favorite things" — and one of my favorite things is my home full of interesting people I adore and delicious food I've helped prepare.

I love to host. I love the minutes before guests arrive. I love that moment the doorbell rings and the evening stops being a plan. The candles are lit, and ice is in the bucket.

Somewhere in the middle of the demolition of our home, right about the time I realized the wooden floors were goners and that I am allergic to drywall dust, I came up with an idea. I would build shelves for a collection of interesting drinking glasses. Not a matched set. Not eight of anything. I wanted odd, quirky glasses — preferably with a story, or at least enough clues to make one up.

My idea was that when people came to our house, the first order of business would be walking up to the shelves, surveying the glasses and choosing whichever one called their name.

That glass would be theirs for the night.

Focusing on those shelves likely saved on therapy bills.

However, the plan had one flaw: I didn't own a single interesting glass.

Still, I designed shelves for a collection that didn't exist, in a house that wasn't finished, for parties I couldn't yet throw. It helped keep me going.

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Nominate someone extraordinary for our 2026

INSPIRIT AWARDS

Know someone in Louisiana who is making a positive difference?

We're looking nominees for our 2026 Inspirit Awards — people of any age who do their best to make their local community a better place, whether in their work, at schools, in organizations or in neighborhoods.

Nominate someone at nola.com/site/forms/the_inspirit_award by Sunday, Nov. 1. Recipients will be announced in December.

Be sure to include details and examples of how you think their efforts can inspire others. We're eager to share their stories.



PROVIDED PHOTO BY MELISSA CARRIER/THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

Mystery surrounds Julien Hudson's 1835 portrait, 'Free Black Man Wearing a Turban.'

Who is Julien Hudson?

New Orleans' first native-born portrait painter was a so-called free man of color

BY DOUG MacCASH | Staff writer

At the top of a long, steep staircase in The Historic New Orleans Collection research center in the French Quarter hang a pair of precious, newly acquired, 19th-century portraits. They are artifacts of a peculiar part of Louisiana's 19th-century social system.

Both portraits were painted in 1835, when the enslavement of Black people was ubiquitous in Louisiana. Though the little boy with the moth and the elderly gentleman with the gold earring were both of African ancestry, they weren't slaves.

➤ See **HUDSON,** page **11D**

Remembering Del Hall

Richard Campanella's Geographies of New Orleans

Raised in public housing, pioneering cameraman helped invent broadcast news



Photographer and cameraman Del Hall

PROVIDED PHOTO BY RICHARD CAMPANELLA

BY RICHARD CAMPANELLA
Contributing writer

New Orleans-born cameraman Del Hall died in Chicago last month at age 90, but his influence lives on in television broadcasting.

Son of a Mexican-born father and a New Orleans-born mother, Delos Frederick Hall was born in 1935 on South Rampart Street, steps from old Chinatown and Louis Armstrong's childhood neighborhood. He was raised in the Iberville Housing Project, which had recently opened where the former Storyville red-light district once stood.

Quirky characters and colorful street life abounded in the New Orleans of Del's youth. He remembered the Fruit Man ("I gotta gotta gotta peaches; I gotta gotta gotta melons"), the Rag Man, the Bottle Man, the Milk Man, the Knife Sharpener, the Kerosene Man and "the Mad

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HALL

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Russian," a crusty old comrade who sold 5-cent ice cream to giggling children.

Living close to the downtown theaters, young Del would plunk down 9 cents and watch decade-old Frank Buck adventure flicks on capturing wild animals for zoos.

"That's what got me interested in camera work," Del explained to me in a 2013 interview. "I thought, what a great job, to go film these adventures."

He got a chance to pursue his interest when his beloved Na-Ma took him to Reiner's Pawn Shop and bought him a Kodak Retina 35 mm camera, which unlike a cheap box camera, allowed for photographic experimentation. That's exactly what he did through elementary school, and when it came time for high school, he chose Jesuit largely because he spied a darkroom in its promotional brochure.

After graduating in 1953, Del joined the Air Force and ended up in the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, where he trained aerial photographers in practice missions over Southern cities. A half-century later, I first met Del and his wife, Ginger, when they visited my office at Tulane University to show me his rare 1957 aerial photographs of New Orleans at the height of its postwar construction boom, including the partly completed Greater New Orleans Mississippi River Bridge.

After returning to civilian life, Del sought work in photography but soon came to realize such jobs were scarce. That's when "it hit me a like a bolt of lightning," he recalled. "Television!"

By 1959, he was working for WDSU-TV, and with his trusty Bolex 16 mm camera, covered the only-in-Louisiana story of a cussing Gov. Earl K. Long getting released from a mental hospital in Mandeville. His footage of the ornery governor growling straight into Del's camera aired that evening. Soon he was covering the 1960 governor's race, including Jimmie Davis singing "You Are My Sunshine" — arguably the last old-fashioned Louisiana political campaign.

By then, Del had made enough of a name for himself for WWL-TV news director Bill Reed to ask him to join its crack camera team of Larry Lala and Mike O'Connor. Del accepted immediately. With reporters Bob Jones, Henry Telles and Rufus Rivers, plus general manager J. Michael Early and his erudite assistant Phil Johnson, Jesuit-owned WWL Channel Four had assembled a legendary new team in the early days of television.

When Del was assigned to cover the funeral of Earl Long, he found himself blocked from entering the church service. He instead improvised by filming thunderheads gathering overhead while Long's favorite song "In the Garden" reverberated through the walls. Creative tactics like that, novel at the time, garnered Del a reputation as a rising star. He would later help perfect now-standard camera techniques such as the stand-up, the cutaway, the walk-and-talk, the zoom-in, and the use of reflections and novel angles.

The next three years had Del on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement, covering demonstrators on Canal Street, marches on City Hall and protests on Dryades Street, as well as meetings of the White Citizens Council in the Municipal Auditorium, where he teamed with a young CBS Southern Bureau reporter named Dan Rather.

In November 1960, Del's footage of racist protesters intimidating 5-year-old Black girls as they integrated two downtown public schools aired on "CBS Evening News" and reached worldwide audiences.

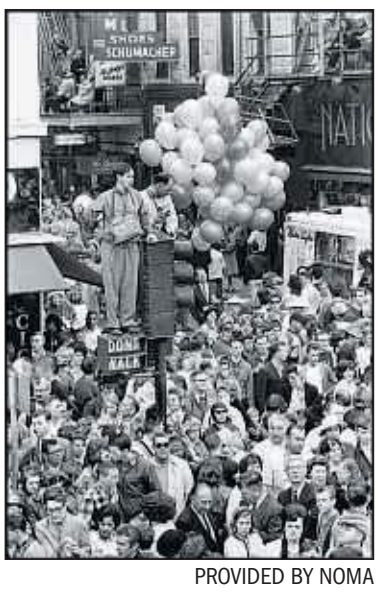
That same fall, the Congress of Racial Equality arrived to organize sit-ins at segregated lunch counters on Canal Street. As Del and colleague Roddy Mims recorded the escalating tensions at McCrory's, their whirring cameras put the store manager on edge.

After he conferred with law enforcement, police arrested Del and Roddy for "disturbing the peace by creating a scene." The manager offered to drop the charges if the cameramen turned over their film. They refused and were hauled down to the police station. But the footage aired, and they were eventually found not guilty.



PHOTO BY DEL HALL/US AIR FORCE, COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION OF RICHARD CAMPANELLA

A 1957 aerial photo of the first Mississippi River bridge in New Orleans under construction.



PROVIDED BY NOMA

A Dell Hall photograph shows other photographers waiting for the arrival of Rex, king of Carnival, from a perch on Canal Street in New Orleans in 1965.

One voter-registration drive in the Iberville Parish town of Plaquemine in August 1963 met with riotous resistance. Sensing that tensions might explode after nightfall, Del conserved his camera's battery power — a critical limitation in that era. He was right: that night, police on horseback wielded clubs and cattle prods at protesters, while other authorities directed tear gas and high-powered hoses at congregants locked inside the Plymouth Rock Church.

Del got it all on film with reporter Bob Jones and raced back to the studio in New Orleans, where Del processed the film and fed it via coaxial cables to CBS in New York. His unique, nocturnal footage of the Plaquemine riot aired nationwide, with Walter Cronkite anchoring and Dan Rather reporting. Coming on the heels of the March on Washington and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Del's footage served as a reminder of the road ahead.

Two years later, Del found himself on a different sort of road — a dirt road outside Bogalusa, pursued by members of the Ku Klux Klan after he attempted to film their nighttime rally.

"You haven't been chased until you're chased by the Klan down a dark country road at night," Del later said.

Del also covered President John F. Kennedy's 1962 visit to New Orleans; the 1964 Beatles concert in City Park Stadium ("I sat at Ringo's drums!"); the last streetcar on the last Canal Street line; the last bell at the New Orleans Cotton Exchange; the untimely death of former New Orleans Mayor Chep Morrison and the devastation of Hurricane Betsy in 1965.

He flew to Rome to cover Vatican II, to Germany for a story on the Berlin Wall, and to Vietnam on the growing U.S. military engagement — multi-night international stories filmed in color, a rarity in this era for a local news station in a medium-size media market.

In 1966, opportunity beckoned from CBS, known at the time as "the Tiffany Network" for sparing no expense in producing high-quality programming. Del moved to Chicago and was soon flying constantly to news stories of mounting political and social unrest.

Following the assassinations of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in spring 1968, Del found himself on the front lines of the riots outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where he was the first journalist to be beaten by police. The bloody incident earned Del a mention on-air by Walter Cronkite to a stunned nation.

It also won Del an Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Achievement by Individuals in Coverage of Special Events — as well as a subpoena to testify at the "Chicago Seven" conspiracy trial.

Del went on to become Cronkite's lead cameraman covering stories such as President Richard Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union; the 1972 presidential campaign and the ensuing Watergate scandal; former Argentina President Juan Peron's impending return from exile and an interview in China with Prince Norodom Sihanouk, future King of Cambodia — and avid fan of New Orleans jazz.

The 1970s saw Del and his professional partner and wife, Ginger Hall, working the camera for "60 Minutes" and for Charles Kuralt's beloved "On the Road" series. One story featured a disillusioned hippie who became a blacksmith to help restore historic Savannah, Georgia.

"I used every trick in the book for this one," Del recounted of his camerawork; "flames reflecting off his glasses, color gels, close-up lens, the works." Clanking Savannah Blacksmith won Del a National Emmy for Best Cinematography for News and Documentary Programming.

In the 1980s, Del and Ginger covered stories such as the Falklands War and the U.S. invasion of Grenada. But they always found time to come home to New Orleans every Mardi Gras to film the Rex parade on Canal Street.

They launched their own production company and succeeded in transitioning from film to video, from tape-to-tape linear editing to tape-to-digital nonlinear editing, and finally to the digital editing and dissemination of today. Ginger, meanwhile, became the first-ever woman to head the local branch of the International Teleproduction Society.

After retiring in 2006, Del and Ginger remained active in the arts and community affairs in both Chicago and New Orleans. Del died in September, five days short of his 91st birthday. He is survived by Ginger and five children from a prior marriage, and their grandchildren.

Richard Campanella, a geographer with the Tulane School of Architecture and Built Environment, is the author of "Draining New Orleans"; "Crossroads, Cutoffs, and Confluences"; "Bienville's Dilemma"; and other books from LSU Press. The writer's son Jason attends Jesuit High School. Campanella may be reached at http://richcampanella.com, rcampane@tulane.edu or @nolacampanella on X.

PARTY

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I started hunting for interesting glasses at garage and estate sales. A friend gave me a set of commemorative glasses from 1975 when The Advocate turned 50. Each glass featured a different notable front page. That set gave me a place to start.

We are back in our house, even though it still isn't completely finished. It is close. And really, is a house ever finished? Doesn't everything remain in a constant state of "work in progress"?

At any rate, my husband and I sleep in our home and everything we own sits under one roof for the first time in more than a year. After being in a rental home and a year of not knowing where half our things were, having them all together feels like luxury.



Jan Risher had an idea to build shelves for a collection of interesting drinking glasses in her renovated home.

Last Thursday night, I hosted my first real dinner party in our home. I took the whole day off work just to get ready for it. My husband and I worked on the menu for days.

Because I had the day off, I took time to luxuriate in ordinary tasks like vacuuming and dusting. Then, I made the soup and took more time than necessary to decide on the dinnerware, napkins, candlesticks — all the little details I could conjure. For me, it was a glorious day, and I loved being able to do exactly what I did.

Even though the collection is still meager, 23 glasses now sit on shelves built for many more. As our guests arrived, one by one, they walked to the shelves, studied the options and chose. One friend picked the bright yellow 1960s vintage Louisiana tumbler. Another picked one of the Apollo 11 glasses shaped like a rocket. Then they poured margaritas, and the evening took off.

There were several moments — simple flashes of laughter, or watching people who didn't know each other before open up and share themselves with a new friend — that almost made me tear up.

I forgot to serve the homemade watermelon sorbet after the albondigas soup, so I served it just before dessert instead. I realized late into the evening that the water pitcher needed refilling. But people didn't seem to mind too much.

The night was everything I had hoped it would be. We were sitting with friends in chairs that had been painstakingly restored. We were eating albondigas and my husband's chiles rellenos.

The evening was loud and ran late, but the whole night felt a little like a dream — a version of the one I'd been having for more than a year. This time, though, we were really there, sitting at our table. By the end of the evening, the candles had burned low, the napkins were askew, and the wine bottles were empty.

After the guests left, I found the ragtag glasses scattered from the living room to the kitchen. I washed them by hand and set them back on the shelves, with plenty of room on either side.

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STAFF PHOTOS BY JAN RISHER

Aside from finds at estate sales, friends gave Jan Risher interesting glasses to help start her collection.