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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mardi Gras Memories Found in Hurricane Archive

NEW ORLEANS, February 6, 2007- Memories and images of Mardi Gras before and after Hurricane Katrina fill the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank (HDMB), which has been collecting and preserving stories, images, and the digital files from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita since November 2005. Photographs from Mardi Gras in 2006 illustrate how residents resiliently battled toward recovery through humor in their costumes that depicted homes with blue tarps, rooftop rescues, and government trailers. Others remember Mardi Gras's past by uploading photos they rescued from their flooded homes. Online visitors unfamiliar to the annual celebration may also watch two short documentaries, from the New Orleans Video Access Center, that captured how people commemorated Fat Tuesday six months after Hurricane Katrina. (See page 3 for list of URLs.)

Created by the University of New Orleans and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, *HDMB* has already collected more than 20,000 entries. Each object gives readers unmatched perspective into the lives of those who survived, evacuated from, responded to, and began to rebuild after Katrina and Rita. *HDMB* also offers Katrina and Rita survivors a permanent place to leave their memories so that historians will use their stories when writing about these storms in the future.

Sheila Brennan 1/29/07 4:53 PM

Comment: Once national guard collection up, we'll have a better figure.

HDMB is a digital archive that seeks contributions from anyone and is available for everyone to read or browse. First-hand accounts, on-scene images, blog postings, podcasts, and videos are some of the materials being collected. Digital technology offers people the opportunity to record experiences in the moment, but many of those digital recordings are quickly discarded. For example, one contributor photographed a heart-wrenching moment at a Red Cross Shelter in Citronelle, Alabama, when an elderly couple returned from their damaged home with the only belongings they could salvage: a small box of jewelry and a few photos (<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/2166>). Hurricanearchive.org seeks to save those moments, so they are not permanently lost.

For those without Internet access, they may phone 504-208-3883 to record a story on voicemail. New Orleans musician **Delfeayo Marsalis** welcomes contributors in the recorded announcement.

About University of New Orleans

The University of New Orleans (UNO) is Louisiana's premier urban university. Facing massive challenges following Hurricane Katrina, UNO resumed its Fall 2005 semester in early October with a combination of on-line and on-site courses offered on satellite campuses. UNO was the only New Orleans university to reopen in 2005. Building upon its rich academic research tradition, UNO sponsors a group of projects to identify, record, and alleviate the effects of Katrina on the citizens of Louisiana. An important goal of the university is to provide appropriate physical and electronic venues for storing and disseminating the collected data as the Gulf Coast rebuilds.

About CHNM

Since 1994, the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University (<http://chnm.gmu.edu>) has used digital media and computer technology to democratize history to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past. CHNM maintains a wide range of online history projects that are available at no cost through its website. Hurricanearchive.org builds on prior work to collect and preserve history online by CHNM, especially through *ECHO* (<http://echo.gmu.edu>) science and technology history project and the *September 11 Digital Archive* (<http://www.911digitalarchive.org>), which gathered more than 150,000 digital objects related to the attacks. The Library of Congress permanently houses those materials. Both projects are part of a growing practice of using the Internet to preserve the past through “digital memory banks.”

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Mardi-Gras-Themed Highlights from the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank

Images:

Blue tarp houses on Flood Street costumes, Louisiana State Museum:

<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/2622>

Rooftop Rescue costumes, Mardi Gras 2006, Louisiana State Museum:

<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/2624>

Trailer costumes, Mardi Gras 2006, Louisiana State Museum:

<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/2621>

Memories of Mardi Gras 1957 in St. Bernard Parish, LA:

<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/15174>

Videos:

“Post Katrina Mardi Gras 2006,” short documentary produced by New Orleans Video Access Center:

<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/4324>

“Krewe Du Who?” short documentary that follows the "Krew Du Poux" during Mardi Gras 2006, produced by New Orleans Video Access Center.

<http://www.hurricanearchive.org/object/4320>