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January 9, 2026

Dr. Kathy Johnson, President  
University of New Orleans  
2000 Lakeshore Drive  
New Orleans, LA 70148

Dear Dr. Johnson:

On December 11, 2025, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System approved the following request from University of New Orleans:

F.3. Request to award an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Mr. Ivan Neville at the Spring 2026 Commencement Exercises.

Enclosed for your records is the Executive Summary with the resolution that was approved by the Board along with the approved personnel actions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Slaght".

Carol Slaght  
Executive Assistant to the Board

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR THE  
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM**

**ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**December 11, 2025**

**Item F.3.**      **University of New Orleans'** request for approval to award an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Mr. Ivan Neville at the Spring 2026 Commencement Exercises.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The University of New Orleans (UNO) requests approval to award an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Mr. Ivan Neville at the Spring 2026 Commencement Exercises. As a native New Orleanian, Grammy award-winning Ivan Neville is a true heir to the legendary Neville family. He is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and singer for over 50 years. His impact on culture and music extends beyond New Orleans as he is recognized globally, having worked with music icons such as the Rolling Stones, Paula Abdul, and Bonnie Raitt, just to name a few. Mr. Neville has released five (5) solo albums and also founded "Dumpstaphunk," a band whose four (4) albums have literally defined the sound of contemporary New Orleans funk. "Dumpstaphunk" currently includes two (2) graduates from UNO's Jazz Studies program; Neville also was a student at UNO in 1977.

Mr. Neville's commitment to community was prominently displayed after Hurricane Katrina, when he co-created the "New Orleans Social Club" to record a benefit album within weeks of the disaster. He went on to perform at countless charity events through organizations like the Tipitina's Foundation to support hurricane recovery efforts. Even more inspiring is Mr. Neville's personal story of overcoming addiction. After a two-decade struggle, he achieved sobriety in 1998 and has since transformed his experience into a powerful platform for advocacy.

For these reasons, Mr. Neville is a truly exceptional candidate for an honorary doctorate from UNO. His life demonstrates how personal challenge can be turned into a force for good. His success in balancing a storied musical career with a profound commitment to his community's well-being and the recovery of others embodies the very achievements this honor is meant to recognize.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the following resolution be adopted:

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,*** *that the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System hereby approves University of New Orleans' request for approval to award an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Mr. Ivan Neville at the Spring 2026 Commencement Exercises.*



THE UNIVERSITY *of*  
**NEW ORLEANS**  

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 30, 2025

Dr. Richard J. Gallot, Jr.  
President  
The University of Louisiana System  
1201 North Third Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Dr. Gallot,

On behalf of the University of New Orleans, I am requesting approval to award an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters during the University's spring commencement on Friday, May 8, 2026, to Mr. Ivan Neville.

As a native New Orleanian, Mr. Neville is a true heir to the legendary Neville family. He is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and singer for over 50 years. His impact on culture and music extends beyond New Orleans as he is recognized globally, having worked with musical icons such as the Rolling Stones, Paula Abdul, and Bonnie Raitt. Mr. Neville has released five solo albums and founded "Dumpstaphunk"; a band whose albums define the contemporary sound of New Orleans' funk.

After Hurricane Katrina ravaged his hometown, Mr. Neville joined the New Orleans Social Club to record a benefit album just weeks after. He performed at numerous events benefiting recovery efforts.

In his personal life, Mr. Neville's journey to overcome addiction led him to become an advocate for those facing similar challenges. In effect, Mr. Neville's resilient spirit, creativity and commitment to his community mirrors the mission of the University of New Orleans and its students. I firmly believe that Mr. Neville's personal and professional story will resonate with our students as they embark on their journey.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Kathy E. Johnson  
President



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

September 30, 2025

Dear Members of the Honorary Degree Committee,

I am writing this letter to nominate and strongly support the granting of an honorary doctoral degree to Ivan Neville. My recommendation is based not only on his profound and enduring contributions as a leading figure in contemporary New Orleans music but also on his inspirational personal journey of recovery and commitment to uplifting our community. Honoring Mr. Neville would recognize a distinguished individual whose life and work powerfully reflect the University of New Orleans's values and deep connection to the cultural heritage of our city.

Ivan Neville's impact on music and culture is immense. As a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and singer with a 50-year career, he is a true heir of the Neville family's legendary legacy and vital culture-bearer for the region. His exceptional talent is widely recognized, having collaborated with musical icons such as the Rolling Stones, Bonnie Raitt, Ani Defranco and Paula Abdul. Beyond these high-profile collaborations, his solo work, including the acclaimed album *If My Ancestors Could See Me Now* and the Billboard hit "Not Just Another Girl," showcases his creative force as a singular artist. Neville has released five solo albums. He also founded "Dumpstaphunk," a band whose four albums have literally defined the sound of contemporary New Orleans funk music. "Dumpstaphunk" currently includes two graduates from UNO Jazz Studies. Neville also was a student at UNO in 1977.

Neville's commitment to community was prominently displayed after Hurricane Katrina, when he co-created the "New Orleans Social Club" to record a benefit album within weeks of the disaster. He went on to perform at countless charity events through organizations like the Tipitina's Foundation to support recovery efforts.

Perhaps most inspiring is Ivan Neville's personal story of overcoming addiction. After a two-decade struggle, he achieved sobriety in 1998 and has since transformed his experience into a powerful platform for advocacy. He is a vocal supporter of recovery and participates in significant community initiatives such as Rally 4 Recovery. His courageous and public embrace of this journey offers an uplifting message of resilience and hope that would deeply resonate with and inspire UNO graduates as they navigate their own paths in life.



THE UNIVERSITY *of*  
NEW ORLEANS

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

For these reasons, Ivan Neville is a truly exceptional candidate for an honorary doctorate from UNO. His life demonstrates how personal challenge can be turned into a force for good. He would be an charismatic and inspiring figure at commencement, powerfully illustrating the creative spirit and resilience that define both our city and our university. His success in balancing a storied musical career with a profound commitment to his community's well-being and the recovery of others embodies the very achievements this honor is meant to recognize.

Thank you for considering this nomination. I sincerely hope that I can be present to see Mr. Neville bestowed with this honorary degree.

Regards

Regards,

Brian Seeger  
Professor of Music  
Coca-Cola Endowed Chair in American Jazz Studies

## **Ivan Neville Career Synopsis**

Vocalist, songwriter and musician performing on Hammond B3 Organ, Nord electronic keyboard, Electric Clavinet and electric guitar

Co-founding member of Dumpstaphunk, Dragon Smoke, Neville Jacobs, Ivan Neville & Friends

Recordings and/or performances with The Rolling Stones, Bonnie Raitt, Don Henley, Aaron Neville, The Meters, Willie Nelson, Bobby Womack, Buddy Guy, Carlos Santana, Neil Young, B.B. King, George Duke, George Clinton, Ernie Isley, Keith Richards, Paula Abdul, Dave Matthews Band, Dr. John, Maceo Parker, Neville Brothers, Taj Mahal, Ani DiFranco, Chaka Kahn, Rufus, Gov't Mule, Warren Haynes, Tedeschi Trucks Band, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Joe Bonamassa, John Scofield, Milton Davis, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, String Cheese Incident, Spin Doctors, Robbie Robertson, Edwin McCain, Angie Stone, Jerry Lee Lewis, Marc Broussard, Branford Marsalis, Bernard Purdie, Tab Benoit, Jon Cleary, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Steve Kimock, Galactic, Anders Osborne, Mike Gordon, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe and Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

International festival appearances include Fuji Rock Festival, Byron Bay Bluesfest, Caloundra Music Festival, Guitare en Scène Festival, Jam Cruise, Dead & Company's Playing In The Sand, Widespread Panic's Panic En La Playa

Domestic festival appearances include New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Bonnaroo, Outside Lands, Lockn, NYC Summerstage, High Sierra Fest, San Francisco Jazz Festival, Electric Forest, Telluride Jazz Festival, VoodooFest, Summerfest, Funk Fest, Suwannee Hulaween, Bear Creek, AmpJam, French Quarter Fest, Summer Camp Music Festival

Television performances include Jimmy Kimmel Live! (2025), Late Show with Stephen Colbert (2019) and Late Show with David Letterman (2003)

Movie appearances include the 2005 documentary Make It Funky!, the 2022 documentary Take Me To The River: New Orleans

Movie soundtrack singles include "Not Just Another Girl" on the 1988 film My Stepmother Is an Alien and "Falling Out of Love" on the 1990 film Pump Up the Volume

Movie soundtrack performances include “Home of the Brave” on the 1990 film Captain America; backing keyboards on the 1996 Space Jam soundtrack; and “Makeup of a Fool”, “When the Saints Go Marching In”, “NOLA Jump” and “A Closer Walk With Thee” all on the 2011 film A Little Bit of Heaven

Radio appearances include NPR World Cafe, NPR Tiny Desk (with Bonnie Raitt), Artie Lange Show and Sirius XM Radio

#### Awards and Honors:

2023 Grammy Award: Best American Roots Performance  
"Stompin' Ground"

2023 Best Piano/Keyboard, OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

2014 Best Piano/Keyboard, OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

2013 Best Piano/Keyboard, OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

2011 Best Piano/Keyboard, OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

2009 Best R&B/Funk Band or Performer (with Dumpstaphunk), OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

2006 Best R&B/Funk Band or Performer (with Dumpstaphunk), OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

2004 Song of the Year "Brothers" (with Aaron, Art, Charles, and Cyril Neville, and Milton Davis), OffBeat Magazine's 'Best of The Beat'

#### Discography Highlights:

Touch My Soul (2023) Solo

Where Do We Go From Here (2021) Dumpstaphunk

Dirty Word (2013) Dumpstaphunk

Everybody Want Sum (2010) Dumpstaphunk

Listen Hear(2007) Dumpstaphunk

Scrape (2004) Solo

Thanks (1994) Solo

If My Ancestors Could See Me Now (1988) Solo

Professional Society Memberships: BMI, SAG/AFTRA, MusicCares, Tipitina’s Foundation

#### Websites:

[www.ivannevillemusic.com](http://www.ivannevillemusic.com)

[www.dumpstaphunk.com](http://www.dumpstaphunk.com)