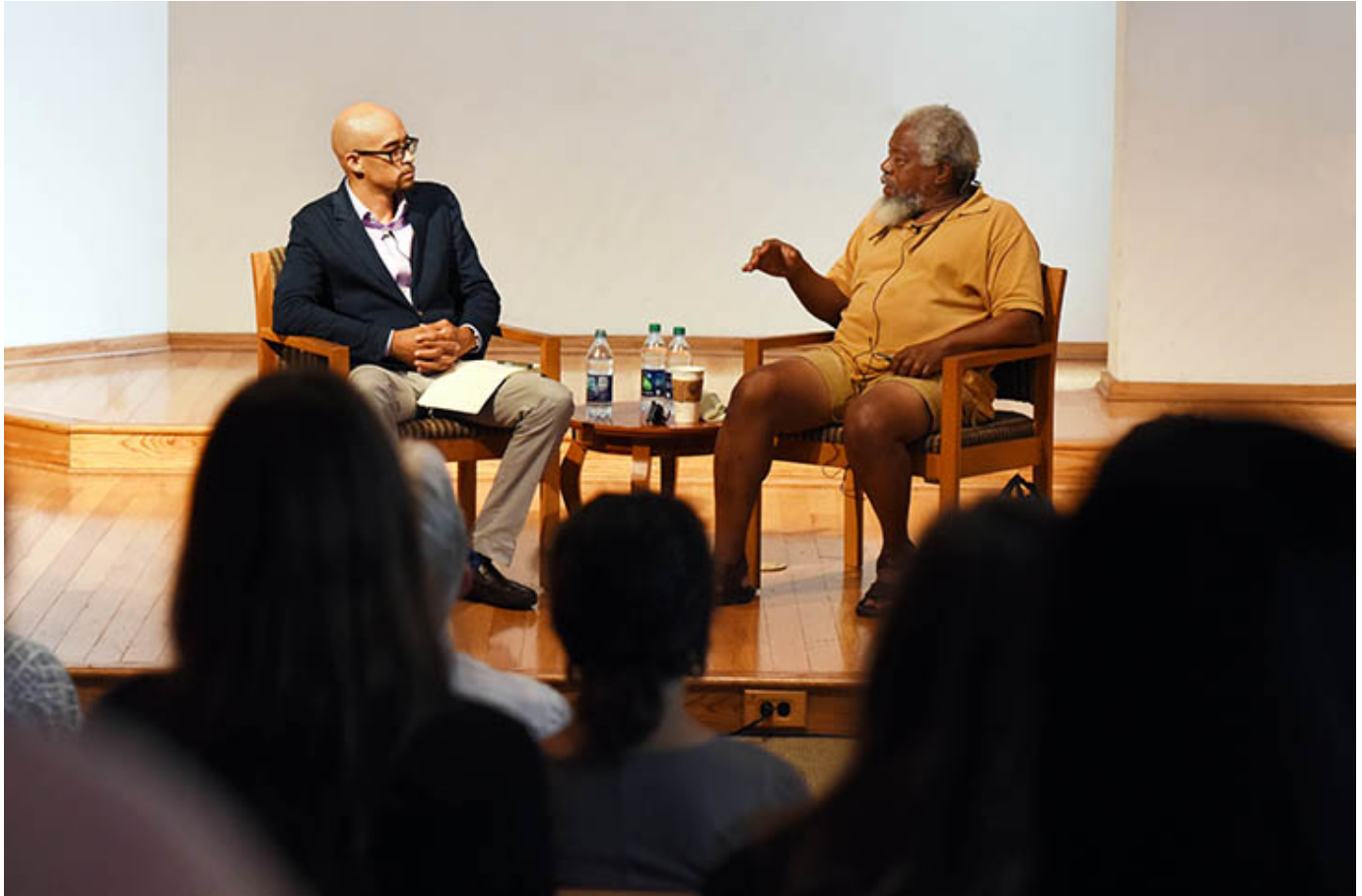


A conversation on race, justice and Hurricane Katrina now

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Community organizer Malik Rahim, right, joins Josh Guild, an associate professor of history and African American studies at Princeton University, for a discussion of “The Katrina Disaster Now” in Rogers Memorial Chapel on the Tulane University uptown campus on Wednesday (Sept. 9). (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

New Orleanians breathed a collective sigh of relief last week as the city commemorated [10 years of resilience](#) in the face of Hurricane Katrina on Aug. 29. New Orleanian Malik Rahim joined Josh Guild of Princeton University on Wednesday (Sept. 9) in a conversation on the Tulane University uptown campus that illuminated

cracks of injustice beneath this veneer of success.

As part of a series tied in with [The Katrina Disaster Now course](#) taught by Andy Horowitz, an assistant professor of history at Tulane, Rahim recalled the racism he faced growing up on the West Bank that led him to become co-founder of the New Orleans chapter of the Black Panther Party.

“We live in a state that is based upon racism,” Rahim said. “It’s not by chance that Louisiana leads America in incarceration, and New Orleans leads Louisiana.”

Rahim dedicated his life to fighting injustice until a single storm destroyed his entire community.

“I’m not a naïve person,” he said. “I’ve served time in prison. I’ve been on death row, but nothing prepared me for the aftermath of Katrina.”

Drawing on his experience with the Panthers, Rahim co-founded [Common Ground Collective](#), a grassroots relief organization that attracted over 21,000 volunteers. Common Ground’s work has included the provision of essentials, a free medical clinic, debris removal, home rebuilding, legal advocacy and wetlands restoration.

“We worked in 19 parishes in Louisiana, three counties in Mississippi and two counties in Alabama,” Rahim said. He believes that the only way to prevent another such disaster from happening is to restore the disappearing wetlands that once protected cities from the whims of the sea.

“We can save the Gulf,” he concluded, challenging the audience to do exactly that. Sponsors of the event were the Environmental Studies Program and the William L. Duren ’26 Professorship.

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