

## Email exchange between OpEd Editor for The Advocate and Ms. Catherine Wells

From: Letters <letters@theadvocate.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 6, 2025 at 3:36 PM

Subject: Re: LA Wildfires response

To: Catherine Wells <cwellsla@gmail.com>

It was not Rene Sanchez who responded. It was me, the Opinion Page editor. I do take umbrage to those who say we are printing false information and that our staff does not understand what happened in Katrina. Perhaps my response to Cathy Hightower was terse. But I will not countenance any suggestion that our newsroom is ignorant about Katrina. It's simply not true. Many on our staff also suffered losses. And their knowledge of events goes very deep. Many stayed for months and to give New Orleanians information they needed, even as they were struggling themselves. They deserve better from the audience they served so well during those difficult times than to be insulted and patronized and doubted.

Sincerely,

Arnessa M. Garrett

Opinion Page editor

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From: Catherine Wells <cwellsla@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 2:46 PM

To: Letters <letters@theadvocate.com>

Subject: LA Wildfires response

Dear Mr. Sanchez,

I was very disappointed when I read your response to a letter sent by Cathy Hightower, a 50-year subscriber to The Advocate, who lost her father in the flooding of New Orleans. Your response, I thought, was insensitive and wildly inaccurate (Katrina shorthand?). New Orleans has been fighting this battle for many years now – Katrina did not cause the devastating flooding of the city, nor did it cause any of the 1,392 deaths of New Orleans citizens.

The catastrophic failure of the levee system around the city caused the flooding, levees that were built by The Army Corps of Engineers. Lives were ruined, people died, and life has never been the same for those who were affected by the destruction and the deaths of their loved ones; preventable destruction, and preventable deaths.

I would like to urge you and your staff to listen to a series of eight podcasts produced in 2020 by The Atlantic. In New Orleans, the disaster wasn't the hurricane, it was what happened afterwards. The series is extremely compelling. It tells the true story of what happened in the words of the people who lived it. The name of the podcast is Floodlines. Here's the link: <https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/floodlines/>

Sir, I would also like to request that The Advocate issue a memo to its reporters stating that whenever writing about the flooding of New Orleans, they must add that levee failure played a major role.

Catherine Well

Baton Rouge resident