

Black History Month

BSA promotes unity

by Kimberley McGee

In 1973 the African-American student population of UNLV joined together to create the Black Student Association (BSA). Although the BSA then consisted of only five members, they ignited from a spark of unity that has flourished over the years into a full-fledged organization today with 55 members.

"We celebrate the (African-American) culture," said Jacqueline Robinson, president of the BSA. "Our goal is for people, and not just African Americans, but any person of any cultural background, to become more aware of the African-American culture."

Education of the African-American culture is of extreme importance to the BSA.

"For so long, African Americans have been minimized in this society... that mindset remains in peoples' thinking today," Robinson said. "We must reeducate ourselves so that we can progress farther than that mindset. It was Carter G. Woodson who said 'When you control a mans' thinking you do not have to worry about his actions'."

Robinson said that the BSA

is a social and aspiring political group, stressing the need for more political involvement.

"This university has grown so fast and there has been no time to pay attention to the little details. That is our job, as students," Robinson said. Financial aid, club's and organization's difficulty in obtaining a meeting room due to lack of insurance, the tuition breakdown and the ratio of minority faculty to that of minority students are some of the topics Robinson believes the BSA should address.

"How do you expect to change something if you do not participate?" Robinson asked. "When a system goes bad, a lot of people, regardless of color, will not participate."

BSA is not only involved with the university but the local community as well.

"We want to create a link with the community to better educate them and us," Robinson said. "It is imperative that we get involved, especially with the older members of the community so as to learn from their past experiences. It is a two way street, you get what you give to the community."

Robinson quoted Frederick Douglass: "Those who profess



photo by Kimberley McGee

Robinson urges unity among people of all races.

to favor freedom yet depreciate agitation are those who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning."

The BSA welcomes anyone who wishes to join in the struggle for unity and better understanding of the African American culture. For more information please contact Jacqueline Robinson at 647-7725 and leave a message.

Americans enslaved by shackles of the past

by Kelcey A. West

COMMENTARY

Somewhere buried in the earth's heart is a pair of shackles covered with fresh skin and blood. Those shackles, that were once worn by slaves of African descent who wholeheartedly and nonviolently built this country, are now being worn by white and black Americans who are enslaved mentally by the myths that have built a Berlin Wall in the United States.

Today during this month of Black History it is only appropriate that we try to knock down this evil and racist wall with truthful education about the real history of this country.

The reason why we need truthful education is because the moment children read current history textbooks, only anger and disrespect circulate through their veins. Children of African-American culture feel betrayed because they know that their people were responsible for this country's history. Before there was Ulysses S. Grant there was Christopher Attucks and before there was the Wright brothers there was Granville T. Woods. Hundreds of blacks have been whited-out in the history documents for reasons unknown to the common teacher.

When a child of white-American descent reads the history text they feel white people are solely responsible for everything in the world including rain and snow. They are taught to believe that an American is a white individual whose fathers built this country single-handedly. White children are also taught to believe that black people were uneducated when they were brought here. The problem here is that today, whites feel an inner-power over

blacks mentally, as blacks feel an upper-hand physically. This is due to the fact that the educational system will promote black athletes before a black scholar like Dr. Daniel H. Williams who performed the first open heart operation.

Today, racism is only in the mind and not the eye. Some blacks are trying to look white and vice versa. The mind is solely responsible for the prejudice acts that occur in every facet of American culture. In fact, Black History Month is an opportunity to define American culture. American culture is an expression of how an African man would act in Europe. If a so-called, full-blooded American looks into the mirror, what can one say is non-African and non-European about his culture? Thus remember French people are of African descent.

This brings us to a saying quite popular in the America, "Go Back to Africa." If black people had gone back to Africa where would America be? Another saying or myth that circulates through the white community is that black people are violent. The black race is not violent but tired of waiting for a paycheck that was written in 1776. How can a race of people be violent by watching a lynching or the brutal ignorant acts of the civil rights movement?

Black History Month is a small chisel that can be used to chip away at this handmade wall that is allowing this country to move backward instead of forwards in the fight for human justice and freedom for all.

AKA supports African-American culture

by Kimberley McGee

Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA), an African-American sorority on campus, is now celebrating Black History Month. With an international membership of over 150,000 in the United States, Virgin Islands, West Africa and the Bahamas, AKA supports its motto: "Service to all mankind through programs and community involvement."

"Our goal is to promote high ethical and moral standards among college women," said Allison Johnson, a member of AKA.

AKA was formed in 1908 by a group of women attending Howard University. It is the oldest African-American Greek-

letter organization.

The UNLV AKA sorority, which began as an interest group, was formed by 12 women which called themselves, Those Interested in Alpha Kappa Alpha (TIKA). In 1976, TIKA became the Kappa Xi Chapter of AKA.

AKA supports programs and funding projects such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Youth Council, the National Assault on Illiteracy Program, providing food baskets to the needy, donating time and funds to community shelters and working with various campus organizations.

"African-American community service is our main con-

cern, now and after graduation," Johnson said. "Each graduate chapter supports an African village."

"I don't think that one month is enough for exploring black history. There is so much history to be learned," said Adejoke Adenle. "To realize the true meaning of Black History Month you have to experience it. They need to teach it in the high schools. It should be mandatory. Black History Month should be for all races, for everyone to celebrate black history and black culture."

"It is time to celebrate these people who have been left out of the history books, the black inventors and leaders," Johnson said.

UNLV alumni become leaders in the community

Black History Month is important for the children

by Stephanie Holland

"I know it sounds cliché, but I believe the children are the future," said Wendy Nichols, a graduate of UNLV and a firm believer in helping children to believe in themselves. She is also a firm believer in Black History Month.

"It means everything to me. I think it is very important that our children learn about our history."

"We (African-Americans) may feel inferior because we don't know of our colorful history. It is important, especially for the youths, to know of their heritage, their history. They are de-

scendents of kings and queens. It is important that they have something to look forward to," said Nichols. She has a strong desire to teach children not only the art of public speaking but the ability to feel proud about themselves and their heritage.

Nichols, who works at Channel 3 in the client services department, said, "I would like to open a school for public speaking for children. I think it is important to build self esteem in the youth. I'd like to do that through teaching public speaking."

Her philosophy is very basic, yet often not taken seriously enough. "The youth are what is important, they can make a change if they have the knowledge, self-esteem and confidence."

Finance graduate 'banks' on success

by Jaime Matis

In today's complex and overwhelming society, role models can be difficult to come by. We are fortunate at UNLV to have produced a variety of role models, success stories, and leaders. A UNLV alumnus, who epitomizes these characteristics is none other than 26-year-old,

Bruce Ford.

Bruce has come a long way since graduating in 1986, with a degree in Finance. This outgoing individual has managed to balance a well-rounded and successful career. Bruce, a banker at Pioneer Citizens Bank, serves as assistant vice president, plus he manages the Decatur/Spring Mountain branch.

He also teaches two banking classes at the community college. Bruce enjoys the customer contact he receives from his job. Though he enjoys his current status, which he accredits to UNLV, his determination and hard work, Bruce aspires to one day be a bank president.

Ford feels Black History is important "for myself and others to learn and know how important black culture is."

The "military brat" has been a resident of Las Vegas for 10 years, including his student years at UNLV. While attending UNLV, Bruce was active in intramurals, a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, and worked at Pentagon Federal Credit Union. Bruce is still active with UNLV, serving on the board of alumni associates.

Bruce Ford, a young, successful and intelligent African-American UNLV alumnus, is someone who represents a genuine success story, role model, and someone that we should all look up to.

Black History Month Profiles