

MARK COURT DESEGREGATION DATE TONIGHT

"FREEDOM SPECTACULAR" IN LOS ANGELES ARENA

WEST LAS VEGANS who happen to be in Los Angeles tonight will have a wonderful opportunity to participate in a momentous event arranged for the benefit of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

On tap at the huge Sports Arena will be a magnificent Freedom Spectacular, offering the talents of many of Hollywood's greatest entertainment stars. Art Seidenbaum presented a powerful preview of the big affair in the Los Angeles Times this week. His article follows:

An anniversary will be observed Thursday night, in the Sports Arena. Celebrate may be the wrong word, although the show is an entertainment, very public and carries a list of stars as long as those funny Hollywood Blvd. sidewalks.

It will have been 10 years ago Thursday that the United States Supreme Court ordered the United States public schools to desegregate. A decade ago. Some did, prodded by judges or bayonets. Many still have not. North of where the color line is drawn tight and hard, the law was not necessary. Only the spirit of the law, a bugle of things to come.

10 Years Ago

It is 10 years ago and yet in the school my children attend — public, California, middle class, nice people — there are no Negro children. Maybe, indeed, no Negro families want to live in our neighborhood. But when my insulated friends tell me THEY are pushing too fast, a decade later, I wonder.

It is a marvelous city, with all the sunshine and opportunity that an unending traffic can bear. Prejudice has no reason to do business here. And yet there is a young Negro who can only rent

apartments by telephone; as soon as he shows up to see a place, it has just been taken. He is still looking, Rumford Act or no act. So, when I hear my friends complaining that THEY have nothing to complain about in Los Angeles, I wonder some more.

It is a week in which a southern governor took his poisonous medicine show up North and won 30% of the Democratic primary votes of the sovereign state of Indiana. While the Senate debates into infinity, my friends tell me to look at the remarkable progress being made. If such optimism leaves me wondering, I can begin to imagine how THEY feel.

The Sports Arena show hauls no such harangue. It is a closed-circuit television spectacular to raise funds — meat and potato down-south bail-bond money — for the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People.

West Coast

I went to watch the final taping of the West Coast half of the show at CBS the other night. A couple of hundred paying watchers did too, putting up \$50 apiece to become a studio audience. The 2-hour completed telecast will be simultaneously screened for audiences in

some 50 cities — the hour done there plus another originating in New York. Happily, this is not one of those interminable telethons in which singing acts are sandwiched between phone calls. It has a written-in continuity (by Rick Mittleman from a book by Shirley Burden, narrated by Burt Lancaster).

They were still rehearsing when I got there. Tony Bennet was sitting in the control room waiting his stage turn while director Steve Binder worried the camera work for James Darrin and Lon Fontaine's dancers. Nat Cole, who had been present for six hours, was in the wings alone with a monitor. Comic Bill Cosby was behind stage explaining the anatomy of a monolog to a couple of

publicists. Gene Kelly, a last-minute substitution, was curled up with a script. Stella Stevens, Cannonball Adderley, Keely Smith, Benny Carter, Carolyn Jones mingled backstage, an army of familiar faces.

The performance went without hitch, cementing some segments shot earlier (that drop in such names as Lancaster, Richard Widmark, Agnes Moorhead, Ed Begley, Edward G. Robinson, Edmond O'Brien) with the present company. A big girl named Barbara McNair, who sings, also generated electricity. A little girl named Karin Washington, who acts, also carries a message without saying anything. When it was done, executive producer James Baker bear-hugged Binder — six

weeks of no-pay production wrapped and ready, no taboo or commercial sponsors attached. Then there was champagne, for cast and contributors.

As a hunk of show business, this Freedom Spectacular rings in its own right. As a feat of money-raising, it is a demonstration in the best, peaceful direction. The \$5 and \$10 ticket prices will be used to make the next decade count. Not in bloodshed, boycott or bigotry. In conscience. That's where it is, where it will go.

Usual Sources

The usual sources — Mutual Ticket Agencies and the Arena box office — still have space left. If you were moved 10 years ago, this is a delightful way to pay your respects, to give everybody something to

grow on. This is one benefit that probably shouldn't have been necessary. The illness it attempts to cure should have died of its own unnatural causes 10 decades ago.

Instead, its virulence still grows among two kinds of victims: those who are completely frightened and those who are not quiet free. This is the national health problem of our time.

(DEMOS, from page 1)

contribution to the politico-civic whirl because she was one of the very few persons identified with the Matteucci-Labor coalition who was not washed 'down the drain' by the 'cow counties' unified protest vote.



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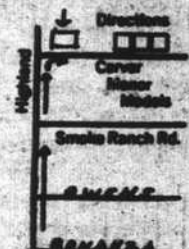
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