

**Benjamin L. Hooks**  
FCC  
COMMISSIONER



In a recent column, I cited the "positive ripples" I felt had resulted in black hiring and upgrading, in the increased number of Black radio ownership, etc., since my arrival at the FCC, July 1872.

I also cited the "long and sorry" history of radio and television in the U.S. in its dealing with black American citizens.

It is not my nature to be pessimistic, and so despite my negative observations, which are valid, I must confess that I see definite progress being made in terms of hiring and upgrading of blacks and other minorities in the communications industry.

In short, I believe there is a definite light beginning to shine through at the end of the tunnel, and that we are moving from a long history of communications black-out to a significant black-in.

The grainy texture of black life-- its hates and frustrations, its trials and tribulations, was not relieved by the cavalier treatment of dark-skinned citizens by the radio and television industry. Nor were the true joys, triumphs, or just the humdrum everyday life of blacks, much like that of the average white, given any currency in radio or television shows of the past.

Thus, to the extent that television and radio were robbing 25 million blacks of their great heritage, and presenting to whites a woefully distorted image, or no image at all, of their black fellow citizens.

But, as always, blacks have managed to transform humiliating and frustrating labor and situations into virtue as in Langston Hughes' earthy and immediate poem, Mother to Son:

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters  
And boards torn up  
And places with no carpet on the floor---  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a'climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes going, in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now --  
For I've still goin', honey.  
I've still climbin'  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

This can-do philosophy in the face of monumental hardship is of the highest order and because it is the matrix of black existence in the end, blacks are beginning to triumph. We are beginning to see more and more of black life validated on television. Some of what TV presents, of course is a distortion of reality, or designated to appeal to the lowest common denominator.

There are such shows as Sanford and Son, That's My Mama, The Jefferson, Good Times, all top rated, which may not be all that we would hope they might be, but they are far more than anything we had in the past. And I am just not ready to join some of the more severe black critics in condemning these shows out of hand and consigning them to the devil.

Not only do they furnish work for a large number of blacks--actors, writers, technicians, etc., I believe, for example, a sly dig Redd Foxx at a racist situation, is much more instructive and to the point than a dozen "talking head" or a series of serious rap TV shows.

And so we can condemn TV and radio for its failure adequately to portray the life, the hopes, the dreams and the aspirations of the black community, while at the same time, acknowledge some of the things it is doing to right historic wrongs, even if it is doing these things for commercial rather than humane reasons.

**RSVP Has New Look**

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for Southern Nevada's seniors has a new look. RSVP has a new sponsoring agency, new headquarters and a new project director, announced Jack Fagg, executive director for the Senior Services Division of Nevada Catholic Welfare.

Fagg said Catholic Welfare has become the local sponsor for RSVP. The headquarters moved in June to 825 South Fourth St., a building with offices and lounge for volunteers.

Fagg also announced the appointment of Vicki Bertolino, 29, as project director for RSVP. Experienced in a variety of community work, Miss Bertolino is on the board of directors of the Voluntary Action Center of Greater Las Vegas.

A 15-year resident of North Las Vegas, Miss Bertolino was employed as a part time instructor at UNLV and a writer for the Review-Journal and the North Las Vegas Valley Times where she was honored this past year by winning first place in the State of Nevada's journalism awards for best feature article.

Federal and local grants have been obtained by RSVP to continue this program through 1976.

This group places retired persons in volunteer jobs for government and private non-profit agencies. Among RSVP projects are information booths staffed by senior citizens at McCarran International Airport and the Clark County Courthouse.

Volunteers receive no pay but are reimbursed for meals and transportation.

"There are about 5,000 persons in this area aged 60 and over in good health who need to engage in meaningful activity using their special skills and talents," Jack Fagg stated.

"Through volunteer work, they can become useful citizens of our community."

All interested persons should contact Miss Bertolino at 382-3826, the RSVP headquarters and hospitality house. Information centers will be set up at the Jaycees State Fair, Aug. 20-24, to answer questions regarding RSVP and other senior citizen projects. Look for the cartoon poster with Henry and his friends flying high above the Senior Citizens Booth at the Jaycees Fair.

**Birth Certificates Required**

Children entering kindergarten for the coming school year, and first graders who have not previously attended school in Clark County, will be required to present birth certificates or other proof of date of birth.

Birth certificates for children born in Clark County from 1955 to the present can be secured at the Clark County Health Department, 625 Shadow Lane, Las Vegas. The fee is \$2.00.

Children born in other states should apply for birth certificates from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state capitol.

Children must be five and six years old by September 30, 1975, to enter kindergarten and first grade, respectively.

All kindergarten enrollees should be accompanied by a parent or an adult who is conversant with the child's birthdate, status and history of health, and other personal information. It is imperative that every kindergarten child seeking enrollment present a birth certificate or other satisfactory proof of age (hospital certificate, baptismal record or passport).

**ON THE MOVE**



**AARON WILLIAMS, County Commissioner**

Aaron Williams, a tireless worker and a breed definitely one of a kind, graduated from Harmony H.S., in Tatum Texas, and got two years of schooling at Butler College, Tyler, Tex. and Aaron agonized in deciding whether to settle for hat-and-hand-tongue-in-cheek economic and social situation was expressly tailored for blacks (1939) at that time in Texas or make tracks north.

He chose the latter. He spent three and a half years in the South Pacific with the U.S. Army in WW II.

After that he treked to Detroit, Mich., and started work as a laborer with the Midland Steel Corp. He was promoted to crane hooker, material checker. He was the first black in the 25 year history of the plant to become a time-keeper. He was eventually promoted to foreman. When he resigned to open his own supermarket, he had become assistant superintendent.

He struggled with this business for five years, after which he moved to Las Vegas.

He began his career here as a porter at the Silver Slipper. Later he held down two jobs-- bus boy by night at the Sahara and an orderly by day at the Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital (SNMH).

Williams was the first Black elected to a local municipal position in the history of Nevada when he gained a seat on the North Las Vegas City Council in 1968. He served in that capacity until he was elected to the Clark County Commission in 1971.

He started work for the REECO Corp. as a clerk. His rise with the company has not been exactly meteoric; however' in 13 years with the climb has been from clerk, to senior clerk, clerk supervisor, material control agent, buyer, and for the past eight years he has held the position of senior buyer.

Along with his duties as County Commissioner & his duties at REECO, Williams is active as the second vice president of the local branch of the NAACP, second vice president of the Nevada Lung Association, an Optimist Club member, a member of the National Black Caucus, a Clark County Democratic Central Committee member, a member of the board of directors of the Airport Authority, and director of the Las Vegas Valley Water District.

He also supports seven little league baseball teams, director of the Sanitation District, assistant administrator of the Affirmative Action Program of REECO, chairman of the Human Resources Committee for consolidation, a Police Commission member and a trustee for Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital.

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