

THE SUNDAY VALLEY TIMES Sept. 11, 1983

AS WE SEE IT

Jesse Jackson—Not To Be Dismissed Easily

The Rev. Jesse Jackson is a spellbinder. He also is a politician who, if he were white, might well run off with the Democratic presidential nomination next year.

On his third Las Vegas visit he also demonstrated that he's an excellent showman.

In fact, his appearance here at Cashman Field Friday night was the best show in town.

Unfortunately, he didn't draw too well.

The estimates ranged from about 1,600 to 2,300. It looked rather sparse in the 10,000-seat Cashman stadium.

THERE WERE almost more blacks at the Pryor-Arguello championship fight at Caesars Palace, and Rev. Jackson himself took good-humored note of that event.

Nevertheless, his appearance under the sponsorship of the year-old Nevada Black Chamber of Commerce signaled that the Black Chamber now is a force to be reckoned with here.

The Black Chamber's accusations that Democratic Party officials had failed to pitch in and help promote the appearance of the nearly announced Democratic presidential candidate shook the Democratic Party badly.

One black leader said, "It was a case of hitting the donkey over the head with a two-by-four. We had to get its attention. Unfortunately, we did it too late."

Despite a gubernatorial proclamation and finally some fund-raising help from Democratic wheelhorse Bob Smith, Black Chamber leaders feel privately that the Democratic leadership in the state "went to the bushes on us."

SOMEHOW, THEY all developed "conflicts and prior commitments," said a Black Chamber leader.

With two major exceptions, there was not a single top Democrat there, much less leading white Democratic officeholders.

Mr. Adams, the Reno attorney who is state Democratic Party chief, was instrumental in first inviting Rev. Jackson and later talking to him personally about his visit here as they both boarded a plane in Detroit after the Democratic convention there.

"**WE SUSPECT** the problem," said one Black Chamber official privately, "was they didn't want to have their pictures taken with Jackson, or be tied to his more strident image."

That was not so, however, with Grant Sawyer, who was called upon by a black leader to help out and later became Gov. Bryan's official representative.

The former two-term Governor, now Democratic National Committeeman for Nevada, has long been an outspoken advocate of equal rights.

Gov. Sawyer said he'd be there to introduce Rev. Jackson and he kept his word. He held nothing back. It was not a lukewarm introduction, nor a perfunctory one. It was a strong, warm and highly complimentary one.

And, Clark County Democratic Party Chairman Charlie Waterman, who earlier had been mad as a wet hen about the

Black Chamber's criticism, also was on hand with a flock of voter registrars, including his wife.

BY THE TIME the three-hour event was over, the bearded, white-haired Mr. Waterman was out on the field, arms locked on high with Rev. Jackson himself, and swaying back and forth with a crowd singing "we shall overcome."

Is there any breach between the Democrats and the Black Chamber because of the accusations surrounding the event?

Probably not. If anything the Black Chamber emerged from all this more widely recognized as perhaps the strongest black organization in Southern Nevada, possibly even more so than the strife-torn NAACP and its dubious leadership.

Just how strong a force the blacks can really be at the polls was brought home to the crowd by Rev. Jackson himself.

He pointed out that of the more than 55,000 blacks here fewer than 6,000 of the estimated 20,000 eligible are registered to vote.

DRESSED IN HIS usual tieless, almost para-military dark shirt and pants, in sharp contrast to the three-piece suit he wore while traveling here first class by plane, the Rev. Jackson repeatedly hammered home the message of registration.

In almost Billy Graham-like style, seeking converts, he asked those not registered to stand up, come from their seats down onto the Cashman diamond and follow guides out to the registrars. More than 100 did so.

Those tending to underestimate or brush off the Rev. Jackson as only a shooting star are making a mistake. They should see him in person.

He is no longer just a clergyman head of a certain faction of blacks. He's a national political figure — one of enormous energy, charisma, excitement, personal magnetism and skill.

UNLIKE SO MANY white politicians who are uncertain of themselves, Jesse Jackson is totally in command — of himself and his constituency. He knows his audience — how to maneuver it, and make it respond like a machine.

There's a tinge of the revolutionary leader in him. But he is not as strident and arrogant in person as he appears to be on television, where we all too often see only those short clips of his shouting thrusts.

He is a polished speaker from whom rolls a mixture of litany, simile and almost poetic aliteration. Again and again he yelled that unregistered blacks are "rocks just laying around," and the audience sang it back to him.

Granted, he gave Las Vegas blacks, and the handful of whites who were there, his pat speech, probably honed and repeated hundreds of times. But there's probably not a speech writer or politician in Washington who could match him.

He tells blacks that they've been told so long and often that they're the minority, they believe it. But, he points out,



RECENTLY the Joe Louis Chapter 33, Disabled American Veterans presented the Joe Louis Humanitarian of the Year Award, in the form of a plaque, citation and service cap, to Boxing's premier promoter Don King. In the absence of Don King, his son Carl, accepted the award during a boxing press conference at the Showboat Hotel. Participating in the ceremonies, (L-R, standing) were: Alfred Gleghorn, Chapter Commander; Adjutant Filip F. Johnson; First Junior Vice Commander Tyrone Davis; and seated Mel Selarzar, Publicity Director, Nevada Chapters.

"I am Somebody! Respect me. Protect me. Never neglect me. I am God's child. If my mind can conceive it and my heart can believe it, I know I can achieve it. Down with dope! Up with hope! I am Somebody!"

Jesse L. Jackson

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together with women, Hispanics and teenage voters, blacks are the "new minority."

JESSE JACKSON came to Las Vegas not to urge marches down the Strip, but rather to say that blacks can gain what they want through the ballot box.

"We don't have to explode through riots to be heard," he cautioned.

"You may have been born in the slum, but the slum doesn't have to be in you," he said.

"Let's turn to each other and not on each other," he sang.

"We must save the whole nation to save ourselves," he reasoned.

"WE'VE GOT freedom to live

anywhere... But freedom without equality is like the right to dive into a swimming pool without any water in it," he explained.

And, "When you do your best, God will do the rest," he lectured.

By the time it was over, Jesse Jackson had 'em in the palm of his hands and many in the crowd were singing "Run, Jesse, run in '84."

Instead of saying "I don't care" whether Jesse Jackson runs or nor, as the national chief of the GOP said here last week, the Republicans should climb down off their high horse and start taking lessons from one Jesse L. Jackson. He's not to be dismissed so cavalierly.