

# Education

## SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

### National Vocational Education Week

Each year, the nation sets aside a special time to recognize and honor vocational teachers and students. This year, the week of February 10-15 has been designated as National Vocational Education Week. Special events will take place at the Area Technical Trade Center and the Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center. On February 10, SNVTC held a special event to honor Raymond L. Sturm, who was the Director of Vocational Education for Clark County for a number of years. Under his leadership,

the concept of a regional vocational school was initiated, a facility designed, the building staffed, students recruited, and a premier school opened which has been a "lighthouse" school for vocational education over the past two decades. Visitors from across the nation who have toured this facility and viewed the programs went home to duplicate the instructional program which they had observed. The Raymond L. Sturm annex will be named and dedicated in his honor.

This is only one of the many programs which will recognize outstanding

educators who have contributed to the growth of America and its prominence through the delivery of vocational education instruction to thousands of students during the past eighty years. We so often, as individuals, consider vocational training as a program designed for those students who cannot attend college. Nothing could be farther from the actual truth. Vocational education has been, and continues to be, an instructional activity designed to acquaint students with specific job entry level skills. Many students have a career interest in one of the technical fields and never intend to attend a college or university program. They have selected to enter the world of work and through their high school training, advance in the company or industry where they are employed. They achieve success measured in equal terms with a college graduate. They provide a service which is essential to America's continued prosperity. They offer to each of us a skill which we ourselves have difficulty imitating.

This time of honor and recognition for vocational education is well deserved. It is a time when students can take ample pride in a skill which they have developed through their high school training. They can leave our comprehensive high schools or other specialized schools knowing that some can repair refrigeration units. Others can maintain automobiles and keep us on the move in a mobile society. There are culinary arts students who prepare exquisite and lavish buffets. This list of accomplishments continues. A few years ago, I heard a prominent congressman state that America's growth to world prominence had been developed through the hands of vocational education students. As this week continues, those students who have selected to receive their occupational training at the high school level, junior college, or community college level will be recognized. Teachers will be

### Western High School Celebrates Black History Week

In celebration of Black History Week, Feb. 10-14, Western High School has planned activities for each day throughout the week. Additionally, readings honoring notable black people will be read over the school intercom each morning. Black History Grams will be on sale each day and an art display by students will be featured in the Student Center.

Thursday, Feb. 13: Dress Up Day. Students will wear fancy attire during the regular school day in honor of Black History.

Black History Luncheon. "Soul food" dishes will be served to Western staff and invited guests in room 124 from 11 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 14: Music Appreciation Day. KCEP Radio personalities will be at the school to distribute and autograph free albums for all students during both lunch periods, 11:05 a.m. to 12:40 p.m.

### School Readiness Confab set for Mar. 5

The Third Annual Readiness Conference for Clark County School District students will be held Mar. 5, from noon until 5 p.m. at the Union Plaza Hotel.

The conference is one aspect of the Job Incentives for Nevada's Graduates (JING) Program, and is designed for seniors who need training to obtain employment and to retain a job. Approximately 350 students and 50 support staff members will participate in instructional seminars, contests, and a career fair.

honored and parents can feel the pride in the accomplishments of their students and their schools.

The Clark County School District has supported vocational education since its inception in 1956. Ray Sturm, Clayton Farnsworth, and literally thousands of teachers have made a successful program. National Vocational Education Week is a time to honor students and staff, but more importantly, it is a time to recognize the significance of this program to all of education.

### "THE REPORT CARD"

#### Black History Month

Yvonne Atkinson



February has been declared as National Black History Month. Across this nation, activities to recognize the contributions made by black scholars, scientists, government leaders, and involved citizens will be held. This is more than just a time of special events. It is more than a time when we hold formal presentations. It is more than a time when we identify and recognize men and women who have contributed to the American dream. It is a time when all of us can take pride in the accomplishments of those who have forged a new path for America and to take special pride in the contributions being made today by black men and women who have taken their place in every level of society.

Black History Month must then be three things. First, it must be a time when we properly acknowledge literally thousands of our ancestors who have made significant contributions to the community and country. I have often been surprised at the lack of information the community possesses about its national Black leaders. But when you consider that we have not had occasion to call special attention to these people, the answer is obvious. Across America, this month we take time to single out those who have sometimes been forgotten and lost in history.

The second phase of this month goes with properly emphasizing the importance of the Black culture in American society. America has been and continues to be, a "melting pot" for all races. The melting pot concept should never, and must never, eliminate the individuality and uniqueness of the individual. The proud heritage that we all have

stands as a strength for this country. America takes its prominence from the fact that we are individuals bound together by a single purpose. Black History month gives all of us a chance to identify with the accomplishments of Black men and women who have labored for over 200 years to create a better America, and to emphasize the concept of a nation of over 200,000,000 proud people.

The third significance for Black History month comes in our own personal commitment to ourselves. This is a time to learn from others, to seize upon opportunities, and to move forward. During the past two decades, I have seen improvement in employment practices, housing, desegregation of schools, and numerous other areas where barriers have been broken or eliminated, but we do not have a utopian situation. The school dropout rate for Blacks is excessively high. The unemployment rate in many cities is at crisis proportion, and many members of our Black community, because of past barriers, have not been able to meet their full potential and take their place in the American mainstream.

Black History month is a time to remember, a time to recognize, and a time to plan for the future. New barriers must be torn down, old barriers that remain must be bridged. Black History Month is not just for Blacks. It is for all Americans because wherever a barrier is found, it will affect not one race, nationality, or creed, but all. Where injustice lives, it affects everyone. Where poverty is allowed to exist, all are subjected to the problems that this brings. Where discrimination holds

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