

THE NAACP AND YOU!



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



-NAACP Mid-Year Membership Drive-

The Las Vegas branch has set a goal of 2,000 NAACP members before the end of 1987. This goal can be realized if everyone who reads this column would see themselves as a writer of NAACP membership for his or her family and then come into the NAACP office and sign up. Don't continue to put off what you know deep down in your heart that you should have done a long time ago. Don't be guilty as some of your friends are who spend most of their time sitting around talking about what Black people are not

doing. Why don't you break away from that state of do nothingism and begin working for the greatest organization ever established by man. You have no idea what joy and fulfillment you will receive when you suddenly realize that you have the ability to help someone within you. Why don't you call or come into the NAACP office and become a volunteer today? Who knows, the family you help maybe your own.

-NAACP Meets Sunday July 12-

The regular monthly meeting of the Las Vegas

branch NAACP will be held Sunday, July 12 in the branch office, located at 940 W. Owens Ave. A report will be made by the delegates to the 78th Annual NAACP Convention held in New York City from July 5th thru July 9th. Also the Cosmetiques of Las Vegas will present a check (donation) to the branch. Each member who attends is asked to bring a covered dish or drinks in support of this pot luck reception. Many of you have not been in attendance at a NAACP meeting in a long time. Only if you will attend, then will you find out what you have been missing. The meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m. and last until 6:00 p.m. Other reports to be given are, but not limited to: the Clark County School District, the Las Vegas City Housing Authority, the recently held Job Fair, the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, the Job Bank and Complaint Committee. The Struggle: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Join the NAACP Today, P.O. Box 4887, Las Vegas, NV 89127.

Civil Rights Journal

*A News Service of the United Church of Christ
Commission for Racial Justice*

THE ROBERTSONS: Strength in the Face of Racial Violence

The Robertsons look like an average African American family. To meet them you would not know that this ordinary family has been forced, by extreme circumstances, to become extraordinary, just to insure their survival. A target of continuous racially motivated violence in Brooklyn, New York, they refused to submit to the terrorism, but rather, vowed to stand together to change the racist environment in which they lived. And now, because of the actions of the Robertsons, a significant first step has been made which will benefit the whole community.

It began in March of 1981 when a white policeman put a gun to the head of Dario, one of the Robertsons' five sons. He was only 13 years old then and running off to the recreation center he attended every day after school. But the police officer saw only that he was running

and that he was Black. As his teachers and fellow students screamed for them to stop, the officers pulled a gun, hand-cuffed the frightened youth, and hauled him off to the station house. Only because Dario halted immediately at the police command, did he not become yet another statistic in the spiraling rate of young African American men killed by white police officers. . . .

When Mr. Robertson went to see about his son the officers cursed the father and roughed him up. No arrest was made and the police subsequently admitted that they had made a mistake. But admissions of error are useless to Dario, who will forever be haunted by the image of that gun to his head.

The family soon moved to an affordable neighborhood in another section of Brooklyn — not an easy thing for a family of seven to find

in New York. The problem was, the Robertsons were the first Black family on the block. Racist names were hurled at them every time they left home. The all-white block association vowed to force their removal. One night someone even slithered into their yard and spray painted their house to show, Mrs. Robertson was told, "Where the niggers live." And even after seven years the paint stains remain.

Of course, none of this is new. Racist violence and police brutality is a fact of life in most African American communities. What is different about this case is the strength and determination of the family. They became like a small army, sitting around the kitchen table, parents and children, writing letters together to whoever they thought might listen, and taking shifts guarding their house.

Why you might ask, did they stay and fight? "Because," says Mrs. Robertson, "No one should be allowed to force us to move. And no one should be forced to live like this. We are a decent, law-abiding family, and decent housing is impossible to find for a low-income family like ours. The older boys were strengthened by what they had to fight. But now my husband and I are fighting for the sons who are still coming up. My youngest is now 2. We're in this fight for our lives."

There is good news, however. A milestone has been reached in the neighborhood. Some of the Robertsons' white neighbors worn out themselves by the tense environment they created, have begun to come forward. The main instigator has moved away and now one hundred-fifty of her neighbors have signed a petition, initiated by Mrs. Robertson, to form a new block association that will be open to all. As she says, "We are going to build a unified association where everyone is welcome. No one says you have to like or break bread together, but we should at least respect one another."

The Robertsons' undaunted courage has forced an entire neighborhood to change. Next week we will tell you more about them and about the first meeting of this new community group which has begun to bring the neighborhood together.



Fire eaters and snake acts... A table top tap dancer on roller skates... A tennis ball juggling break dancer? Sounds incredible? No, just sounds like the West Las Vegas Library's annual Gong Show which by tradition features the untraditional. The fourth annual Gong Show is scheduled for (Saturday) July 25 at 6 PM in Heritage Hall, 932 W. Owens Avenue. Pictured above is a singing act featured at the third annual Gong Show.

MISSION

From Page 7

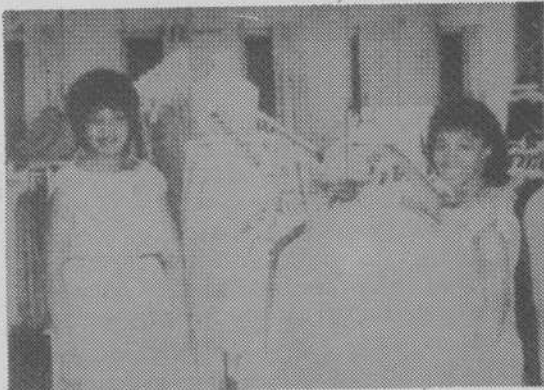
In 1982, Bethany Baptist Church in Brooklyn raised \$1 million to buy and renovate a dilapidated former A&P site. With their pooled funds, they built Harvest Manor restaurant in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is run by church members and staffed by over 50 employees.

In Indiana, Rev. L. James Perry considers it a personal mission to do all he can to

help blacks create and operate their own businesses. He is pastor of the Greater St. James AME Church in Gary, and is also the owner of a very successful pharmacy in South Bend, which he opened in 1953. Acclaimed an outstanding businessman, Rev. Perry is looked on as an inspiration to blacks who desire to start their own businesses. He devotes much of his time to encouraging young people to complete high school and

pursue business careers.

More and more pastors agree with John Walker's claim that "the church's obligation extends beyond conducting Sunday services, midweek services, and prayer meetings." Increasing numbers of the clergy are seeing the church as an "economic catalyst," with the power to guide and coax blacks to capitalize on the assets and resources already existing within their communities.



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