

**FROM THE DESK OF GWEN WALKER
GREAT KING IN BLACK HISTORY**

**CHAKA(TSHAKA)
1787-1828**

Chaka was an illegitimate child who was abandoned by his father, Zenzangakona and he brooded over this and the taunts of other children who called him a coward; and because of this he wandered from tribe to tribe trying to find acceptance. As an adult he conditioned himself to be a great warrior and to display the courage that would eradicate his childhood fears.

Chaka was chief of the Zulua and made himself known throughout Europe and South Africa by his military tactics. In 25 years he conquered vast numbers to make himself master of Natal. If Chaka gave an order, it was carried out even if it meant death to hundreds of people. If one of his warriors returned home without his weapons, he was executed without a trial.

Through the aid of his father's rival, Dingiswayo, Chaka became the leader of the Mtetwas tribe. He developed more military skills and



discipline that he used to unite the remaining tribes of Natal.

Chaka was assassinated in 1828 by his own people.

--See your local video rental store to rent both parts of the story of this great king; you will remain on the edge of your seat throughout the movie.

***Please visit our new West Las Vegas Library for more black history.*

**BENI CASSELLE GALLERY
DEDICATED IN WEST
LAS VEGAS LIBRARY**

On February 1, the new West Las Vegas Library, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd., dedicated its gallery to the late Beni Casselle, well known local Black artist, with a reception from 7 to 9 p.m. An exhibit of his work in the gallery which now bears his name has been on display since January 2 and will continue through March 5.

Also in February, Black History Month will be observed by the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District with several other events.

From Casselle's prolific work, the exhibit includes selections from series that he produced, including "hats of Gbarnga," "Isis," "Jazz Giants," and "Finite Body/ Infinite Soul." Both subject and style of Casselle's work are based on images and symbols of Black heritage. His portraits, for example, evoke African masks with their strong geometry and coloration.

An American of Ethiopian ancestry, Casselle was born on the second floor of his father's mortuary in Philadelphia, July 13, 1929. He died Feb. 19, 1986. A lifelong artist, he deferred his creativity for many years while pursuing a career in marketing. His widow, Corene, holds a Ph.D. and is an educator in Las Vegas. When she was appointed an education advisor to Liberia in 1979, Casselle and their children accompanied her and lived there for two and a half years. Some of the paintings of that intensely creative period of Casselle the artist will be in the exhibit.

Other Black History events include special exhibits entitled "Black History Is Gold," prepared by Ethnic Expo, the Second Baptist Church and Rancho High seniors, which will be displayed informally in most branches of LV-CCLD as space allows. The exhibit includes photos and 103 facts about Black achievement.

The Library District will also screen "Paul Robeson: Tribute to an Artist," a movie about the great Black performer, at 3 p.m., Feb. 24, at the West Las Vegas Library; and 2 p.m., Feb. 26 in the Clark County Library auditorium, 1401 E. Flamingo Road. And the West Las Vegas Library will have a Black Heritage Film Festival, including "Anasi, the Spider," "The Legend of John Henry," and "A Story, A Story," Sat., Feb. 11 at noon in the Young People's Library.

**DANCE ENSEMBLE OPENS CITY OF
LAS VEGAS BLACK HERITAGE
MONTH CELEBRATIONS**

The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble will perform at 8 p.m. Friday, February 10 at the Charleston Heights Arts Center, 800 South Brush, as part of the City's Black Heritage Month celebrations.

The Denver-based dance ensemble has gained national recognition for its outstanding energy and versatility in dance performances throughout the world. Critics have called the group energetic, jazzy and high-spirited and they have the distinction of being Colorado's first full-time, salaried professional modern repertory dance company. The Seattle Times wrote "Robinson has developed a remarkable troupe

Africa and throughout the United States. In addition to works by Cleo Parker Robinson, the Ensemble performs dance pieces choreographed by Chuck Davis, Barbara Gardner, Mischa Morawski, Eleo Pomare, Rod Rodgers and others.

Among its credits, the company was included in the Gordon Parks Special on West German Public Television and was one of two American companies to represent Black dance in the Second Annual World Black and African Festival of Art and Culture. They were also featured in "Family Reunion: Americans at FESTAC," a documentary film on the festival which was shown in 74



Cleo Parker Robinson

... She brings freshness, discipline and commitment to her choreography."

Since starting in the Model Cities Workshop for the Cultural Arts in 1971, they have performed and offered workshops in Central America,

countries throughout the world, and produced by Emmy award winner Dick Young. In addition, the group has been highlighted in Essence, Ebony and National Geographic.

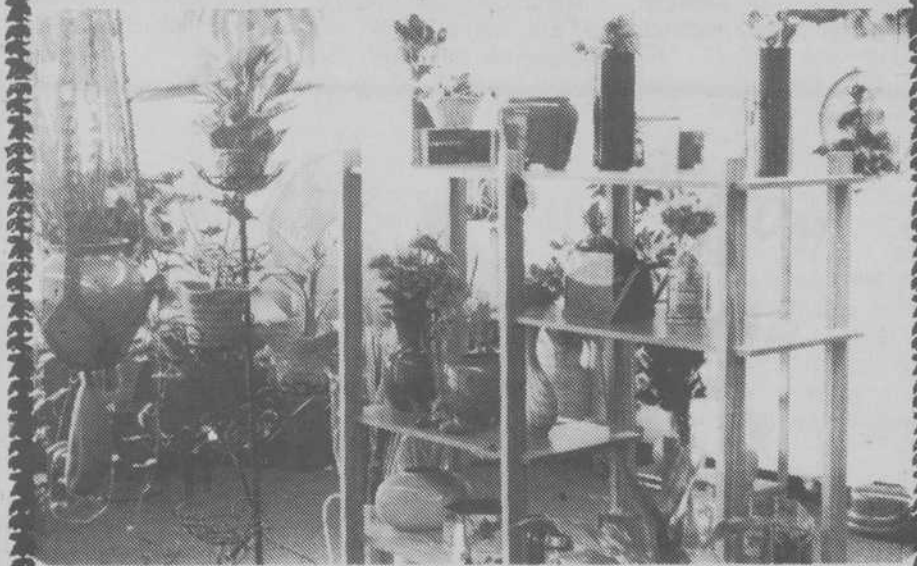
In May 1979, the ensemble made its successful New York debut as the first company outside of New York to perform in the Harlem Cultural Council's Dance-mobile at Symphony Space.

This program is presented by the Cultural and Community Affairs Division of the City of Las Vegas Department of Parks and Leisure Activities and is funded, in part, through a grant from the Nevada State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students, seniors and handicapped.

For more information call the Center at 386-6383.

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