

# Man's Color Blind Heroics Recognized

## The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis

It was 14 years ago, January 19, 1975 that an early-morning fire in the East New York section of Brooklyn was responded to by engine companies from the New York City Fire Department. A near tragedy was averted when the fire was extinguished and three black infant sisters were saved from certain death.

One of those whose life was spared was three-year old Lisa Greene. Since the fire, as she grew up, Lisa longed to know the identity of the fireman who saved her life. During all those years since then she carried with her the desire to eventually meet her rescuer.

Finally, in her senior year at Brooklyn's predominantly-black Jefferson High School, at age eighteen, Lisa began a six-month quest to find the man responsible for saving her life. When she located him, living in retirement in Las Vegas, Nevada, she sent him an invitation to attend her high school graduation. Marvin Bunch, 67, was moved to tears by Lisa's invitation and he readily accepted her offer.

Said Lisa in a recent interview with the New York Daily News, "I never really met him and I have no memory at all of the fire. But I have a future -- I'm going to college -- and it's all because of him."

Lisa remembers absolutely nothing about the fire, but Bunch has a vivid recollection of what happened. He can recall almost every detail. In an exclusive interview with me from his Las Vegas home, which he shares with wife Madeline, Bunch recounted the incident. "I'd have to say it was actually fate that placed me at the fire station where I was stationed when we got the call to respond to this particular fire," he said. Firemen were being rotated in and out of heavy fire areas then in effect, Bunch had not anticipated being sent to that particular fire station on that fateful day. But he was. Here's his account of what happened when his unit responded to the alarm.

"As we approached the building at 445 Ashford Street in Brooklyn, heavy smoke was banking down into the street and flames were showing at the front windows



Ray Willis

so we knew we had a 'good job'. There were people in the stairwell screaming and hollering that there were children on the second floor."

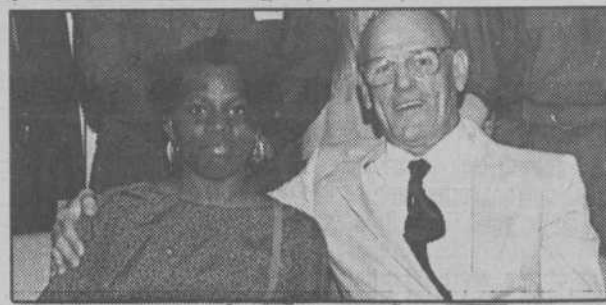
Bunch continued, "As I ascended the stairs I could hear heavy scratching at the door and a lot of commotion coming from the kids trapped inside. I sized up the situation pretty quickly and I knew right then and there if we had any chance at all of saving the children's lives we couldn't open the door because it would pull the fire around behind and kill them."

"So we got the water on the line and knocked the fire down first. With my mask and heavy equipment I got on my hands and knees and crawled along on the floor searching for the children. I felt something soft make contact with my boot."

"I reached down and picked up a form and then crawled out of the apartment. Once I got to the outside I passed the infant (Lisa) to another fireman who took her to the hospital."

Lisa had to be resuscitated, was in critical condition for two weeks, and hospitalized for three months. Despite being badly

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Lisa Green & Fireman Marvin Bunch

## Verlia Grice Davis Elected Chairperson As Agency Celebrates Anniversary

Verlia Grice Davis has been elected the new Chairperson of the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County (EOB). Ms. Davis, elected by the Board of Directors on June 28, 1989 is EOB's 16th Chairperson since the Agency was incorporated in August 1964. She has been a member of the Board since March 1983, representing the NAACP.

Ms. Davis is a former school teacher and also a former employee of the Economic Opportunity Board. She currently is an Administrator with Clark County Social Services. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas and a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Ms. Davis is an active member of the Clark County Community and was a candidate for University Board of Regents in 1988.

Davis said she considers it a challenge to chair the Economic Opportunity Board at this particular time, because "It has been 25 years since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act, launched the 'War on Poverty'". In Clark County the Economic Opportunity Board will reaffirm its commitment to serving the needy and Davis said she is personally pleased "to have the opportunity to lead the Board of

Directors in carrying out that commitment. When one out of every five children in America still live in poverty and when America must admit that it has the highest percentage of working poor since 1968, we cannot declare the War on Poverty won." Ms. Davis noted that poverty is at the root of our drug problems and our crime problems, and "we must continue to work toward solving those problems."

## Third Annual Rose Awards Presented July 15

The Third Annual Rose Awards, presented by the Professional Black Women's Alliance, was held at the Moulin Rouge on Sat., July 15.

The theme for this year's presentation was "Black Women - Our Role, the Year 2000."

Over 200 guests heard the program's moderators - Willa Bywaters-White, Clark County School District psychologist; Brenda Williams, constituent services representative for Sen. Richard Bryan; and Jean Childs, director of the E.O.B. Head Start Program - introduce this year's professional role models.

The 21 honorees, each of whom received a certificate of recognition and a black rose, were: Vera Sampson of the Juvenile Court Services; Francine Hall, State of Nevada Executive; Agnes Smith from the University Medical Center; Dorothy Smith, executive with the City of Las Vegas; Trudy Rainey, Personnel Director for the Reynolds Electrical & Engineering Co.; Gwen

Weekes-Rahner, a community volunteer; Dr. Patricia Butler from Clark County Community College; and Carolyn Haywood, a State Farm Insurance representative.

Also honored were: Jo Ann Johnson, florist and manager of Petals of McRoy floral shop; Wendy Nichols, a student; Virginia Brooks-Brewster from the State Securities Division; Trudy Meacham, owner of Mariella Exclusive Italian Fashions Shop; Carolyn Oats of the Hatchery Home; Helen Anderson, owner of Hamburger Heaven; Marie Jordan, librarian; Josephine Hubbard of the Federal Women's Program at Nellis Air Force Base; Ida Maxine Porter, owner of the Downtown Art & Gift Shops; Lula Mae Williams from the Western Coach Services; Millicent Dillworth from the U.S.M. Center; Barbara Jackson, Executive with the City of Las Vegas; and Charlene Mason, Youth Services Director with the Nevada Business Services.

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## PREMIERE "Minority Business Review"

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## F.Y.I.

"Minority Business Review" endeavors to expand the general public's awareness about minority entrepreneurship in our community.

The weekly format will consist of an interview with a minority entrepreneur doing business within the State of Nevada. Our guests will have an opportunity to provide details about their businesses, their affiliates as well as about themselves, in a manner that is open and informative. In addition, a weekly "update" on points of interest to the minority entrepreneur will be provided.

The segment for the last Sunday of each month will consist of an open discussion with one or more representative(s) from the government and corporate sectors, financial institutions, business experts and consultants.

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