

## Major Hotel Casinos--Is There Room At The Top For Blacks?

### The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis



Ray Willis

Because of the uniqueness of Nevada, the Nevada Gaming Control Board and the State Gaming Commission have evolved into regulatory agencies over the gaming industry which have virtual absolute power and authority. Traditionally, positions on the gaming boards have been a career ladder into top executive positions within the gaming industry.

Since gaming was established in Nevada, however, there has been only a single Black person, a certified public accountant, to be appointed to a position on the gaming board. Unfortunately, we will never know if he could have become the first Black chief hotel/casino executive, because he voluntarily resigned before his term expired.

Thus, we can only speculate what his chances would have been to become the first black head of a major strip hotel resort.

To be sure, a few Blacks have climbed the ladder of success within the gaming industry and have been elevated to middle management positions. Some even have "the power of the pen" to sign comps and extend hotel privileges on their own authority. But, can it truly be said that any of these individuals are key employees? I think not.

With the passage of a "cooling off" law in the 1987 Nevada Legislature, it will not be possible in the future for gaming board and commission members to become casino officers without waiting out for a specified period of time. So some of the advantages of

having those positions have been watered down for those serving in the future.

What it means is that if there is ever another Black appointee to a gaming board, he or she will have a trying time entering the gaming industry at a high level once their term expires. Of course those same restrictions would apply to all other members of the gaming board.

Fortunately, there are other avenues to corporate business power in Nevada gaming and the vast majority of our present corporate officers got there through some of these other means. One way is to gain direct control of a major source to finance buying a hotel-casino--such as the Teamster's Pension Fund.

Another way is to work your way up the corporate ladder in a company based outside of Nevada, then to get appointed to transfer and head up a Nevada operation.

Yet another way is to become a legal consultant or financial consultant to major gaming business.

Whichever of these avenues you look at, it is clear that a Black person would find it difficult to penetrate the inner circle of the power elite to get a shot at

## Local Muslim Leader Addresses M.A.P.A. Conference

Mujahid Ramadan, Resident Imam of Masjid Muhammad Las Vegas, has been invited to speak on issues of the African-American Political Concerns, at the National Muslim American Political Association (M.A.P.A.) Conference, August 4-6, in Washington, D.C.

Imam Ramadan states, "It is a blessing and honor to have been selected to address such a distinguished audience from both the

national African-American community and Muslim community." His topic "The African-American Political Concerns" is timely, due to the honoring of the slain African-American Muslim leader and political activist, Al Hajj Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X).

Others being honored are: Rep. John Conyers (MI), Rep. Walter Fauntroy (D.C.), Rep. Merv Dymally (CA), and Judge Abdus-Shakoor (MI).

## Westside School Alumni Association Plans Second Reunion

by H.P. "Fitz" Fitzgerald

The advisory council of the Westside School Alumni Association has organized a planning committee for its second reunion, which is scheduled for the last weekend in May, 1990 in Las Vegas. The first reunion of the organization drew more than 300 former administrators, teachers and students from throughout the country. The 1990 reunion will be a three-day event which will run Friday through Sunday, it is planned.

Some alumni members of the planning committee are Betty Henderson, alumni association advisory council chairperson; Deborah Moore; Henry Moore; J. David Hoggard, Sr.; George Ward;

ownership or officership in a major hotel casino. Yet, in my estimation, something on this other will have to happen -- and I believe it will, eventually.

It's going to take someone truly visionary to elevate a capable Black as a key resort executive -- and I think such a person exists somewhere in corporate America right now.

Because a majority of our casinos are corporate-owned, the idea of single ownership is remote anyway. But the idea of a highly-skilled professional Black person becoming a top executive of a Nevada casino is not inconceivable.

Who would have thought it possible that Blacks would one day own a professional basketball team such as the Denver Nuggets? Well today that has become a reality.

Having blacks in top management positions of Nevada casinos -- it's really not as improbable as you might think!

## DA's Office Appoints 1st Black Female Chief Deputy District Attorney

by Melanie

Johnnie B. Rawlinson was appointed Chief Deputy District Attorney by District Attorney Rex Bell in May. Rawlinson has filled S. Mahlon Edwards' vacancy after his appointment as County Counsel.



Johnnie B. Rawlinson

Rawlinson has been with the District Attorney's Office more than eight years and is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of North Carolina AG & Tech State University, the Alma Mater of Jesse Jackson. She graduated with distinction from McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento.

Rawlinson is the highest ranking black in Clark County, and is the first black female Chief Deputy in the County. She feels it is very gratifying to have worked her way up through the system within the organization.

Rawlinson brings with her almost nine years of experience in legal representation of the County and it's various agencies.

Rawlinson, who will be 37 in December, is married and has two daughters. She loves to read and plays softball and racquetball. She is active in the Junior League and a member of numerous community organizations.

located at 330 West Washington Avenue.

### THE SENTINEL-VOICE

Nevada's only black community newspaper  
Published every Thursday by the Brown Publishing Co.  
Inc., 1201 South Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
Telephone (702) 383-4030.

Serving Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City  
Sparks, Hawthorne, Henderson and Tonopah.

Betty Brown, President, Publisher & Editor; LeRoy Brown,  
Marketing Director; Willis Brown, Production; Don Snook, Graphics;  
Delores Feemster, Reno General Manager.

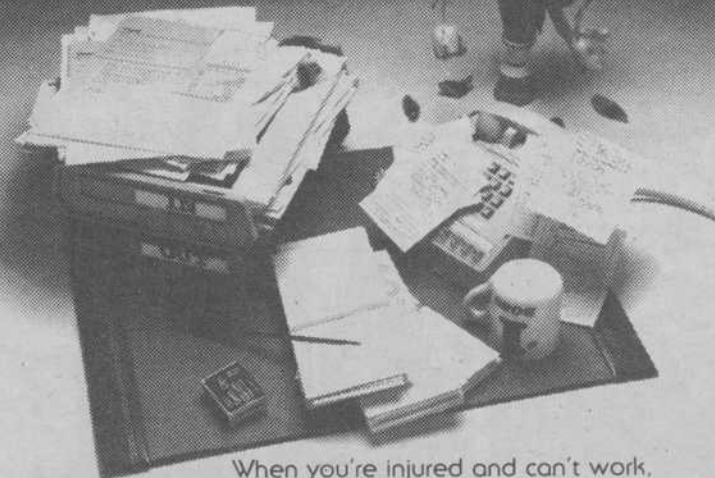
Members: National Newspaper Publishers Association  
West Coast Black Publishers Association.

This newspaper is audited by Community Papers  
Verification Service, 6225 University Avenue, Madison,  
W153705 (608) 238-7550.

Subscriptions payable in advance  
Six months \$15.00  
Twelve months \$25.00  
The rates apply to Continental United States only



## You miss out on more than a paycheck



When you're injured and can't work, you may lose benefits and pensions, the challenge of a job you enjoy, even social contact. Personal Injury Attorneys see that clients are compensated for all the frustrations and deprivations of being unable to work.



## JAMES ORAN PORTER

GENERAL PRACTICE EMPHASIZING  
PERSONAL INJURY & INSURANCE CLAIMS

330 So. 3rd St., Suite 990 Las Vegas, Nev. 89101  
385-3030