

Is KCEP A Black Radio Station?

The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis

Turn on KCEP-FM 88.1 radio station anytime night or day and you'll invariably hear some form of soul music emanating from the airwaves. That's because the station is an all-Black broadcast facility -- or is it?

Originally, KCEP was a fledgling station at best. It began under the tutelage of Mr. J. David Hoggard, Sr., former Executive Director of the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County, as a training base for black men and women interested in the pursuit of a career in broadcasting.

Operating sporadically and on a piecemeal basis, KCEP formerly had only 10 watts of power, less than that of a standard light bulb! Little wonder why it could only be heard on a limited basis of a mile or two beyond its base station in the Golden West Shopping Center (now Nucleus Plaza).

It operated like this for several years with only a dedicated cult-like following of individualists, longing for a variation to the kind of nondescript music heard on every other local radio station. Avid KCEP listeners living miles away went so far as to rig elaborate antenna systems at their homes in order to pull the KCEP's tepid signal.

Then it happened -- KCEP got its big break when it won approval from the Federal Communications Commission in the early '80's to erect a bigger tower and increase its power from 10 watts to a whopping 5,000 watts of radiating power. Enough power to propel its signal to within a 100 mile radius. Working feverishly, KCEP's loyal cadre of disc jockeys, engineers, volunteers and a



Ray Willis

few paid staff, including yours truly as general manager made history in 1983 when KCEP began broadcasting a much stronger stereo signal from its new base in the historic Westside School at 330 West Washington -- still its headquarters to this date.

Once the station's signal could be heard throughout Clark County, its audience got bigger, but so did its problems. Almost immediately there were complaints about one thing or another. "You're playing too much rap music. You're not playing enough gospel! You don't play enough oldies. You don't have enough local news! Your disc jockeys can't talk properly." And on and on...

As the station grew it also began to prosper financially. McDonald's Corporation took out a longterm underwriting agreement and other corporate and local sponsors followed suit.

Instead of being a liability to its licensee, EOB, it began to more than pay its own way. At this stage of the station's development there would be more detractors. Through it all, the station remained on an even keel and kept to its mission of providing entertainment and information for the

predominantly black residents of southern Nevada.

Which brings me to my main concern relative to the station. You see, contrary to what many believe, KCEP is not a black station per se. That's because its licensee, the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County, is not a black agency. EOB is an anti-poverty federally-funded agency which operates a myriad of government-sponsored programs such as Head Start and Senior Transportation.

Founded in the '60's, EOB was a non-black agency. It's first executive director was not black nor were most of its board members. Before the agency moved its headquarters to West Las Vegas it was even located in the vicinity of the Las Vegas Convention Center. That tells you something in and of itself.

Not that it will happen, but think about it as you tune in KCEP and listen with enjoyment to "For Women Only" or "Straight Talk" or any of the gospel or soul music offerings which can only be heard on this station -- that at any given moment the station's format is subject to change in much the same manner as the MoTown and More station did earlier this year.

Some may argue that the station doesn't serve them anyway -- that it has been given over to the young people because of the type of music played frequently on the station. Fact is, the reason so much younger/hipper music is played is because it's what pays the station's bills.

If you want KCEP to play more jazz, oldies, gospel or whatever, it's up to YOU collectively to let the station manager, and if necessary, the EOB board know what you prefer to hear. And, on top of that, be prepared to support the station. There's no doubt in my mind that the earning power of mature adults could move the station into a desired direction if enough people showed interest.

Since the station started as a training ground for would-be teen disc jockeys, it has continued to operate on much the same premise after its power boost.

Demographers say there are more than 70,000 blacks living in southern Nevada (meaning there must be at least 80,000). I would encourage every adult out there who wants KCEP to play more of a certain kind of music to get out a pen and paper right now. Write a let-

King Committee Sponsors Cultural Fund Raiser

In an effort to further expose Las Vegas and especially African American Las Vegas to the rich heritage and diverse culture of the Caribbean, the Las Vegas Chapter of the Dr. Martin Luther King Fund Raising Committee will sponsor an "After-Work Caribbean Cool Out" on Friday, November 10th from 6-9 p.m. at the Moulin Rouge, 900 West Bonanza Road.

This fund raiser will feature Caribbean Music and Videos. The host for the evening is the popular Las Vegas D.J. performing artist and entrepreneur, Stan "Rankin T" Tyrell.

ter to KCEP General Manager Rob Holiday, 330 West Washington Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89101. Tell him what you prefer to listen to and how you're prepared to support the station. In closing, ask Rob to acknowledge your letter with a personal reply.

Mail that letter off today. After all, we don't really know how much longer we have to call KCEP our very own.

Westside School Alumni Association Elects New Officers

By H.P. "Fitz" Fitzgerald

At a recent meeting, the Westside School Alumni Association elected officers for the 1990-1991 calendar year.

The newly elected officers include Dr. Betty Henderson, president; H.P. Fitzgerald, and James Council, vice chairmen; Judy Banks, secretary, George Ward, treasurer, and Robert For-

Tyrell is the owner of Caribbean Lifestyle on Las Vegas Boulevard, and announcer on KUNV's "Reggae Happenings" and an authority on Caribbean Music.

Both the King Committee and Tyrell feel this fund raiser will provide the perfect opportunity to entertain as well as allow Las Vegas to enjoy the diversity and almost instant seductive appeal of Caribbean Music.

Along with Reggae, Soca and Caribbean Music, the Cool-Out will feature videos of some of the Caribbean's hottest stars.

Tickets are \$5.00 and can be purchased by calling 870-3420 or at the Moulin Rouge the day of the event.

tson, sargent at arms. Committee chairman elected to plan the groups 1990 reunion are: H.P. Fitzgerald, publicity, Exie Davis, membership; Patricia Feaster, souvenir booklet; J. Davis Hoggard, Sr., program; Judy Banks, invitations and ticket sales, and Betty Henderson site arrangements.

The date, place, and time of the 1990 association reunion will be announced later. The group's first reunion which was held in 1988 drew more than 500 Westside School graduates, faculty, and administrators.

The next meeting of the association will be Saturday, November 4, 1989 at 7:00 p.m. in alumni room of the Westside School location at 330 West Washington Avenue.

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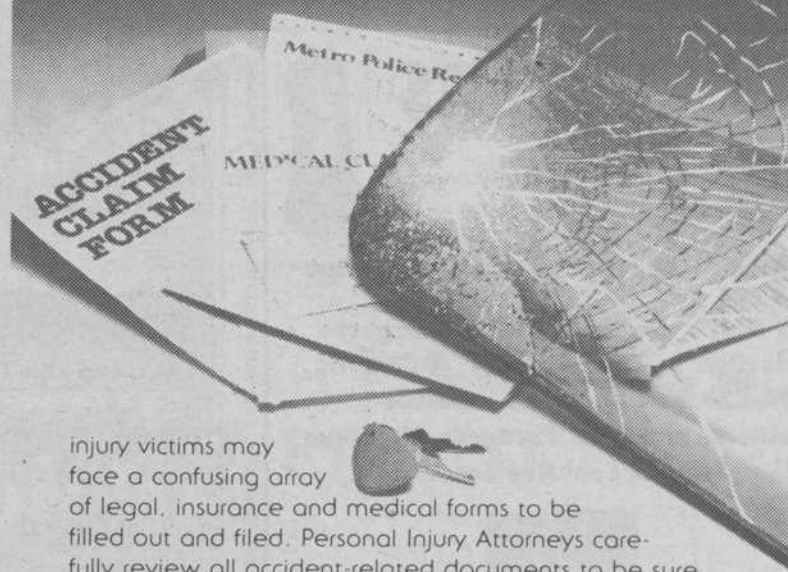
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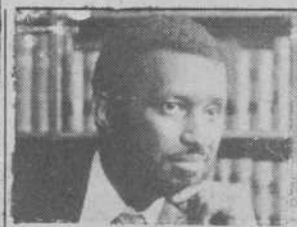


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