

Profiles Of Westside School Alumni Association Members

This is the ninth in a series of profiles of members of the Westside School Alumni Association members. The Westside School opened its doors in 1922 and closed down in 1969 when the Clark County School District was integrated. This writer began his Nevada education career at this school in 1947 as an art and building trades instructor.

The profile of the Association member this week is an alumn who achieved great success in her chosen field in spite of

and the speech pattern may well sound like a finely tuned musical instrument being played.

And that's all rap music is. An extension of the black experience through the use of skillful vocalizations which tend towards the harmonic. As a mature black adult, I admit to having been slow in accepting rap music. Now I'm a total convert, because rap represents the highest and best application ever to date of the black experience as expressed verbally.

To me, black talk is the sum total of our history and our experiences as a race of people now based here in America. We need to take pride in this unique aspect of the black experience that is culturally enriching and which serves as a unique vehicle for shared communication among our people.

My fondest hope is that we are able to deepen our appreciation of the power of the spoken as well as the written word--and that we never forget that knowledge is king.

hardships and handicaps. Her career began in the State of Alabama and she reached the height of her success in the State of Nevada, where she recently retired because of health reasons, but not before devoting more than 20 years of dedicated service to the cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas with the Clark County School District.

SUSIE MOODY PARKER - Susie Elliott Moody Parker received her Two Year Normal Teaching Certificate from Alabama State, now Alabama University, and her B.A. Degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with Dr. Holbert H. Hendrix, who was her advisor and role model, she told this writer during the interview.

Parker's teaching career began in Leesville, Louisiana, with brief teaching stints in the state of Washington. She then moved to Las Vegas where she became a substitute teacher and part-time bookkeeper, while raising her family and attending the University at Las Vegas to earn her A.B. Degree in Elementary Education. Her first substitute teaching position was at the Old Westside School. Working two part-time jobs and raising five children and educating them as a divorced head of the household parent was not easy, especially when wages were low and living conditions were not easy, even for two parents. But Parker was determined to succeed in her chosen field, and she did. Her fellow alumni association members salute Parker and wish her

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Discrimination Suit Filed Against School Board

The Las Vegas Alliance of Black School Educators, joining eight black parents and 13 black students, has filed papers with the Federal District Court charging the Clark County School District, Board of Trustees and Superintendent Brian Cram with systemwide racial discrimination and segregation.

The papers were filed Tuesday, February 20, 1990 in the lawsuit initiated by the Alliance when the Board of Trustees purged the school district of virtually all its top-ranking black administrators last spring. The papers recently filed substantially expand the issues to be tried in the federal court.

Specifically, the Revised Complaint submitted last Tuesday contends that the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Brian Cram have taken the following racially discriminatory actions to create and maintain systemwide racial segregation designed to benefit white students by placing the primary burden on black students:

1. Manipulating school attendance zones and feeder patterns to make student enrollments racially segregated;
2. Choosing sites for school construction and additions in a manner which in-

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Coaster Cornell Gunter Shot to Death

Singer Cornell Gunter, former member of the famed 50s rock group "The Coasters" and lead singer of the current group "Cornell Gunter's Coasters, was gunned down Monday morning as he sat in his car at Berg Street and Bourbon Way in North Las Vegas. Found slumped over the steering wheel of his car, he had been shot six times - twice in the chest - with a pistol, police said. There were 2 bullet holes in the windshield of the 1978 blue Camaro.

The shooting suspect has been described by North Las Vegas Police Lt. Gary Rainey as an African-American male between the age of 20 - 25 and 5-feet-ten inches to 6-feet tall. The suspect, who was seen running a short distance away apparently discarded his jacket and shoes. The jacket was described as a silver, satin-type with three thin black stripes down the arms and the words "Las Vegas Players Club" written on the front.

Lt. Rainey said robbery did not seem to be the motive, nor did he think the shooting was drug or gang related.

Gunter, who was in his 50s, grew up in Los Angeles, but

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The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis

African-Americans routinely go about their daily lives speaking two distinctly different languages without ever so much as blinking an eye.

The ease at which we use black jargon interchangeably with standard English is such that one could easily say we are bilingual.

The only major difference being that black talk has its roots in the English language itself, while foreign languages originate from the countries in which those tongues are spoken by natives.

Take, for example, a hypothetical, but reality-based story of two black teenage girls engaged in casual conversation about a boy they both like. It might go something like this: "Girl, I think Donya' is fineeeee. Have you noticed how that boy walk. He sweet, ain't he." And the other teenager responds, "You show is right. He someum' else. You show got that right."

To an outsider a conversation like this might easily be negatively construed due to cultural differences. I've often marveled, for instance, at how foreign-born persons can get away with butchering the King's English and still be considered cute in doing so, while a black person under similar circumstances is put down because of the way he or she talks.

On the other side of the spectrum, it's not just a coincidence that comedians like Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor and even Bill Cosby often mimic the way caucasians talk. These comical imitations highlight how bland standard spoken English is as opposed to how



Ray E. Willis

blacks speak the language.

Among blacks at all levels you will find those who talk black all the time, rarely using standard English, because that's the way they feel comfortable communicating verbally. While other blacks, who speak "The King's English," are often criticized for having their noses up in the air because of their proper speech.

Then there are those blacks who freely float from so-called proper English to black talk with complete freedom and ease. Those, in my opinion, are the truly gifted ones--because they are able to adjust their conversation to fit the comfort level of those to whom they are talking.

If you think about it, that's all language is, an expedient manner for us to reach out and touch others with our thoughts in a way that makes them feel comfortable with receiving, processing, analyzing, understanding and respecting our message.

To talk black actually harkens back to our ancestral roots in Africa because it incorporates the full range of vocal abilities that we were endowed with. Close your eyes and listen closely to a black person talk

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