

## ABDULLAH

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could accomplish some of their community objectives.

Tom Gholson, Deputy Executive Director of the L.V. Housing Authority, gave the SENTINEL-VOICE some historical input on what led to the closing of the centers: the collapse of the Sartini administration was at the helm; the financial re-organization of the Housing Authority; and the budget constraints placed on the Housing Authority by HUD due to the Grand Jury investigation which is presently underway. All contributed to the decision by the board to take cost cutting measures which led to the consequent closing of all eleven of the youth centers.

Gholson said that after only two weeks on the job, he received a mandate from the Housing Commissioners to look into the requests for re-opening the Centers. Gholson reiterated the fact that no policies were established and considerations were not made as to the eventual re-opening of the Centers.

The youth centers were closed in January of 1990 and the Boys and Girls Club and NALA submitted proposals on December 15, 1989, while Gustavos Ramos was Acting Executive Director. A preliminary memo was sent to Mr. Ramos dated December 7, 1989 by Susan Ernst, Housing Board Commissioner, recommending that a hearing be scheduled to approve a contract for facilities to be awarded to the Boys and Girls Club, who had met the renovation requirements set by the Board of Commissioners. At that time there were no other proposals for the A.D. Guy Center submitted...After competition for the Centers surfaced, then we decided to start developing criteria...The MLK Committee did not submit their proposal until February..."

THE SENTINEL-VOICE interviewed Louis Conner, Chairman of the Housing Commission. Conner was adamant about his position on the A.D. Guy Center.

He said that the issue has gotten out of hand.

"We (the Board) have been trying to get the Boys and Girls Club to locate in West Las Vegas for a number of years and they had not responded...Finally we have a well-funded organization that is being located in our community and then we start attacking it...This organization is well-funded and self-sufficient...They applied for Block Grant Funds to get started, but I guarantee you after about a year, they won't need any funding...Most groups that get funded keep coming back for funds...So they are an asset to the community," he said.

When asked about Mayor Lurie using the renovation project as a political football, Conner responded that the Mayor wanted to see a strong youth program in West Las Vegas and he felt that the Boys and Girls Club was such a program, not just because the Mayor happens to be the President of the Boys and Girls Club.

Dora Miller, President of the Martin Luther King Committee said it was the "same old game." She said that the MLK Committee doesn't like the way the Mayor went about acquiring the A.D. Guy Center.

"We believe that the Mayor should have followed the Democratic process...The Housing Authority or the City of Las Vegas, before even considering the Boys and Girls Club and NALA proposals, should have gone public with the issue...We did not find out about the renovation plans until after the ap-

proval by the Board...Why didn't they invite other organizations to compete prior to rendering approval?"

"The MLK Committee had commitments in-kind from Clark County School District educators, building contractors, entrepreneurs, and patrons to help us to renovate and consequently open up the Center...We would not have needed as much funds as the Board had required because of all of the volunteer in-kind assistance that we were to receive...These volunteer groups and organizations wanted to see us develop the programs that we proposed to Mr. Ramos..."

"There was never any advertisement that the Center was available...We believe that the Mayor's influence with the Housing Commissioners and his being an officer on the Boys and Girls Club Board had something to do with the Center being awarded to that organization...We were led to believe that our proposal would at least be considered prior to approval of the Boys and Girls Club lease...Mr. Conner and Mr. Ramos assured us that we would be considered...We were never given the opportunity to appear before the Board..."

Harris said that she believed that if the democratic process was exercised, there would be no controversy. Where did Block Grant money come from all of a sudden? If Block Grant Funds were available, why was the Center allowed to close? These are some of the unanswered questions.

Wendell Williams, State Assemblyman, said that the Housing Authority never reviewed any other proposals for the A.D. Guy Center. According to Williams, the Mayor, being a public official should have made sure that the "democratic process" was applied.

"We contend that the Housing Commission and the Mayor circumvented the democratic process by not allowing other groups to compete for the Center," said Williams.

Harris admitted that Rowe said the MLK Committee could get any other center but the A.D. Guy Center.

"We have not ruled out the possibility of acquiring another center or even working with the Boys and Girls Club; however, at some point (control) may come into the picture...The A.D. Guy Center is centrally located and would have been a more effective location for the programs we had slated..." she said.

Williams said that the A.D. Guy Center is the largest center in West Las Vegas and that's why the MLK Committee sought to utilize it.

Some of the programs that Harris and the MLK Committee had proposed were:

- 1) Academic/cultural enhancement
- 2) Self-esteem courses and activities
- 3) Behavior modification
- 4) Job training program
- 5) Sexuality responsibility for males and females
- 6) Parent outreach program
- 7) Truancy project
- 8) Life Skills
- 9) Spiritual growth and fulfillment

Notwithstanding the fact that this is a political year, the Honorable Mayor, the Board of Housing Commissioners and the Authority must make sure that the democratic process is exercised at every level of city government. Our readers will attest to the fact that they MLK Committee has always been at the forefront of most of the worthwhile efforts taking place in our community from legislation of a state holiday in honor of

## WILLIS

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where the powerful color-producing genetic material is stored."

"That Whites do indeed desire to have colored skin can be seen by anyone at the very first signs of spring or summer when they begin to strip off their clothes...in an attempt to add some color to their white, pale colorless bodies."

Those are some of Welsing's theories. She's not easily dismissed as being a kook. Attesting to her credibility, she is one of the 36 "Legends of Our Time" celebrated in the current month's issue of Essence magazine.

When asked to defend her theories through explanation, Welsing responds, "I'm saying that White people must first acknowledge that something awful has been going on, just as the Germans would have to accept responsibility for what they did in the Holocaust. Unfortunately, in White America, there's a denial among 99 percent of the people that anything has happened."

"If they read my book, they would see I'm asking White people to respect themselves. Because if they respect themselves, they would respect others and get

along with the other people on this planet instead of killing them off."

Ironically at the mention of Public Enemy, Welsing says she has never met the group, nor does she even know who they are!

Within the context of her theories, Welsing defines racism as "a global system of behavior that exists for the purpose of White genetic survival."

She says she understands her theory is disturbing to some, but says science can be disturbing. "If you don't like the truth, you kill the person who speaks it. But it's still the truth," Welsing said.

Isn't it strange that the same rap music that many of us as mature adults dismiss as being nonsensical can be the catalyst for the dynamic presentation of scholarly viewpoints relative to our own race?

In my wildest dreams, who would ever have thought the professional paths of a Black social psychiatrist and a rambunctious rap group could embrace a common theory? And to those who say rap doesn't have a message in its music...that won't work anymore! Rap music has indisputably come of age. Go 'head.....go....'head.....go 'head!

### Keep Hope Alive ....

STOP THE VIOLENCE

the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the Dr. MLK Parade and many other educational community programs going on throughout the year. They have never been a media-seeking organization, but one seeking justice. We will be watching the developments of the other Housing Authority recreation centers with more intensity from now on. Democracy will prevail across the board.

See you next week with an update on the hiring practices of the Clark County School District and an exclusive interview with Superintendent Brian Cram.



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### PHI BETA SIGMA TO HOST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Epsilon Psi Sigma and Pi Zeta Chapters, will host the 41st Western Regional Conference May 4-6, 1990 at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino.

This year's theme is "Stepping Into the 90s."

The public is invited to attend their "Blue and White Affair" on Saturday, May 5, 1990 from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. in the Gold Coast Hotel's Grand Ballroom.