

ABDULLAH

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didn't have teachers that cared enough to take time out with me, I sought other means to get attention...So when I started a gang I got attention and that felt good..."

"...I can remember how one day I beat up a guy mercilessly who was in a wheelchair. I took the wheelchair and beat him almost to death with it...Well, now I know what they mean when they say what goes around comes around, because now I am in a wheelchair..."

Concepcion's gangbanging career included violence, extortion and other gang activity until he was indicted for murdering a rival gang member and was sent to prison for three years.

"You know a lot of people think that arresting gang members and giving them more jail time is the solution...I am here to tell you that prison time don't help you at all...In prison you learn how to become more conniving...You learn how not to make the same mistakes...I was educated by some of the best minds in the business...I believe that one-on-one counseling is the best way to turn a gang member around...Some law officers didn't give a damn...They would harass you, curse you out and keep sending you to jail...But for me the few who would take time to talk to me, who showed they really cared about me as a human being helped turn me around..."

When Concepcion came out of prison, he was wiser and more educated in crime and he stepped up his operations to include pimping and gambling. He recalled for the audience at Thomas and Mack how other notorious gangs evolved out of the Crips.

"I didn't know that the 'Bloods' would eventually become a gang. I love the color red and me and my partners, we always greeted each other, 'What's happening, Blood?' and before I knew it there was a gang called the Bloods...I had a cousin named Cunningham and we used to always greet each other, 'What's happening, Cous (Cuzz)?', and before I knew it there was a gang called the Cuzz.

Concepcion's awakening came as he remembers, from the time he was shot and consequently confined to a wheelchair. He recalls that



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams welcomes Concepcion to Las Vegas during "Peace Weekend."

the wheelchair did not stop his gang activity, but it gave him time to reflect on his past and to look into the future. With constant warnings from his mother, whom he loved dearly, and seeing fellow gang members being killed before his very eyes, he decided it was time for a change. Because of a caring mother and the urgings of police officers who treated him like a human being, Concepcion began to use his creative abilities to combat gangbanging and drugs by bringing together talent in the most depressed, drug-ridden areas in Los Angeles, including "Nickerson Gardens", a project area second to none in the United States in homicides, black on black crime and senseless crimes against innocent victims. He sought help from celebrities he knew and brought together the support of two corporate giants - Reebok, Inc. and Warner Brothers Records and promised rival gang members that there was a way out. He encouraged rap groups such as MC Hammer, EZ E and others to join him in producing a video that would show that the people in the ghetto were not all ignorant and didn't care. He wanted to make a statement to all gang members that WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME GANG."

Concepcion continued: "...My mother had the greatest effect on turning me

around...When I was confined to the wheelchair, it did not stop me from gang activity...But I did not go as much...I had time to think...I stayed around the house and my mother kept talking to me...She told me one day that I didn't care about her and her feelings...and I said to her, 'Why do you say that?' She said, 'You don't think that I know what you are doing...What would happen one day if the Police came here looking for you and you are not here and they make a mistake and kill me or one of your brothers and sisters? Do you care? That can happen, you know,' she said and that's when I started thinking. She has passed away...Many people think that all gang members are hard core and don't want to change.. I'm going to tell you something...Nobody wants to die...Sure, I feared that one day I would get killed...You don't think about it a lot...I feel that if people would take the time and talk to their children and aid and support the schools and be concerned about their children's education, many kids would never join gangs...One-on-one counseling can turn a lot of kids around...They are just kids and they need help and many of them want help..."

To be continued next week.

ASSEMBLYMAN WENDELL P. WILLIAMS

- * 1989 Community Service Award NAACP
- * 1989 Community Service Award Black Professional Women's Alliance
- * 1989 Community Service Award Grace Immanuel Baptist Church
- * 1989 Community Service Award Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity
- * 1989 Community Service Award Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity
- * 1989 Community Service Award Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation
- * 1989 Special Congressional Recognition for Community Service U.S. Senator Harry Reid
- * 1989 Community Service Award Ray & Ross Transport
- * 1989 Outstanding Legislator of the Year Nevada State AFL-CIO
- * 1990 Community Service Award Fordyce Club of Las Vegas
- * 1990 Community Service Award Doolittle Community Center
- * 1990 Community Service Award UNLV Alliance of Black Professionals



VOTE BALLOT #47 Sept. 4