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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

COMMUNITY RELATIONS WITH METRO STRAINED AFTER SHOOTING

By Lee Brown

The recent shooting of a West Las Vegas man, added with the classroom arrest of a 10-year-old boy in early January, has led to a major setback in community/police relations, according to community leaders. And they, as well as West Las Vegas residents, know that these events couldn't have happened at a worse time, as the nation closely watches the second trial of the Los Angeles police officers involved in the Rodney King beating, which already has many fearful of a repeat of last April's civil unrest where a large portion of West Las Vegas' businesses were destroyed by fire and looting.

City Councilman Frank Hawkins, along with other community leaders and activists expressed their dismay over last Sunday's shooting death of 37-year-old Gregory Joe Warren, who was accused of chasing a woman with a knife in his hand, then attempting to attack an officer.

"We've all recognized that there are areas of concern that need to be addressed," Hawkins said. "We have to devise a better way of dealing with people. No man has the right to take the life of another man."

Part of the shooting was captured on tape by a KVBC Channel 3 cameraman and has been turned over to Metro for review.

The tape showed Warren moving toward officers while wielding a knife and shouting "Shoot me, shoot me," before two officers, rookies Brian Alexander de Becker, 21, and Steve Wayne Borden, 36, each shot him once.

Warren later died at University Medical Center.

The tape has now reportedly been turned over to the Police Community Relations Board, developed after last years unrest, for its review.

At a meeting with Metro Sheriff John Moran Tuesday, one of the main ques-

tions asked by community leaders was why officers didn't use other means to subdue Warren, such as tazers, mace or dogs.

Police Community Relations Board member Chester Richardson.

Nonetheless, Hawkins still believes Warren could have been taken into

custody alive. The two officers involved in the shooting have been placed on administrative leave.

However, should history repeat itself, the coroner's jury assigned to review the shooting may end up clearing the officers involved.

In the past 14 years 51 of 53 officer-related fatal shootings have been ruled "justifiable." The two that weren't were ruled "excusable," which means an officer is ruled to have acted properly, though the suspect was not armed when shot.

In addition, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has requested that the U.S. Justice Department review the incident.

"We have to devise a better way of dealing with people."

City Councilman
Frank Hawkins



Though most of the questions were answered, Metro promised to investigate and answer those they couldn't, according to NAACP spokesman and

custody alive.

"I don't believe taking a life is the answer," he said.

A coroner's inquest will be sched-

IN OBSERVANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

McWilliams Townsite 1930-1950

A HISTORY OF WEST LAS VEGAS AND ITS RESIDENTS

— 1930-1940 —

In spite of a national Depression and the fact that Las Vegas was rejected as unsuitable as a government

town, the early 30's were years of rapid growth and relative prosperity for Las Vegas. Prohibition ended, gaming was legalized, the tourist and divorce trade began to appear, and the money from dam workers residing in Boulder City spilled over into Las Vegas.

Assembly Bill 98, legalizing gambling, was signed into law on March 19, 1931, by Governor Fred Balzar. At the same time he signed another bill establishing only a six-week residency requirement for divorce. These acts, along with the attitudes and free minded spirit of the West, gave Nevada the reputation of being the "Last Frontier of the Union."

The first real resort in Las Vegas, The Meadows, opened in May of 1931 at the enormous cost of \$300,000. The Meadows was considered a high class establishment as it required patrons to dress for dinner. Other nightspots, such as The Black Cat, Red Rooster, and The Venetian Ballroom, soon followed.

By the mid-thirties, celebrities began to flock to Las Vegas. Some favorite stars, such as Clara Bow and Rex Bell, decided to make their homes here, but others came to obtain divorces or to enjoy the nightlife. Auto courts began

In honor of Black History Month, this is PART 2 of a 4 part series highlighting the history of West Las Vegas, and the men and women who worked hard over the years to improve the quality of life of its residents.



Photograph of Westside, 1943,
(Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

to appear as a public no longer on gas rationing put Las Vegas on their itinerary of places to see in the U.S.A. In 1935 Las Vegas initiated its first Hell-dorado celebration of the old West, which still occurs each May.

Even though thousands of people moved to the area in the early thirties, the black population was only about 150 or about 2.7% of the population.

In 1930 blacks lived interspersed with whites and other ethnic groups in essentially an eight-block area downtown which spread from First to Fifth

and from Stewart to Ogden. Prior to 1931, there was no segregation in Las Vegas, but when people from other parts of the country began to pour into the area they seemed to have brought prejudices with them.

Consequently, the construction of Hoover Dam was not the boon to the black population that it was to the town in general. At first, Six Companies, the organization building the dam, refused to hire any blacks at all. And in 1931 the Colored Citizens Labor and Protective (See McWilliams Townsite, Page 4)

A Tribute to Arthur Ashe

1943 - 1993



By W. G. Ramirez
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