

# DISPARITY STUDY HOTLY DEBATED AT RECENT N.L.V. CITY COUNCIL MEETING

By Muhammad Abdullah

In an attempt to gain participation of the City of North Las Vegas in the Clark County "Disparity Study," City Councilman John Rhodes - newest member on the five-member council - requested that \$30,000 be allotted from the city's coffers.

The agenda item came up for discussion and debate on

Wednesday, July 21, 1993, and drew a number of community activists and organizations to speak in favor of it's overwhelming approval. Only one citizen spoke against the measure. She requested more information.

Rhodes believes that participation by the city will enable them to identify how African-Americans, women and other

minorities are fairing economically, and, in a general sense, will stimulate economic development throughout the city. In citing areas where disparity may exist (ie affordable housing, employment opportunities, commercial and industrial development) particularly relative to minority entrepreneurial opportunities for upgrading exist-

ing businesses and creating new businesses and construction projects (ie inclusion of minority contracts in the bidding and procurement process) and numerous other areas where minorities are not being granted full access, the study appears to be a plus for the city.

Some of those on hand to support the study were: Rev.

Jessie Scott, President, local branch of the NAACP; Marzette Lewis, President, Windsor Park Homeowners Association; Frank Hawkins, City Councilman of Las Vegas; Otto Merida, Executive Director, Nevada Camara De Comercio Latina (Nevada Latin Chamber of Commerce); Tho-

mas Ghoulson, Deputy Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Las Vegas and Debbie Conway, Management Analyst and Facilitator for the consulting firm Business Innovations Plus, Inc., Tom R. Akers, President.

(See Disparity Study, Page 24)

## LOCAL WEST AFRICAN DANCE CHAPTER OF "CHILDREN OF THE DIASPORA" TO UNITE WITH NEW YORK & FLORIDA CHAPTERS; VISIT TO WEST AFRICA SLATED

By Muhammad Abdullah

West African choreographer, dance instructor, and professional dancer Abayomi, founder and president of "Children Of The Diaspora Dance Theater, a West African dance group, recently said that she would be uniting her local West African dance chapter with the original group that she formed in 1985 in New York City where she was born and raised. She also formed a dance chapter in Florida while living there.

Abayomi is the product of an African-American mother and a native West African father. According to Abayomi, her father did not pursue knowledge of his culture nor did he pass it on to his children, however, inside of

her was a burning desire to understand and nurture the culture that existed in her genetic memory.

"After forming the Children Of The Diaspora Dance Theater in New York City in 1985, I came to Las Vegas and formed a chapter here in 1987 after coming off of the road with Stevie Wonder. Then I moved to Florida and formed a chapter there. Now I am back in Las Vegas indefinitely and am working with the School of African Philosophy (SOAP), with SIMBA and with any other organization that would like for me to work with their children," she said.

Abayomi specializes in the Cultural Arts through African music and dance and is availing

her talents throughout the community and talked about the SOAP summer program.

"We - referring to the classes that she conducts - study dance in the traditional way - meaning mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, the children and other relatives - sisters and brothers - come together. What we do is respect each other in the dance classes. We do have the children in the front because in our summer program held at the Jerusalem Baptist Church's Addison Center our focus was on the children. All family members are encouraged to participate," she said.

Abayomi emphasized that due to the popularity of African culture and African fashions and

the trend toward ethnocentric education, the time was right to bring all three chapters together and plan for a trip to Africa in 1994. Abayomi earned a degree in Early Childhood Education with emphasis on Deaf Education because of her love for teaching.

She traveled to Nigeria with a athletic exchange group from Brooklyn, New York in 1986 and her life has never been the same. Her hope is to unite the three chapters of Children Of The Diaspora Dance Theater and herald a performance and tour throughout West Africa in 1994.

Interested groups, organizations or individuals can contact Abayomi at (702) 225-8363 for more information.

## NAACP DEPLORES FIREBOMBING OF THEIR WEST COAST OFFICES

Last week on Friday, July 23, 1993, the office of the Tacoma Branch of the NAACP was bombed. In the early morning hours of July 27, 1993, the office of the Sacramento Branch of the NAACP was firebombed. Both of these events are deplorable acts of terrorism obviously committed with the intent of interrupting the work of the NAACP through a calculated campaign of violence, stated one NAACP spokesman.

NAACP National headquarters has instructed offices to increase their security while at the same time continuing their important work without let up.

Some days ago, a despicable plot by white supremacists to attack African-American community leaders and instructors in Los Angeles was exposed before it could be put into action. All these events, the NAACP believes, represent an escalating tide of racism, exposing a ugly side of America that threatens not only the NAACP, but all other institutions and individuals who speak out on behalf of racial justice and equality.

Whether the attacks on the NAACP are connected is unclear at this point, but most assuredly a pattern of racial violence is clearly existent. The NAACP will call on Attorney General Janet Reno to immediately order a full and thorough investigation into these events and to bring the weight of the federal government into this deadly situation.

## AACAF



AACAF Board of Directors on hand included (L-R) Jeff Clemons; Deborah Jordan, Secretary; Joe West, Vice President; Kathryn James, President; Gilbert Mullins, Jr.; and Patricia Feaster, Treasurer.

Photo by Paula Irons

(Continued from Page 1)

The foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank - First Interstate Bank for sponsoring this community event, Santa Fe Hotel and Casino for donating the delicious and decorative refreshment platters; Professional artists, Harold Bradford and Deborah Richards, Vice-President of the Las Vegas Art Museum Board of Directors; "Friends of AACAF"; Priscilla Adams; and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Trodick for assisting with the month-long art series, in addition to volunteers Barbara Davis, Rodney Chaney and Shirley Fugazotti.

Most of the artists were between the ages of 16 and 25 years, and only three participants had previously entered a contest. Marilyn Barker, a housewife and mother, had never entered a formal competition. She says she just draws for fun and her friends take them and frame them to hang in their homes.

AACAF's purpose is to bring out the untapped

talent in this community. AACAF reminds all community artists that they have a year to prepare for the next annual "Community Art Affair".

At the conclusion of the awards reception, AACAF President, Kathryn James, presented the beautiful "AACAF Volunteer of the Year" trophy to professional artist, Harold Bradford. She stated that there is always someone who quietly helps in the background and never expects any recognition, and that Harold is that person. He designed and donated the foundation logo as a sample of his many supportive efforts.

Six of the nine Board of Directors were present to assist with the affair: President, Kathryn James; Vice-President, Joe West; Treasurer, Patricia Feaster; Secretary, Deborah Jordan; Directors Jeff Clemons and Gilbert Mullen, Jr.

For further information regarding AACAF or any of their future events, please contact them at 646-1520.

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