

ETHNICALLY CORRECT DOLLS AND TOYS FOR LAS VEGAS SHOPPERS



Imagine a mother's distress. Her 3-year old son, looking at a "He-Man" action doll, announces, "I guess I'll never be able to be a super hero." The mother asks why. Her son's reply: "Because all the super hero dolls are white."

That very scenario became the foundation for a line of today's hottest collectibles — Ethnically Correct dolls and toys made by black toy manufacturers — as well as the basis of a local small business, ETHNICALLY CORRECT COLLECTION, that

SUGAR Puddin'

Emma, I need you to do something with my hair.... All this talk about nubian queen, I need you to make me feel better.....

girl, we are the only culture that hair becomes political. So feel good, feel proud whether its nappy or straight.....

Sugar Puddin', girl! you got to work with it just like you work at everything else in life.....



BY ZELLA RUYEAR

searches for and sells products made by the ethnic groups they represent.

OLMEC TOYS, today's largest black toy manufacturer, was started nearly ten years ago in New York City by that young black mother, Yla Eason. Her first product was "Sun Man," the worlds Greatest Superhero who gets his magic powers from the

melanin in his skin, the pigment which also makes him brown. And, as a child's positive role-model hero was born — out of necessity and love — a new collectible found it's way to the American public. The acceptance a success of "Sun Man" led to a complete line of preschool ("Learning Kids") and teen toys ("Hip Hop Kids"), and the fashionable "Imani". Everybody knows the Barbie doll, a collectible in it's own right, but when Mattel, the Caucasian manufacturers of the famous beauty, added a brown-bodied doll to it's "family", they merely created a Barbie of a different color. Olmec responded with the creation of "Imani," a black fashion doll that, unlike Mattel's issue, was designed with ethnically

correct features. Her name is Swahili for "faith", and because she changes wardrobes yearly, Imani is highly prized not only as a child's toy, but also as a collectible.

Locally, these dolls can be found at Losee Road Antiques, 2270 Losee Road in North Las Vegas, 798-7898/647-3800, 7 days a week from 10-to-5, where Jo Polk-Matthews' "ETHNICALLY CORRECT COLLECTION" is lovingly arranged as they await new homes.

In addition, Ms. Polk-Mettews, a school psychologist, has brought an exclusive line of another black toy-manufacturer's products to Las Vegas: "Willie Pearl" and "Mae Ella" made by the William Ruth Company. Before long, Willie

Pearl and Mae Ella will be joined by "Johnny". Willie Pearl, her brother, Johnny, and her best friend Mae Ella, are based on real people — depression era ancestors of author, Michelle Green, who has written a series of books about them. In real life, Willie Pearl grew up and married Eddie Lee, one of the first black-Americans to become a triple-rated pilot in the Army Air Corps. The book, Willie Pearl, available at Losee Road Antiques, was recognized nationally in 1990 with a Newberry Award nomination and an American Library Association nomination. It has been adopted as core curriculum in the Compton (CA) Unified School District and has been approved for classroom use in (See Ethnically Correct, Pg 26)



VEGAS INSTANT PAGE

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