

## TO BE EQUAL: "AFFIRMATIVE ACTION UNDER ATTACK"

By Hugh B. Price

SEE PAGE 2

## POLITICAL POINTS: "AFFIRMATIVE"

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

SEE PAGE 2

## PREP BASKETBALL — ZONE TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS

SEE PAGES 18-20

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# LAS VEGAS

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### NATIONAL NEWS

#### FOSTER LASHES OUT AT "RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS"

NASHVILLE, Tenn (Reuter) - President Clinton's embattled choice for surgeon general, Dr. Henry Foster, attacked "right-wing extremists" opposing his nomination Sunday and angrily denied he approved a controversial syphilis study on black men in the 1960s. "I ask for your help and prayers in working with me again to fight the latest attack from the white right-wing extremists that are trying to use my nomination to achieve their radical goals," Foster told worshippers at a Nashville church. The White House later clarified Foster's statement, saying he had not meant to use the word "white" and had merely stumbled over the word "right". Foster accused his critics of using "distortion after distortion" in attempting to derail his nomination. Senate confirmation hearings are not expected to begin until early spring pending further background checks.

#### SHABAZZ CLAIMS FBI TRANSCRIPT TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT

WASHINGTON (Reuter) - Qubilah Bahiyah Shabazz, daughter of slain black leader Malcolm X, insisted she "definitely" wanted a childhood friend to assassinate Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, The Washington Post reported Tuesday. The newspaper quoted an FBI transcript of a wiretapped conversation between Shabazz and her friend Michael Fitzpatrick, an FBI informer with a history of involvement in radical causes who faces drug charges. Shabazz, 34, was indicted last month in Minneapolis on charges of hiring Fitzpatrick to kill Farrakhan. The Post said the FBI also issued an alleged confession by Shabazz in which she told federal agents, "The idea to kill Farrakhan was my idea. I knew it was a very serious thing, but I believed that Fitzpatrick could do it and get away with it." Shabazz claims she was entrapped by the FBI and has pleaded not guilty. The paper quoted a lawyer for Shabazz, William Kunstler, as saying the quotations that the FBI issued were taken out of context.

## Las Vegas Fire Department Graduates First Female African-American Firefighter in History

By Victor S. Ingram

What better way to celebrate Black History Month than to make history. Latonia Whitaker became the first African-American female to complete the rigorous training regime of the Las Vegas fire department and earn the coveted title of fire fighter. She walked on a stage with 15 other cadets during the graduation ceremony on Friday, February 24 at the Charleston Heights Library Auditorium. Filled to capacity, a crowd of nearly 400 welcomed the city's newest fire fighters into the ranks. Whitaker, not only becomes the first African-American female on the city fire department, but carries the distinction state-wide.

The 23-year-old 1992 University of Nevada-Las Vegas graduate earned a degree in Nuclear Medicine and immediately sought a job in that profession. She became frustrated when she found she was over-qualified for nearly every job she applied for. However, when approached by the United Firefighters of Southern Nevada last year, Whitaker decided fire fighting might offer an exciting and challenging career. She, along with 3300 other potential applicants, tested for an interview for cadet training.

Emotional moments filled the graduation ceremony as fire cadets said farewell to each other after their rigorous 10-month training cycle. "10 months ago 3300 people tested to become firefighters," says Las Vegas Fire Department training officer Tom Miramontes. "These cadets showed that

(See FIREFIGHTER, Page 11)



Clark County fireman Sam Smith (L) pins badge on first black female firefighter Latonia Whitaker (R). Photo by Victor Ingram

## Black Groups Push for Mayor Jones to Resign from Housing Board

By Victor S. Ingram

Resign from the Las Vegas Housing Authority Board of Directors? Mayor Jan Jones says "no" despite a call in recent weeks from several members of the black community. On Wednesday, February 15, the Mayor exchanged words during a City Council meeting with Rev. Chester Richardson. Richardson, a longtime critic of the Mayor, called for the Mayor's resignation from the board citing her political motives as her chief reason for remaining as chairman. Richardson says the Mayor's "political grand standing at the expense

of low-income residents" has left the authority in a state of duress.

Eventually, engaging in a shouting match, the meeting became unruly as Richardson called the Mayor "racist", yelling it over and over. He was escorted by city marshals from the council chambers.

Mayor Jones responded that Richardson's motives stem from his disagreement with a payment made

last month terminating his service contract with the housing authority. As a previous contract consultant of the housing authority, Richardson's fees were questioned by the Mayor.

Unity in the Community, a coalition organization of predominantly black organizations, also requested that the Mayor resign. "Without objection, members of the Unity in the Community

(See HOUSING, Page 11)

## Local NAACP Gets 1997 National Convention; Some Question Benefit To The Las Vegas African-American Community

By Victor S. Ingram

The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) announced a major victory in securing the 1997 national convention. During a press conference on Thursday, February 23 at the West Las Vegas Library, organization president Reverend James Rodgers announced the national office agreed to hold the convention in Las Vegas. It could potentially bring twenty-thousand delegates to the city infusing nearly \$250,000 into the local economy.

"We are proud to announce that the 1997 NAACP convention will be held in Las Vegas," says NAACP president James Rodgers. "We want to roll out the red carpet as well as the black and green."

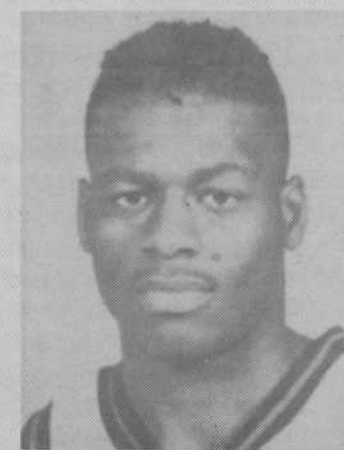
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Marketing Representative Roosevelt Tosten says the event will be significant for Las Vegas for several reasons. "We feel it will be a financial benefit as well as a prestige benefit for our city," says Tosten. Questions about

(See NAACP, Page 11)

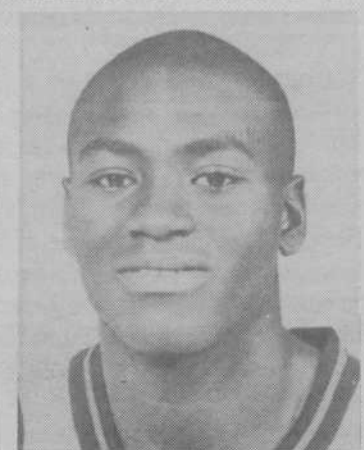


NAACP president Rev. James Rodgers (L) consults with NAACP public relations committee chairman Darnell Brown (R). NAACP announces Las Vegas as 1997 convention site. Photo by Victor Ingram

## TWO UNLV PLAYERS UNDER MICROSCOPE



KEBU STEWART



JERMAINE SMITH

SEE RELATED STORY, PAGE 18