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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Michael Douglas to Succeed Judge Addeliar Guy

 By Nichole Davis
 Sentinel-Voice

"I've accomplished a dream that I didn't think was possible for me to do," said Deputy District Attorney Michael Douglas, 47, who was appointed last month by Gov. Bob Miller to fill the seat soon to be vacated by Judge Addeliar Guy. "Now, I have to consolidate the opportunity and be the best judge I can be."

Douglas beat out Las Vegas Municipal Court Judge Valerie Vega and former Deputy District Attorney Tom Leen for the coveted post. In his first media interview since his appointment, Douglas discussed his past, present and future goals.

Douglas, a graduate of Hastings College of Law, has taken a unique route to becoming a judge. Though Douglas graduated from law school in 1974, he didn't begin practicing law until 1981. This wasn't completely by choice. He took the California State Bar Exam twice and failed both times.

He described looking at his scores once trying to figure out what happened:

"When you take a bar exam, you have to pass

two and a half days worth of work, and I only passed two days worth...That just won't cut it," Douglas said.

Meanwhile, Douglas began teaching business law at a California community college in 1975, and continued to work with the YMCA. But, he didn't give up his dream to practice law.

A few years later, a friend in Philadelphia asked him to come work with him. This time, Douglas prepared for the Pennsylvania bar and passed it the first time. He promptly moved to Philadelphia and worked with Green and Bernier P.O. for about a year before the firm decided to relocate Washington D.C., but he decided not to move with them.

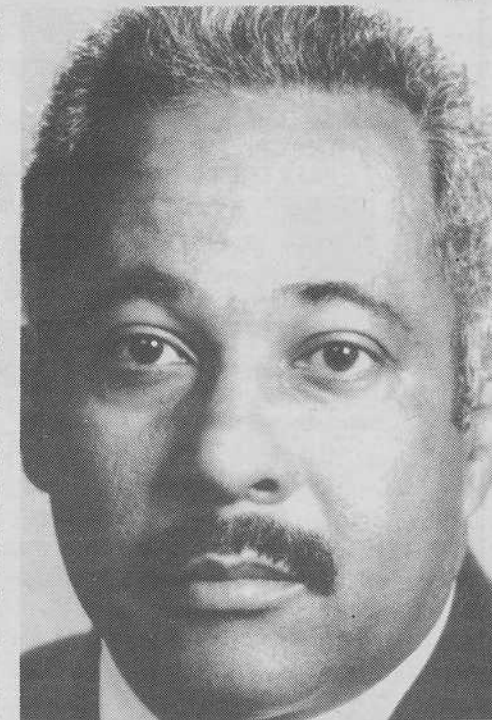
Instead, in July of 1982, he moved to Las Vegas where he had a relative, Paul Dawkins, formerly a mid-day news anchor at Channel 8, KLAS-TV. Douglas worked at Nevada Legal Services while, he prepared for and passed the Nevada bar, again the first time out. Two years later, he joined the District Attorney's office as a deputy district attorney where he has been ever since.

Over the years, he has dealt with several areas of law including welfare law, landlord/tenant law, bankruptcy and family law. He has worked in the civil division where he works with gaming law since 1985.

Not passing the California bar exam may have taught Douglas the biggest lesson of his life: Preparation is the key to eventual success. Douglas has been preparing for a chance as a jurist for about two and a half years. He knew which position he wanted, he just didn't know when it would be available.

Said Douglas, "I applied when Don Chairez went through the process not expecting to get in, but I wanted to go through the process. I finished up number six. I didn't even make the finals. I applied again in February. That was when Gene Porter was appointed. I wanted to let them know I was serious about the job, because if I didn't apply again, theoretically some other black attorney, could have stepped forward."

Though Judge Guy approached the National Bar Association, the black bar and "encouraged all (See DOUGLAS, Page 3)



MICHAEL DOUGLAS

M.L.K. Committee: Teaching Choices for Our Children's Futures

 By Nichole Davis
 Sentinel-Voice

A lot of people have complained about what is not happening for blacks in Las Vegas, but a few groups are attempting to make a difference one step at a time. The Martin Luther King Jr. Committee is one of them.

The M.L.K. Committee sponsors a small but well-focused program called Choices for the Future run by Vanessa King-Thompson.

"The purpose of the seminars and workshops are to broaden the minds of the students we have in our classroom," said King-Thompson, "to let them know that they have more than one option in life."

The lofty goals of this program are

balanced along with some practical information for the youth.

We try "to teach them some of the skills and necessary training they might need to know in their future endeavors," said King-Thompson. "For example, sending a thank you card after a meeting with someone. Just business and social etiquette. It's basically survival skills that many of our youth don't know."

"It's held every Saturday. We have a different topic and a different guest speaker each week," she continued.

Past speakers have included Wallace Edwards and Rhonda McCoy from Aid For Aids of Nevada (AFAN) Assemblymen Wendell P. Williams, and Wendell Blalock of First Interstate Bank.

This week the focus is on financial

aid and what parents can do to prepare their finances for their child's college education.

Vernon Lyle, a financial consultant, will speak along with Rita Smith, director of Financial Aid at the Community College of Southern Nevada and Christopher Stevens, a financial aid counselor at UNLV.

Lyle, who works for the Franklin Corporation, "will be talking to children and their parents about what it costs to get into the university that they're trying to get in. We've already asked the kids to submit the names of the schools they were looking at."

Smith "will be going over financial aid, how to fill it out correctly, what (See TEACHING, Page 3)

The Black Land Crisis

By Shedrach Harris

It has been said that, "under all is the land." Land is the surface of the earth and the source of all raw materials, plant and animal life. The value of land is influenced by its location, composition, how it is used, the supply and the demand for it. Because land is essential to life, it becomes the foundation for the social and economic activities of people and nations. If it fulfills its highest and best use, it becomes valuable and serves as a source of wealth and power.

Some of the attributes of land are that it is physically immobile, it is durable, and there is a finite supply of land. In economics, land is considered as one of the four agents essential for production: land, labor, capital and coordination. As such, land represents the natural elements of a nation's wealth.

If there is any truth to the statement made by Minister Louis Farrakhan that "politics without economics is symbol without substance," then it can be deduced that the political power of the Black Nation could become more substantial if it was backed up with some economic power that is rooted in the "rights of ownership" of some land. For the Black Nation to be truly independent and productive, we need some land, labor, capital, and coordination. The labor we have, but it is idle, wasting away in unemployment lines, street

corners and prisons. The capital (money) we have, but we desperately need more of it. The coordination (management, trained personnel, etc.) we have, but it is currently employed by white corporations. The one ingredient we don't have is land.

In the December 1994 edition of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, it was reported that "Thousands of empty lots are found throughout Chicago's oldest Black communities. Nearly one in every four lots is vacant. Building owners have walked away, failing to pay for upkeep, utilities or taxes. Although the Black Belt communities make up a fifth of the city, banks made five percent of the city's residential loans there from 1983 to 1992. The city has instead become the largest landowner there. More than two-thirds of the city-owned lots in Chicago are in those communities."

What this means is that there are vast tracts of vacant land in the Black community that are owned by the government. Most of these areas are located on the South and West sides of Chicago. Once decimated by neglect and the subsequent riots of the 1960s, private investors, bankers and government agencies, now see these areas as prime for development and revitalization. In fact, they have become known as "Enterprise Zones," and indeed they are, for whosoever shall enter these zones will surely find a prize.

(See LAND CRISIS, Page 3)



MEMBERS OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. YOUTH COMMITTEE

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice