

## Local Pioneer Lubertha Johnson Passes



LUBERTHA JOHNSON  
Sentinel-Voice

Long-time Las Vegas and civil rights activist Lubertha Johnson died Monday at age 89. Suffering from Alzheimer's disease, she passed away at a local nursing home.

Johnson, who owns the distinction of being Nevada's first African-American nurse, made her mark in Las Vegas by becoming active in the local chapter of the NAACP in 1945. She went on to become president of the organization on two different occasions.

The soft-spoken champion of women and children is credited with aiding in the cause to establish Nevada's civil rights law. In addition, she is also credited with helping to gain employment opportunities for African-Americans in the school district, hospitals and hotels.

Born in rural Mississippi in 1906, her family moved to Las Vegas in 1943. In a 1992 interview, she recalled her family's move west, and what

they discovered when they arrived in Las Vegas.

"I didn't expect it to be like Mississippi," she said of her arrival here. "I expected the great west, and westerners to say that a man is a man, and you wouldn't think that the color of your skin would have anything to do with it; but that was the first shock."

She was shocked, however, to find that blacks here were also confined to poor living conditions. Though conditions weren't as bad as those in the deep south, she made it her mission in life to ensure that conditions for local blacks improved, not worsened.

One of Johnson's crowning achievements was when she formed the county's first anti-poverty, self-help enterprise, Operation Independence, which included the area's first Head Start program, the Manpower program (which later evolved into the Economic Opportunity Board, or EOB as it is better known), and the Operation Independence child development centers, one of which is still in operation.

In addition to her valued work with the NAACP and her church, Johnson was a member of the Alpha Rho chapter of Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, the National Conference (formerly known as the National Conference of Christians and Jews) and the Southern Nevada Human Relations Commission.

Services have been scheduled for Tuesday, January 16, 1996 at noon at Zion Methodist Church, 2108 North Revere Street in North Las Vegas, with Rev. Marion Bennett officiating. Internment will be at Palm Mortuaries, 7600 South Eastern Avenue in Green Valley.

Donations in her memory are being accepted at the Operation Independence Pre-school, 1966 Genoa Drive.

## JUDGE GUY

(Continued from Page 1)

Clark County district attorney. Guy was the first black to serve in that capacity.

"The truth is that Dell Guy was exactly the kind of administrator I was looking for," Marshall recently told the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

"He was intelligent, an experienced attorney, a decorated military veteran, a family man, and on top of all of this, he was black," Marshall says.

By 1966, Guy, the fourth black to pass the Nevada bar, would become the first black deputy district attorney in Clark County's history. Stewart Bell, a long-time friend, fondly recalls what it was like to work against Guy, the prosecutor.

Bell was once representing a client named Brenda Gross, and Guy was the prosecuting attorney.

"Judge Guy was a much better, more experienced lawyer

O'Callaghan says. "Everything everybody said about him was true.

"He was a good deputy D.A.," O'Callaghan says. "He had a good record and a good grasp of the law."

While governors now pick judges from a three-name list provided by a judicial commission, in 1975 governors could pick whomever they wanted, O'Callaghan says, making Guy's appointment even more significant.

"I picked Dell Guy because he's a good man. He's the type of man you can trust to do the right things," O'Callaghan says.

Peers say Judge Guy more than lived up to the expectations — he set the standard.

"He was always prepared, and he took you to task that you had always better be prepared," says Michael Douglass, who will be sworn in as Guy's replacement on Friday.

*"Judge Guy never forgot where he came from, and he wanted to help as many young folks as he could"*

than I was. He pummeled me pretty good, and Gross was convicted of manslaughter.

"After the conviction, he called me up to his office. He took the time to explain to me the things that I could have done better and the areas where he had taken advantage of my inexperience."

Bell called this a classic example of how Addelir Guy approaches the law.

"He wanted all lawyers, whether they were for the prosecution or the defense, to be the best lawyers that they could be for the next client that walked through the door," Bell says.

"Even though I was on the opposition side, he was giving me pointers on how I could be the best lawyer I could be for the next case."

Guy's diligence and love for the law would not go unnoticed by his peers.

Nine years later he was appointed to the District Court bench.

"I sought him out because of what people said about him,"

"At a time, when there were only 10 black lawyers here in town, it was important, because people figured if one of us screwed up, all of us would screw up."

Fellow District Court Judge Lee Gates says: "The most important thing about him, I think, is that he is a person who has had a lot of life experiences that he brought to the bench. He has a keen understanding of human nature. He's compassionate. He's a man of high integrity. He loves the law.

"It's not just a business to him, it's a profession, and he believes that it should serve the public and the litigants," says Gates, who is the only other black judge in the state.

"The judge was looking to all of us as attorneys to be involved. He felt we should be a leadership group in the community, not just out there to make a dollar," Douglass says.

Outside the courtroom, Guy served the Las Vegas community as a housing authority commissioner from 1967-1975. A local youth center

bears his name as a testament to his service in that organization, and the new junior high school scheduled to be built before the turn of the century will also bear his name.

Guy worked as an executive board member in the local chapters of several prominent organizations such as the National Bar Association (aka the black bar), the Boy Scouts of America, the March of Dimes, and the United Way.

He has also participated in Toastmasters, the NAACP and coached Pop Warner football.

"Judge Guy never forgot where he came from, and he wanted to help as many young folks as he could," Gates says. "He was a proud African-American, and he's worked to increase the number of African-American judges and lawyers."

Guy also worked to increase the number of artists by starting the Spirit of Nevada Art contest in 1989. Many of the works hang in his chamber and depict scenes from throughout rural Nevada. He has also sponsored the Addelir D. Guy Law School Scholarship Fund, started in 1987.

Despite his accomplishments, Guy says his "greatest achievement is being able to look in the mirror and being pleased with what I see. "I've tried to live a life of honesty and integrity, and for the most part I've done that," he says.

Guy has three specific goals for his retirement: "To help the youth, to write a book and just to do a little loafing."

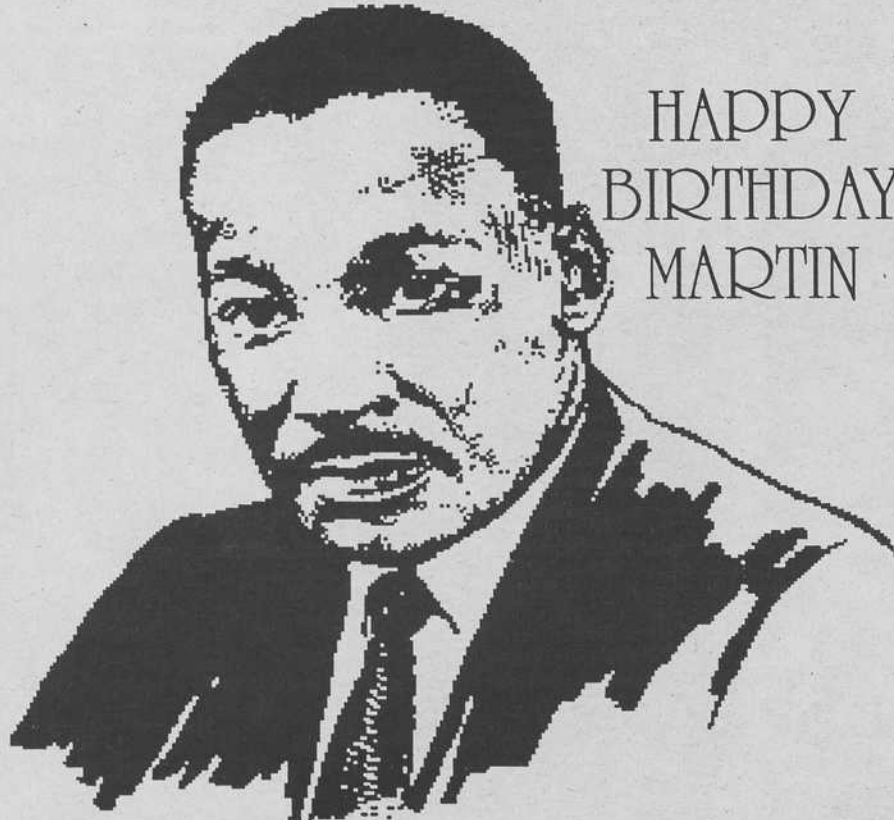
"I've enjoyed my life. For the most part I've been lucky. I've had people help me who I've never known, and I've had people help me that I never even knew helped me," Guy says.

Guy, a graduate of Chicago's Loyola School of Law, was born on Nov. 1, 1923 in Chicago. Though Guy is Catholic, he recalls alternately attending Baptist and Methodist services as a youth.

He has been married to A. Rosalyn Guy for nearly 25 years and calls her his "best friend."

He has three grown children and six grandchildren.

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