

## Les Brown delivers stirring message

By Lee Brown  
Sentinel-Voice

Using a unique blend of humor and real life experiences, motivational speaker Les Brown delivered a message of hope and inspiration during his keynote address at the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators' Sixth Annual Scholarship Luncheon held recently.

The "Marks of Excellence" luncheon, attended by more than 200 members of the political and business community, was held Sept. 14 at the Tropicana Resort and Casino.

Brown, a world renowned motivational speaker and author, was asked to speak because "we believe that his knowledge and experience offers thought provoking ideas and inspirational insight on how to pursue excellence in whatever endeavors you may undertake," said the organization's president, Kirby Burgess.

True to form, Brown didn't let his audience down. Born in low-income Liberty City section in Miami, Florida, Les and his twin

brother Wes, were adopted at six weeks by Mamie Brown, a single woman with little education or financial means.

As a child, Les Brown's inattention to school, coupled with his restless energy and the failure of his teachers to recognize his true potential, resulted in him being mislabeled as a slow learner, a label and stigma that stayed with him, damaging his self-esteem for several years, he said.

In 1986, Brown, who has no formal education past high school, entered the public speaking arena on a full-time basis, forming his own company, Les Brown Unlimited, Inc., providing motivational tapes and materials, as well as workshops and personal/professional development programs aimed at individuals, companies and organizations.

The former host of the Les Brown Show, a nationally syndicated daily television talk show which focused more on solutions than problems, is also the author of the highly acclaimed and successful book, *Live Your Dreams*.

"Whatever goals you have, I hope they're ambitious goals — goals that will challenge you," Brown said to those in attendance. "Why? Why is it that most people never discover they have something special. Because most people operate within their comfort zones. Most people work on jobs where they pay them just enough to keep them from quitting, and they work just hard enough to keep from getting fired," he said. "All of us have the ability to do the things that we don't even know. But most of us never challenge ourselves. And I say to you as public administrators, now more than ever, you have to challenge yourself. Today, you either expand, or you are expendable."

Brown, who says he speaks on an average of 4 or 5 times per week, said most people are failing in life, not because they're stupid or dumb, but because they don't know what their true potential is.

"You want to create some



Brown during luncheon: "Either expand or become expendable!" Photos by Savoy/LVS-Voice

strategic alliances with other people — people that you can learn from, people that you can grow from, people that open some doors for you that you don't even know about," he said. "You don't get in life what you want, you get in life what you are. Most people never, ever discover their true potential, because most people don't realize the value of developing your mind," Brown said. "All achievement comes out of the human mind."

"Many young people today are full of so much anger and



cynicism they can't see themselves in the future — and when you don't see how you fit and have a vision of how you fit, then you act like a misfit."

Brown praised the NFBPA and its members for their efforts, both locally and nationally.

"You're part of an organization that obviously believes in the value of making discipline a major force in your life," Brown said. "Being involved in the process of ongoing self-education in this knowledge driven world. You're part of an organization that obviously



believes in holding yourself to high standards — and that's why you come together to network and to exchange ideas — so you can go back to your various departments and look for ways to optimize the efficiency of your operation, and how you can begin to maximize your anti-drug potential in making a difference with the people that you serve.

"You're part of an organization that challenges you to begin to reach beyond your comfort zone, personally and professionally, to develop your

(See Brown, Page 3)

## Blacks predominate juvenile system

By Nichole Davis  
Sentinel-Voice

Black teen-agers are over-represented in at least three stages of the local criminal justice process, according to the latest figures from Clark County government officials.

For the years 1992-94, black teens were arrested at a rate 2-1/4 times higher their white counterparts and were nearly 2-3/4 times more likely to be detained after arrest.

During 1994, black teens were more than five times more likely than whites to be certified

as an adult for their crimes, said officials from Clark County Family & Youth Services (FYS), the agency which maintains juvenile detention facilities.

No other minority group was impacted as greatly as were blacks, department officials said.

Area experts admit there appears to be a systematic breakdown in the area, "but we don't know at what stage the problem is occurring," said FYS director Kirby Burgess, who is also chairman of a governor-appointed board examining the issue.

The decisions to arrest and detain suspects are made by police, but the choice to certify a teen-ager as an adult is made by judges and lawyers.

The issue of the unfair imprisonment of minority youth has emerged as two state-appointed groups are trying to understand "why the numbers have gotten so far out of hand that it's hard to ignore," Burgess said.

The Nevada Supreme Court commissioned a task force to examine the impact of racial and economic bias in the criminal justice system. They are now working with the Gov. Bob

Miller's Juvenile Justice Commission.

The two groups met jointly for the first time Monday to discuss perspectives on the issue and what could be done to resolve it.

Sensitivity training for officers, cutting the caseload of public defenders and alternative sentencing for youth offenders were three of the concepts discussed.

Local police receive little sensitivity training in the police academy. Las Vegas Metropolitan Police officers, for example, get eight hours of

(See Juvenile, Page 7)



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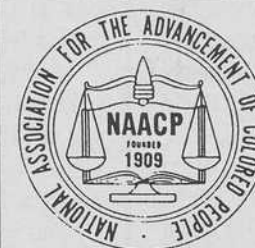
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