

BUSINESS

BUSINESS EXCHANGE

A black man finally owns Harlem Globetrotters

By William Reed

Special to Sentinel-Voice

When it comes to influential players in Corporate America, Mannie Jackson has played at very "high posts." Now, the new owner of the Harlem Globetrotters, Jackson became history's first African-American and former player to own a sports/entertainment organization when he purchased the legendary team in 1993.

The Harlem Globetrotters, a renowned professional exhibition basketball team, have been a household name among Americans, and around the world, for over 70 years. In 1926, Abe Saperstein, and English-born Jewish Chicagoan took over coaching duties of an all-black team, the Savoy Big Five. His new team lacked a hometown audience and arena and got paid through touring, first the mid-west and later all America. During the early period, Saperstein carried the entire team in his car. A shrewd businessman, Saperstein concluded the team could be

made more popular with marketing. In a stroke of genius to combat the fierce racism he knew existed in America and to emphasize the team's all-black composition and its barnstorming, he renamed them the Harlem Globetrotters — though they had no connection to the Manhattan, New York neighborhood. The team debuted on Jan. 7, 1927 wearing red, white and blue uniforms Saperstein had sewn in his father's tailor shop. Saperstein's marketing and promotional genius made the Globetrotters top entertainment attractions and preceded the National Basketball Association (NBA) in paying multi-million dollar salaries. After building an international reputation and the ability to draw fans around the world — in 1951, the Globetrotters played before 75,000 spectators in Berlin's Olympic Stadium, one of the largest crowds to ever see a basketball game — Saperstein died in 1996 and the team was sold to three Chicago

businessmen for \$3.7 million.

When Mannie Jackson was a teenager in the 1950s in Edwardsville, IL, his basketball prowess earned his All-American honors and the title of Greater St. Louis area "Prep Player of the Year." He went on to captain his University of Illinois basketball team, become a member of that state's Sports Hall of Fame, play professional basketball and for the Globetrotters. Until Dec. 31, 1994, Jackson was a senior vice president and corporate officer of Honeywell, a top Fortune 100 Company headquartered in Minneapolis. He still sits on the board of directors of Honeywell's South African subsidiary, Martech Controls, as well as the boards of Ashland Oil, Jostens Corporation, Stanley Works and Reebok. He and former president of the Executive Leadership Council, a national group of the nation's top African-American executives, and an investor and founding member of Stairstep Inc., a Minnesota corporation that trains, develops



WILLIAM REED

and finances black small-business initiatives.

Jackson is looking to score big profits and business for and from his new acquisition. "The Harlem Globetrotters are one of America's greatest assets," he told Nashville's *Contemporary Magazine*. "Because they are so much a part of sports history, I have felt a major responsibility to make it happen right. With a commitment to excellence and global social consciousness, the Globetrotters are setting the standard in the sports/sports entertainment arena industry." Jackson recently announced that in conjunction with Columbia Pictures, a feature film re-telling the Globetrotter story is being done, with an animated series expected to follow. Ideally, in these new times and generation of people, domestic tours of Jackson's Globetrotter teams would be well received in all of America's urban hearts and sports arenas. Wouldn't it be just dandy if, like in the days when Saperstein used his own network of local promoters, African-American promoters and organizations in major cities were the ones booking and organizing arena dates for Jackson's new Harlem Globetrotters' barnstorming tours?

William Reed is publisher of *Who's Who in Black Corporate America*

Preview

(Continued from Page 1)

Vegas can be major producer and exporter of movies, recordings, multimedia products and be a "showcase for the

Political power does not equal economic independence

By C. Mason Weaver
Special to Sentinel-Voice

What is the goal of the black community? Economic power or political power? Political power is a group experience; it is usually acquired through a structured organization, run by clearly defined leaders, for the purpose of meeting mutually agreed upon goals. People can join together for political power under many different organizations and groups. You can be a member of a political party or an ideological constituency. You can work toward gaining political clout as a member of a group like the Concerned Women for America, the National Organization for Women, John Birch Society or your local church. This is a proven, successful way to ensure political power. But does political power ensure economic power?

Have you ever noticed that Japanese "communities" do not seem to worry about how many Japanese Congressmen there are? Ever wonder why you do not have a Korean Congressional Caucus? It seems odd to me that "Arab Americans" and "Jewish Americans" with such strong and traditional political priorities seem more interested in economics in America than politics. Why? Because economics, not politics, is the path to achieving real personal freedom.

However, economic power empowers the individual, not social leaders. Social leaders of every group are only interested in political power because that empowers them. If the individual becomes powerful that individual does not need a leader. That is why we have so much focus on political power, not the power of self-determination.

While we prepare ourselves for the season of black cultural

awareness, let us prepare ourselves for independence from our cultural chains. While we honor Martin Luther King, Jr. in January and clothe ourselves in African clothes during February, let us remember the reason some of us still feel oppressed by drugs, crime, high taxes, bad schools and welfare is due more from lack of money than lack of political power.

I do not care how you define the "black culture." If the culture has no strong semi-independent economic base, then it resembles a plantation, not a community. The civil rights movement was very much about gaining control over economic means, and not so much about gaining political power as an end in itself. Of course, voting rights were a very important issue during the civil rights movement, but the March on Washington, boycotts, demonstrations and civil disobedience often focused on jobs.

Jobs were the reason Martin Luther King traveled to Memphis the week of his assassination. Jobs were the inspiration for the 1994 Civil Rights Act and the motivation behind the passage of affirmative action laws.

Civil rights are of little help if the individual cannot secure income and take advantage of the right to live and work where he pleases. Economic freedoms are not decided by political parties or a social culture, they are decided by the individual who is willing to sacrifice all he has for all he desires. That is freedom and that is America.

C. Mason Weaver, a member of the national Advisory Council of the African-American leadership, Project 21, is president of The Committee to Restore America; located in Oceanside, Calif.

world," Hunt said.

Attendee John Phillips, of the Las Vegas Housing Authority and board member of the Urban Chamber spoke favorably about

the information presented by the speakers and exhibit booths. "The opportunities are here [for African-Americans] if we take advantage of the business growth and booming population in Las Vegas," Phillips said.

"Ethnic" and "cultural diversity" was referred to by several speakers throughout the day's events. Observing that the major speakers were predominately white males, Phillips noted what he called a "lack of diversity" in the ethnic mix and gender of the keynote speakers.

The lack of blacks or women as keynote speakers was possibly due to the fact that most, who did speak, are resort owners, land developers and

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— JANUARY 23-26, 1997 —

Disney's World On Ice at the Thomas & Mack Center

For more information call 702-895-3900

— SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1997 —

Community Little League 1997 Baseball Sign-Ups

McDonald's (Bonanza & Rancho) • 10am-3pm

For more information call 702-390-8867 (voice mail)

— TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1997 —

New Directions For Youth Task Force

749 Veterans Memorial Dr. (Parks & Leisure) • 8:30am

Contact person: Ricky Watts at 702-229-6297

Governor's Youth Advisory Council

123-E Charleston, Bldg B (NV Dept. of Trans.) • 10am-3pm

Contact person: Heidi Sakelarios at 702-687-4885 (Reno)

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