

# First Fridays hosts career day

By Damon Hodge  
Sentinel-Voice

Seventeen-year-old Jerry Williams dreams of Hollywood celebrity.

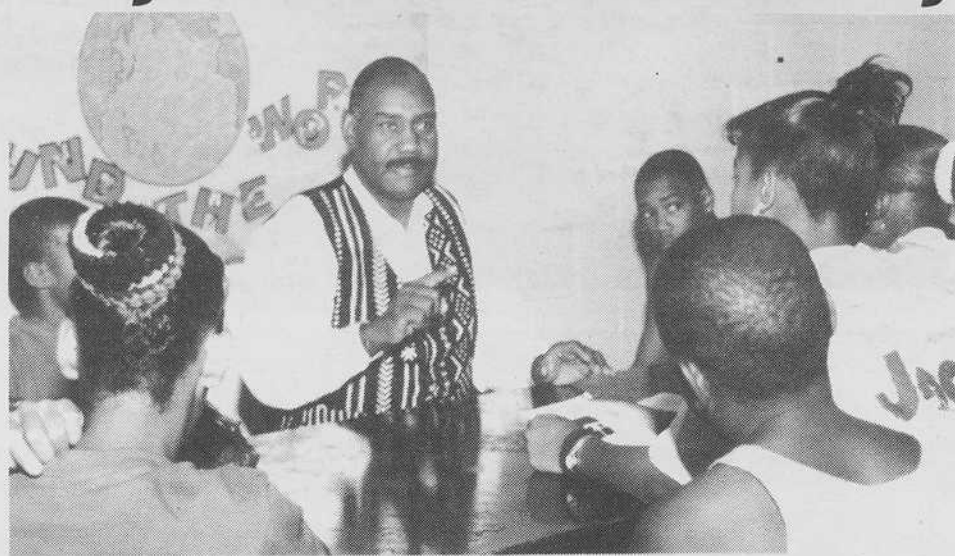
First Fridays, a year-old networking group, wants Williams, and all youth to have career alternatives just in case they never see their names flash in neon lights.

Parents and children trickled through the group's first career day Saturday, July 19, at the Andre Agassi Boys and Girls Club, 800 N. Martin Luther King Blvd.

Mary Fells wants her 14-year-old daughter Davita to enter law enforcement. "But I also wanted her to see what other career options are available." Davita, a ninth-grader at the Las Vegas Academy for the Performing Arts, is interested in theater.

Alisha Bell and Lisa Margerum founded First Fridays last year to ease the transition of Las Vegas transplants. Both were civically active in their former communities - Bell in Detroit and Margerum in Milwaukee. The career day is an outgrowth of their activism.

"We wanted to expose the kids to different career



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Dr. William Dugan (center) speaks to a group of kids during First Fridays' inaugural career day last Saturday at the Andre Agassi Boys and Girls Club.

options," said Bell, who works in sales for a cellular phone and pager company.

In addition to career booths, the program tapped a cross-section of more than 20 professionals from the health industry, media and business.

"Knowledge is power," North Las Vegas City Councilman John Rhodes told a classroom full of youth. He recalled how he and the club's namesake, Andre Agassi, grew up playing tennis and later succeeded in life. "You have

the same opportunities. Don't let anything stop you."

Margerum, a pharmacist and career day coordinator, said the group chose Agassi's club because of familiarity. "I have little sisters that went to Boys and Girls clubs. I know how important it was for them."

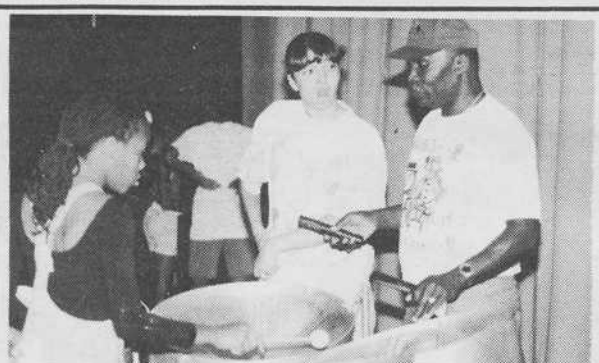
"The kids are already used to coming here (to the club)," First Fridays' vice president Dereck Hibbler said. Hibbler served double duty, also representing the City of Las Vegas' Municipal Court

system. "The event helps the kids put faces to the jobs," Hibbler, a house arrest officer, said.

Agassi club program director Susan Key called the event "informative."

"The youth are our future," booth operator and Chef Reggie Noles said. The owner of Creative Cakes and Catering thinks the event did mountains of good.

"If we don't do something positive (for our youth), they will do something negative."



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Rupert Henry works with the steel drum orchestra.

## Camp

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"The unity circle serves as a symbol for the community," Ellis Rice said. Rice leads the unity circle when not in his role as the program's cultural activities specialist.

"The camp opens up new avenues for the kids," said music instructor Henry Shed. A former music teacher in Pine Bluff, Ark. and Los Angeles, Shed is one of several paid, professionally trained staffers.

Another is Shelby Brown. A respected dance instructor with international experience - including working with Michael Jackson on his "Smooth Criminal" video - Brown said the most difficult thing was making dance interesting to her students.

Serina Yarbrough, an 11-year-old headed to Charles I. West middle school, hopes to dance her way to the big time. Fellow West middle schooler Christian Lee, 12, likes his newfound ability to read music.

Julio Hernandez began drawing at age 9. The 14-year-old future Green Valley High freshman is using the visual arts class to enhance his skill.

Eleanor Primm can see a difference in her children. "The program has given my daughter confidence and leadership," Primm said. "It has shown my son about his African heritage and how to meet and socialize with different people. It has truly been a blessing for us."

Film/video instructor Stan Armstrong is envious. "I wish I had an opportunity like this when I was a kid."

## NAACP

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Las Vegas City Councilman John Rhodes.

"I got to go to a City Council meeting and see how the meetings worked," Wyse said. "It (the experience) increased my interest in wanting to be a politician. My goal is to be a senator."

Natasha Taylor dabbled in her mother's accounting business - filing, doing data entry and bookkeeping. Thanks to the institute, the Durango High junior has formed her own bookkeeping business. "I have five customers," Taylor said, "three of them are steady customers." She said LaGrande helped her with her business plan and business cards and flyers are in the works.

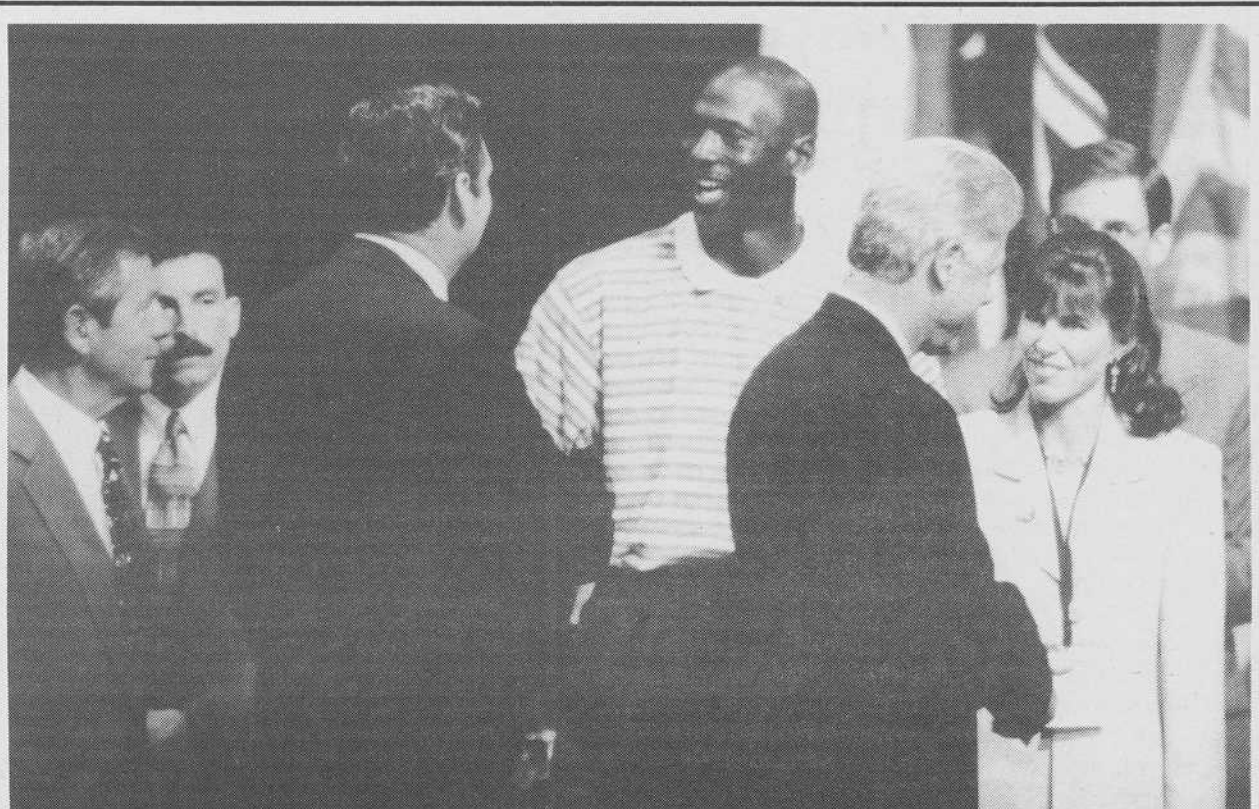
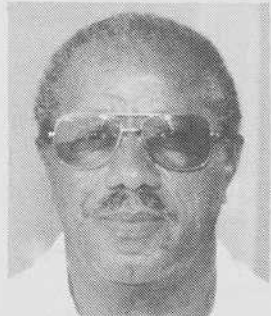


Photo special to Sentinel-Voice by Las Vegas News Bureau

### His Airness and the President

NBA basketball star Michael Jordan (middle) shakes hands with Gov. Bob Miller while President Clinton holds a conversation. Clinton spoke at the National Governor's Association meeting held at the Mirage Hotel. Forty-three governors, their staffs and families came to Las Vegas for the meeting. After the activities, Jordan, Miller and Clinton played golf. Last week, Clinton was in Lake Tahoe discussing the future of that area.

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