

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

# Cronyism in ethics case

Cronyism is once again on display in county government.

For spending interest earnings from property taxes to buy personal items, to improperly accepting \$42,000 in computers donated from an investment firm, to waiving nearly \$2 million in late-payment penalties to delinquent tax filers, including several of his "acquaintances," all county treasurer Mark Aston received was a stern reprimand.

What?

The state Ethics Commission - which did little to prove it deserved that title with Friday's ruling - could have and should have socked Aston with a hefty fine. Instead it was content to render the soft-handed rebuke.

Commission chairwoman Mary Boetsch said Aston was put on notice "big time." Commissioner Helen Chisholm said that he might get his just desserts come voting time. "Next time the elections come up, maybe that will be the fine."

Get real.

The third-term treasurer has already said he is seeking re-election and has insisted that he did nothing wrong. He claims the assault on his character is politically-motivated.

No, no, no, Aston, you're wrong. This is not a political issue, it's a moral one.

Armed with barrels of mud aimed squarely at Aston, the commission chose to hurl its sling wide right. Commissioners repeatedly scoffed at Aston's defense of his actions. But they didn't follow their disgust with equally harsh action.

Since the commission didn't step to the fore, the citizens of Clark County should. Aston has proven that he can't operate above-board, thus they should make sure to sink the re-election ambitions that he harbors.

Aston's actions should be considered an affront to all taxpaying citizens. He was elected to uphold the law and respect the authority of his position. Not flout it.

Unfortunately, given the commission's fluffy brand of punishment, the smug, arrogant county treasurer probably will either learn that lesson or continue his wayward ways. Election time will tell.



# In pursuit of excellence

Have you noticed? For the second time this year a young African-American athlete has vaulted to the top of a sport in which African Americans have rarely occupied the top rungs - and in doing so has spurred predictions of a revolution in the sport.

First, it was Tiger Woods, golfer extraordinaire, of Asian, American Indian, and European, as well as African descent.

Now, it's Venus Williams.

Williams, the 17-year-old tennis phenomenon who powered her way to the finals of the U.S. Open in New York recently, was no match this time for the superb play of Martina Hingis, the world's top-ranked player.

Still, the expectations of Williams are astonishing: Although she's just begun her career at the top of the sport, the president of the United States Tennis Association declared after the tournament that she "is the best thing that has happened to American tennis for the last 20 years."

These two young African-American athletes are important in ways that transcend sport. For one thing, Woods and Williams have restored the public memories of the true African-American pioneers in these sports - an Althea Gibson in tennis, a Charlie Sifford in golf - and in so doing shown that in fact there's very little in the field of human endeavor black people haven't done before.

The newcomers aren't breaking barriers; they're opening the doors wider. Their stardom also underscores the point that, once the barriers to its participation are lowered, no arena of human activity is "off limits" to any ethnic group. Tiger Woods and Venus

## To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price  
President  
National Urban League



Williams are exceptional people, alright. But they're not exceptions among African-Americans. The qualities they've displayed - talent, determination, discipline, self-confidence, and faith in the future - aren't limited to a few African-American youth.

In fact, we have those kinds of youngsters in abundance. Some of them are in two-year technical schools, or community colleges, or the military, or the workforce.

Some others of them have had the luxury of choosing among Harvard, Stanford, Pennsylvania, Emory and Morehouse for college.

Last year still others, seventy-nine high school seniors who won prestigious National Achievement Scholarships, chose to enroll at Howard University, propelling that historically black institution to the top of the heap in the national competition for those prized students. That's revolutionary activity worth talking about.

We'd be the first to say that we, black America and all of America, need more young people like this. That is to say, we need to inspire more young people to cultivate the qualities, which will enable them to achieve in school, contribute to their communities and build productive lives for

themselves.

That's the purpose of the annual national celebration we at the Urban League call "Doing the Right Thing." To show off our youth all across the country who are doing well in school and in their communities - and to show their peers that excellence is worth pursuing and will be recognized and rewarded.

We began this event last September with great success; nearly 100 of our League affiliates sponsored street fairs, parades and award ceremonies which showcased the good things young people do.

This year we expect it to be even bigger because we have joined with nearly a score of other black professional, fraternal and church

organizations to launch the Campaign for African-American Achievement.

As Bishop Roy L.H. Winbush, chairman of the National Congress of Black Churches, says, our purpose is to harness the power of the African-American community to lift the academic achievement levels of black children.

We'll help education officials renovate school facilities and improve curricula

to give young people a proper scholastic learning environment. And we'll ally ourselves with local community organizations and parents and young people themselves to spread the culture of achievement within these neighborhoods.

Our young people must have access to opportunity-to quality education, to ample chances to develop socially and spiritually through work and community service.

They need to feel surrounded by caring adults who provide emotional support and advice and guidance. Those are the qualities which have produced a Tiger Woods, a Venus Williams and uncounted others.

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

## LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.  
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.  
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
Telephone (702) 380-8100  
Fax (702) 380-8102

**Contributing Writers:**  
Kim Bailey  
Angela Kristin Brown  
Lee Brown  
Loretta Arrington Hall  
Diamond Ross  
Sharon Savage  
John Stephens III  
Fred T. Snyder  
Crisandra Varnado

**Photographers:**  
John Broussard  
Jonathan Olsen

**Ramon Savoy, Publisher-Editor**  
**Lynnette Sawyer, General Manager**  
**Marcello Sawyer, Copy Editor**  
**Willis Brown, Production Manager**  
**Don Snook, Graphics**  
**Ed & Betty Brown, Founders**

Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association  
and West Coast Black Publishers Association