



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

West Middle School recently concluded its first student council installation. (Front row L-R) Socorro Rodriguez, 2nd Vice President Jamar Rankin, President Kristen Stanley, Howard Culverston, Adolpho Rio and April Washington. (Back row L-R) Mrs. Dumas, 1st Vice President Ambrose Sayles, Teanna Howard, Jamie Calinag, Judge Gates, Allen Corbaley, Wendy Whitsett, Mrs. Fletcher, Rudy Rivera and Mrs. Stepp.

# West installs first student council

By John Melvin Patterson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Charles I. West Middle inaugurated its first student council officers amid pomp, circumstance and a well-known judge.

OK, so the pomp and circumstance bit may be a stretch, but the ceremony did have a touch of regal flair.

District Court Judge Lee Gates officiated the installation. He watched proudly as Student Council President Kristen Stanley joined the other council members and home room representatives in briefing the crowd on as to who they were and emphasizing their commitment to live up to the honor their fellow students have entrusted to them.

The West family was thrilled. "It was a

wonderful program and each child was a shining star," said Dr. John West, son of the late Charles West, Nevada's first black doctor. "I sincerely believe we have all the makings to become the best school in the district."

Gates was honored to preside over the installation. He said the ceremony was a bit nostalgic.

"It brings back some fond memories for me," Gates said. "I was very impressed with these youngsters and the way the whole program was put together."

"These kids have shown their intelligence and their polish. By getting off to such a good start in life at their young ages, I believe some of these young people will be the 'movers and shakers' of tomorrow."

# West Las Vegan defies odds, produces in law

By John Melvin Patterson  
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When Mary Etta Clinton was studying law in college, she couldn't get a babysitter. Thus, Clinton often trekked to class, her son Uri, 9 at the time, in tow.

That experience prompted Uri Clinton to want to become a lawyer. And despite a bumpy educational ride, Uri Clinton, now a law clerk in the Clark County District Attorney's Office, has achieved his dream.

"Since that night (going to my mother's class) I have only wanted to become a lawyer," he said. "I found that class simply fascinating!"

Uri Clinton's ride to success started off rocky. His teachers at Lewis E. Roe Elementary School and Western High School often doubted whether Uri would even graduate from high school much less from law school.

He took Special Education classes and basic classes, and just before graduating from Western, general courses. But it was at Western, that he began finding his niche.

He joined the debate team. "I realized I had a natural talent for developing and presenting an argument (much needed in courtrooms)." Inspired by the debate team outside the class, Clinton credits his turn-around in the classroom to a biology teacher/track coach at Western. "You must produce, he told me, and those are the words I live by today."

Though his grades improved, he failed his American College Test. Test officials told him in a letter saying that "... some people just aren't meant to go to college. Maybe, you would be better off at one of the trade schools." He wasn't discouraged.

One of the few schools that accepted him despite his low scores was Florida Memorial University in Miami. At Florida Memorial, Clinton turned his grades around.

After one year at Florida Memorial, he transferred to UNLV. Switching from a small college to a large college only boosted his desire to succeed. His grades continued to climb.

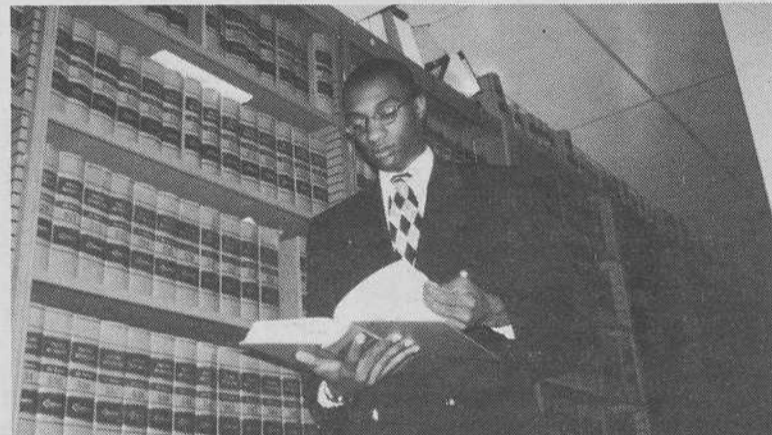
His civic activities also began to take root. He co-founded and was first president of the Minority Pre-Law Association. And in 1994, he graduated with departmental Honors while earning his bachelor's.

Armed with a full scholarship, he jumped to the Gonzaga University School of Law in Spokane, Wash. At Gonzaga, the curriculum and racism tested his resolve.

There were only five African-Americans in the school. He faced death threats by letter and telephone. "I can't say that I actually knew how the students that integrated 'Ole Miss' felt, but I think I had a very good idea," he said. "But, I had to go on, not only for myself, but for everyone who cared about me. Those were very trying times of my life!"

Three years later, Clinton was the only black student to graduate. He painfully recalls taking final exams in a secret room with a security guard present because he had been warned not to take them.

Surviving Gonzaga, he interned



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Uri Clinton shows off the study habits that have made him a success.

during summers. He was later offered jobs in New York City, Spokane and Las Vegas. Choosing was not tough.

"It had to be Las Vegas," he said. "This is home. I remember growing up on the West Side. It was like having an enormous family. I love the people and the city. When I came home I saw a few things going on in our community that disturbed me. I

wanted to help. By becoming a prosecuting attorney, I may be able to help clean up the streets. Something to give back to my West Side 'family'."

After graduating with a political science degree in a few years, Clinton said he plans to run for a congressional seat. He knows he will have to "produce" to get there.

## Advertising

(Continued from Page 1) placed ads infrequently. The largest government advertiser — the U.S. Postal Service which spends \$168 million annually, twice as

much as the Army's \$83 million — just recently demonstrated how the larger white society "usurp(s) minority culture, expression, music, lifestyle, and soul," Leavell said.

When the USPS issued its Kwanzaa stamp, celebrating the African-inspired holiday tradition created 30 years ago by Dr. Maulana Karenga, and now widely celebrated by Blacks in this country, she said there were few ads in black newspapers announcing the

stamp was available.

U.S. government ad spending in newspapers and magazines rose 16 percent last year, and is expected to increase substantially again soon, as new anti-drug census and predicted anti-smoking advertising campaigns begin.

"What we've done is send a clear message," Escobedo said, "that African-Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans are coming together and going to the federal government."

## Conference

(Continued from Page 1) and structural dissimilarities depending on the population being served by the contract. Other plans fail outright to contract with providers that traditionally serve low income beneficiaries.

That, said Sen. Larry Young (D-Md.), president and founder of the National Black Health Study Group, was the reason the study group was founded 10 years ago.

"I was dissatisfied with the white organization not being inclusive," he said. "Blacks were not at the table to receive important information. I looked around and there would be 100 legislators invited, but there was less than 12 of us in the room. The information was good but we were not getting it."

Young said African Americans have to be more assertive medical consumers. "More often than not we participate when our dollars should make us players; participants watch but the real game is taking place on the court."

Young urged African Americans to visit their local health department and to talk with health educators.

Parts of this article were taken from the presentation made to the National Black Health Study Group.

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