

New Miss Nevada Teen U.S.A. studious, active

By Brenda Kirkpatrick
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Going the extra distance has become sort of a mantra for Vicki Franklin, the new Miss Nevada Teen U.S.A. and only the second black to win the title.

The 17-year-old Eldorado High student did all the things necessary to prepare for the pageant: new hairstyle, manicure and pedicure, sold tickets as is required. But she also studied.

Studied?

In the four years leading up to the competition, she attended pageants where she learned what it took to be a winner from the losers and why some girls had tried as many as five times to win and never won.

"I wanted to be completely ready so that this wouldn't happen to me," Franklin said.

Her work paid off, culminating with a victory in last month's Miss Nevada Teen U.S.A. pageant at the Nicholas Horn theater at the Community College of Southern Nevada's Cheyenne campus. As a result, she will compete in the Miss Teen U.S.A. National Pageant next August.

"My family really has always been behind me to teach me the importance of preparedness and of doing a job well," said Franklin, a native of Las Vegas. "They're all like that. All my family members are high achievers and are very busy people. Sometimes my priorities get out of whack because I'm so busy. My family and friends help out by keeping me on course."

Franklin has a full plate indeed. Starting with dance lessons at age of three, she has become a singer, athlete, cheerleader, student and community leader.

She excels in ballet, modern and jazz dance styles. An alto, she sings Broadway show tunes, popular and top 40 music, contemporary jazz

and even dabbles in country western style music and has performed at the Fremont Street Experience, at state fairs and for the needy, elderly and ill.

Franklin, who runs track, and is shooting for a spot on the Eldorado High School Relay Team, is also a talented cheerleader.

For the past two summers, she has been chosen "The Best All Around Cheerleader" at the Universal Cheerleading camp. Last year she represented the United States in London, England, winning the title of "All Star Cheerleader" and performing with other cheerleaders on a float during the Annual London Parade on New Year's Day.

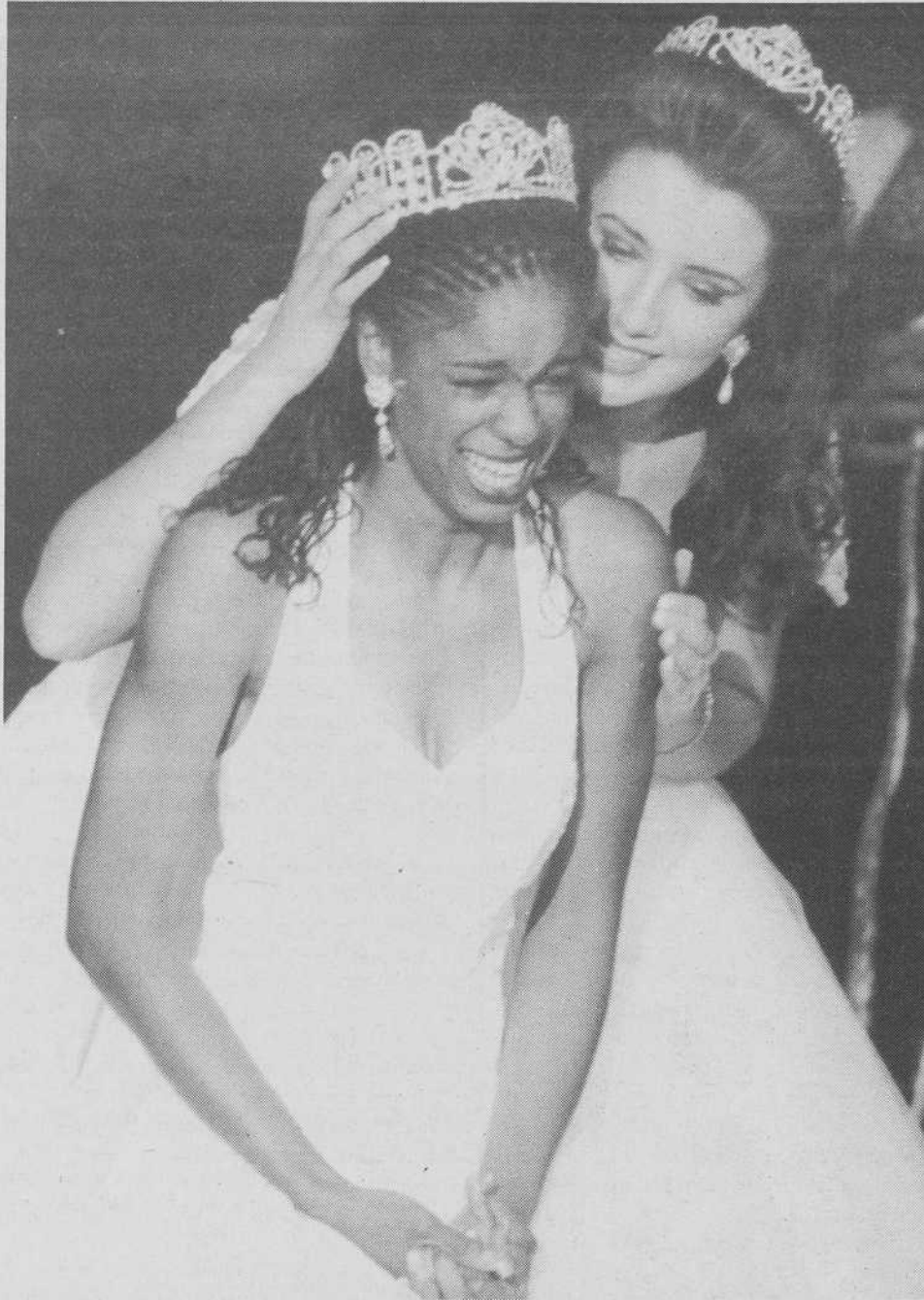
Franklin is also a member of the National Honor Society, junior class president, a member of the youth enrichment program AKA Teens, has volunteered at Shade Tree which houses homeless and battered women and their children as well as M*A*S*H* Village, a temporary shelter for homeless families.

Franklin said she would like to attend a historically black college in the East and study law with an emphasis on family law.

The Miss Nevada Teen U.S.A. Contest lasted three days and had 21 contestants. The pageant featured individual interviews conducted in a business atmosphere, an opening number featuring cocktail dresses, a quick question/answer forum and swimsuit and evening gown modeling.

For winning, Franklin received a \$1,000 scholarship, a 14k gold pendant with a crown in it, a watch, a membership to 24-Hour Fitness, photo shoots and gift certificates to some local stores and a beauty makeover.

She also earned the chance to add another feather in her cap: the 1998 Miss Teen U.S.A. title.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Steve Marcus/Las Vegas Sun

Victoria Franklin is overcome by emotion as she is crowned 1998 Miss Teen Nevada U.S.A.

Black dolls possess a distinct, reverant history

By Brenda Kirkpatrick
Special to Sentinel-Voice

There is probably a doll created to depict everything one can imagine.

Clown dolls, baby dolls, show dolls, fashion dolls, personality dolls, such as Shirley Temple or Barbie, period dolls, children's dolls, stuffed dolls such as Raggedy Ann and Andy, French dolls, German dolls, African dolls, and other dolls depicting every known ethnic group can all be found in someone's collection.

Dolls come in all sizes from as small as one inch to human size. They are made from such diverse materials as rocks, wood, clay, corn husks, straw, papier mach, wool, cotton, brushes, plastic and porcelain.

Africans have made dolls for centuries and used them in ceremonies for healing, in rites of passage, as toys, to serve as in dramatizing tales of fantasy.

The black doll came to the United States with the slaves.

In America, Marcus Garvey encouraged blacks to purchase dolls like themselves.

Garvey established a doll manufacturing firm named Berry E. David Cronon in his book, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey*, Garvey is quoted as saying, "Mothers,

These caricatures caused blacks to see themselves in a negative fashion, to hate their own beautiful skin color, hair and facial features.

give your children them (dolls) to play with and cuddle. They will learn as they grow older to love and care for their own children and not neglect them."

Garvey was working against a well-organized tide of hate and political and social innuendo created by whites. Black dolls were made by white manufacturers for the sole purpose of demeaning the image of blacks. These dolls had bulging eyes, protruding, enlarged lips, hang-dog expressions. Over time, these dolls did their job well. Too well.

These caricatures caused blacks to see themselves in a negative fashion, to hate their own beautiful skin color, hair and facial features.

Eventually, blacks hated black dolls and purchased only white dolls for their children—unintentionally perpetuating the idea that blonde hair, blue eyes and pale skin was that which was preferred.

With the growth of the

industrial age, manufactured dolls entered the marketplace. They included the "Topsy-Turvy" doll which had a black face and white face that could be turned either way.

Usually, the black side of the doll would be dressed as a servant and the white side dressed as a mistress.

The desire of black people to reverse the accepted attitude for black dolls and turn the dolls into toys of pride is shown in this statement from the catalogue of the National Negro Doll Company in Nashville, Tennessee.

The company was founded in the early 1900's by R. H. Boyd, a black man, "...Every race is trying to teach its children an object lesson by giving them toys that lend to higher intellectual heights. The Negro doll is calculated to help in the Christian development of the race..."

Shindana was a black owned and operated toy company in the United States.

It was founded in 1968 in Watts after the riots. It began by manufacturing a black baby doll, known as Baby Nancy.

At the 1976 toy fair, the firm exhibited dolls fashioned after famous athletes, after a CIA agent named Slade and a wide range of other dolls.

The company eventually discovered that more than half of its output was purchased by white parents. Sindana's sales topped \$1.4 million in 1975, but in 1983, went out of business.

The negative image trend in black dolls changed dramatically during the latter part of the 20th century with white manufacturers becoming very successful in selling black dolls in nearly every retail outlet where white dolls are sold. Caricatures of black dolls became politically incorrect.

Certainly during the 26th annual doll show and sale sponsored by the Las Vegas Doll Club, there was nothing negative nor derogatory in the

display of the beautiful black dolls along with the white ones and a host of other dolls. Included in the displays were antique dolls, collectable and reproduction dolls, toys, miniatures, bears, and the very

necessary doll parts that creators of dolls need.

Among the collectors was Cheri Brazie from Reno, Nevada. She is an African-American woman who not only

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