

# Summit

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He criticized blacks for not stressing the importance of education. "We are not an enlightened people," he said. "Ask 10 African Americans who are their senators, school board members or mayors and they can't tell you. Seventy percent of African-American men do not graduate from (high) schools."

Michael Hightower, a Fulton County, Ga., commissioner said, "Public education in urban America is broke and before we can get to any solutions we all need to agree that there is a problem.

Then we need to find solutions, and then let's make real changes based on those solutions."

Besides the need for economic power, panelists also urged a united front to attack the travails plaguing the black community — high teen pregnancy rates, a lack of generational interaction, pervasive materialism, declining morals and disregard for what many of the heroism, courage and vision of the men and women who fought and died for voting rights and civil rights. As it stands, they said, black America is ill-equipped



The education topic by moderator Bev Smith caused Mayor Emmanuel Cleaver, of Kansas City, to respond with criticism about how tax dollars are spent on the schools and children.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

to make an economic impact on the 21st century.

"We need to be responsible for ourselves; we need to ask our children about homework," one participant said.

Another participant said,

"Community is the issue. I got my education at the barbershop, where the black elders gathered. We got to learn about life."

(Abraham Lincoln emancipated the slaves.)

# Holley

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will speak."

Added Williams, "Sensitivity training should not be a punishment but a way of life for the police department."

Gary Peck, executive director of Las Vegas' ACLU, questioned whether the police department produced an environment that made Holley feel comfortable with making derogatory racial remarks. If so, "those types of attitudes are unacceptable," he said.

Sherriff Jerry Keller defended Holley's punishment, saying it was congruent with department policy for a first offense.

Peck disagreed.

"It has been my experience that the policies and practices of his department with respect to these kinds of incidents are not

clearly spelled out," he said. "It is not very clear to any of us what those policies are and what the criteria are that will be applied when determining what kind of discipline is deemed appropriate."

Citizens cited Keller's ruling as validating the reason why the Legislature created the civilian review board championed by Sen. Joe Neal, D-North Las Vegas.

"The sheriff needs to review all of his policies and take a look at how he is handling this situation," said Williams, who is pushing for a meeting with Keller to examine the policies.

Sgt. Lewis Roberts, president of the Black Police Association said, "We think that the comments are inappropriate, they were ill-timed, and unprofessional. As a representative of the largest police union in the state it definitely leaves questions as to whether our membership can get proper representation."

# Funding

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and to assert nonetheless that while they are intolerable and must be addressed, they do not constitute an excuse for failing to equalize school finance.

Our country is in desperate need of comprehensive school reform that addresses instructional format, governance, accountability, and finance.

Equal access to widespread systems of public education are the very cornerstone of our democracy, and continuing to permit widespread deterioration of our public

schools threatens our democracy's very survival. States that are supporting school finance equalization are finding that current outdated systems are inadequate to insure that students have sufficient skills to live in a complex and rapidly changing society, to make informed choices, to understand current issues, appreciate their cultural heritages, to function intelligently and to compete favorably in the job market.

How can we function as a nation when increasing percentages of our population

can be described in these terms?

The answer is, we cannot. Martin Luther King Jr. said that we are all woven together into a single garment of destiny. What affects one of us directly affects us all indirectly.

The Supreme Court found in *Watson v. the City of Memphis* that constitutional rights "... are not merely hopes to some future enjoyment of some formalistic constitutional promise. The basic guarantees of our Constitution are warrants for the here and now and, unless there is an overwhelmingly compelling reason, they are to

be promptly fulfilled."

Contact your representatives and ask them to cosponsor the act.

# Wine

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Officer Rick Crosby, an event volunteer, said the wine taster provided him a chance to make valuable contacts. "There are lots of different people from different places here," he said. "It's a good place to network."

Rowan Strong, of Family Youth Services, said the event gave "people the chance to talk," socially. He was also impressed with the diversity of the guests for a Black History Month-labeled event.

Former CCSN President Robert Meecham and Sen. Richard Bryan, among others, enjoyed the festivities.

Though the evening offered food, arts and music bolstered the ambiance, most event goers seemed to find interacting with others the icing on the cake.

Event chairperson Joanie Flowers said to one of the many guests, "It just gets better every year."

# President

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to the Republican Party's irresponsible abandonment of America's public schools."

Rep. Cynthia McKinney applauded the President's proposal to provide new options for America's seniors in obtaining health insurance, for tackling "another issue critical to America's working families, that of affordable child care," and his initiative on education. "Clearly, the President has a vision," the congresswoman said.

Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr., D-Ill., lauded President Clinton "for laying before the American people a record of achievement and a concrete plan of action for the future. I am particularly excited about the President's initiative to raise the minimum wage."

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# Art

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feathers, grass, human hair, ivory, leather, metal wire; mirror pieces, nails, rope, straw; string, terra cotta and wood. In the collection, only the glass African trade beads were imported.

Some of the carved pieces were known as reliquary, or burial pieces which were placed atop the grave of the deceased as a grave marker.

Ancestral figures served as miniature memorials to deceased friends, leaders and family and were prayed to by infertile women hoping to bear children. Dolls were also used for this purpose.

A fetish is used in oath-taking or to heal someone who is ill. These fetishes are often draped with small bundles of medicines made from organic materials like herbs, blood or powders. They are bound in cloth or burlap and attached to the body of the fetish. Often large nails are inserted in the fetish to make it powerful. A fetish is akin to a good luck charm.

Divination pieces, like statues, bowls, plates and tools, were used to forecast the future. Figurines with lidded containers held sacrifices — items of value to the person needing a fortune told, such as cowrie shells, or cola nuts.

Some of the most common carving subjects were: animals, bowls, a chief's staff, deities (gods/spiritual beings), drums, masks, a fly whisk (used by the chief); furniture, grave markers, headdresses, helmet masks which covered the entire head, musical instruments, plates and shields.

Many carvings exist of women tribal leaders and chiefs. Women would reign only when their husbands were in office and would be beside their husband on a carved stool, while her husband, who wielded a wooden staff got the attention of his subjects when held aloft. At ceremonies, chiefs, male or female, wore a headdress — surreal representations of elephants or antelope — and necklaces and sat on a special stool. Horns and drums called a ceremony or assembly to order.

Yoruba — a tribe, language and a city called Santari in Brazil and Cuba — is also a religion, in which women who carried twins (ibedjie) carried carved twin wooden children around her abdomen during her pregnancy to assure their safety. The twin carvings served as ancestral protectors.

Thanks go out to Masamba Mboup from Senegal, Africa and George Sturman, of Las Vegas, an African art historian and importer/collector of tribal art for loaning a portion of his vast collection to the museum.

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