

# NEWS CLIPS

## E. ALEXANDER-RALSTON, AMONG 1ST BLACK ELECTED JUDGES IN THE SOUTH, DIES

Elreta Alexander-Ralston, one of the first black women ever elected to judgeship in the United States, recently died. She was 78. Alexander-Ralston was the first black female student accepted by the Columbia University School of Law, the first black woman to practice law in North Carolina and one of the first ever elected to the bench, serving as a District Court judge in Guilford County from 1968 to 1981. She retired from the post in 1981. Alexander-Ralston then practiced law for another 15 years.



ALEXANDER-RALSTON

## ONE CATTLEMAN APPEALS RULING IN OPRAH LIBEL CASE

AMARILLO, Texas — As he promised on the courthouse steps moments after losing his libel case against Oprah Winfrey, an Amarillo cattleman has appealed the verdict. A jury decided in February that Paul Engler and a group of other cattlemen didn't have a claim against Winfrey, her production company or a vegetarian activist under business disparagement laws. Plaintiffs said Winfrey's April 16, 1996, show dealing with mad cow disease damaged the industry. During the trial, U.S. District Judge Mary Lou Robinson decided that the cattlemen couldn't sue under Texas' "veggie libel" law, designed to protect food products from false disparagement. Twelve other states have similar statutes. Engler appealed Friday to the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, charging that the judge made incorrect rulings and other errors. Winfrey's lawyer, Charles Babcock, said he hadn't expected Engler — one of the nation's largest cattle feeders — to follow through with his appeal. "I thought, upon reflection, they would realize the futility of appealing this verdict," he said. Engler and his companies are the first plaintiffs to appeal.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TO EVICT PETS FROM PUBLIC HOUSING

WASHINGTON — In a move aimed at ridding public housing complexes in the nation's capital of menacing pit bulls, District of Columbia officials this week will begin evicting pets from its public housing communities. The campaign — dubbed Operation Bark and Bite — will enforce a "no pet" clause in tenants' rental agreements. The eviction is being imposed by David Gilmore, the independent receiver appointed by the courts in 1995 to run the city's troubled public housing system. Officials estimate that 250 dogs — most pit bulls — are kept in the city's 55 public housing communities. "It's the pit bulls that are the largest nuisance," said housing spokesman Arthur Jones. "Children are intimidated. Residents are intimidated. The dogs are used in combination for fighting ... as part of illegal drug operations." D.C. housing police, along with officials from The Washington Humane Society, on Thursday will start knocking on doors and confiscating any dogs they find. The Humane Society will give owners seven days to reclaim their dogs and find them homes outside public housing. Unclaimed dogs will be destroyed. Residents who refuse to let police into their home face eviction. The eviction campaign could take up to six months because of limited space at the Humane Society, officials said.

## UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LAW TO PROTECT HISTORIC SITES

The bathroom in the basement of the historic Michigan Street Baptist Church in Western New York looks like any other bathroom until you remove the picture frame on the east wall. There is a hole in the wall behind the picture. Beyond that lies a secret room where hundreds of runaway slaves hid on their way to Canada and freedom in the years leading up to the Civil War. Other sites around Buffalo and elsewhere have been razed, destroyed or forgotten. Because they were secret rooms, underground tunnels, barns and makeshift docks on river banks, the sites were not always easy to identify for historical purposes. But a new state law will revive the history of the Underground Railroad in New York and protect and mark the remaining sites, artifacts and paths. The "Freedom Trail" legislation, signed into law by Gov. George Pataki at the Michigan Street Baptist Church last October, is the first in the nation aimed at preserving the history of the Underground Railroad. On the federal level, U. S. Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, is leading an effort to craft legislation for a national Freedom Trail program. Besides sending a copy of the New York legislation to each of the other 49 states, Stokes submitted a bill to Congress last May. It has yet to come up for a vote.

# Business banquet honors past, future

By Deborah Kohen  
Sentinel-Voice

In its six-year existence, the Economic Opportunity Board's Micro Business Program has shuttled more than 800 Las Vegans to the land of entrepreneurship.

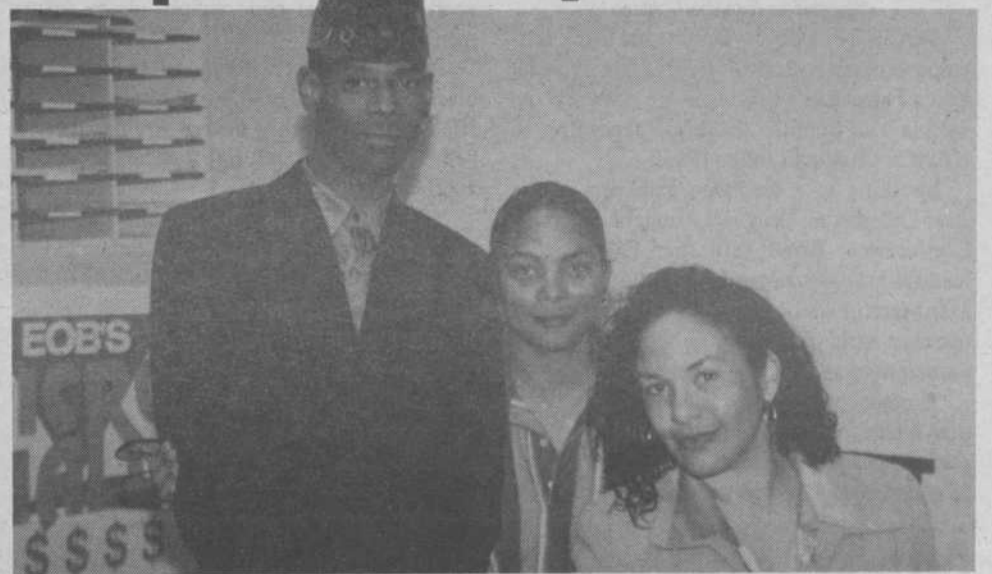
Fifteen businesses that have succeeded through the nonprofit EOB's business kick-start initiative, along with community leaders who back the entrepreneurial program, will be honored at a black-tie banquet in May.

The banquet will be held at 8 p.m. on May 16 at the MGM Hotel. Tickets are \$50; the price includes dinner, music, entertainment and the awards show. The banquet will double as a fund raiser to help cover administrative costs for the increasingly popular program.

Created in 1992, the Micro Business Development Program is designed to assist would-be entrepreneurs to secure start-up business loans, develop business plans, obtain all the required licensing and permits, and start operating their business.

Micro Business coordinator Kimberly Bailey, who has headed the program since its inception, said the program's weekly classes encourage clients to learn all aspects of running a business, including money management and job creation.

Annual expos, a weekly radio show ("Enterprising



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Kimberly Bailey, Micro Business coordinator, seated right, shares information during the morning planning meeting for the upcoming banquet with David Bowie, program assistant, and Claudia Allen, assistant coordinator at the new Micro Business office on Stella Lake Dr.

People" on KCEP FM 88.1 - Tuesdays at 9 a.m.) and the program's "Micro Mall" give clients visibility and experience. Also, participants can get referrals for free legal, accounting and other professional assistance.

"Motivation plus education equals economic empowerment salvation in business development. That's our formula," Bailey says, explaining that the fundamental cause of poverty is lack of hope and ambition.

Aimed at helping the poor to become financially self-sufficient, the program is open to all, though most of its clients are Black males who "are trying to do for their families,"

says Bailey, who provides weekly business counseling sessions for clients and continues to monitor their progress through start-up and fruition.

Bailey hopes to put pressure on manufacturing and wholesale companies and other businesses to boost commerce with local entrepreneurs.

"We have to address the good-ole-boy system," she said, adding that this can be done by educating clients about Nevada's business climate and encouraging them to use global marketing strategies to gain name recognition. The theme of the banquet is "new technologies taking us into a new business age," a reference

to the marketing potential of using the internet.

Besides attending the fund raiser, Bailey said the community can support the program by visiting the Micro Mall, which is set up from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every weekend at the radio station, 330 W. Washington Ave.

For \$150 per month, new entrepreneurs have an opportunity to market their products and services without having to make a heavy investment in start-up and overhead costs. The Micro Mall offers food, fun and music and provides a festive and unique shopping atmosphere, Bailey said.

(See Banquet, Page 4)

## Dogcatchers' gala honors loyal supporters

Special to Sentinel-Voice

For nearly two decades, Hen Hen's Dog Catchers Youth Foundation has provided a variety of youth sports events in the West Las Vegas area.

The community youth group, started in 1981 and commonly referred to as "The Dogcatchers," has established a reputation for inspiring youth to refrain from gang activity and drug use by offering sports alternatives.

On Saturday, March 21, the Dog Catchers honored loyal community supporters with a gala awards ceremony at the Jockey Club Resort on the Las Vegas Strip. Honorees included businessman Mike Waller, KCEP FM 88.1 station manager Sherman Rutledge, Las Vegas Housing Authority manager Frederick Brown and local businessman Jimmy Banks. In all, some 16 honorees were provided recognition.

The evening featured food, live performances by local recording artists, and a DJ for after-event dancing.

Program president and founder Henry "Hen Hen" Thorns said the first of what he plans to be an annual event was an opportunity to

showcase the incredible support people have provided to The Dogcatchers.

He reflected back on the original purpose of the group which was to enhance the opportunities of youth in the community.

"I accomplished what I wanted to do," he said.

He said many of the early Dog Catchers are in college or working and contributing to society.

Some members had gang and drug affiliations and either they dropped their affiliations or couldn't participate in activities.

The group often travels out-of-state for competitions or just for fun.

A youth, however, must submit his report card prior to reserving a seat on the group bus.

"Once they show us their report card, we decide if they get to go," he said. "If they are doing bad, then we get them some help."

By his most recent estimates, some 1,000 children have participated in the group.

Thorns credits a strong volunteer base and parents for his program's success.

He said the name of the organization says a lot for the group's credo.

Said Thorns: "The Dog

Catchers is an organization designed to catch our own children before gangs and drugs have an opportunity."

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