



Feelings flood forum

**Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice**

Tears flowed from nearly every eye in the room, except from Reggie Hayes, the young man whose murder conviction was recently overturned after he spent 14 years in prison.

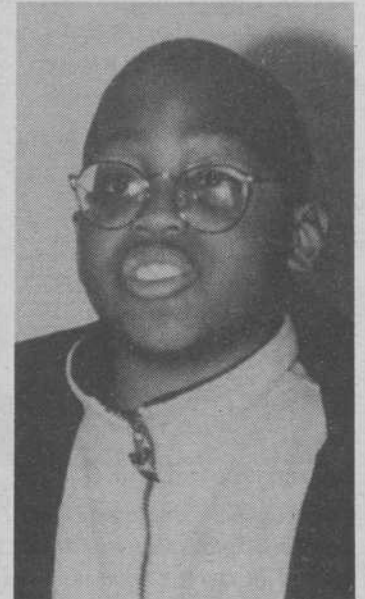
"Firstly, I'd like to thank God," Hayes told an audience of more than 100 at a West Las Vegas Library forum designed to ratchet up pressure for a governor's pardon. "My situation is only rare because I've been released. There are a lot of people unjustly incarcerated like me. God has blessed me to be able to speak on their behalf."

The National Alliance

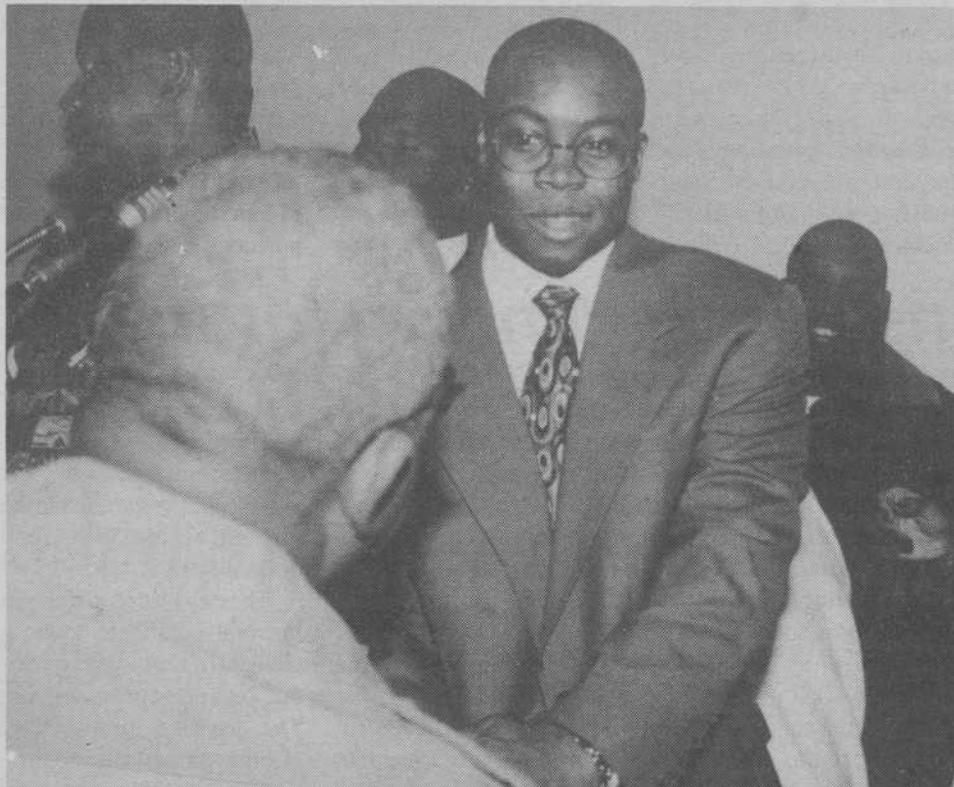
Against Racist and Political Repression organized Monday's forum for Hayes who was 14 on Aug. 10, 1985 when he accepted what he thought would be a ride home from Donald Lee and Eddie Hampton, both 16, and Phillip Minor, 18.

The trio, who tried to killed four other people earlier in the day, kidnapped 21-year-old Nellisairman John Brown at gunpoint, beat him, robbed him of \$9 and shot him in a vacant alley.

Though Hayes wasn't involved in either crime and even led police to the murder scene, he was convicted of murder and got two consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole, plus (See Hayes, Page 13)



LV Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy
Reginald Hayes' young cousin Markael Green used his time during Monday's forum at the West Las Vegas Library Theater to tell attendants how he dealt with his cousin's absence. Hayes was recently freed.



LV Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy
Reginald Hayes shakes hands with a supporter Monday during a forum sponsored by a local civil rights group championing a full pardon for him.

Nominations signal rebirth

**Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice**

The local NAACP set about beginning anew after two years of turmoil last week with nominations to elect a new set of officers and 24 executive board members. The branch was suspended months ago for not filing a 1996 financial support, a claim Las Vegas members dispute.

On Friday, members simmered at a three hour meeting to nominate a new set of officers and 24 executive board member candidates.

Edward Lewis, president of the Tri-State conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People which encompasses Nevada, Idaho and Utah, wouldn't allow the press to cover the meeting, but said later that, "they got the same old politicians doing the same old crooked things. We need a new day."

Sources told the Sentinel-Voice that emotions ran high with community activist Marzette Lewis grilling members about the fate of membership dues money and how the local chapter descended into such disarray.



LV Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy
NAACP election official Tasha Crockett, seated, examines the Las Vegas NAACP roster during the nomination process.

The Las Vegas branch was suspended in August for allegedly failing to submit 1996 financial reports. Then president the Rev. James Rogers said he filed the reports, but national headquarters has no record of them.

The suspension capped years of turmoil. Members accused the Rev. Chester Richardson, Roger's assistant from 1994 to 1997, of sexual harassment, said the branch has thrown unapproved fund-raisers and questioned why \$5,000 in sewer fees wasn't paid for the 600 W. Owens Ave. office the group was eventually kicked out of in December 1997. Members also said they have not received membership cards.

Lewis said his office is investigating a man who tried to strong-arm a \$10,000 contract from a local businessman using the NAACP as a front.

By the end of the session, some nominations were OK'd, others were under protest.

Presidential candidates also used the session to campaign.

(See NAACP, Page 2)

R&B artists, divas en vogue at awards

See Related Story Page 8 Usher.

More than 12,000 fans crowded the MGM Grand Garden Monday night for the 9th annual Billboard Music Awards and the majority of the women, it seemed, screamed for R&B artist

Pre-teens, twentysomething women and some young grandmothers in the three-ring circus themed arena screamed as the LaFace/Arista Records singer won the Billboard award for artist of the year, Hot 100 singles

artist and R&B artist of the year.

Next proved it might the next force in R&B, taking home the Hot 100 single of the year for "Too Close," Hot 100 singles, duo or group of the year, R&B singles artist of the year and R&B single of

the year as well as other awards.

Billboard awards are presented annually to top artists and groups and for top-selling albums, those with highest sales and base sales and those receiving the most radio airplay.



Daddy's little girl

Like most Las Vegans, Briyonna Green and her father were surprised by Sunday's blustery temperature and the friend it brought with it: snow. Green and her dad Leon Green built a snowman in their front yard.

LV Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy