

# Inaugural African-American pageants slated for the weekend

Catisha Marsh  
Sentinel-Voice

The beauty, intelligence and strength of character of black people will be celebrated on February 5th, 6th and 7th when over 50 contestants will grace the stage at the First Annual Mr. & Ms. Black Nevada pageant.

The contestants will compete in five divisions: Miss Black Teen Nevada on Friday, Feb. 5 at 8 pm; Mr. and Ms. Black Nevada, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 6 at 8 pm; and Little Miss Black Nevada and Young Miss Black Nevada on Sunday, Feb. 7 at 2 pm.

"Mr. and Ms. Black Nevada enhances

self-esteem, develops personal and professional growth and gives contestants an opportunity to meet and network with other individuals sharing similar goals and aspirations," said Karen Johnson, pageant co-director. Both co-directors Johnson and Mya Lake Collins are no strangers to the pageant circuit, both having had daughters recently participate in Miss Teen Nevada. Lake Collins also carried the honor of Mrs. Las Vegas in 1996 and finished first runner up in the Mrs. Nevada contest.

Johnson and Lake Collins first conceived the idea during a lunch date. Lake Collins said that she and Johnson met while their

daughters were competing.

"We were always the only blacks in the pageants," Lake Collins said, "so we did the research and found out that there was nothing like this here. We just ran with it."

The competition, symbolically held during Black History Month, will feature interviews, casual wear and evening attire categories judged by an eclectic array of Southern Nevada politicians, media personalities, educators and business folk.

The five divisions will also have a photogenic, congeniality and spirit winner, as well as four runner-ups.

The first place winners of Mr. & Ms.

Black Nevada will represent the state in the Mr. and Ms. Black United States pageant in April 2000. All of the winners will also receive over \$5,000 in cash and prizes, including such awards as diamond and gold tennis bracelets, satellite dishes, cosmetics, health club memberships and modeling scholarships.

All of the division competitions will be at the West Las Vegas Library Theatre.

Tickets are available at House of Flava, 1230 W. Owens, Larry's Sight and Sound, 811 W. Owens, and The Bishop's Wife Boutique, 1216 W. Owens. For more information, call 233-8388.

## Seminar to focus on business networking, marketing, finance

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This month's calendar is jumping!

On Saturday, Xtravaganza Event Planners will throw "A Business Networking Gala" at the Bellagio, 3600 S. Las Vegas Blvd.

Industry experts have been invited to share their knowledge of such diverse topics as business law, computers, marketing and finance. The roster of guests includes Debra Turner, vice-president of the National Bar Association, Jerry Stephens, deputy district director of the Small Business Administration, Cover Contact Business Lending president/CEO Cindy Geriachowski, Kimberly

Bailey, Micro Business coordinator for the Equal Opportunity Board and Nancy McRight, president of the National Women Business Owners Association.

"These seminars promise to be more in-depth than at your typical networking event," said Sherri Fuller, owner of Xtravaganza and coordinator of the event.

Fuller, who ran Executive Services Etc., an administrative support company, two years before opening the event planning business, said that she didn't begin to realize her potential as a business-owner until she began meeting other professionals. That's where she got the idea to start

organizing networking events.

"The advantages to networking are outstanding," she said. "I was overwhelmed by the information I started getting, especially from other small businesses." Fuller usually got business by word-of-mouth, until she jumped on the networking bandwagon. Now, she says, she has more contracts from meeting people at business events.

Bailey, who has worked with Fuller since September, sees the Gala as a tremendous opportunity for black business owners to market themselves.

"Vegas is wide open," said Bailey, "We just don't have enough of these types of

functions." Although she knows that Saturday's mixer includes all kinds of business people, she feels that African-Americans should make special efforts to make it and get together more often in the future.

Angelica Urquijo, Fox 5 News anchor will co-host along with Fox 5 colleague Daryl Hood. Urquijo, who owned her own business before venturing into the world of broadcasting felt that participating would help her "get back to her business roots."

"I stay active in the community," she said, "I'm part of a minority group as well, so I'm there to be especially supportive to

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## Payton

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sclerosing cholangitis, afflicts just three in 100,000 people, said Payton's physician, Dr. Joseph Lagattuta. The cause of the disease, which blocks the bile ducts, is unknown, but isn't related to alcohol, steroids, hepatitis or immune deficiency, he said.

Symptoms include fatigue and jaundice — yellowing of the pigment of the eyes and skin.

Asked if he was scared, Payton responded quickly: "Am I scared? Hell yeah, I'm scared. Wouldn't you be scared?"

"But it's not in my hands anymore," he added. "It's in God's hands."

Payton is being evaluated for a transplant at the Mayo Clinic, where former Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker received a liver transplant in 1996 for the same disease. Tucker was on a waiting list for four months.

Lagattuta said 88 percent of people who receive a liver transplant are alive after a year, and the long-term survival rate is "very promising." He said most patients can return to an active life if they receive a transplant.

Doctors say Payton won't get preferential treatment

because of his celebrity.

News of Payton's illness sobered those who knew him as a muscular, fearless player.

"We're all humans and regardless of how rich we are, how fortunate we are, whatever we maybe, things like this happen," said retired Bears fullback Roland Harper, who blocked for Payton.

"He'll show everybody in the world how to fight," Ditka said.

"While I was there, he missed one game and we nearly had to tie him to the bench. He never ran out of bounds. I got spoiled watching him run."

Bears owners Ed and Virginia McCaskey issued a brief statement saying they were "devastated to hear that Walter is sick."

"He's a very dear person to our family and the entire Bears organization. We'll do all we can to help Walter in his current battle."

Said NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue: "The love, support and prayers of the entire NFL are with him."

Lagattuta said the disease is difficult to diagnose and can go undetected for years. He initially thought it might be a gall bladder problem when Payton told him in October that he had felt ill

since July. The liver problem was diagnosed within the last two weeks.

Lagattuta said Payton has significant bile-duct blockage. To aid his digestion and give him adequate nutrition, a plastic tube was surgically inserted between the vessel that carries bile from the liver to the intestines. But Payton said he is not taking medication.

"It's amazing, I can eat anything I want, as much as I want, and I still can't gain any weight," Payton said. But he said the illness has affected his sense of tastes and smell and chewing his favorite bubblegum makes him want to vomit.

"It's going to continue progressively to get worse to the point where a transplant is inevitable. That's where we are now," Payton said.

"Right now, I'm still healthy even though I look like I've lost weight. To some of you, I don't look healthy, I still am."

In his final season with the Bears in 1987, the 5-foot-11 Payton was listed at 202 pounds.

Asked how much he weighed now, Payton wouldn't say.

Instead, he replied: "You want to pick me up?"

A first-round draft pick

from Jackson State in 1975, Payton carried the load for mediocre Bears teams early in his career before leading Chicago to its only Super Bowl appearance, after the 1985 season.

Selected to nine Pro Bowls and inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1993, Payton holds NFL career records for yards gained, 16,726, and carries, 3,838.

He posted 77 100-yard games and 10 1,000-yard rushing seasons. His 275-yard rushing performance against Minnesota in 1977 still stands as the NFL record for rushing yards in a game.

After retiring from football, Payton co-owned an Indy-CART auto-racing team and ran a restaurant and other businesses in Chicago.

He served on the Bears directors' board and joined groups seeking to buy ownership in NFL franchises.

### Correction:

In the Jan. 28th issue of the *Sentinel-Voice*, we incorrectly identified the late Jesse Scott as "Vergus Porter" on the front page. We apologize for any confusion we may have caused.

## Atkinson-Gates to appeal Ethics Commission ruling

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson-Gates will appeal the January '98 Ethics Commission decision that found her actions to open daiquiri stands at hotels on the Strip in violation of ethics laws.

The Commission's decision came after an investigation spanning three years of Atkinson-Gates' political reign: from '95-'98. The panel released its much anticipated opinion after over 11 months of deliberation and preparation.

This is the second appeal that Atkinson-Gates has filed protesting an Ethics Commission decision. Her first appeal objects to the broadness of the ethics laws which the Commission used to find her guilty of bestowing favors on friends and political colleagues who sought concession contracts at McCarran Airport.

In this second appeal, Atkinson-Gates also claims that the laws are unconstitutional due in part to their vagueness and unequal applications. The Commission's investigation into Atkinson-Gates' political/moral conduct began in September 1997 when the Clark County official asked the group if she should abstain from voting on issues pertaining to hotels in which she had businesses.

Although Atkinson-Gates declined to comment, her attorney, Dan Polsenberg, said, "The primary reason we're appealing, even if my client doesn't directly benefit, is to get a constitutional interpretation of the statutes."

In their current form, Polsenberg said that the laws were "so vague" that they were "meaningless" and that they "paralyze local government".

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