

# West Las Vegas entrepreneur making mark in showbiz

**Catisha Marsh  
Sentinel-Voice**

It appears it's time for Las Vegas natives to make their mark in the music business.

Kenneth Crear, son of Dr. John Crear, of Nevada Treatment Center renown, recently started Creative Management Group.

"As a management company we oversee artists' careers," Crear said. "CMG comes to one of our artists with a song. If the artist likes the song, he or she records it. CMG then plays it for executives and if they like it, we negotiate song production."

CMG handles almost all aspects of an artist's business, including hiring attorneys, stylists, touring and financial planning. But the real importance of good management, Crear said, is to get the artist paid.

"We make deals, usually earning 15 percent of what we negotiate. We have the contacts and connections," he said.

Having managed industry heavy-hitters like Rick "Dutch" Cousin who produced Ice Cube's "We Be Clubbing" remix, Warrin "Smiley" Campbell, co-

producer of "How Deep Is Your Love" by Dru Hill and Dru Hill themselves, Crear knows about getting his clients paid.

Crear's group also consults for Jersey Films, Danny Devito's film company, working on such blockbusters as "Pulp Fiction," "Get Shorty," "Above the Rim" and had his artists score films like "Menace to Society."

Crear's life hasn't been all rosy, though.

After attending Arizona State University on a tennis scholarship and majoring in Sociology, he became a director of basketball operations at one firm. Three years into the job, the owner was charged with embezzling \$11 million. Crear lost \$82,000 in commissions.

He was broke, saddled with a bad reputation and despondent.

His brother Cedric, uncle Rudy and friend Rick Cousin helped get him back on track.

When he started out in the entertainment business, he got financial backing from friends he'd made as a tennis player and as an alumnus of Gorman High School.

He rediscovered his

confidence and set about fulfilling his dreams.

"I consider myself successful because I'm alive. I've never been arrested and I don't do drugs. I'm what my parents want in a son," he said.

Crear's mother, Barbara, remembers her son as "very manipulative — good at getting his way, mature and outgoing."

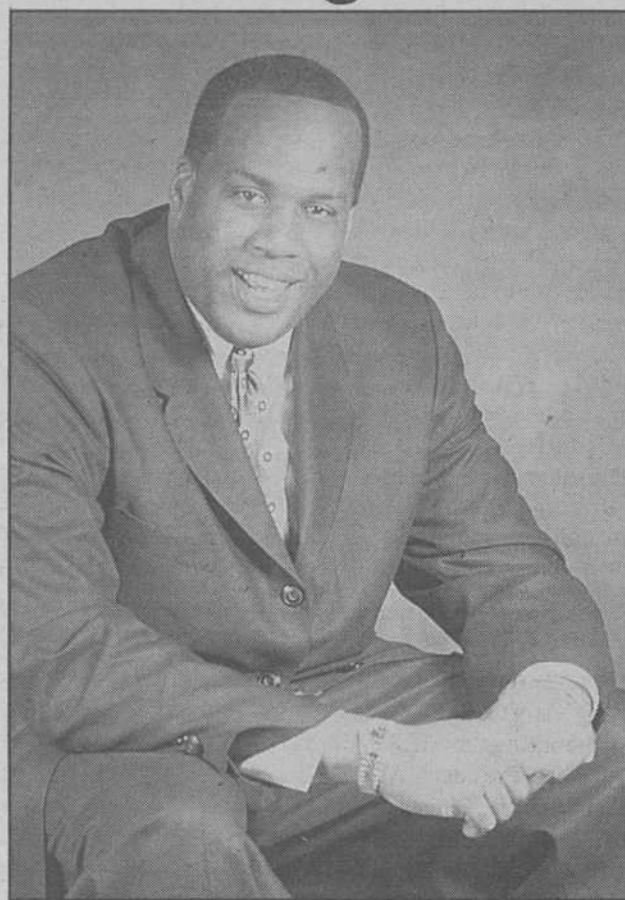
"He was always number one on the court," she said of her son's tennis exploits. "He always had to have six rackets, (and was) well-dressed."

"He's assertive, determined, and wants the best out of life," she said. "He's a very compassionate person. He's not impressed with how much you have or what you do with it. He's loyal and honest."

Crear's brother Cedric admires his older sibling's integrity and aggressiveness.

"Here's a guy from Las Vegas who found his way in the music industry," said Cedric Crear, who runs Creative Music Publishing, CMG's publication arm. "He's really become a major player."

The Crear boys grew up in



KENNETH CREAR

West Las Vegas, Kenneth Crear described his beginnings as "the best of both worlds."

"Vegas is slow and fast," he said. "There's not a lot to do as a kid, but just enough to keep you out of trouble. People look at you as

someone special, too. They're like, 'Wow! You're from Las Vegas?' ... It's a real land of opportunity, too. Where else can you, without a degree, be a (card) dealer and make 35 to 40 grand a year?" And Crear is not just local. He's visited Africa and

even had breakfast with Nelson Mandela, which he called a "real treat".

"Africa was exciting," Crear said, "They're so far behind in technology. You don't know what your money will be worth when you wake up. It was a great cultural experience. It made me appreciate America."

Crear said the key to CMG's continued prosperity is its ability to efficiently make hits. There will be no overbudget, million dollar videos coming from this camp. CMG general manager Aaron Clark will assure quality albums withing budget, he said.

"My goal is longevity," he said, "I want to make sure my clients are always paid."

Crear knows what makes a hit. "It's in the lyrics, the song, the context of the hit and it has to have a hook," he said.

Crear said he's yet to experience the dark side of managing stars. He knows tough times will come and he's prepared to handle them.

"(What's important is that) when you go to bed, make sure you've done what you can to rectify what you did wrong that day."



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

A view of Pretoria, South Africa as Louise Banks, local businesswoman and frequent candidate for political office, entered the city.

## Local political stalwart discovers South Africa

**Catisha Marsh  
Sentinel-Voice**

Louise Banks didn't exactly hear the beat of Africa's drums in her heart before she went on a recent trip to South Africa.

"I had never thought about going to Africa," Banks admitted. "I was surprised when I got there because I thought it would be like what you see on National Geographic—huts, African clothing, women walking around with their breasts out. But, they're just like us. Most folks get up everyday, dress like we do and go to work in cities just like it's an American city."

Banks accompanied a delegation from Southern University to South Africa for 10 days. She flew from Miami to Capetown in about 14 hours. She and her group stayed in the coastal city for three to four days and then flew to Johannesburg, where they remained for six days.

When asked about the differences between

the cities, Banks said, "They really don't compare. Capetown is a more upperclass city. Most of the whites live there. Johannesburg is dominated by blacks and there's a lot of poverty."

What amazed Banks was the sense of hope that prevailed, regardless of what state people were in.

"People don't have a lot, especially our people," Banks said. "Everything's not equal, but it takes time for change. You cannot change a person's mind. ... Blacks work in service areas. Wages are low but a lot of Americans are going over there. Everyone's hoping for a better life."

One bus driver told Banks that teachers make an average of 2,000 to 3,000 rand per month—the equivalent of about \$300 to \$600, depending on the value of the dollar.


She was astonished to observe that South African blacks look a lot like African- (See South Africa, Page 7)

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