

Redistricting proposal nixes black districts

Redefined wards will still be overwhelmingly white

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Frederick Kessler, a Wisconsin-based judge hired to assist in redistricting Las Vegas wards, proposed new boundaries Friday that seem to leave black voters in a questionable political situation.

In the June 8 elections, voters OK'd the addition of two new council seats. The city council will appoint two new council members by January of 2000. There will be six wards in all.

In Kessler's proposal, Rainbow Boulevard, Cheyenne Avenue, McLeod Boulevard and Charleston Boulevard would encompass Ward 5, the ward with the highest black population.

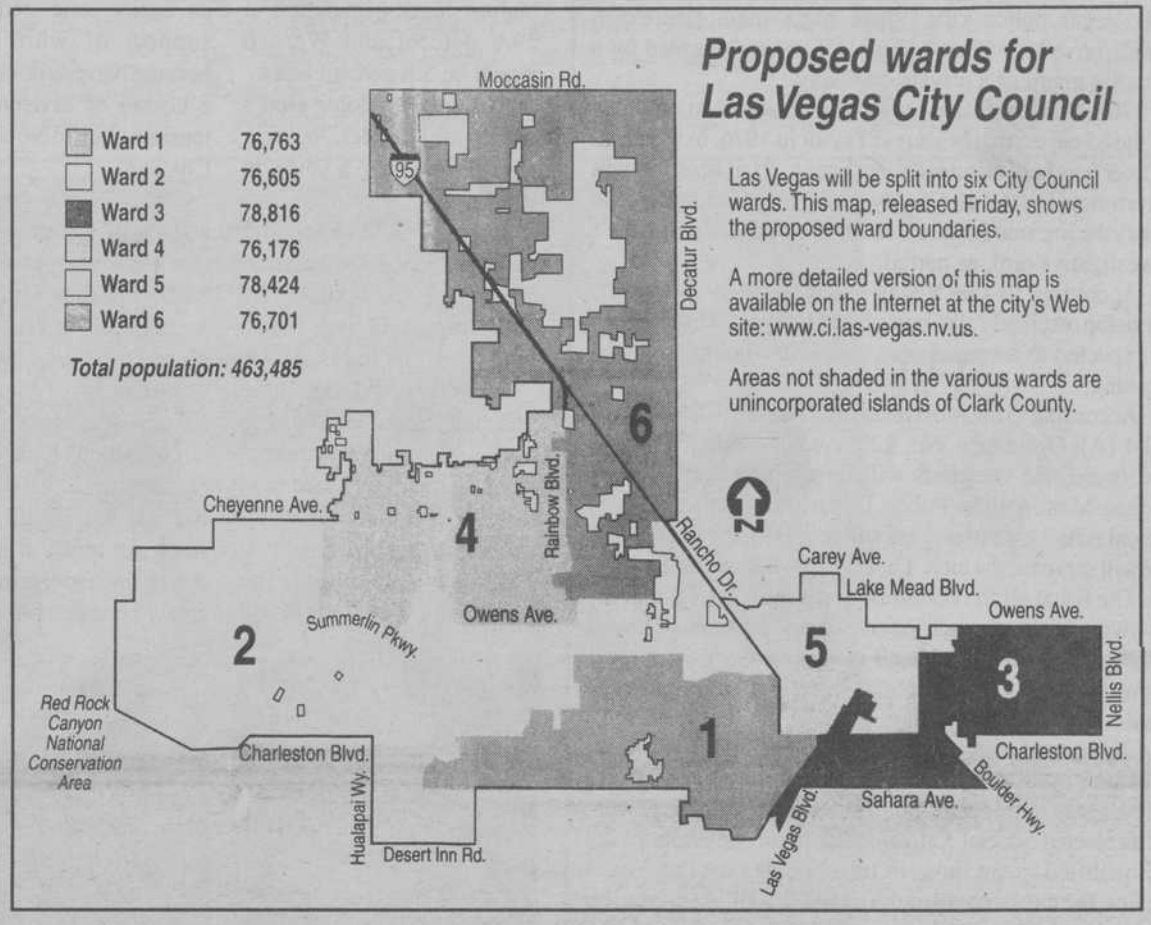
Ward 6 would be bordered by Hualapai Way with a descending step formation moving south,

Moccasin Road to the north, Decatur Boulevard to the east and Lake Mead Boulevard. Wards 3 and 5 would share the downtown area and the Strip.

"Las Vegas is a paradise of racial integration," the judge said at Friday's press conference. "Every ward has at least a 5.9 percent African-American population. Las Vegas is as integrated a city as anywhere in the United States. The problem is trying to figure out how to create minority/majority districts."

Kessler said that his priorities were ensuring the level of compactness of the ward and achieving certain racial and ethnic breakdowns within each election precinct. He met with Sen. Joe Neal, Ways and Means Chairman Morse Arberry and Las Vegas

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Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates and (right) District Court Judge Michael Douglas chat with Dr. Rodney Hood of the National Medical Association during a health fair at Doolittle Community Center. Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy



Doctors stress health at convention

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Take It To Heart, a health education initiative, began the National Medical Association's Las Vegas convention Sunday with a press conference and health fair at Doolittle Community Center.

Residents got blood pressure and cholesterol checked, tested for diabetes and got coronary risk assessments. Members of the National Black Nurses Association conducted the tests, while physicians offered free personal consultations based on results of the tests.

Take It To Heart is a joint venture between the National Medical Association and Bayer Corporation.

Founded in 1985, the National Medical

Association represents 20,000 black doctors and health professionals in the United States. Bayer is an \$8 billion international chemical, health and scientific research company. The Take It To Heart program cost approximately \$150,000.

"The partnership is what's important," Bayer product manager Miles McLennan said. "It's the best method we've come up with to identify local places to give people assistance."

When asked if Bayer was sponsoring Take It To Heart to corner the African-American market on remedies for illnesses prevalent among blacks, McLennan said, "I'd be lying if I said we weren't in the game. We do have medications to treat (the diseases)."

Regardless of Bayer's motives, the

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Top bureaucracy hindering start of police review board

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

With its first meeting imminent, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police



BOGGS-McDONALD Department Citizen Review Board is still mired in bureaucracy.

The 25-member volunteer committee will review complaints of police abuse and send its rulings and recommendations to city and county government. Legislation

sponsored by Sen. Joe Neal, D-North Las Vegas, and authored in part by Education Chairman Wendell Williams created the board in 1997 to address a spate of officer-involved killings.

In December 1996, 21-year-old Daniel Mendoza was shot and killed by former Las Vegas police officer Ron Mortensen as he stood outside his home in McKellar Circle. Mortensen and former partner Christopher Brady, both off-duty drove through the neighborhood looking to "harass dopers and bangers" when Mendoza was fatally shot. Mortensen is presently serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. Brady, though described in grand jury testimony as a hothead and bully, was never charged. There was never a coroner's inquest.

Charles Bush, a 39-year-



JAMES TATE

old black casino floorman, died July 31, 1990, after an altercation with three officers who burst into his Paradise Road apartment without a search warrant. Bush died after officer Gerald Amerson used a controversial chokehold to subdue him.

A coroner's inquest jury absolved Amerson and officers Thomas Chasey

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