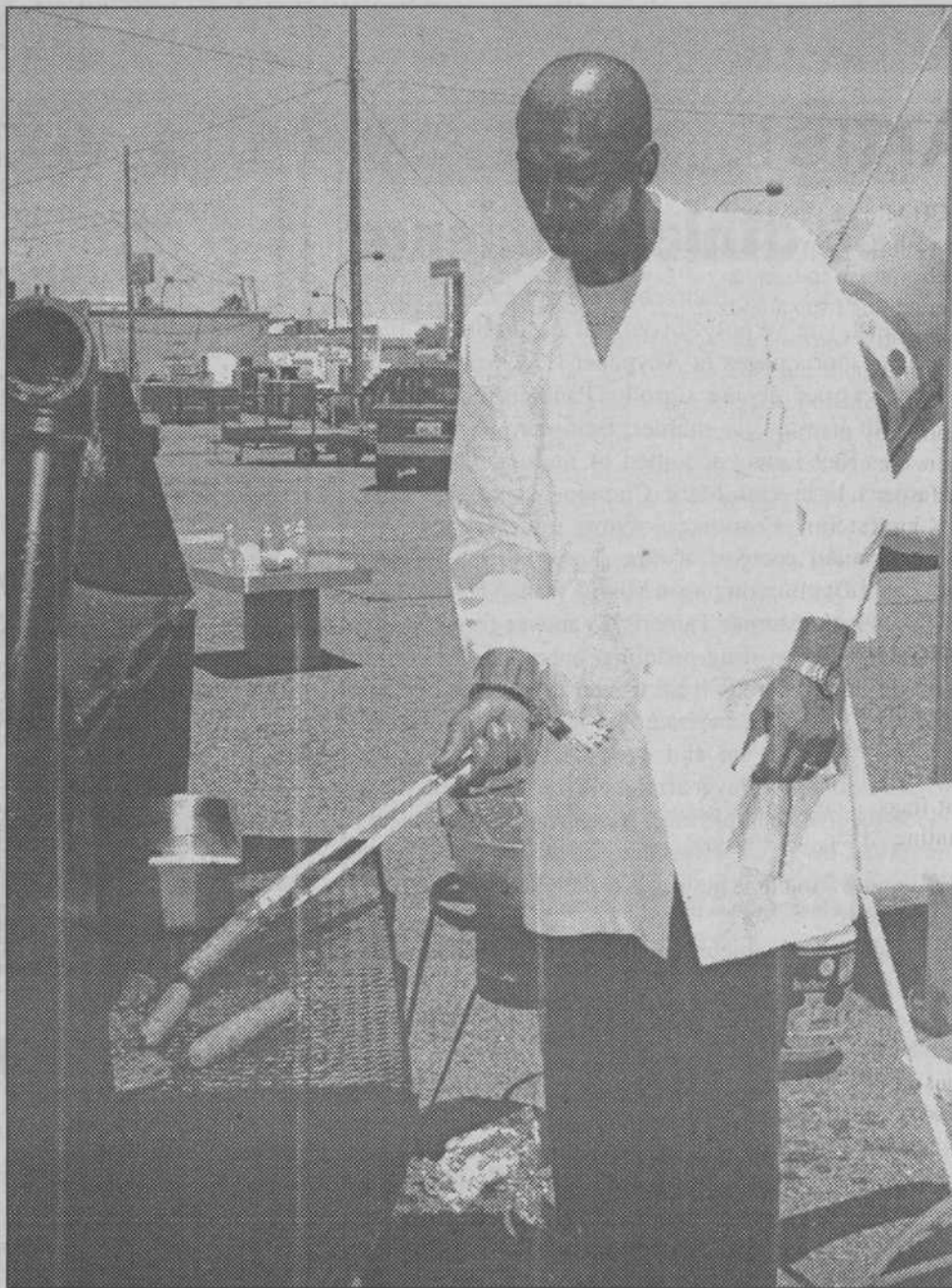
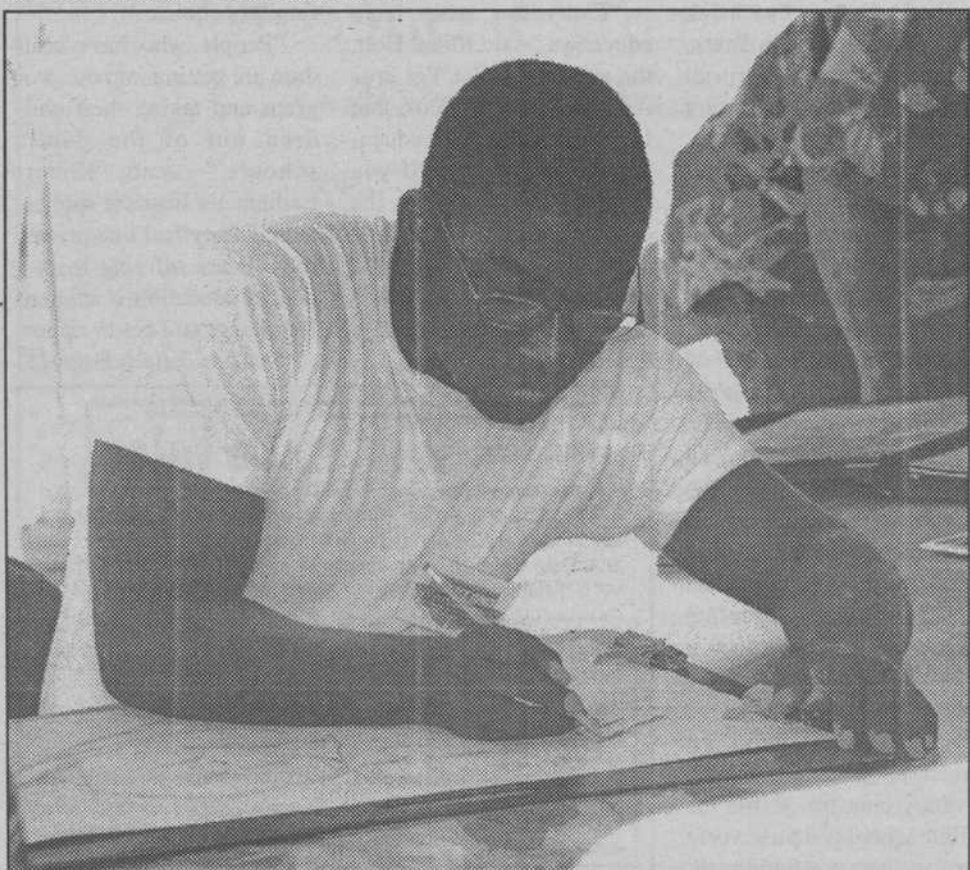


# Downtown Renaissance

Sentinel-Voice  
photos by  
John Broussard



(Top) Marcia Washington, right, a candidate for the Nevada State Board of Education (District 2, Subdistrict A) chats with Marian Burns. Adjacent, Virgil Peters, an instructor at the Culinary Union Training Center grills hot dogs. Below, Johnathan Hortas, Lloyd Hoch, Kanasha Jean and Jabari Jones lounge in a cart. Lawyer Ed Bernstein talks up his Senate candidacy. LaRoyce Jones, proprietor of LaRoyceArt Graphic Art demonstrates his craft.



## TONY BROWN ENDORSES LEGAL PLAN

A new kind of legal insurance that aims to protect minorities against racial profiling is selling faster in New York than anywhere else in the US, highlighting the City's increasingly strained police-community relations.

The novel plan arms policyholders with around-the-clock legal help and wallet-size cards to help clients assert their right to any attorney if ever stopped by cops.

The idea for the plan, offered through Pre-Paid Legal Services, came from Tony Brown. Brown is a New York journalist and host of "Tony Brown's Journal" on PBS. "Response has been excellent," said Brown, who also has a New York-based radio call in show that he has used at time to informally promote Legal Shield. "You don't have to tell black people they need it. It's like, 'where can I sign up?'"

Pre-Paid Legal Services was founded in 1972, mostly to help protect white-collar businessmen from civil suits. Harlan Stonecipher, the company's president, has expanded the plan's benefits so that Pre-Paid Legal Services now is to legal problems and attorney fees what medical insurance and HMO's are to doctor bills.

The idea behind Legal Shield is to "even the playing field," said Stonecipher, who used the name of Abner Louima — the Haitian immigrant tortured in a Brooklyn station house bathroom recently — in discussing the plan.

"If Abner Louima, as they were taking him to that bathroom had had a Legal Shield card, I don't believe it would ever had happened," said Stonecipher. "I can't prove that, but he was a Haitian immigrant who police probably figured was not aware of his legal rights."

"If he had had that card, they would have known that here is someone who not only has access to a lawyer, but he has a lawyer he can call at 2 a.m. It would have changed everything."

Persons interested in finding about Pre-Paid Legal Services locally can call Fred Willis at (702) 360-6665 or Ralph Shackelford at (702) 255-5433.

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