



Vindicated Bechtel exec describes ordeal

Al Triche
Sentinel-Voice

"There were some days that I just didn't feel that I could get up." - Dr. Dorothea Clark

Dr. Dorothea Clark, Director of Diversity for Bechtel Nevada and a former president of the Urban Chamber of Commerce in Las Vegas, is currently on a paid leave-of-absence from Bechtel. She is a free woman today, she says, due to the interventions of God, a couple of attorneys she fondly refers to as her "Dream Team," and because she was innocent.

Her nightmarish ordeal began in the spring of last year.

While in California on church-related business, Clark's pastor called to inform her that an April 22 newspaper report indicated she'd been indicted the previous day by the U.S. District Court here on federal charges of participating in a

kickback scheme. Unaware that the action was being taken against her, she said she was absolutely blindsided by the case.

"It was the worst nightmare," she recalled, "I was in total shock."

The indictment charged her with conspiracy, unlawful solicitation and acceptance of kickback, and aiding and abetting a plot to secure "favorable treatment in connection with a subcontract for Omatayo Idowu with Bechtel," which manages the Nevada Test Site and oversees numerous government contracts.

But at that time "there were no contracts at Bechtel," said Clark, "we were going through a downsizing." And, another irony-one which deepened the surreal quality of her circumstance- was that her chief accuser was someone she said "was supposed to be my friend."

Marta Fernandez, a professional and social acquaintance of Clark's, and her husband at that time, Wali Suhail, were both consultants to Idowu, an electrical engineer and owner of an Atlanta-based firm which has done business with the government for years.

Thomas H. Peterson, III- who, with William B. Daniel, comprised Clark's "Dream Team"- explained the scenario.

"Fernandez entered into a contract for consulting services with Idowu, who also contracted with Suhail for the same services," he said. The evidence is that both of these persons were paid by Idowu- approximately \$10,000 collectively- and the allegation by Fernandez is that a significant part of that money she gave to Dr. Clark."

More than a year after the indictment, Clark's case went to trial.

Peterson said the government's

case hinged on representations made by Fernandez and Suhail, but that their testimony "wilted, wilted fast and furiously under the fire of cross-examination."

Furthermore, he noted, prosecutors had been unaware that their chief witnesses had criminal histories of their own.

He agreed the government's prosecution of this case could be characterized as reckless. "Dr. Clark faced significant prison time had she been convicted of these crimes. Ninety-five to ninety-nine percent of all defendants who are tried by the United States of America are in prison," he said.

Clark's defense, he said, was based on the premise "that these two perpetrators took money from (Idowu), were unable to perform the services they said they could perform, and once met with that inability had to find a 'fall guy.'"

The four-day trial of Clark and co-defendant Idowu ended on June 5 when, Peterson said, "the jury deliberated for a total of two hours and five minutes."

Clark described standing between her attorneys after the jurors returned to the courtroom. "I was holding their hands for dear life. I know I had to hurt them because I hurt my own hands," she said. Then she listened as a series of three "not guilty" verdicts were issued and she was acquitted of all charges. Likewise, Idowu was completely exonerated.

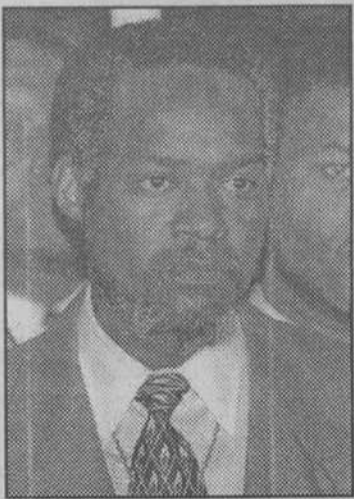
Peterson said Clark "stands in a very rare category of people who've been indicted by the United States of America and have taken the United States to a jury trial, and are now walking around free having been vindicated."

Describing her ordeal, which (See Clark, Page 2)

Civil rights activist Earl T. Shinhoster dies in car crash

Todd Steven Burroughs
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON, D.C. (NNPA) — Earl T. Shinhoster, a 30-year veteran of the national NAACP who served as the group's interim executive director when Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. was fired in 1994,



EARL T. SHINHOSTER

died Sunday after the car he was in ran off a highway in Macon County, Ga., and slammed into a tree. He was 47.

The car's other two passengers — Adema Hackshaw of Austell, Ga., the driver, and Aziz Samimah of St. Louis, Mo., — were injured, police said.

Both were sent to Baptist South Hospital in Montgomery, but Shinhoster died at the scene after emergency workers pried him from the car's wreckage, said Cpl. Damon Summers of the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

A blown-out left rear tire made Hackshaw lose control of the green 1997 Ford Explorer, forcing it to swerve across two lanes and the highway's shoulder into an embankment, said the police spokesman.

The trio was in the left southbound lane of Interstate 85, about 25 miles north of Montgomery, Ala., at 9:50 a.m. Sunday morning at the time of the incident, according to the police spokesman.

Samimah was thrown from the car as it hit the embankment and began to turn over, said the police spokesman. It then collided with a tree, said Summers.

NAACP President and CEO Kweisi Mfume, who replaced Shinhoster in the NAACP top post in 1995, said in a statement that the civil rights leader's death is a "profound loss for the NAACP and the larger civil rights community."

"Earl was one of the NAACP leaders who made this organization work for 91 years," Mfume added. "He was part of the NAACP family (See Shinhoster, Page 2)

Erving makes plea for missing son

19-year-old missing for more than two weeks

Mike Schneider

SANFORD, Fla. (AP) — Basketball great Julius "Dr. J" Erving pleaded for help Tuesday in finding his 19-year-old son, who has had drug problems and has been missing for more than two weeks.

Cory Marvin Erving's last contact with his parents was May 28, when he went to a shopping mall in Lake Mary, about 20 miles from Orlando. Authorities said there have been no sightings of his car and they consider him "endangered" because he has little money.

"That's an individual's worst nightmare," Julius Erving said at a news conference with his wife and their three other adult children. "This bad dream has gone on for 16 days now, 16 very hard days."

Sheriff Don Eslinger said Cory may have had a confrontation with someone before he disappeared. The sheriff gave no details.

"We've had no critical witnesses from whom we've gleaned information about his whereabouts," Eslinger said. "We've exhausted many leads."

Julius Erving said Cory was born with a learning disability that he

described as a mild form of dyslexia and attention deficit disorder.

He had to be put in special schools through eighth grade.

Cory and his older brother, Cheo, were arrested in 1998 while walking away from a car parked in the affluent Orlando suburb of Altamonte Springs. Cory was charged with burglarizing the car; Cheo was charged with possessing a crack pipe. A police spokeswoman in Altamonte Springs said Tuesday she did not know how the case was resolved.



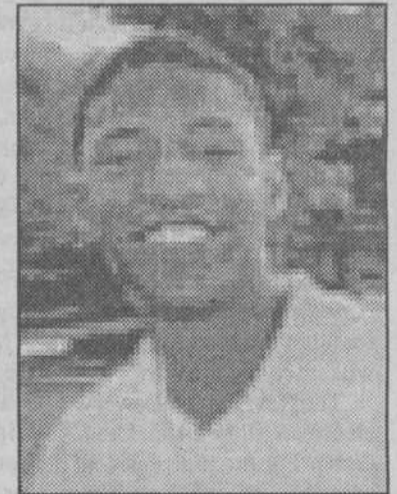
JULIUS ERVING

Cory was working at a sandwich shop and taking courses geared toward getting a high school equivalency diploma. Despite his past trouble with drugs and alcohol, Cory's family believed he had turned his life around.

"We felt he was on course to have some success in a life that has been very trying, living in the shadow of a public figure like myself and a high-profile family," Erving said.

His family described Cory as fun-loving and a prankster.

"Sometimes, just in support of him, we would tease him about all the diplomas he's garnered from



CORY MARVIN ERVING

drug rehab centers," the father said in a subdued tone. "He has about five or six of them."

Cory had plans to go to a Memorial Day weekend cookout with his family and was running an errand to pick up bread when he last spoke to his father.

"He called me and said he would be home in 20 minutes," Julius Erving said. "That was the last time I talked to him."

Erving, a Hall of Famer and former NBA MVP, revolutionized basketball with his high-flying slam-dunks and was one of the sport's biggest stars. His 16-year career ended in 1987. He is the executive (See Erving, Page 2)