

## Grad students get chance to teach

*Sentinel-Voice*

UNLV has developed a special program for graduate students to help them develop their teaching skills while obtaining their advanced degree. Graduate Student Professional Development Program in College Teaching is a series of workshops totaling 12 hours design to help graduate students to be successful at teaching.

"Many graduate students teach—or plan to teach in the future—but if they aren't education majors, they do not always receive instruction in how best to teach," said Harriet Barlow, director of graduate student services in the Graduate College.

"This program provides them with valuable information on topics such as learning

styles, teaching styles, teaching with technology, and classroom assessment techniques."

The program is voluntary and available to all graduate students of different disciplines and studies.

"We want the students who complete the program to come away feeling more confident about their teaching abilities," Barlow said.

The University Teaching and Learning Center and the Graduate College teamed up to offer this program to the students as they may teach courses to undergraduates or plan on becoming university professors.

Those interested in more information can call 895-4392 or 895-4960.

## Clemency

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"It feels good," Mr. Smith said. "We've come a long way from where we were six years ago. A lot of ups and a lot of downs, but we always maintained our faith in the Lord. We must have patience and wait."

But, will they win Clinton's support? The Smiths personally introduced themselves to the president at the Saturday dinner of the annual Black Caucus Legislative weekend last month.

"It really was a warm feeling to not introduce ourselves as Gus and Odessa Smith" per se, but "as the parents of Kemba Smith. And I saw right away that there was name recognition," Mrs. Smith said.

The new hope is refreshing for the couple, who have lost repeated appeals to federal courts in Norfolk and Richmond.

"He thanked us for coming up," Mr. Smith recalled, and "he said he was aware of the case. He was very warm, very gracious, glad to meet us."

The Justice Department, which must make a recommendation to the president, has publicly acknowledged receipt of the request for clemency. But officials are not allowed to say when the president will announce a decision. His tenure ends in January 2001.

Meanwhile, the Smiths have vowed to continue the fight for congressional review of the so-called "mandatory minimum sentences" that have incarcerated thousands of first-time offenders for extreme periods of time with no consideration of their non-criminal history.

Congress re-enacted mandatory minimum sentencing laws in the mid 1980s. The laws base punishment only on the amount or alleged amount of drugs involved in the offense. A judge is not allowed to take other factors, such as behavior and criminal record into consideration. However, sentences can be minimized if the defendant were to provide information to prosecutors to be used against someone else.

Appeals for Smith have consistently claimed that the sentence was excessive, that she had poor legal representation, and that she was a victim of battered woman syndrome.

Their fight to change the mandatory minimum laws would not end with her release, the Smiths said.

"We view this as being much larger than our daughter," said Mr. Smith. "We want to forge ahead and fight for justice on behalf of people just like Kemba." Her clemency petition is "just a bend in the road," he said, adding that even Smith "wants to be an activist" on this and other issues of justice once she is free.

Smith, once an AKA sorority debutante, played the piano and took ballet lessons as a child. She was drawn away from her shel-

tered upbringing on the Hampton University campus. There she met and was intrigued by Peter Hall, who swept her off her feet with his popularity, Jamaican accent, self-confident manner, fine clothes and flashy cars.

With Hall being the idol of droves of other women, Smith was awed by the fact that he had "chosen" her. She testified that she remained ignorant of his East Coast cocaine distribution ring that he managed, even as the relationship grew more and more intense.

Gradually, during the two-and-a-half-year relationship, he began controlling her violently. He once beat her so badly that she was treated in an emergency room. She also suffered a miscarriage because of his physical abuse. The malevolent cycle of physical and mental abuse continued, including his threats to harm her family if she did not obey him. He murdered one of his closest friends whom he thought was snitching.

In August 1994, with Mr. Hall's permission, Smith returned to Richmond five months pregnant with his son. She turned herself in to authorities after hearing that she had been indicted. In October that year, Hall was murdered in Seattle before being caught by law-enforcement agents.

Though prosecutors acknowledged Smith never actually handled or sold drugs, she was held accountable for the entire 255 kilograms of crack cocaine distributed by the conspiracy, even though she didn't know Hall in 1989 when his distribution began. Smith pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine, money laundering and lying to authorities to protect Mr. Hall. Her sentence was much higher than those received by other members of the drug ring who admittedly sold crack cocaine.

While behind bars, Smith gave birth to Hall's son, William Armani, now 5. He is in kindergarten and enjoying the love of his grandparents, Smith's parents, who are raising him. He knows his mother's story and is occasionally heard telling it to other children, his grandmother said.

Meanwhile, Smith is working towards her bachelor's degree through an extension program of the University of Southern Colorado and she wants to earn a master's and doctorate, her parents said. She also undergoes emotional counseling, sings in a choir and participates in a Bible study, they said.

In an essay written by Smith, entitled, "On the Other Side," she says her learning "as much as I could about Black History" has given her strength to endure the time.

"She's remarkable, she has been my inspiration through this," her mother said, "and she is extremely, extremely grateful. Yes, I am sure something like this will leave scars on Kemba, but Kemba is very-much spirit-filled, so we know with God she will make it through this."

## Chaney wants new election

*Associated Press*

A candidate who narrowly lost his bid for the Las Vegas NAACP presidency has asked the national NAACP organization for a new election.

Lonie Chaney lost the Nov. 18 election to incumbent Gene Collins by four votes, 159 to 155.

Even though the national organization sent three representatives to observe the process, Chaney and 51 other local NAACP members complained of nine alleged irregularities warranting a new

election.

But Chester Richardson, who supervised the local election, said it was conducted in a fair manner and the observers would have spoken up if they had seen any evidence of impropriety.

Collins said the vote is vindication for him.

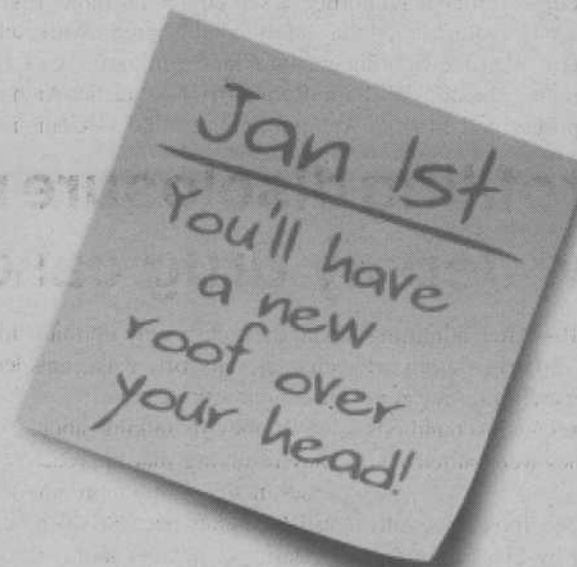
"Everything they asked for they got," Collins said. "We're going to continue to run the branch."

The election observers were dispatched after Chaney and his supporters sent a pre-election letter to NAACP na-

tional Chairman Julian Bond asking a Clark County district judge to stay the election. The judge denied the request.

If the three election observers find there's merit to the election challenge, the matter would be forwarded to the national organization for a final decision.

Collins said the new regime tackle issues of workplace diversity, economic empowerment and helping seniors. He said anyone that wants to help the civil rights organization can.



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