

Hotel chain sues the NAACP over boycott

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The Adam's Mark hotel chain sued the NAACP Friday, claiming the civil rights organization's call for a boycott was illegal.

Within hours, Fred Kummer, Adam's Mark chief, and Kweisi Mfume, NAACP president, were talking by telephone and working to reach an out-of-court settlement, said Sharon Harvey Davis, a spokeswoman for the St. Louis-based hotel chain. She said the two men agreed to talk again Monday.

Mfume, however, issued a biting statement indicating no settlement was in sight.

"This lawsuit is a blatant attempt to stifle the voice of the NAACP and others engaged in legitimate public criticism of this company's discriminatory practices, and we will vigorously defend against it," he said.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Baltimore, cited Mfume's words at the July 11 NAACP annual convention in New Orleans.

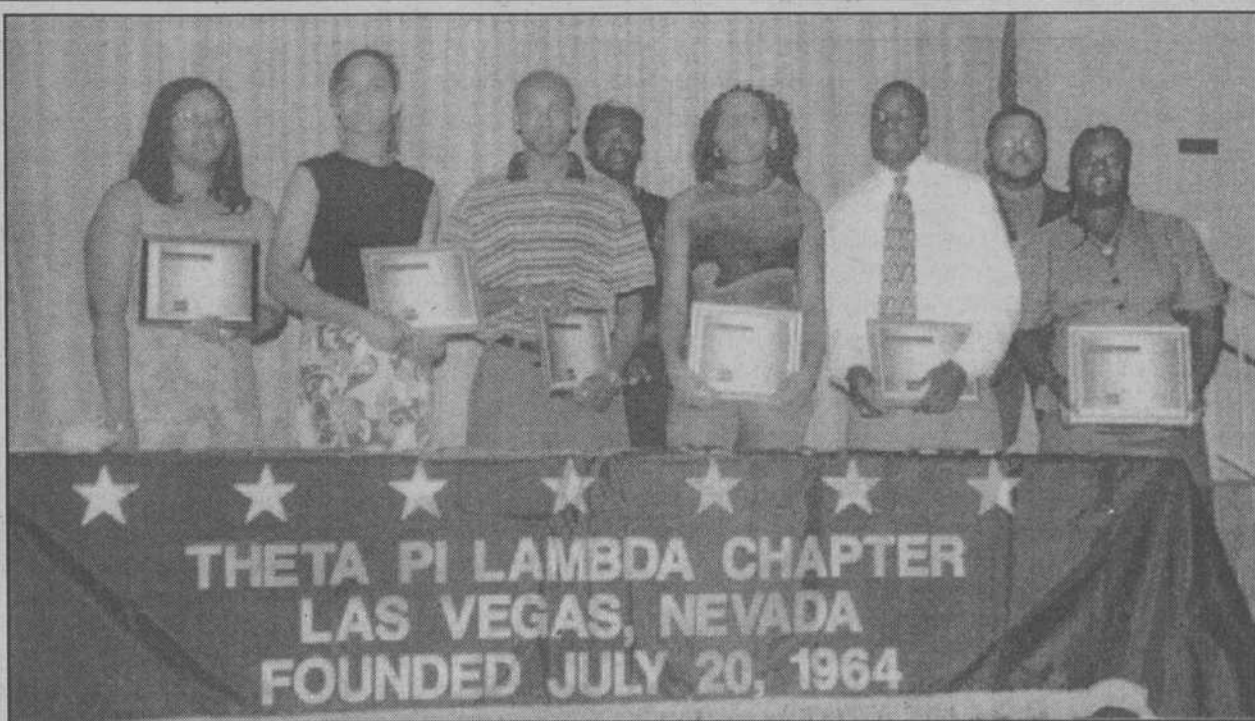
"It is time for all of our membership, and quite frankly all Americans of good conscience to stop giving Adam's Mark their money or their business," Mfume said at the meeting.

The Baltimore-based NAACP and Adam's Mark have been at odds for at least two years. In 1999 five guests sued the chain, saying the Daytona Beach, Fla., hotel labeled them security risks by requiring them - but not white guests - to wear orange wristbands during the Black College Reunion.

They also claimed black reunion guests were required to pay cash in full to reserve rooms and charged more than other guests.

The Justice Department filed a separate suit, suggesting a pattern of discrimination, and reached an agreement with the hotel under which the chain's employees received diversity training. Adam's Mark admitted no wrongdoing in reaching the settlement, which ended an earlier boycott.

In October, a federal judge threw out the \$8 million settlement.



REWARDING EXCELLENCE

The Theta Pi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. recently awarded seven deserving African-American high school students with scholarships. The recipients were, from left to right, Traci Reeves, Keisha Stevenson, David Lewis III, Jacina Joy Redden, Andrae Mitchell, the father of recipient Desmond Parks and Latoya K. Christopher. In the middle is Paul Cooks, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Jumpstart

(Continued from Page 1) it," she said.

"It went fine for maybe three or four months," Mims explained, but then, she said, "we fixed the refrigeration unit once, the drive shaft fell off in the middle of the freeway (and) we've had the brakes fixed twice." Soon she learned that "there aren't many places here that fix refrigerated trucks, especially this size," says Mims.

Calling the company that had sold the truck, she further discovered, to her chagrin, that "they had gone out of business."

"Then we called the people we make payments to," Mims continued, "but they just said we still have to make the payments."

So it went, until Wednesday of last week, when Mims had to acknowledge that the end for the truck had finally come. "The engine is gone, the refrigeration unit is gone, the brakes are gone," she said, ruefully. Then came the bad news.

"We took it to get an estimate," said Mims, "and he gave us a quote of about \$11,000 to repair the engine, about \$4,000 for the refrigeration unit and about a thousand for the brakes," adding, "and there are some more little things that need to be done, including fixing the air conditioner. That came to another \$2,000."

The handwriting on the wall was clear. The repairs, says Mims are "definitely not affordable for our budget."



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Toni Mims, executive director of Jumpstart, looks forward to community support in transportation dilemma.

Meanwhile, she says of Jumpstart, "We're feeding 3,000 children per month. We have 52 paid employees, plus 32 summer workers provided by Nevada Business Services."

She conceded, however, that if the truck isn't replaced soon, "We're going to have to shut the program down because we have no way of delivering. We've been renting a van. It's costing us \$1,800 a month," she said, but Jumpstart can't absorb that expense much longer.

Adding a cruel footnote, Mims expressed concern that a replacement vehicle should Jumpstart obtain one- might be subjected to a very avoid-

able type of abuse that the present truck receives, repeatedly...and she doesn't know what to do about that problem.

Somewhat helplessly, Mims described recurrent vandalism, mostly gang graffiti spray-painted on the truck over and over again. "Every Monday, without fail," she said, "we have a new gang symbol on it. They're just tagging our truck."

Mims indicated that she doesn't want to ask for money, nonetheless, "money," she said, "would be nice." She'll take whatever help she can get to replace the vehicle, so critical

to the life of the program, but requiring so much more than a jumpstart to make it roadworthy.

"I really just want somebody who can fix it," Mims said with a sigh, "or donate another truck, even a smaller one."

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S.T.E.P.S.

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on how to break into the music business.

"It validates what the show is about, (to) talk to someone for free and tell them what it's going to take," Wallace said.

"It helps kids. They can see an award for doing something good," said 14-year-old Jerry McCloud, who runs the S.T.E.P.S. recording studio and has helped with the production and auditions for the upcoming show. "It's a privilege to come here after school."

The show is free to the public, but you must have tickets to get in. For tickets, or for more information, call 455-0722.