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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



There for the Parent Resource Center's opening: County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates, left, and Clark County School District area superintendent Marsha Irvin.

## New center aims to aid parents

By Dianna Saffold  
Sentinel-Voice

Matt Kelly Elementary School has been involved in a strenuous campaign to improve the academic standards of the school. It continues to improve its ratings as it places an emphasis on parental participation. On Friday, Matt Kelly invited the community and its leader to join in a grand opening celebration of its Parent Resource Center and HOSTS Link Learning Center.

The multi-purpose room was filled with grades ranging from Pre-K to the fifth grade; teachers, parents and politicians, all welcomed by

principal Rickard DiTondo; followed by the pledge, led by vice principal, Dr. Emmell Beech.

Teacher Marilyn Gross spoke with the exceptionally quiet group about the pet project with which she shared intense efforts to initiate along with Dr. Beech, the PASS program (Programs Assisting Students Staying In School). Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates funded the program with a \$7,000 grant. The PASS program was described as the "nucleus of it all" by Dr. Beech.

The program moved quickly to the entertainment

portion, featuring the Matt Kelly Colorguard and the Drama Club. Under the instruction of Krystal Johnson, who is one of the two VISTA workers, the MK Colorguards were: Linda McCleary, Abriel McClendon, Chelsea Neill, Rouyeisha Masey, Kathleen Hall, Brea Finley, Cree Smith, Ja'Ceea Millender, Britnee Shaw and Ellie Charo.

The Drama club recited with movement, the poem, "Because Of You." Coached by teacher, Virginia Cooper, and parent, Dianna Saffold, the thespians were Corey Williams, Jerrell Green, Dennis Jones, Geovonne

Wilkerson, Charmaine Wilson, Bryan Hall, Angelique Southern, Rebecca Breland, Hoden Jenkins and Jamice Freeman.

Mayor Oscar Goodman, unable to make a personal appearance, sent a letter that was read by Di Tondo. Goodman was at the school last week reading to the children. Superintendent Carlos Garcia sent Dr. Carlene Lee to represent him in his absence. Dr. Lee began her educational career at Booker Elementary School and was pleased to return to the community to  
(See HOSTS, Page 7)

## University system settles bias lawsuit with lawmaker's wife

LAS VEGAS (AP) - The Nevada state university system has settled a discrimination lawsuit filed by the wife of Assemblyman Wendell Williams, her lawyer said.

Zelda Williams will receive \$49,900 from the University and Community College System of Nevada after a community college employee used a racial slur about her in 2001, her lawyer Richard Segerblom said Thursday.

"I just think that the uni-

versity (system) was fortunate to settle the case," Segerblom said. "He made some really horrendous comments."

Wendell Williams, D-Las Vegas, said he had not spoken with his wife and was unaware of the settlement.

The lawsuit stemmed from an Aug. 17 incident during which Zelda Williams, then a student, was visiting John Cummings, Community College of Southern Nevada government liaison and adviser

*"I just think that the university (system) was fortunate to settle the case. He made some really horrendous comments."*

—Zelda Williams's attorney Richard Segerblom



ZELDA WILLIAMS

to the college president. Cummings also is a friend of Wendell Williams.

Mike Meyer, then associate vice president for athletics and development, allegedly uttered the racial epithet while Zelda Williams was in Cummings' office.

Meyer issued a public apology, resigned from his position and is no longer affiliated with the college.

Zelda Williams filed a \$1.5 million discrimination lawsuit that also sought com-

ensation for emotional damages. A federal court dismissed the discrimination suit. The settlement is payment for emotional damages.

Lawyers with the University and Community College System of Nevada declined comment on the details of the case.

Cummings said he was glad the lawsuit was settled.

"It has made CCSN better aware that we need to place a greater emphasis on diversity training," he said.

## Ruling may spur cross burning ban

WASHINGTON (AP) - A Supreme Court decision upholding state power to punish cross burners should prompt new state laws outlawing the practice, Virginia's attorney general says.

The court ruled Monday that a burning cross is an instrument of racial terror so threatening it overshadows free-speech concerns. Justices voted 6-3 to uphold a 50-year-old Virginia law making it a crime to burn a cross as an act of intimidation. A lower court had ruled the law muzzled free speech.

"A burning cross is a symbol like no other. It doesn't just say we don't like you. The message is we are going to do you harm," Virginia Attorney General Jerry W. Kilgore said. "This decision today will be used I'm sure by many other states to outlaw this type of activity."

In addition to Virginia, states with anti-cross-burning laws include California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont and Washington,

plus the District of Columbia.

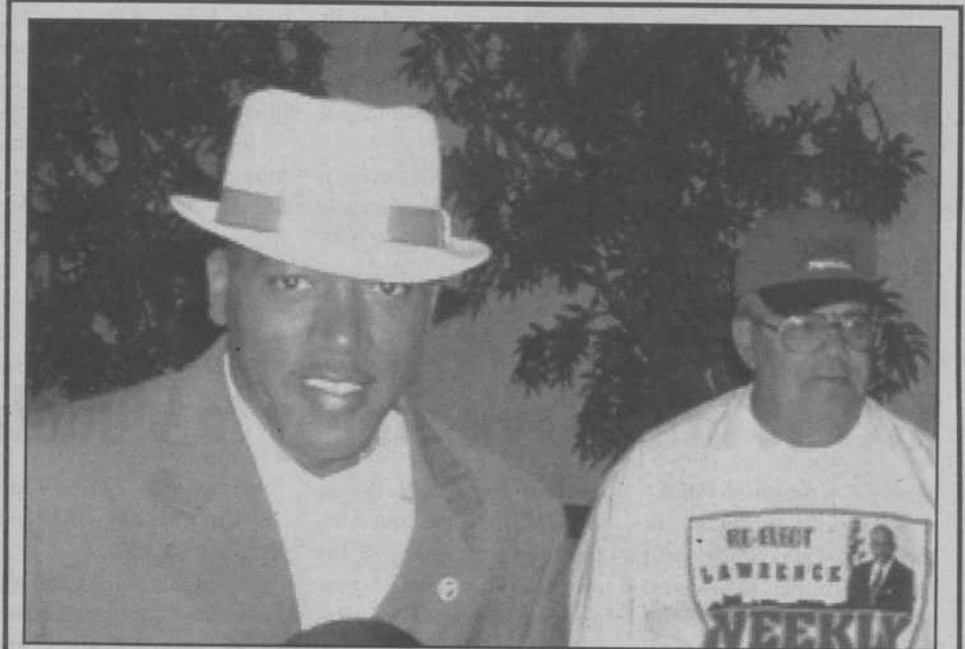
In Monday's ruling, four justices said part of Virginia's law was unconstitutional on separate grounds, because jurors could be told that cross-burning alone was evidence of an intent to intimidate.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the majority, said the protections afforded by the First Amendment "are not absolute" and do not necessarily shield cross burners.

The ruling seemed at odds with past Supreme Court decisions that protected the constitutional speech rights of unsavory or unpopular groups and causes, including flag burners, pornographers and strippers, and people who use swastikas or crosses in demonstrations.

"We certainly would have preferred the court take the stronger free speech stand and not allow a state to single out cross burning as a kind of expression that can be banned," said Kent Willis, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Virginia.

(See Cross-burning, Page 6)



## HAT'S ON TO THE VICTOR

Las Vegas City Councilman Lawrence Weekly cracks a smile during his victory party Tuesday night at Texas Station. Weekly trounced challenger Gene Collins, a local activist, to win reelection to his Ward 5 council seat.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Kathi Overstreet