

'Miracle Baby' continues to defy large odds

By *Lés Pierres Streater*
Sentinel-Voice

Jada Amiya Wilson, born on Nov. 17, 2003, at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, N.C., and weighing just 9 ounces and measuring about 9-1/2 inches, continues to defy the odds in life.

At 23 weeks and awaiting confirmation by both the World Almanac and the Guinness Book of Records, she is reportedly the smallest baby to survive this long. Jada spent the first six months of her life in the hospital in an incubator, undergoing surgery twice and fighting for her life.

There is good news. On May 11, she was able to leave the hospital and go home with her parents, weighing 6 pounds, 4 ounces and attached to a heart and apnea monitor. Now she weighs 7 pounds and 10 ounces.

She was one of two daughters born to Ayanna Wilson and Cory Hickman. Her twin, Jasmine, weighing 1 pound, managed to survive for 14 days but unfortunately was unable to put up the fight to live as Jada has.

During the pregnancy, Ayanna suffered from toxic/preeclampsia and had to undergo an emergency C-section with her condition being life threatening. Her blood pressure was high, accompanied by the possibility of a stroke. She was five months pregnant. This medical condition also posed a toxic risk for the unborn fetuses.



Photo special to the Sentinel-Voice

Jada Amiya Wilson is awaiting verification that she is smallest baby to survive this long, weighing nine ounces at birth 23 weeks ago.

Jewel Wilson, a Las Vegas resident, mother of Ayanna and grandmother of Jada, recently returned home after a month's stay in Charlotte following the discharge of her grand-

daughter from the hospital. She has returned to get her affairs in order, so that she can return to Charlotte in September to care for her granddaughter. Ayanna plans to return to work.

According to Jewel, she has contacted the World Almanac and the Guinness Book of Records.

"I am awaiting the medical records to be sent to me from the hospital so that I can submit them to both places and have my granddaughter's birth placed into history based upon her surviving this long," she said.

She remembers holding her granddaughter for the first time.

"It was great," Jewel said. "It was the best thing in the world. Now I know what being a grandmother feels like. It was a lot of work caring for my granddaughter while I was there. She is on monitors and oxygen and suffers from reflux attacks. That proved to be very scary. Once you understand what you need to do to take care of her, suctioning out her nose and throat so she can breathe, it became easier to do after knowing how to handle the situation.

"She now suffers less from this situation compared to when she first came home from the hospital," Jewel continued.

"Everyone has been totally stunned as to the survival of my granddaughter. She's coming along really well. We had to see pediatri-

cians, neurologists, ophthalmologists, pulmonologists — you name it. At home, Jada pulled at the oxygen tubing and I finally took it off her during the day. When she went back for an examination, they were surprised that she didn't have the oxygen hooked up. No one expected for her to be off the oxygen for another few months. She drew a crowd every time we visited the doctor's office because everyone had heard of this miracle baby."

She added, "I felt very nervous when I first came in contact with my granddaughter. She responded to me excellently when I held her during feeding time, as she was a difficult baby to feed. The nurses reported that it took her at least two hours to get less than 2 ounces of formula down. They asked me if I wanted to feed her, and as nervous as I was, I took the bottle and sat with the baby feeding her. She took the whole bottle in less than an hour and the staff was shocked stating that she must know that her grandmother is here."

There is guarded optimism that Jada will continue to strive and survive this ordeal. The family is learning to care for a "preemie" with special needs. Bank of America has established an account in Charlotte to help with Jada's medical costs. The account number is 0006-9037-1246. For anyone wishing to contribute, call Maria Quant, Bank of America, at (704) 386-6188, ext. 4.

Obama to give keynote address at Dems convention

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — Eager to showcase new faces at the party's national convention, Democrats have picked just about the newest face around to deliver the keynote address: Illinois Senate candidate Barack Obama.

Obama could become only the fifth Black senator in U.S. history. Tapping him to deliver the keynote address suggests the party sees a bright future for the 42-year-old law professor and state senator.

"What an extraordinary expression of confidence by the national party in his ability to command that stage," said David Wilhelm, the former head of the Demo-

cratic National Committee.

Past Democratic keynote speakers include New York Gov. Mario Cuomo and New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley. More recently, the speech has been delivered by promising younger officials, such as Rep. Harold Ford of Tennessee in 2000 and Indiana Gov. Evan Bayh in 1996.

Obama, whose father was Black, has made a splash on the national scene since his March victory in the Illinois Senate primary, partly because he was able to win the support of many White voters as well as an overwhelming number of Blacks.

"At a time when so much

of our politics seems divided, the fact that, at least within the Democratic Party, we were able to pull together a broad-based coalition is encouraging to Democrats," he said Wednesday.

Obama often says he is part of the Black community but not limited by it.

His father was from Kenya. He met Obama's mother, who was White, when both were students at the University of Hawaii. When Obama was 2, his father left the family and returned to Kenya, where he eventually became a senior economist in the Ministry of Finance.



Current Illinois Senate candidate Barack Obama proved his growing popularity by scoring coveted speech time during the Democratic convention later this month. He could become the fifth Black U.S. senator.

Obama was raised, mostly in Kansas, by his late mother and grandparents. He graduated from Columbia University in New York and received his law degree from Harvard Law School. He became the first Black president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review and later worked as a civil rights lawyer and as a community organizer in New York and Chicago.

Obama teaches law at the University of Chicago and has served in the state Senate since 1997.

Mary Beth Cahill, campaign manager for presidential candidate John Kerry, said Obama represents "the next generation of Democratic leadership."

"He really leaped out as someone who people would really love to see."

Shaq

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10-year veteran.

Riley said he was saddened to part with all three players.

"It disheartens me to see them leave," Riley said. "However, you don't get many chances to acquire the best player in the league, and this was a trade I felt we had to make."

With the departure of three starters, Riley will build his team around O'Neal, Olympian Dwyane Wade and Jones, Miami's leading scorer each of the last four seasons. The Heat will now shop for help at both forward positions and backup point guard, and free agents will likely consider Miami a more appealing option with the addition of O'Neal.

"Everybody wants to be here now," said Jones, who played with O'Neal in Los

Angeles from 1996 to 1998.

Each player involved in the trade must pass a physical before joining his new team. O'Neal's first appearance in South Florida is expected to be Tuesday, the Heat said.

He instantly becomes Miami's highest-profile athlete, and Heat ticket sales have been brisk this week. O'Neal is moving from one city enthralled by celebrities to another, but there are a lot more of them in Los Angeles than in Miami, and O'Neal is likely to become the biggest thing on South Beach.

"There's a lot of excitement going around in the city," Heat guard Rasual Butler said. "They call Shaquille O'Neal 'Big Daddy' for a reason — because everything he does is big. And it's big news that he's coming here."

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