



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

(L to R) Bamidele Adefemi, Gregory Hall and Avery Walker perform in a drum ensemble.

Celebration

(Continued from Page 1)

The students demonstrated skilled perfection playing instruments under the leadership of Adefemi along with performing individual selections.

Three students — Jessica Washington, a 1st grader from Kay Carl Elementary School; JaVonna Brown, a 5th grader from Kermit Booker Elementary School; and Muna Hiluf, a 7th grader from Frank Garside Middle School — participants in an oratory contest sponsored by the International House of Blues last month, recited their selection of words from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in tribute to him.

A song and dance tribute to the late Sammy Davis Jr. was performed by Lambus Dean. The Las Vegas Black Gospel Theater provided musical selections and poetry readings highlighting historical Black individuals and their accomplishments.

A visual display of artwork by the late artist Albert "Yabo" Stewart was presented by his wife Jeanne Agurie Stewart who spoke very passionately about her late husband's paintings and their part in illustrating the important role that African-Americans have played in our country's history.

Commenting on his work, Stewart said, "One of the things that my husband was trying to demonstrate in his art work was the strength of the Black man and his contributions that he made to society. He fought for his family and cared about what was happening to his people. My husband was a self-taught artist. Not only did he paint, but he also wrote poetry and poems to highlight the struggle of African-Americans."

Concluding with her remarks Stewart stated, "The man (Kwanzaa founder) they

now called (Maulana) Karenga was a bus driver and a friend of mine. He had heard of Al when we were living in Watts when our kids were little, and he wanted to know who papa was; who was the elder that was naming the babies.

"So, he wanted to meet Al and they finally got together. Al had been working for years to form a school for the rites of passage for boys and girls. So, after [they talked, the man explained his concept]... he stated that he also wanted an African name. After [Al gave him] a list of names, he selected the name 'Karenga.' It all started from my kitchen. I now even get excited around the Kwanzaa celebration every year because I was there from the beginning."

Sharing her insights on the background of this event, Kim Russell stated, "This is the 8th annual 'Remembering the Freedoms' festival. We've been conducting this event for the last eight years here at the West Charleston library celebrating African-American art and culture. We have a lot of tributes from artists in history, art, poetry and dance to celebrate those artists who have come before us like Sammy Davis Jr. and James McMillan. We also allow those young people from the first grade on up to come out and practice their oratory skills, sharing their beliefs and their touching stories with the audience."

Adding to her thoughts, Russell said, "We started out our program looking at West Africa and then moving to this country. We featured the artwork of Yabo and gave it some notoriety and looking to expand its display in the future."

"It was a good turnout, and we hope that it will continue in the future."

Lerone Bennett retires from Ebony after a half century

Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO (NNPA) — Lerone Bennett, the long-time executive editor of *Ebony Magazine*, has retired and been named executive editor emeritus, company officials say.

Bennett, who has worked in a variety of positions at *Ebony* for 52 years, will continue to write several articles a year for the nation's largest Black magazine.

A company spokeswoman said Bennett is on a Black History Month tour and will be unavailable for comment until later this week.

The release stated that "*Ebony* managing editors Lynn Norment and Walter Leavy have assumed responsibility for day-to-day operations."

This is Bennett's second time retiring. In September, Bennett, 75, announced that he was stepping down from the position, but after discussions with *Ebony* founder John H. Johnson Jr., he chose to



Lerone Bennett spent 52 years with *Ebony Magazine*.

continue as executive editor.

In his career at *Ebony*, the Clarksdale, Miss., native has covered some of the biggest stories of the 20th century, including the March on Washington and the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala.

He started at Johnson Publishing Company as an associate editor at *Jet Magazine*, later becoming an associate editor and senior editor at *Ebony*.

He was named executive editor in 1987.

Considered one of the nation's top historians,

Bennett authored "Before The Mayflower: A History of Black America," one of the most celebrated Black books in history; "Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream," "What Manner of Man: A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.," "Wade in the Water, The Shaping of Black America" and several others.

He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Morehouse College in 1949 and did graduate work at Atlanta University.

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