

# LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Phelps wins state pageant

By Chelsi Cheatom  
Special to  
Sentinel-Voice

In March, Jáneen Reneé Phelps of Las Vegas was awarded the title Miss Black Nevada USA. Phelps is an undergraduate student, majoring in linguistic studies at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Phelps has participated in other local scholarship pageants, but Miss Black Nevada USA is her first title.



Jáneen Reneé Phelps of Las Vegas was awarded the title Miss Black Nevada USA

"I started competing in pageants because they were fun and I could participate in them with my friends. I was a Millennium scholar and as you know, it doesn't cover all of your college expenses. All of the pageants I have done have helped me pay for school," she explained.

She first found out about Miss Black USA organization while searching online. She entered the pageant and competed against four young women. After submitting a résumé and completing an interview with the Miss Black Nevada USA pageant director, she was selected as the winner.

"I'm so excited to be involved in building up the Miss Black USA pageant. They are under new management and it is now in the hands of great women, including some former Miss Black USA winners. These women have done a lot for the pageant and I know it's going to be a wonderful experience," explained Phelps.

Since earning her title, Phelps has made a few appearances at local events and will appear in a Las Vegas (See Miss Black Nevada, Page 2)

## School chief Garcia resigns

By Lés Pierres Streater  
Sentinel-Voice

Carlos Garcia, superintendent of the Clark County School District for the past five years, announced his resignation at the regular school board meeting last Thursday. He said he will resign his post as of July 13.

CCSD has a student population of more than 280,000 students enrolled in its collective 301 elementary, middle and high schools, operates with a general budget of \$1.6 billion and is ranked as the fifth largest public school district in the nation.

Garcia, whose annual salary as school superintendent is about \$212,000, said he was leaving his current job for the position of Vice President of Urban Markets for McGraw-Hill, a major group of information services and media companies in broadcast, magazine and book publishing with divisions that supply professional and school textbooks. Garcia will continue to live here and work in the Las Vegas area in his new job.

April Hattori, Vice President of Communications, at McGraw-Hill's corporate office in New York said the company is "excited to have someone of Mr. Garcia's experience and background" to



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— Cordell Stokes, spokesperson for CAAN

come to work with their company.

Questions about Garcia's salary, duties and responsibilities were left unanswered, but Hattori said, "In looking at the various educational initiatives in the country, including 'No Child Left Behind,' our organization is working to establish a sense of accountability for large district schools. We are delighted to bring on new people such as Mr. Garcia, who brings 30 years of experience as a classroom teacher, principal and district administrator. He will be able to help us to identify what we need to solve the issues existing that lead to improving student academic performance."

The announcement of Garcia's decision to resign was a surprise, and community reactions about the

superintendent's departure are mixed.

Shirley Barber, school board trustee, District C, was out of town, but responded through her office representative that she "wishes the superintendent and his family the best in his future endeavors."

Gene Collins, state party chair and local chair of the National Action Network indicated that he hasn't followed the school district situation closely but said he feels that Garcia has done "a heck of a good job."

Cordell Stokes, spokesperson for CAAN said, "We're not too particularly concerned about him (Garcia) resigning. Rather, our major concern is about making sure to identify, through a national search, that an individual is selected who has strong administra-

tive skills, people skills, and networking skills, along with being capable of accepting the challenges facing our community."

Stokes added some suggestions and concerns in the search for suitable candidates:

"This individual must be sensitive in understanding and addressing the needs of minority students [and all students overall], along with working to promote diversity throughout the district. We believe that the emphasis should be placed on providing the resources necessary that will enhance student academic performance, including an increase in the budget that will capitalize [on the amount spent per pupil] providing a quality education to students..."

Lester Lewis, education chair of the Las Vegas chapter of the NAACP, said, "Well, honestly, it gives us a fresh start. If they do a national search, and they get someone in here from a similar large urban school district, then we can do a lot of effective things and make some changes."

Lewis added that he believes Garcia's departing is positive for the community:

"I thought, initially, (See Garcia, Page 6)

## BET ends nightly newscast

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Black Entertainment Television has axed its only remaining public affairs program, BET Nightly News, landing another blow to the nation's Black news and information sources.

"People had been hopeful that there would be some shred of information relevant to the Black community left on BET," says Ron Daniels, executive director of the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights. "But clearly there is more of an emphasis on entertainment than education. This is a

tragic loss and not a very hopeful sign."

BET President and Chief Operating Officer Debra L. Lee announced the programming change last week, saying the network will revert to hourly news updates throughout the day instead of one set program in the evening.

"Strategically, this new approach strengthens our news product by responding directly to the changing needs and preferences of BET viewers," says Lee in a press statement. "When combined with plans to expand our news specials, we'll have news programming that's

fast, flexible, accessible and timely. There are other news coverage options at our disposal which we're also considering, including the possibility of a weekend news magazine or analysis show."

BET Founder and CEO Robert L. Johnson, who has undergone much criticism after the cutting of other news-oriented programming, was quick to explain the new program format.

"News and Public Affairs have always been historically important parts of the BET lineup, and have earned numerous awards over the years. But it's now time to (See BET, Page 13)



### TALENT SCOUTS

Antonio 'L.A.' Reid, left, chairman of Island Def Jam Music Group with hip-hop impresario Russell Simmons, second from left, rapper Jay-Z, second from right, and Tony Austin, partner and president of the Simmons Music group, smile during a news conference in New York last week. Simmons announced the formation of a joint label venture with DEF Jam Music Group named The Russell Simmons Music Group.