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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Forum stresses uniting in civil rights struggle

Parker Philpot
Sentinel-Voice

A large cooperative of local organizations, representing major ethnic communities, convened Tuesday evening in a three-hour forum at the Clark County Government Center to discuss "Civil Rights: the Unfinished Business."

The NAACP chapter was the sponsoring organization. Representatives of more than 15 other culturally diverse organizations with a focus on

civil rights, education, health, economic and community development participated in the forum.

In addition, David M. Sanchez represented the Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission on the 10-person panel and was among more than 16 speakers who addressed each other's questions and made timed presentations for an audience of more than 80 attending the forum.

The free event was open to the public and was broadcast on Channel 96.

The moderator was First Vice President Mujahid Ramadan of the local NAACP Chapter 1111, who said the event will lead to a report being issued in about 60 days reflecting what was discussed in the forum, calling for oversight committees for each municipality, and proposing action items to create solutions.

It was an airing of feelings

and beliefs — backed by statistics — about the recurrent and persistent problems of harmful discrimination, stemming from racism, leading to civil rights violations as experienced by various local communities of people of color.

In the program's opening remarks, Steve Schorr, the forum's host, said that the ethnic and racial composition of the local community is changing, citing statistics that African-Americans, Hispan-

ics, Asians and other minorities are more than 44 percent of total population. Schorr said the need for answers to "Where are we going?" and "Where are we today?" on the subject of civil rights is critical.

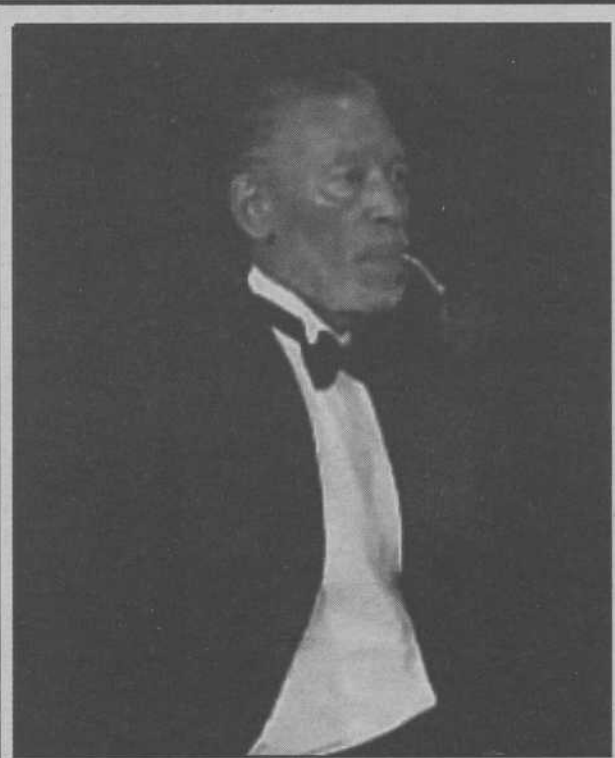
Each organization expressed determination to continue fighting unfair and racially biased treatment locally — but to do so from a broad-based collective approach, in addition to each group's ethnocentric or tar-

geted advocacy efforts.

The first speaker, Sherman Rutledge Jr., chair of the Legal Redress Committee for the local NAACP chapter, said the number of complaints of civil rights violations his office alone has received in just the past seven months is 268. Rutledge says the cases involve racism, sexual harassment and other abuses.

"They are basic human rights issues," Rutledge said.

(See Forum, Page 2)



Locals mourn Cochise, 'Rembrandt of Black painters in Nevada'

Cochise Couyette, known by many, was from one of the pioneer families in Las Vegas that arrived in the early 1940s. A self-taught and nationally renowned portrait artist, he consistently helped the community to remember their cultural heritage and the contributions of Black entertainers, sports figures and community leaders.

His paintings hang in prestigious homes and in the library of the University of Nevada Las Vegas. A grassroots activist and champion of children, his dream and vision was to establish training classes with the help of local organizations to enable children to start micro-enterprises of their own to help motivate and empower them to remain in school, finish their education and then give back to the community. His primary goal was to start a business producing a commercial line of Black greetings cards and art prints while teaching young painters.

Services for Cochise Couyette will be held on Saturday at 11:00 am at Thomas and Jones Funeral Home at 310 Foremaster Lane, between Main and Las Vegas Blvd. North. Visitation will be on Friday from 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Producer filming modern-day western

By Chelsi Cheatom
Sentinel-Voice

Local film producer and director James A. Brooks is currently producing a movie "Buckaroo" in the Las Vegas Valley.

Filming on the project started early this month and will continue through May 21. The projected release date for "Buckaroo" is September 15, according to Brooks. The modern-day western will be released nationwide.

Brooks, films director and co-producer on the project, explained, "The movie is about a Native American kid who gets in trouble with the law in the city of Denver. He ends up going to court after this run-in with the law. His punishment is that he must learn how to be a cowboy."

"Buckaroo" was written by Bob Holland. The film stars Lindsay Wagner ("The Bionic Woman"), Gary Busey ("The Buddy Holly Story"), Adam West



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

James Brooks, right, is the brains behind "Buckaroo," a western film backdrop here.

("Batman" in the '60s TV show) and emerging young actor Simon R. Baker ("Into the West," "I, Robot" and "The Missing").

Several local residents are also appearing in the film in-

cluding Executive Producer Greg Shelton who also stars in "Buckaroo." Sentinel-Voice "Sports Pace" commentary writer Huel Washington is cast in the role of the bailiff in the court scenes.

Other African-American stars appearing in the film include Philip Morris, as well as Larry and David Sontag ("Ocean's 11" and "Ocean's 12"). Also starring is George

(See Buckaroo, Page 2)

Jackson defense team rests its case

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The defense rested in the Michael Jackson child molestation trial Wednesday without putting the pop star on the stand, wrapping up after a surprisingly short three weeks devoted mostly to portraying the accuser's mother as a shakedown artist.

Jurors could get the case as early as the middle of next week to decide whether Jack-

son should be convicted of molesting a teenage cancer patient at his Neverland ranch in 2003.

Defense lawyers portrayed Jackson as the victim of false charges that surfaced once the boy's mother realized she was being weaned from a lavish lifestyle that the singer had financed. A series of witnesses testified that the mother was a grifter who made a career out of hitting

up celebrities for money and defrauding others.

The defense took only three weeks to attack a case prosecutors spent nearly 10 weeks building. Initially, the defense case was projected to last up to eight weeks.

Jackson didn't take the stand, as defense lawyers had hinted at the trial's start, and only a few of the celebrities who were on the list of possible witnesses ended up in

court. Absent were celebrities including Elizabeth Taylor, Stevie Wonder, and Kobe Bryant, but those who took the stand included Macaulay Culkin, Jay Leno and Chris Tucker.

Tucker, the comedian and star of the "Rush Hour" movies, was the final defense witness. He told jurors Wednesday that he found the accuser to be unusually sophisticated

(See Jackson, Page 4)