

Magazine showcases Nevada's minority women

By Parker Philpot
Sentinel-Voice

A new Las Vegas-based publication, *Desert Diamonds*, aspires to pedestal accomplished and interesting women of color in Nevada.

Magazine Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Tamara Butler co-hosted a launch party Thursday night with Managing Editor Daria Mason-Davidson.

They invited their supporters, advisors and com-

munity members from various fields to an evening of complimentary champagne and hors d'oeuvres at the newly renovated Artisan Hotel and Spa at West Sahara and Highland.

They introduced the group of more than 50, mostly female attendees, to what Mason-Davidson believes will be "a very exciting" new entry into the marketplace. She said there is a need for this type of maga-

zine, one that features professional and other working women of color.

The genesis of the concept, according to Butler who moved here six years ago, happened when she attended many social and business functions where she observed, met with, and continued to hear about women with histories and achievements that she found compelling — and then, she knew, "I had to do something."

The inaugural issue of the high-gloss, full-color bimonthly magazine is due in January. Butler, who is the founder, and Mason-Davidson have high hopes for success and longevity because there are "so many dynamic women" to write about, they expressed.

"You will be in awe of the accomplishments of minority women in this state. Not all of the women featured will be presidents and vice presidents; some will be secretaries, teachers, doctors, insurance and real estate agents, hairdressers, bankers, sales people, etc., and my desire is that their stories will be motivating and inspiring for many," Butler points out.

"Everyone knows a



Sentinel-Voice photo by Parker Philpot

Tracey Turner, left, in a show of support chides publisher Tamara Butler to autograph a promotional kit for posterity. The launch party for the new *Desert Diamonds* women's magazine was held last week at the Artisan Hotel and Spa.

woman of color who should be included," she added.

In her original thought, successful African-American women would be the focus, but Butler expanded that when she realized "there were just as many dynamic women in other ethnic groups... the minority women of Nevada have contributed to its growth and progress."

Butler said the magazine will have wide distribution

through businesses, at public locations and will be offered complimentary to readers and mail subscribers.

From a business standpoint, she expects the local corporate and business community to recognize the value of a female-based readership, and she anticipates a favorable response in paid advertiser support for *Desert Diamonds*. "It's a woman-based public... women are the

power buyers. In most families, women are the [primary spenders]," Butler explained.

In an interesting decision, the women-oriented magazine will include men, according to Butler. "I have decided to include a man from each ethnic group... No great philosophy behind this, I just thought it would be a nice thing to do."

She did not elaborate on what form the representation of men will take in the issues.

One goal is doubtlessly central to Butler's vision for the magazine: her aim to inspire young women and girls.

"We work with youth, and a lot of young girls need to see the [success and accomplishments] of women," she said.

One of the guests, Tracey Turner, a financial industry professional, spoke accolades and demonstrated her belief in the concept when she turned and placed her promotional kit before Butler, insisting, "I want you to autograph this for me." Turner said she predicts the magazine will be a big success. Butler, humbly and laughingly, complied with her guests request.



UNCF

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feasibility of establishing a local alumni chapter. Their meeting was held at the office of the Las Vegas-Clark County Urban League at 1058 W Owens.

The National Alumni Council, founded in 1946, has a mission to foster, strengthen and safeguard the existence of HBCUs through fundraising for UNCF institutions, recruiting students to attend member colleges and universities, as well as stimulating ongoing financial support from alumni to their alma maters. UNCF has assisted more than 350,000 graduates from colleges and universities across the country and administered 500 student scholarship programs. Over 50 percent of the students are from families with a gross income of less than \$35,000; 55 percent are from single parent families, and 60 percent of students helped are the first in their families to attend college.

The meeting was sponsored by Councilman Lawrence Weekly, a graduate of Grambling State University, who welcomed the visitors to Las Vegas, along with Peggy Selma, a representative of the Western Region and moderator of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to generate enough support from local graduates of HBCUs to establish a local Inter-Alumni Council to foster relationships and networking opportunities among Black alumni in Las Vegas.

Dr. Rubye Taylor-Drake, national president, spoke to the attendees and offered support from her office for a local chapter.

She said, "Our purpose here is to bring together supporters of Black higher education that we feel would work towards orga-

nizing a local Inter-Alumni Council in Las Vegas for the United Negro College Fund. If formed, the council will do three things: raise money for UNCF schools, recruit students and serve as a voice for Black higher education in Las Vegas. On an average, the [national council] has contributed approximately \$1 million dollars supporting [HBCUs] yearly through the UNCF by way of activities sponsored by the Inter-Alumni Councils in various cities, like pageants, Martin Luther King breakfasts in January, Evening of Stars viewing parties during the annual fundraiser benefit and other events sponsored by the alumni."


In addition, Taylor-Drake stated, "It is vitally important that we support our HBCUs because there are discussions going across the country if there is a need to have Black institutions such as ours or to provide them public funding. If you look across the country at the number of successful African-American graduates, many of them attended HBCUs. So, it is incumbent on us to make a way for our future students to have an opportunity to attend... and be exposed to all that they offer."

Dr. Marion Bell, a graduate of Bennett College shared her thoughts about a local presence: "It is extremely important to get a council going here because there are a lot of students who fall through the cracks that would benefit from attending a Black college or university that will nurture them. All of us here who attended an HBCU understand the need to give back and further the efforts of our schools to thrive and prosper. That's our mission now, to help others succeed."

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