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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Williams' death sparks debate on his life

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Stanley Tookie Williams, the notorious co-founder of the Crips street gang who led an anti-gang crusade from his death row prison cell at San Quentin, was executed early Tuesday morning, leaving behind a spirited debate over what constitutes justice and redemption.

After Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected a second last-ditch legal appeal at 11:30 p.m. Monday, Williams, 51, was killed by lethal injection at 12:35 a.m., Pacific time. A crowd estimated at 1,000 to 2,500 stood vigil outside of the prison as Williams made the short walk from a nearby holding cell for a somber, highly publicized event that took 36 minutes and 15 seconds.

According to news accounts, there was a 12-minute delay because the execution team had difficulty

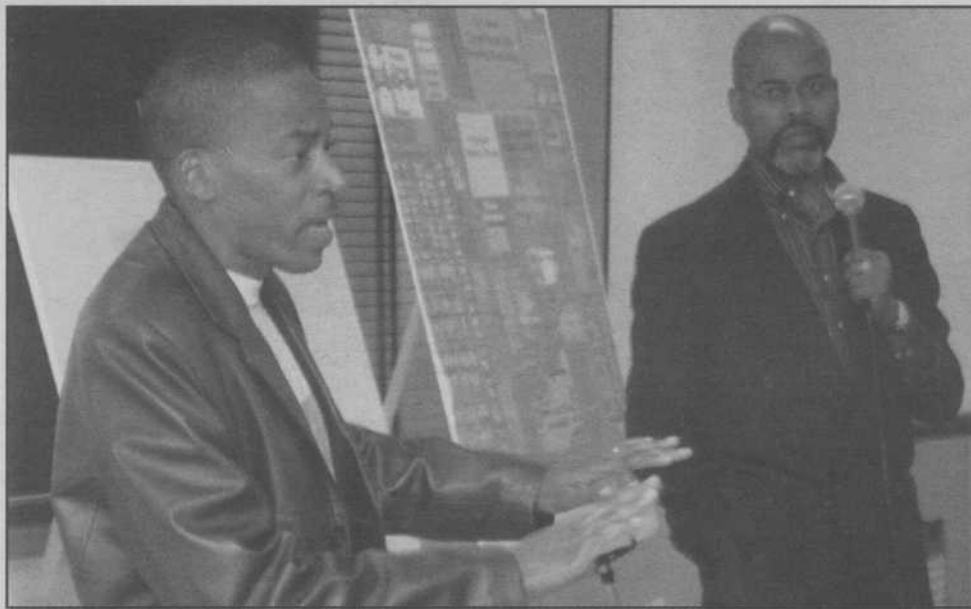


A baby lifts a candle during a demonstration at the entrance of San Quentin State Prison as people gather against the execution of death row inmate and Crips gang co-founder Stanley Tookie Williams in San Quentin on Monday night.

finding a vein in Williams' left arm. At one point, Williams winced, lifted his head from the gurney and appeared to say, "Still can't find it?" witnesses said. There were 39 witnesses, including victims' relatives, Williams' lawyers and supporters and journalists.

Lora Owens, the stepmother of one of the murdered victims, Albert Owens, appeared shaken by the execution and at one point was comforted by another woman, witnesses said. Before leaving for San Quentin to witness the execution, she told CNN: "I'm just glad that we're almost to the end of this. I'm glad that finally Albert is going to have the justice he deserves."

Williams' supporters blew kisses at him and said "I love you" as Williams faced his impending death. Prison officials said Williams spent his last day reading mail from
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Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Las Vegas Councilman Lawrence Weekly, Ward 5, responds to questions about the 10-acre parcel of land at Martin L. King and Lake Mead Boulevards. G. Lamont Blackstone, right, representing DLC UrbanCore LLC, presented two concepts involving a much-needed West Las Vegas grocery store and additional businesses on Monday at the Doolittle Center.

Projects slated for Ward 5

By Parker Philpot
Sentinel-Voice
The ongoing efforts to ensure acquisition of a full-service grocery for the Historic Westside neighborhood progressed significantly with a pending proposal from a

developer, as revealed Monday night at a two-hour public informational meeting held by Ward 5 Councilman Lawrence Weekly.

Weekly heard input on the highly awaited, yearlong-debated grocery store issue. He

updated attendees on an accepted proposal under review from DLC UrbanCore LLC, a firm focused on commercial revitalization in inner-city corridors and creating sustainable business development.
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Bravery, biting humor stoked Pryor's genius

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Richard Pryor, the groundbreaking comedian who died over the weekend of a heart attack, was known for his foul mouth, insight into racism and honesty — a combination that caused many to be repelled by him and many more to be mesmerized by his brilliance.

He suffered a heart attack Saturday in his California home in the San Fernando Valley. Pryor turned 65 on December 1 and had been battling multiple sclerosis, a degenerative disease that strikes the central nervous system, for two decades.

Although America was not unfamiliar with Black comics — Slappy White, Timmie Rogers, Godfrey Cambridge, Nipsey Russell, Dick Gregory, Redd Foxx and Bill Cosby — none of them could have prepared the nation for Richard Franklin Lenox Thomas Pryor.

Pryor prepared the world for a series of edgy comedians: Chris Rock, Eddie Murphy, Robin Williams, David Letterman, George Wallace, David Chappelle and Keenen Ivory Wayans.

"Richard Pryor is the groundbreaker," Wayans later explained. He "showed us that you can be Black and have a Black voice and be successful."

Playwright Neil Simon called Pryor "the most brilliant comic in America." Comedian Bob Newhart said Pryor was "the single most seminal comedic influence in the last 50 years." And Eddie Murphy said that Richard Pryor was "better than anyone who ever picked up a microphone."

And when Pryor picked up a microphone, there was no predicting what might come out of his mouth.

Though known for his use of vulgarity and the n-word, some of Pryor's most memorable work invoked neither. Whether describing a scene in the woods with a deer drinking water or his reluctance to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for fear of catching a life-threatening disease, Pryor could say as much with his facial expressions as with words.

In "Richard Pryor, Live in Concert," the 1979 videotape by which other comedians are judged, Pryor talks about having a choice between dying as a result of getting
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