

# SCLC back from dead, ready to work

Atlanta-based rights organization has addressed internal foibles, focus on expanding scope

By Stan Washington  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
ATLANTA (NNPA) - This isn't your father's SCLC.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which just a few short years ago was on life-support, is now charging forward with renewed vigor under the leadership of its energetic president Charles Steele Jr.

Not only has the Atlanta-based organization rebounded financially from years ago, but it has now expanded its services internationally, Steele announced recently during a media briefing at Paschal's Restaurant.

"We know how to march, how to picket, how to shut you down, but with our partners we're moving to another level," Steele said.

Steele outlined organiza-

tional plans to open conflict resolutions and the pending groundbreaking of its new headquarters.

SCLC opened a conflict resolution center in Dimona, Israel and Dayton, Ohio in 2005, and has plans to establish 50 domestic and 10 international centers in the next four years.

SCLC has entered into an agreement with Mississippi Valley State University and the Cagliero University in Italy to offer a curriculum on non-violence based on the principles of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Steele said. Mississippi Valley will offer the curriculum this fall.

That program is being headed by Dr. Denis K. Muhilly, a college professor instrumental in helping establish the center in Ivrea, Italy.

"We need to break the



*"We know how to march, how to picket, how to shut you down, but with our partners we're moving to another level."*

— Charles Steele  
SCLC President

cycle of violence that is disrupting global communities. These centers can play a major role," Muhilly said.

Added Steele, "Dr. King would be horrified at the violence that plagues nations all over the globe. Our goal is to reduce violence in the U.S., as well as in nations around the world, by training a cadre of conflict resolution specialists who will seek to bring non-violent resolutions to conflicts."

Established in 1957 by the Reverends Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph D. Abernathy Jr., Joseph Lowery Sr., and other ministers in Alabama, the organization has been floundering since the retirement of Lowery in 1997. Until Steele was elected president in 2004, the organization made most of its headlines with news of internal conflicts. Also during that period, debt continued to pile up.

"When I came to office in 2004, we owed the feds; now they owe us. We meet our payroll regularly. The lights aren't being cut off," Steele said. "We have \$2 million in the bank, and we plan to break ground on our new headquarters soon."

The organization is temporarily located in Midtown Atlanta until the building is finished. That financial turnaround is largely due through corporate donations, Steele said. "We would not be in existence today if not for our corporate partners."

They want to see a conflict resolution established for corporations. People don't know how to get along in corporate America, either."

Steele said part of the reason for the media briefing was to let its mostly African-American constituents know that the organization is viable

and strong, but it needs their contributions.

"Donations from Black folk are low. We need to increase that figure," he said.

Reducing violence particularly in the U.S. would have a significant impact on the economy, Steele suggested.

"The economic impact in terms of lost wages and earning potential for those who are either killed or temporarily or permanently disabled is more than \$20 billion per year," Steele said.

"Since most victims of violence are in their teens or 20s, nearly 40 years worth of wages is lost. The social and emotional cost to families who lose loved ones and to those temporarily or permanently disabled is enormous."

Stan Washington writes for the Atlanta Voice.

## Motown

(Continued from Page 1)

Lodge and Jerry Stamis, Jerry's Nugget is still a significant piece of Las Vegas history.

Originally the site of the Town House Bar, the property was purchased and rebuilt as an 80-foot casino complete with a restaurant, bar, keno lounge, a craps table and 100 slot machines.

In 1968, the owners bought their closest competitor, the Bonanza Club, which hosted the city's tallest sign at the time — the famous oil derrick.

This added an additional 10,000 square feet. Further enhancements and expansions through the years have grown the property to over 95,000 square feet of gaming and entertainment space.

Still owned and operated by the Stamis family, Jerry's Nugget focuses on catering to the locals with an emphasis on quality, service and value, the management said.

As Jerry's Nugget can claim over four decades of entertainment, growth and success, it remains one of the premier mid-sized casino properties and a favorite in North Las Vegas. Now, with the proven success of Motown and historically Black music in its marketing plan, it will celebrate another victory this week.

Ferris is excited about the two-year anniversary cel-



In A Fect can perform various styles, from jazz to R&B.

bration and is happy for the receptiveness of the audiences, which is very diverse in terms of ethnicity, age and nationality.

The theme for Motown Friday is "Getting Offa That Thang" and "Shakin Your Groove," which appeals to a wide audience people 21 and over.

"I think Motown Fridays has been successful because of the talented bands that we have playing [every week]. Bands such as In A Fect and Sho Tyme have been the locals' favorite," Ferris explained.

In A Fect combines the talents of five members, Larry White (band leader,

musical director, lead guitar and vocals); Treasure (lead vocals); Clarence Harris (drums); Rodney Kimble (bass guitar and vocals); and Ron-E (keyboards and vocals).

Although the talent of each member affords In A Fect the luxury of being able to perform virtually every type of music, the group specializes in putting on high-energy R&B shows.

The group's leader has a solid foundation in American-born, African-American music styles — soul, R&B, and even contemporary jazz. White, was formally with The Whispers and has written, produced and performed

with artists such as Bobby Brown, Whitney Houston, Cherelle, Ryuichi Sakamoto and Phyllis Hyman. White has the reputation as one of the best guitar players in Las Vegas and his signature guitar solos often bring the crowd to their feet for a standing ovation.

With an incredible stage presence, lead singer Treasure has the ability to draw the crowd to the dance floor and keep them there all night long, while Clarence Harris mesmerizes them with drum solos that can be felt throughout the house. Ron-E dazzles them with his dancing fingers on the keyboard and Rodney Kimble amazes the crowd as one of the few bass guitar players who not only plays outstanding bass, but he can also maintain the high-en-

ergy choreography with the front line throughout the entire show.

When locals and visitors want to enjoy the Black music experience, so-called girls groups with their unique sounding lead singers can't be left out.

The Mary Williams Revue features namesake Williams, a former member of the world-famous group, The Shirelles.

She sang lead with Doris Jackson and became lead vocalist when Doris became too ill to work. The band has been singing songs such as "Soldier Boy," "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow," and "Mamma Said, Baby, It's You" and performing hits by Heatwave, Gladys Knight, En Vogue, Patti LaBelle, and more. Back from performing

in Oregon, Williams said she "loves performing in Las Vegas."

On Friday, the celebration will include live performances from a variety of all-time favorite bands: In A Fect, Sho Tyme, and guest singer Lionel Z from The Coasters. Celebrity DJ, Smooth C, will be hosting the party and giving away dozens of Motown prizes.

Next Friday, June 23, the Mary Williams Revue will be featured, and there will be more prizes and giveaways.

Show time is at 10:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. A nominal cover charge with a drink minimum may apply. For more information, contact 702-399-3000 or www.jerrysnugget.com.

Parker Philpot contributed to this article.



Teaching the Art of Beauty

- Pre-Registering for 2006 Classes
- Bi-Lingual (Spanish) Courses
- Excellent Placement Record - 92% Success Rate
- Financial Aid Available for Those Who Qualify
- Prepare for the Nevada State Exam

902 W. Owens | Las Vegas, NV 89106  
702-636-8686 | www.expertisebeauty.com



After graduating from the Expertise Cosmetology Institute, I immediately landed the perfect opportunity at Hot Headz Salon... Money's great and my schedule is MY SCHEDULE. Thanks, Expertise!

— Ms. Kris, Las Vegas Class of 2002