

# Local barbershop sports innovations

By Debbie Hall  
Sentinel-Voice

The corner barbershop has always been a gathering place in communities across the nation — and Las Vegas is no different. The neighborhood shop is the place to visit friends, share information and get your hair cut. But a new twist on the traditional barbershop is created locally by Calvin "Tito" Hudson, owner of the newly opened, all-sports themed Classic Cuts - King of Cuts at 1445 West Alexander at Martin Luther King Boulevard in North Las Vegas.

With an interactive sports theme, bright colors and the featured functional basketball court in his spacious shop, Hudson says it's more than just a place to get groomed. He said that the community service focus of his business will also be broader and "different from other shops."

There's a good reason why he decided to combine sports and hair and to open a new business, according to Hudson.

"I am a sports fanatic," he said. "Sports are more attractive to people — especially kids. And most importantly, we do good work."

When you enter the b-ball décor shop, "it's an eight-foot door," he said, which helps to accommodate any basketball player-size customers. Hudson said he is pleased to have a growing clientele that includes pro players and pro basketball fans as patrons. And, he says women are invited to show off their sports skills big time, too.

"We had a woman come in and she dunked with two hands," he recalled how im-

pressed the patrons were.

He uses the concept of sports throughout the business. In keeping with the theme, he refers to his associates like team members, calling manager Ezekiel Conner his "first draft pick."

Suspended from the ceiling are four flat-screen plasma TVs, visible from each direction, and there is a full sound system when music is being played instead of a sports event.

The shop gives "game tickets." Customers can perform sports activities, like shooting hoops, for discounts on haircuts. The basketball court is the fun focus of the shop.

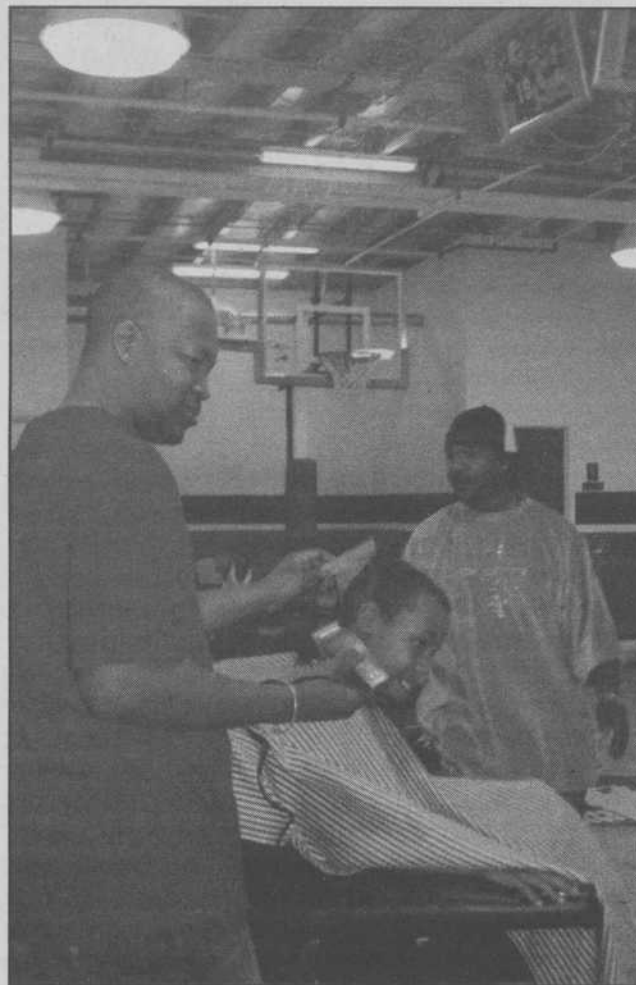
"O-o-o-h, this is cool," said one 11-year-old when he walked through the doors into the shop's court area.

"Every arena has a name. Our arena is called the Binky Center," named after Hudson's daughter Halle's middle name.

The shop has its own logo and apparel in red, white and blue. As Hudson explained, "the colors of red, white and blue stand for the barbershop pole. The white is for the bandages, the blue is for the veins and the red is for the blood. We are not NBA but CCB [the shop's letters] — a concept of sports and barber-shop."

Another aspect is that Classic Cuts - Kings of Cuts is a place to network. Hudson and Conner are also creating a free monthly magazine called "Run Tell That" with information about sports, high school events and other content to connect the community.

Hudson and Conner said they selected this location



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

## Classic Cuts barbershop mixes grooming with sports décor.

because of its proximity to two high schools, one middle school and a grade school, and they liked the residential neighborhoods surrounding the corner.

"A lot of kids don't have fathers... we can reach a lot of [them]," Hudson said, emphasizing that he plans to make a positive, motivational difference in the neighborhood.

There are plans to produce shows and be involved with the community, especially sports-oriented activities for youth. One event is CCB's Back-to-School Drive that is being planned to run for one week before school opens in September.

gether ever since."

Hudson said, "Between the two of us, we have 20 years experience. We just decided to branch out and go on our own with our dream."

Hudson says he has the professional experience in the business to make it work in the long run. "I've been cutting hair for about 11 years. I went to school at Northeast Louisiana Federal Barber College — a government funded school—I got my Master Barber certificate."

He spoke about past experiences in similar businesses and knows that what happens inside the business operations is critical—not just what the business looks like to the public.

Hudson believes that his business concepts represent the future, new generation. He pays homage to the traditional, successful Black barbers and historic shop owners who have paved the way for his business today. "One day [some of them] will retire... we want to be [someplace for their customers to go]."

"We are so different from other shops. Technology-wise we are advanced. The website is going to look like a sports page, with up-to-date events. ...[We will have an online webcam to show types of cuts]," he added. "We have a receptionist up front to take appointments, transfer calls to each barber and e-mail the clients' information," Hudson explained.

The barbershop offers the latest in hairstyles as well as shaves, fades, afros, designs and other grooming needs. Standard discounts are offered for children and those with a high school ID. Hair care products and major line products are also offered, according to Hudson.

He said they welcome women. "Some women are intimidated when they go to a barber," Hudson said. He said his shop offers soft styles not just sharp cuts like some places.

Future but not-to-distant plans call for opening a chain of sports-themed shops in and outside of Nevada. "The first shop is the first edition, the basketball edition." The next one will be football, Hudson said.

He added, "Don't ever quit dreaming, and don't give up on your dreams. You are going to have a lot of people who say you can't do this, and you can't do that. Keep God first, and keep hoping and keep striving. Don't give up."

There are sports bars and sports books all over Las Vegas, now Hudson says he is the first sports barbershop. Open Tuesday to Saturday, to better accommodate his football fan patrons this season, the shop will be open on Sundays.

For more information about services and events, call (702) 273-1980 or toll free 1-866-740-4041.

Parker Philpot contributed to this story.

## Dorothy Leavell elected chair NNPA Foundation

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DETROIT (NNPA) — Dorothy R. Leavell, publisher of the *Crusader* newspapers covering Chicago, Ill., and Gary, Ind., was recently elected chair of the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation's board of directors.

Elected at a meeting of the NNPA Foundation board during the national convention in Detroit, Leavell will serve a two-year term overseeing the programs of the organization. The programs include the annual Black Press Week observance in Washington, D.C., selection of Newsmaker of the Year, Merit Awards competition and judging, the NNPA News Service, and a journalism partnership with the Howard University School of Communications. The NNPA Foundation also has responsibility for the national headquarters building in Washington, D.C.

"I am greatly honored to be elected to lead this most important foundation. It is my desire to create the greatest opportunities for the Black Press through grants and programs to develop our industry," Leavell said. "It is further my desire to provide opportunities for African-Americans to provide our newspapers with the best and brightest of talent to perpetuate an industry that is very much needed today, as it was in 1827 when Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm founded Freedom's Journal."

A member of NNPA for 38 years, Leavell was elected president of NNPA in 1995 and served two, two-year terms. NNPA is the national trade association for more than 200 African-American newspapers.

In 2002, she was elected chair of the nation's oldest African-American-owned ad-  
(See NNPA, Page 13)

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