



Summer Business Institute excels

By *Lés Pierres Streater*
Sentinel-Voice

The Summer Business Institute Program celebrated its annual closing ceremony on Friday at the Stardust Hotel and Casino. The theme of the graduating ceremony, "Providing Today's Students with Opportunities for Tomorrow," depicts the mission of the successful program since its inception 12 years ago.

The SBI program is an eight-week paid internship. Selected students receive life skills training, financial management principles, business mentoring, and experience working on a community service project.

The summer program works with high school and college students who journey through job experiences as interns and learn valuable lessons about decision-making and prepare for their futures in a range of careers.

The concept was that of

Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson-Gates who spearheaded development of the program, starting with only eight students. Over the years, the program has grown steadily.

With a budget of about \$1 million, SBI is managed through the Clark County Business Development Division in partnership with the Clark County School District, Clark County Community Resources Management Division, the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, the Community College of Southern Nevada and the business community at-large.

Debbie Conway, manager of the Business Development Division for Clark County and coordinator of the SBI program, commented on how the program has excelled over the years and what impact it has had on the students.

"The institute has been



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater

Pastor Naida Parson of New Antioch Christian Fellowship Church, keynoted the business institute's closing ceremony.

growing every year and we're up to 102 students. We're now looking to add on more staff to take the program to the next level," Conway said.

This year's program selected students out of a field

of 520 applicants countywide. It was supported by 95 mentors and 85 business partners who hired the interns to work at job sites over the summer.

Conway spoke about new accomplishments of the program: "This summer we introduced the stock game where the students had an opportunity to invest in the stock market and build a portfolio, along with exposing the students to a lively

debate and discussion with members of the [Clark] County Commissioners where the students had the chance to speak one on one with the Commissioners and discuss whatever they wanted to talk about."

The keynote speaker at this year's closing ceremony was Dr. Naida Parson, pastor of New Antioch Christian Fellowship Church.

There was a capacity crowd of 400, including students, family members, mentors, sponsors and guests.

Parson's theme centered around the statement: "Back then you didn't want me, but now that I'm hot, you're all up on me."

Parson told the students that they needed to take advantage of all the opportunities available to them while they are young, healthy and have few responsibilities.

"Young people, there are some things in life that if you miss, or should I say to the teenagers and young adults, in your case, diss [dismiss] them now, they may diss [dismiss] you later."

She continued, "Young people, things in life will get

hot and uncomfortable. Things in life and people in life will burn you.

You will find that as you get older you will want to get away from some things that will drain you because life is hot. So, you have to take advantage of opportunities before they get hot."

Relating her topic to the field of education, Parson encouraged students to see college as a path to success regardless of their level of readiness or anyone's perception of whether they are "college material."

"When you earn your college degree, it doesn't state how long it took you to receive it. It doesn't say what your grade point average was. It doesn't count how many times you may have had to repeat a particular course. It doesn't say if you needed a tutor or had to take remedial classes. All the degree says is that you finished, and one degree looks like another no matter how long it took you to get it."

Parson concluded her remarks by telling the students to seek a future and not just
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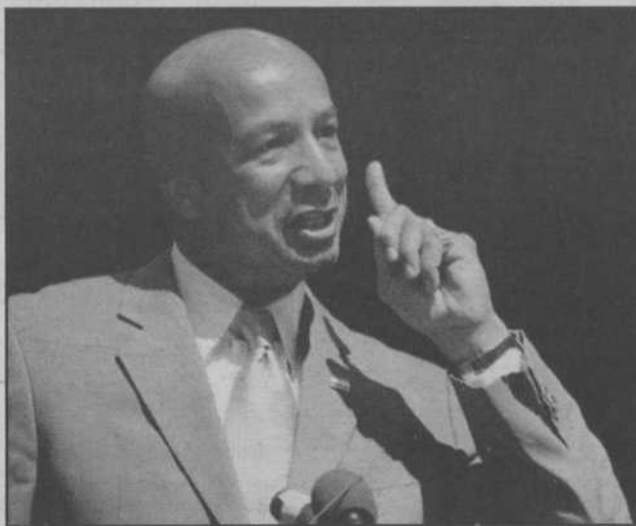
Nagin cites racism, red tape for delays

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin on Friday blamed racism and government bureaucracy for hamstringing his city's ability to weather Hurricane Katrina and recover from the disaster that struck the Gulf Coast nearly a year ago.

In remarks to the annual meeting of the National Association of Black Journalists, Nagin said the hurricane "exposed the soft underbelly of America as it relates to dealing with race and class."

Nagin condemned federal regulations that discourage rebuilding in the largely Black and low-lying Ninth Ward. New Orleans was 60 percent Black before Katrina struck Aug. 29.

"And I, to this day, believe that if that would have happened in Orange County, California, if that would have happened in South Beach,



New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin addressed a National Association of Black Journalists audience in Indianapolis.

Miami, it would have been a different response," Nagin said.

While tens of billions of dollars in federal aid have flowed to Louisiana and other states devastated by Katrina, much of it has gone to developers and contractors, Nagin said.

"Very little of those dollars have gotten to the local governments or to the people themselves," Nagin said.

Katrina dispersed three-quarters of New Orleans' pre-hurricane population of about 460,000 people, and today it's a city of about
(See Nagin, Page 3)

Andrew Young steps down from Wal-Mart

ATLANTA (AP) - Civil rights leader Andrew Young, who was hired to help Wal-Mart Stores Inc. improve its public image, said he was stepping down from his position as head of an outside support group amid criticism for remarks seen as racially offensive.

Young, a former Atlanta mayor and U.N. ambassador, was hired by Working Families for Wal-Mart in February.

"I think I was on the verge of becoming part of the controversy, and I didn't want to become a distraction from the main issues, so I thought I ought to step down," Young told The Associated Press last Friday.

Young, once a close associate of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., said his decision to step down followed a report in the weekly *Los Angeles Sentinel*, which he said was misread and misinterpreted.

In the *Sentinel* interview, Young was asked about whether he was concerned Wal-Mart causes smaller, mom-and-pop stores to close.

"Well, I think they should; they ran the 'mom and pop' stores out of my neighborhood," the paper quoted Young as saying. "But you see, those are the people who have been overcharging us, selling us stale bread and bad meat and wilted vegetables. And they sold out and moved to Florida. I think they've ripped off our communities enough. First it was Jews, then it was Koreans and now it's Arabs; very few Black people own these stores."

Young, who has apologized for the remarks, said he decided to end his involvement with Working Families for Wal-Mart after he started getting calls about the story.

"Things that are matter-of-fact in Atlanta
(See Young, Page 2)