

Grambling's PR man Collie Nicholson dies

Special to Sentinel-Voice
NEW ORLEANS (NNPA) - Collie J. Nicholson, the Grambling sports information director who helped make coach Eddie Robinson's football program internationally famous, died last Wednesday. He was 85.

Nicholson died at home in Shreveport after a prolonged illness, said family friend and spokesperson Jane Davis.

"His wife, son and daughter were with him," Davis said.

Nicholson brought the art of promotion to Grambling State University — a traditionally Black school in north Louisiana — long before most colleges even thought of it.

Nicholson brought to Grambling the concept of the "classic" game — having the team and marching band travel to major American cities.

To orchestrate one such game at Yankee Stadium in

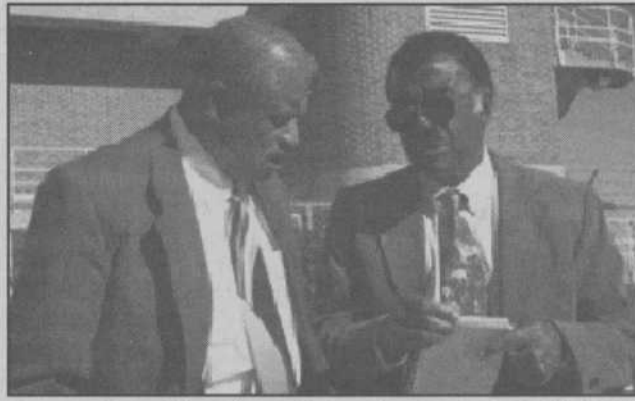
the 1960s, Nicholson had to sell the concept to the National Urban League and the Yankees, said Doug Porter, an assistant coach at Grambling for nine years.

"They weren't too excited about the idea," Porter recalled. "But Collie was so confident they had to be. He told them, 'You may not have confidence in your organization, but I have all the confidence in the world in Grambling and its ability to be a success.'"

Though Grambling suffered a rare loss, 7-6 to Morgan State, the game was a sellout and spawned a friendship between Nicholson, Robinson and Yankee's owner George Steinbrenner.

Nicholson and Robinson also established the Bayou Classic rivalry game against Southern University, which remains a tradition and a moneymaker for both schools.

"When you talk about Grambling athletics, most



Former Grambling State University football coach Eddie Robinson (left) and former Grambling public relations director Collie J. Nicholson get together in this 1998 photo.

people say Coach Eddie," said former Grambling and NFL quarterback Doug Williams. "But we all know, especially those that went to Grambling back in the day, that you should say Eddie and Collie. They were the ones that put it out there for the world to see."

Nicholson also took Grambling football international, arranging two games in Japan in the late 1970s.

"Here I was, a kid from little old Zachary, playing in

Japan, Hawaii, Washington D.C.," Williams said. "And it was all because of Collie's mighty pen."

Working for a small, traditionally Black school, Nicholson recognized the appeal of Robinson's success and publicized it widely.

Nicholson also promoted Paul "Tank" Younger after he scored a then-record 60 career college touchdowns, as well as Junious "Buck" Buchanan, Ernie "Big Cat" Ladd and James "Shack"

Harris, the first Black player to be drafted as quarterback.

Nicholson briefly attended Grambling before serving in the Marine Corps in World War II. He was the only Black reporter serving in the United States Marine Corps during World War II.

Nicholson said he ended up working at Grambling shortly after the war because then-president R.W.E. Jones convinced him to take a newly created position of sports information director. It was a job from which he would retire more than 30 years later.

Nicholson, who was often affectionately referred to as "Nicky" or "Collie J.," was recognized by Grambling State University for his outstanding contributions as a journalist and promoter for the university for many years this past June.

The Hall of Fame writer was feted during a June 16 ceremony at the Robinson Stadium (Fieldhouse) Support Facility that recognized Nicholson as one of the

nation's best writers and organizers. He was lauded for getting Grambling's football program recognition, which was not common in earlier years for African-American schools and programs. He was honored for many years of tireless service to Grambling.

In addition, Nicholson is credited for the birth of the now-popular State Farm Bayou Classic. He took great pride in the university's world-famous marching band. He considered the band and the football team as a "must" duo and promoted them as a powerful package.

"I would like to be remembered as someone who tried to find a way to fit the Grambling program into the general marketplace," Nicholson had stated in an interview years earlier. "I've tried my best to do that."

The University of Louisiana System Board, which oversees Grambling, approved a plan in May to rename the Robinson Stadium press box after Nicholson.

Clarett

(Continued from Page 16) ing to NCAA investigators before the 2003 season and dropped out of school. He lost a U.S. Supreme Court case challenging the NFL's requirement that players wait three years after high school before turning pro.

The Denver Broncos made Clarett a surprise third-round pick in the NFL's 2005 draft, only to cut him during the preseason.

"It's really a shame that someone puts themselves in that position," Broncos coach Mike Shanahan said Monday. "I'm just hoping when he does get out that he's learned his lesson and comes back with a mind-set that he's going to be productive (in society)."

Authorities said Clarett flashed a gun and robbed two people of a cell phone early Jan. 1. He turned himself in around the time that many of his former Buckeyes teammates were putting the finishing touches on a Fiesta Bowl victory over Notre Dame.

Clarett had been drinking heavily on New Year's Eve, Hoague said, but the attorney did not explain why Clarett had a gun in his waistband.

"Obviously, that was a bad decision," Hoague said.

Clarett's attorneys said the guns police found in the SUV belonged to Clarett and came from his mother's house. They said he had the guns

because he was trying to give them to acquaintances to hold for him, but the attorneys did not elaborate.

Had Clarett been convicted on all charges, he would have faced three to 34 years in prison. Assistant

Prosecutor Tim Mitchell said he expects Clarett will serve just over 4 years, with his last six months spent outside prison at a community-based corrections facility.

A victims' assistant from the prosecutor's office read

a statement from the robbery victims, who said the ordeal has been hard on all aspects of their lives.

"Mr. Clarett, we hope you will use this opportunity to help someone along the way," it read.

Crisis

(Continued from Page 14) faraway powers.

Plans are afoot to send in Ugandan and Sudanese troops, as requested by the weak Somali government. The Islamic fighters vehemently oppose such a move.

In Darfur, some 200,000 people have died in a three-year rebellion by ethnic African tribes following years of government neglect. Some of the worst atrocities are blamed on the Janjaweed, Arab tribal militias unleashed by the government — a

charge officials deny. The U.N. Security Council wants to send in peacekeepers, but only if Sudan consents.

Sudanese officials have declared U.N. troops could spark a holy war. al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden — who was based in Sudan in the 1990s until the government ousted him — has called on Islamic militants to battle any U.N. troops that deploy in Darfur. Bin Laden also has identified Somalia as a battleground in his war with the West.

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NOTICE OF DBE GOAL SETTING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Clark County Department of Aviation has established the following overall goals for participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in U.S. Department of Transportation-assisted projects for Federal Fiscal Year 2007: McCarran International Airport 5.5% goal; Overton-Perkins Field 4.0% goal; Henderson Executive Airport 0% goal; North Las Vegas Airport 0% goal. The proposed goals and rationale are available for viewing by the public until October 16, 2006, at the Clark County Department of Aviation Business Office, 5th Floor, McCarran International Airport, on the Department of Aviation Website, or by writing to:

Clark County Department of Aviation
P.O. Box 11005
Las Vegas, NV 89111-1005
Attn: DBE Liaison Officer
e-mail: Webmaster2@McCarran.com

Public comment will be accepted in writing or by e-mail by Department of Aviation until October 31, 2006.

CYNTHIA CICERO
DBE Liaison Officer
Clark County Dept. of Aviation
Clark County, Nevada

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