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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Checkmates' Marvin 'Sweet Louie' Smith passes on ship

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Marvin "Sweet Louie" Smith, one half of the R&B duo, the Checkmates, has died. He was 68.

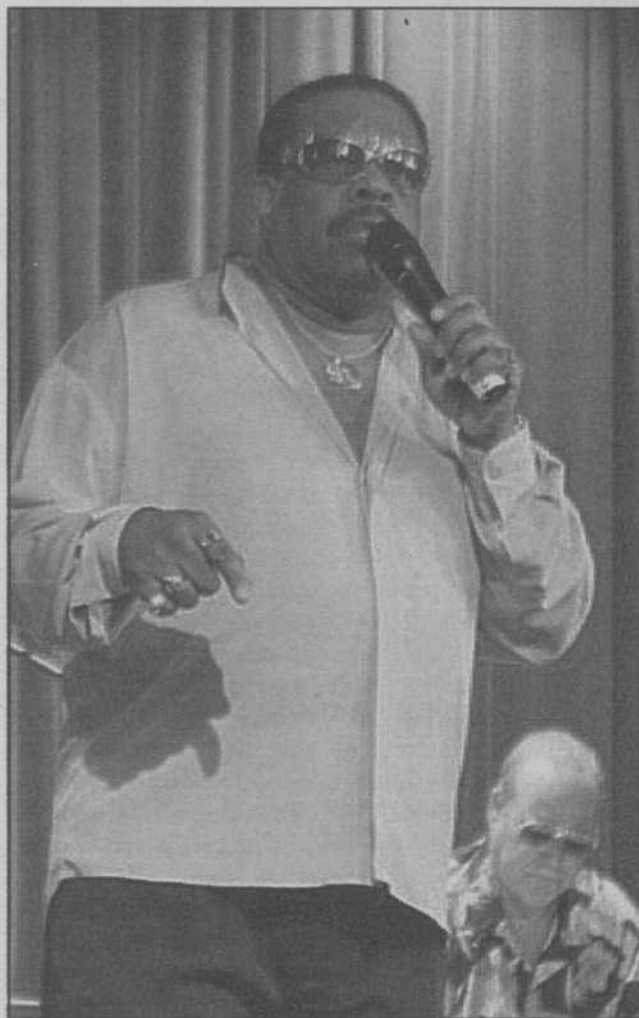
Smith died of a heart attack aboard the Caribbean Princess cruise ship in the Caribbean, where he was scheduled to perform, said his agent, Mike Moloney.

Smith's musical partner, Sonny Charles, a friend since childhood in Fort Wayne, Ind., found Smith in his cabin before they were to rehearse for a show Saturday evening, Moloney said.

The two had served in the Army together under the late-1950s "buddy system," touring in the entertainment division of the Army's Special Services, after which they set their sights on Las Vegas.

The act took off in 1964, when the Checkmates started performing at the Pussycat A Go Go, located on what is now the site of the Wynn Las Vegas Resort.

The group went on to perform at the Sands and



Marvin 'Sweet Louie' Smith of the group The Checkmates.

Caesars Palace.

The duo's best-known recordings include "Love is All I Have to Give" and a remake of "Proud Mary." But 1969's Phil Spector-produced "Black Pearl" was their most successful single, a Top 10 hit.

Smith was a contemporary of some of the greatest performers of all time, including Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Bill Cosby, Moloney said.

Some of the duo's highlights included performing with Sinatra at the Oakland Coliseum, a concert at Madison Square Garden with Herb Alpert and singing the national anthem for the "Thrilla in Manila," the Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier heavyweight championship boxing match in the Philippines.

The Checkmates were inducted into the Las Vegas Hall of Fame in 2000.

Services are scheduled for this Saturday, Dec. 22, 6 p.m. at Palm Mortuary, 1325 N. Main St. at Washington.

Sharpton upset by probe of bid

NEW YORK (AP) - Rev. Al Sharpton angrily denounced federal authorities last week for investigating him and his civil rights organization, suggesting that the Justice Department was retaliating against him for his civil rights advocacy.

"I have probably been under every investigation known to man, and I can't remember a time that I've not been under investigation," Sharpton said at the Harlem headquarters of his civil rights organization.

He continued: "The issues raised are issues that we've learned over and over again, particularly when we are approaching an election season."

Sharpton, 53, called the news conference after reports emerged recently of a federal probe into his finances. The U.S. attorney's office in Brooklyn, where the investigation is based, declined to comment.

The FBI and the IRS are investigating Sharpton for tax fraud and possible campaign finance violations stemming from his 2004 presidential bid, according to a person familiar with the investigation. They also are investigating the National Action Network and several businesses he runs.

A grand jury is scheduled to begin hearing evidence in the case at the end of the month.

Sharpton said he thought the timing of the investigation was suspicious, coming just weeks after he led a march on the Justice Department to demand federal intervention in the Jena Six case in Louisiana and better enforcement of hate crimes.

The charges against the six Black students accused of attacking a White student in Jena, La., led to the September demonstration by Sharpton and other activists
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A year later, groups seeking justice for Sean Bell family

By Saeed Shabazz

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (NNPA) - A year after a deadly police shooting ignited community anger and raised questions about police conduct, activists, elected officials and the family of Sean Bell honored his memory and continued their appeal for justice.

Bell and two friends were victims of 50 shots fired by undercover police officers after leaving his bachelor party on Nov. 25, 2006.

Three officers indicted for the shooting — Michael Oliver and Giscard Isnora, who have pleaded not guilty to manslaughter, and Marc Cooper, who pleaded not guilty to reckless endanger-

ment — are scheduled to go on trial in February.

Police union officials and defense attorneys have said the officers believed Bell and his companions were headed to his car to retrieve a gun. No weapons were found at the scene.

"I want justice," said Nicole Paultre Bell, the mother of Bell's two young daughters, ages four and one, who legally took his name after his death. "I just keep asking myself, 'Why does this have to be my children? Why me? Why do we have to be the ones to go through this?'" she told reporters.

"A lot of people felt that a year would temper the outrage," Rev. Sharpton told the

press, as hundreds gathered at the scene of the shooting in Queens. He vowed to stand with the family until it gets justice. The shooting sparked several protest marches, the largest led by Sharpton and his National Action Network wound down New York city's famed Fifth Avenue shortly before Christmas in 2006. Many demonstrators saw the shooting as symbolic of excessive force against Blacks in New York City.

This year activists called for Blacks to stay away from traditional shopping the day after Thanksgiving to add economic pressure to the demand for justice.

(See Justice, Page 3)



MIX BUSINESS, PLEASURE

Sentinel-Voice photo by Marty Frierson

Sandra Mack, president of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women - Las Vegas Chapter, with her dancing partner Jerry Lindsey, cut a rug at the Fourth Annual Joint Holiday Mixer of the Asian, Latin and Urban Chambers of Commerce held recently at the Venetian Hotel-Casino on the Las Vegas Strip.