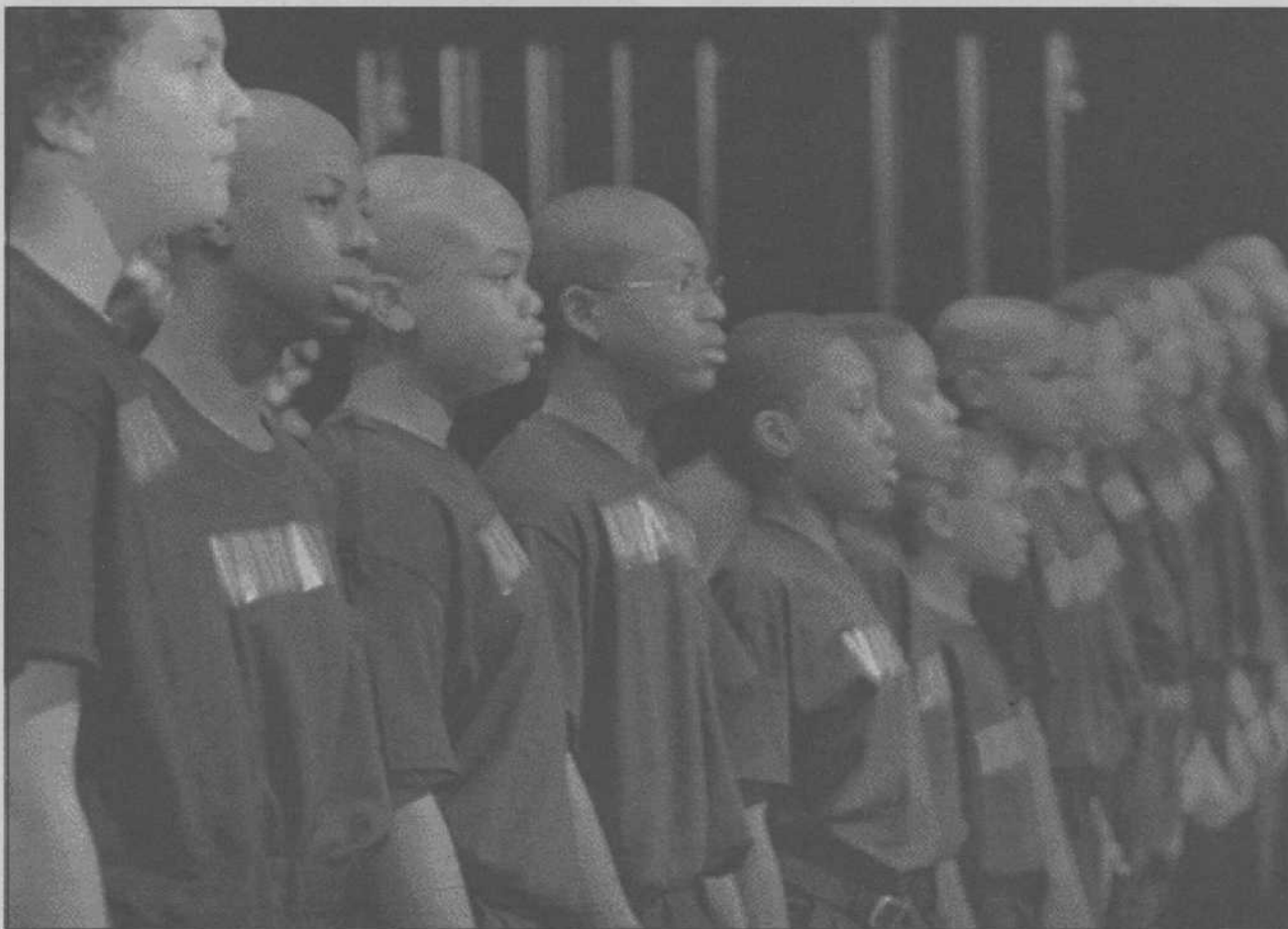


# Rights of Passage Graduation Ceremony

The City of Las Vegas Department of Leisure Services/ Arts & Community Events, the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, the West Las Vegas Library Theatre and the West Las Vegas Arts Center presented Kwanzaa celebration on Sunday. Young boys were honored during the Rites of Passage graduation ceremony titled "Umoja," while the young women (Sisters in Society Taking Action) were acknowledged in a ceremony. Below, Joe Ann Davis and Kwesi Davis participate in the ceremony, which introduced the young people into the "Village," a euphemism for the West Las Vegas community. (Right), a young girl dances during the S.I.S.T.E.R. ceremony. (Bottom) Umoja ceremony participants stand in line.



Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy



## Kitt

(Continued from Page 1)

Kitt was born in South Carolina and her road to fame was the stuff of story-books. In her autobiography, she wrote that her mother was Black and Cherokee while her father was White, and she was left to live with relatives after her mother's new husband objected to taking in a mixed-race girl.

An aunt eventually brought her to live in New York, where she attended the High School of Performing Arts, later dropping out to take various odd jobs.

By chance, she dropped by an audition for the dance group run by Dunham, a pio-

neering African-American dancer. In 1946, Kitt was one of the Sans-Souci Singers in Dunham's Broadway production "Bal Negre."

Kitt's travels with the Dunham troupe landed her a gig in a Paris nightclub in the early 1950s.

Kitt was spotted by Welles, who cast her in his Paris stage production of "Faust." That led to a role in "New Faces of 1952," which featured such other stars-to-be as Carol Lawrence, Paul Lynde and, as a writer, Mel Brooks.

In 1960, she married Bill McDonald but divorced him after the birth of their daugh-

ter, Kitt.

Her sultry attitude made her one of the first African-American sex symbols.

"I show my legs. I love to tease men with my legs," she said in a 2007 *Jet* magazine interview. "I love men and I like to get their attention. Every time I see a man, I want to tease him."

Kitt never wanted to "run with the herd," she told the *Chicago Sun-Times'* Bill Zwecker in October.

"I never felt doing that would make me a 'belonger.' I just wanted to belong to myself and be able to share me with you."

Kitt was in Chicago for

*HistoryMakers*, to air on PBS in February.

"I did it with wit, grit and a sense of humor and I never took up a stick to beat anyone to get to where I wanted to go."

Though her winking irony could border on camp, she was never reduced to self-parody.

While on stage, she was daringly sexy and always flirtatious. Offstage, however, Kitt described herself as shy and almost reclusive, remnants of feeling unwanted and unloved as a child. She referred to herself as "that little urchin cotton-picker from the South, Eartha Mae."

## Bits 'n' Pieces

### Jermaine Dupri says girlfriend Janet Jackson is not pregnant

(TMS) Producer Jermaine Dupri took to his Internet blog last week to deny rumors that his pop star girlfriend Janet Jackson was pregnant. The pregnancy rumors flared up again recently when Jackson cancelled several of the concerts on her North American "Rock Witchu" tour. Many fans rejected the official explanation that Jackson was suffering from vertigo. Dupri told those fans, "I hear y'all and your questions ... No she is not pregnant, and yes we are still together." The latter part of that answer was aimed at rumors that the two had ended their five-year relationship.



Janet Jackson and Jermaine Dupri

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### Singer Brandy gets sued over accident which resulted in a death



Brandy

(TMS) Two-years ago singer-actor Brandy's driving allegedly set in motion a series of collisions which resulted in the death of a mother of two — Awatef Aboudi haj. A lawsuit filed in that case was dismissed by a California court. However, last week, another person injured in the accident decided to file a civil suit.

The lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court by Donald Lite alleges Brandy's speeding and failure to keep a safe distance caused the actress' car to slam into Aboudi haj's car throwing it into his car and injuring him. The exact amount for which Lite is suing was not revealed.

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### TV One collaborates to produce civil rights documentary

(TMS) TV One last week announced collaboration with Brainstorm Media, Time Life and MarVista Entertainment to produce a full-length documentary featuring some of the most stirring songs of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The production will be titled "Let Freedom Ring: How Music Inspired the Civil Rights Movement." *Let Freedom Ring* features songs and interviews with musicians, civil rights activists and historians. The documentary premieres on TV One during Black History Month: Sunday, February 15 from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

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### Jazz great Freddie Hubbard dead at 70

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Freddie Hubbard, the Grammy-winning jazz musician whose style influenced a generation of trumpet players and who collaborated with such greats as Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, has died at age 70. Hubbard's manager, David Weiss, says the musician died Monday at Sherman Oaks Hospital in Los Angeles. He had been hospitalized since suffering a heart attack last month. Although he had been in declining health in recent years, Hubbard continued to perform until just a few months ago. Known for both the intensity of his playing, as well as his melodic style, Hubbard's last concert was in June in New York at a party celebrating the release of his final album. He won a Grammy in 1972 for best jazz performance by a group for the album "First Light."

