

# Show touches on mid-life crisis

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

Kim Russell is a one-woman production. Literally. This weekend the Las Vegas performer will demonstrate her acting chops during Friday and Saturday shows at Reed Whipple Cultural Center.

Written and performed by the Las Vegas resident, "Life After 50: Survivalist Training Required" chronicles one woman's journey through life — growing old gracefully, gaining weight, financial struggling and other mid-life adjustments.

Russell has performed in schools and colleges as the 19th-century abolitionist, Sojourner Truth. Other works include "Tuskegee Love Letters," "Asheba's Story" and the television screenplay "Harlem," written in partnership with actor-director Byron Tidwell.

Russell is the daughter of the late stand-up comic and original Tuskegee Airman, Jay Bernard, who delighted audiences in Las Vegas during the early '90s. She served as program director for the



Kim Russell stars in the one-women show "Life After 50."

International House of Blues ebration of Black History Foundation and spent eight Month by the Las Vegas- years as director of "Remembering the Freedoms," a cel- Clark County Library District.

The Friday performance begins at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$7 and available by phone or at the center's box office at 821 Las Vegas Blvd. North. Box office hours are Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Those interested in tickets and information can call (702) 229-6211.

Upcoming dramatic presentations at the Reed Whipple Cultural Center include Rainbow Company Youth Theatre's "The Samurai and the Shadow Princess" April 3-12 and "Dr. Doolittle" by Sign Stage on Tour April 15.

Future concerts include the jazz quartet Shapiro Project on April 24 and Richel Kompst and the Nightcrawlers on May 8.

The Reed Whipple Cultural Center offers a variety of classes and workshops. For a list, pick up the current ArtQ at the center or download it online at lasvegasparksandrec.com.

## Drummer

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Riser said he spoke last week with Jones, who was excited about "getting busy again" since being hospital-

ized with an early February heart attack.

"He expressed to me he missed his first Funk Brothers gig (last month)," Riser

said. "I could sense the disappointment in his voice. There was an energy he exuded to get back in the band and get going again."

Jones was one of many Motown musicians who went to the former studio in the Motown Historical Museum on Jan. 12 to help kick off a year of festivities marking the label's 50th anniversary.

Abdul "Duke" Fakir, the lone surviving original member of the Four Tops, used the occasion to praise Jones and his fellow Funk Brothers.

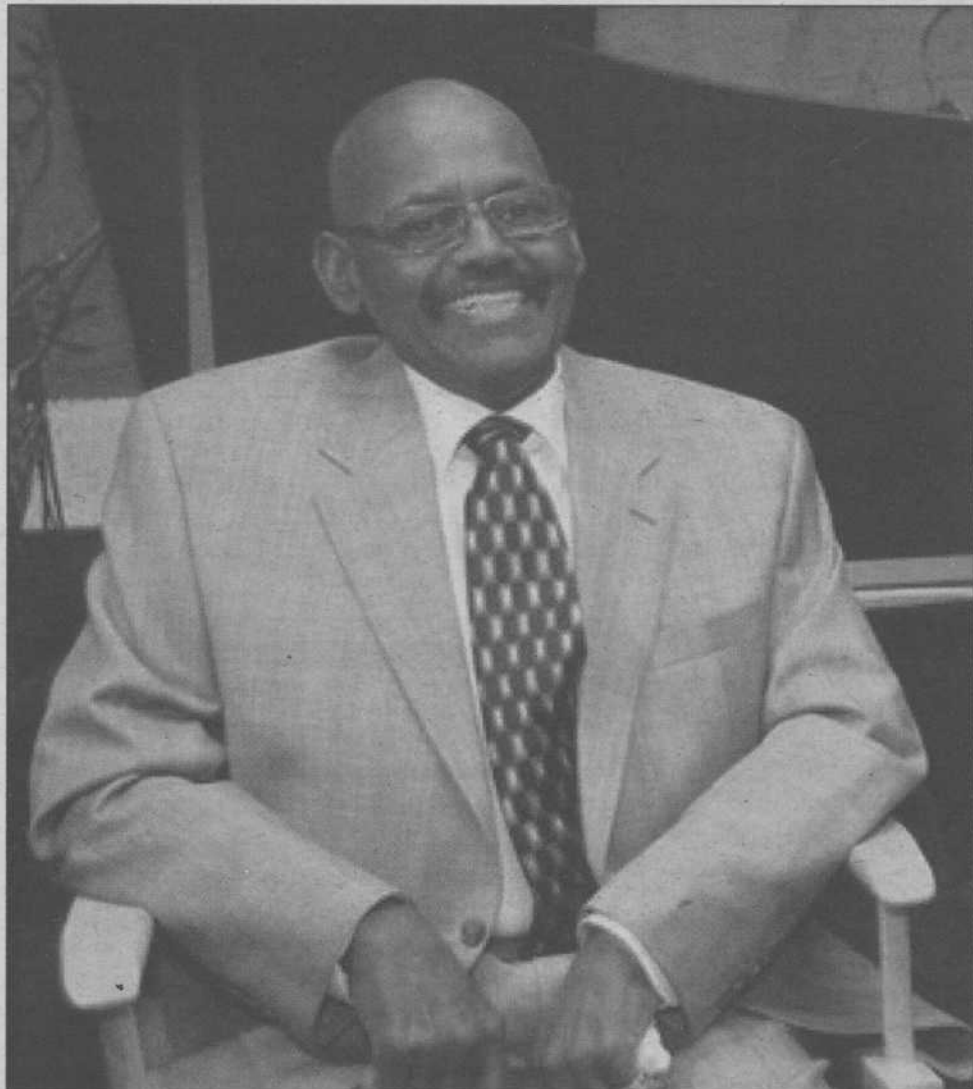
"When they'd finish a song, we, the Four Tops, had a nice phrase," Fakir said. "We'd say, 'Wow, another red carpet to ride on.'"

In an interview with The Associated Press after the ceremony, Jones said the cramped studio where most of Motown's early songs were created deserved as much credit as the players.

"This room is alive," he said. "As far as the musicians are concerned, ...we had to have eye contact with one another because we fed off one another. The place just created its own sound."

Coleman described her brother-in-law — who's survived by his wife, June, and three children — as a man of humor and humility.

"He was a father to the fatherless, a brother to the brotherless," she said. "He had a love for people."



Uriel Jones commemorates the 50th anniversary of Motown Records earlier this year. He played on numerous notable tracks, including "My Girl" and "Ain't Too Proud to Beg."

## Bits 'n' Pieces

TAYLOR MEDIA SERVICES

### "Soul Train" founder Don Cornelius gets probation in spouse abuse case

The founder of "Soul Train" — once the most popular Black-oriented show on television — was sentenced to probation last week after pleading no contest to one count of corporeal injury resulting from an



October 2008 domestic abuse case involving his wife. The 72-year-old Don Cornelius was also fined \$1,000 and ordered to perform 300 hours of community service. The court decision included another order requiring him to stay at least 100 yards away from the Mulholland estate in the Los Angeles area where the couple lived. Four other misdemeanor charges against Cornelius were dropped.

Don Cornelius and wife

Victoria during happier times

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### The original "Bess" in "Porgy and Bess" dies at 96



A youthful Anne Wiggins Brown

Anne Wiggins Brown, the original Black soprano who starred as "Bess" in the landmark 1935 George Gershwin opera "Porgy and Bess" has died. She was 96. "Porgy and Bess" was based on a DuBose Heyward novel about a crippled beggar in love with Bess who was living in the fictional Catfish Row slum in Charleston, South Carolina. Over time, the play became one of Broadway's

most popular opera classics. She left the United States in 1948 claiming her career was being limited by racial discrimination. She ended up in Oslo, Norway where the Norwegian broadcaster NRK recently labeled her "a pioneer for Blacks in the opera." Brown was born in Baltimore, Maryland and at 16 became the first Black vocalist admitted to New York City's famed Juilliard School of Music where she won the Margaret McGill prize as the school's best female singer. She died Friday, March 13.

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### Mo'Nique no longer on radio; explanations conflict as to why

The syndicated radio show hosted by overweight comedian Mo'Nique (Coleman) ended last week after eight months of broadcasting on radio stations around the nation. However, explanations conflict as to why "The Mo'Nique Show" was



Mo'Nique

dropped. The distributor Syndication One issued a statement saying "Mo'Nique was choosing not to continue with the program because she wanted to focus on her career in television..." However; several media sources are reporting that Syndication One simply denied the star a new contract. As for Mo'Nique, she spoke briefly about the situation last Friday saying the decision to end the show was "beyond my control." But before she could finish her somewhat angry explanation, the show was pulled from the air in several markets.

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### Prince launches website for his fans; but you have to pay \$77 a year

One-time pop superstar Prince this week launched a website for his fans offering exclusive music, video, lyrics, tickets for live shows and exclusive information about what are labeled "private or secret" shows. However, to enjoy these exclusives from Prince, his fans will have to pay a \$77 yearly subscription fee. The website, www.Lotusflow3r.com, went live on March 24th. The launching of the website leads into Prince's three nights of performances on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" beginning March 25th.