

Steadman

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attainable."

Consequently Graham said he focused all of his attention on sports. He said that is the approach of many young African Americans. Even though he used sports to get him to college and make a living, Graham said he didn't understand the free enterprise system.

"Most African Americans don't understand the system in America," he told a group of some 100 students. "I was the same way. My parents didn't understand how to take advantage of the opportunities they have."

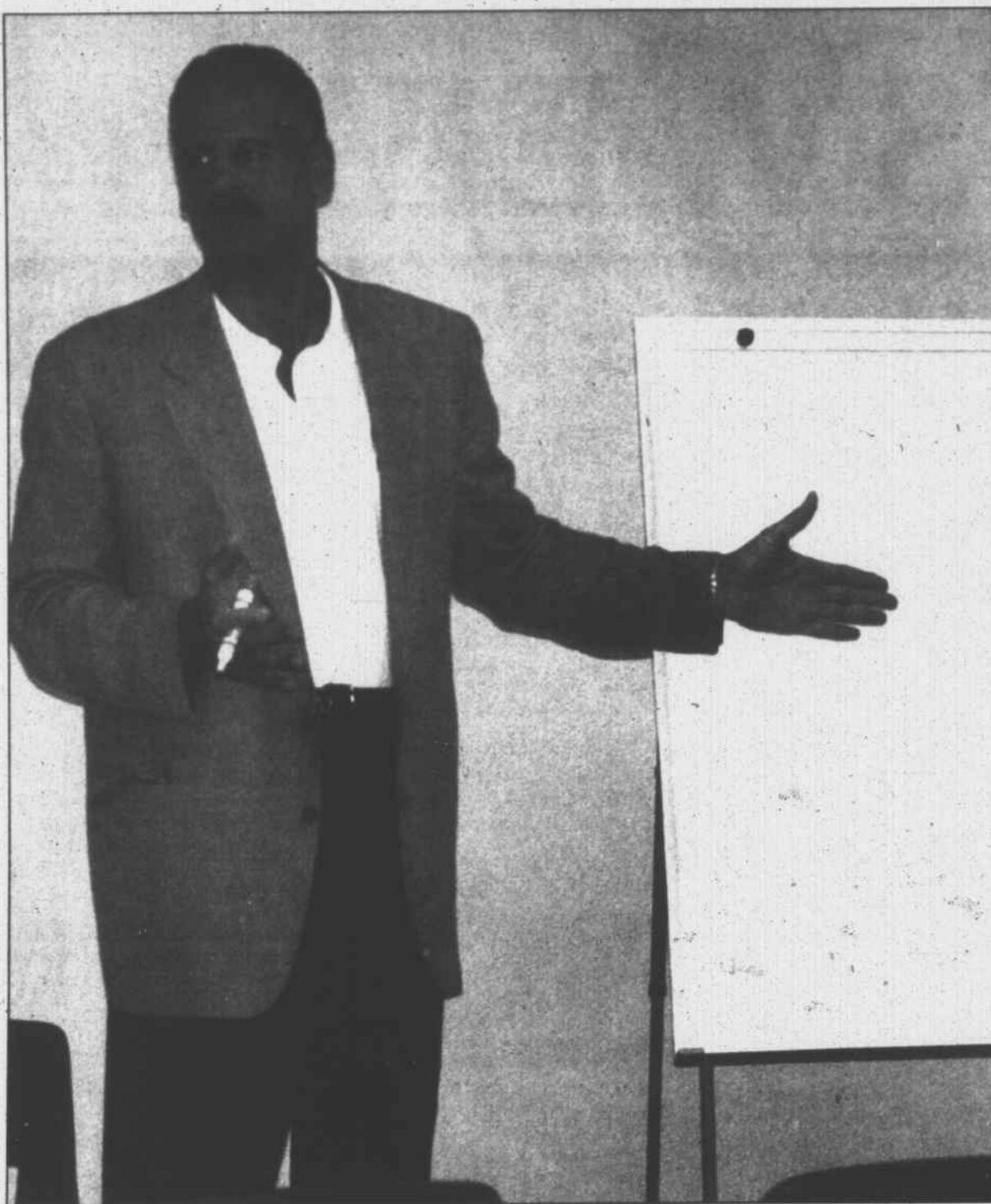
Neither did Graham for most of his life.

"In order to be successful in this country, you have to have skills that are marketable," he said. The thing that happens to most young blacks is they don't have the skills to make the kind of money to afford the things they want out of life."

As a result, Graham said, young African Americans resort to a life of crime.

"I've worked in prison and I've seen a lot of young people just like yourselves," Graham said. "They didn't start out wanting to be criminals. All they wanted to do was have the same things that everyone else wants, like a nice car, a nice place to live, nice clothes and to be able to go on vacation. But once they get out into the world and see that there's no way they can do that with the money they make from their jobs, they turn to crime - most of them selling drugs - to make a living. Before long they're in the jail. And from there, they end up going back again because they still don't have the skills to go out and get the type job that will enable them to live the lifestyle they want."

Graham said it was after his professional basketball career ended that he found himself fac-



Steadman Graham illustrates a point to LIFT Academy students.

ing the same situation. But instead of getting involved in crime, he came up with a plan to get access to the system.

"That's why it is important for you to understand that you can make it too," he said. "I made it and I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I realized that the system will work for you if you have a plan."

In his book, titled "You Can Make It", Graham outlines a strategy for success in the business world. Last year, he said, one of his businesses grossed more than \$20 million.

"It's because I was determined to make it happen," he said. "There have been a lot of disappointments in my life but I never gave up. You have to have

the same drive if you want to succeed. Don't let anyone tell you what you can or cannot do in life."

Graham committed to sending each student at LIFT Academy a copy of his book.

"I want you all to read the book and come away with something that you can use to help you in life," he said.

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NASCAR

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side of NASCAR that minorities aren't given equal access to the sport.

"We were treated very well by Bruton Smith and Bill France of NASCAR," Erving said. "They brought us into their offices and told us that we could use them as a resource. They put us in touch with people who they thought could meet our needs and left the door open for us to develop our team."

"I think they recognized and respected what we brought to the table," Erving added. "We came in and showed them that we wanted to participate and that we had something to add to the sport."

Although Erving said it might be his and Washington's desire to someday field a Winston Cup team, he is perfectly happy with being on the Busch Cup Tour, which is a minor league of sorts to the Winston Cup circuit.

"We're not any closer to being a Winston Cup team than we were last year," Erving said. "We're very happy competing on the Busch Tour and we just want to be the best we can be on that

level."

That doesn't count out the possibility of an entry or step up down the road. However, Erving said there is no rush.

"I think we have shown that we can be competitive," Erving said. "Our sponsor (Dr. Pepper) is happy with what we've done and I think we have grown since we started."

Erving's primary input is in regards to major financial decisions. Washington runs the operation from day to day. That arrangement is fine with both parties.

"Joe makes the decision regarding the team," Erving said. "He's there at all 32 races and I might attend five. He knows the ins and outs of the business."

That gives Erving time to continue to pursue his interests as a sports announcer and to also play golf. For someone who never picked up a golf club until he turned 37, Erving said he is doing quite well.

"I played the best round of golf I've ever played on Saturday," he said. "I came late to the sport, but I've grown fond of it. I don't know how good I might be if I had started in my college days or earlier."

Matkins

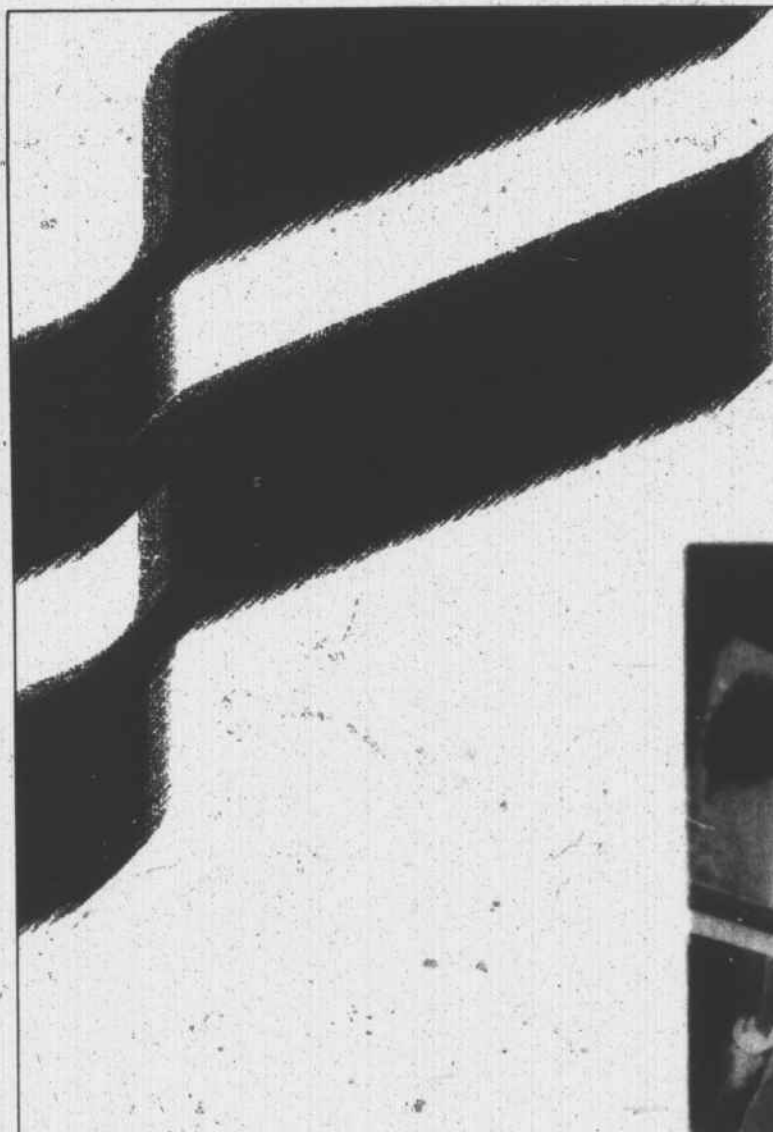
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Hayes said he could not comment. However, a source told The Chronicle that Matkins was excited about the prospect of playing for the Aggies in the upcoming season. Since he is moving from Division I to Division I-AA, Matkins will be eligible to play for the Aggies in the upcoming season.

Hayes' team might be deeper than any team at A&T since the early 1980s when the Aggies captured consecutive MEAC championships. A&T returns nearly

its entire defensive unit and also many of its starting offensive players, including a host of outstanding wide receivers. Perhaps the team's biggest loss was at quarterback, which has not been one of the team's strong suits in recent seasons. Matkins is expected to step in at the quarterback position and that would make the Aggies a legitimate contender for the MEAC championship.

Matkins' ability as a pocket passer suits the style that Hayes' team has gone to in recent seasons.



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