

Father's lesson: Be a team player

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Coming from a family of athletes, Stephanie Ready remembers specifically a lesson in sportsmanship and team work she learned from her dad, Edward. As a basketball player in high school, Ready, a Charlotte Bobcats sideline reporter and TNT Sports correspondent, recalls that neither of her parents ever missed her



Ready

games, but the events of a specifically frustrating game have stuck with her always. "I was not having a good game," Ready said, "and I was frustrated. I was getting a lot of fouls called on me." When Ready's coach took her out of the game, instead of going to the bench, Ready stormed out of the gym, and ran toward the locker room. "It was a small school, so it wasn't a long way to the locker room," she said. But before she reached the locker room, Edward reached her. "He must've sprinted to

me right after I left," she said, "and before I could get it together, he asked me 'Who do you think you are? You can't just walk out, you can't quit. This is a team sport; you can't have everything your way.'" "Ever since that day, I think I have been the ultimate team player," said Ready. "I believe I was always a good teammate, but that day, he put in perspective that it wasn't about me. I was there because of a team." Ready believes this lesson prepared her for the steps her life and career have

taken. In 2001, she became the first woman coach in a men's professional league as an assistant coach with the now-defunct Greenville Groove of the National Basketball Development League. "I don't think if I hadn't been such a standout player in college, I would've ever gotten the coaching job at Coppin State," she said. "And if I hadn't coached at Coppin, I wouldn't have gotten the coaching job in the D-League, and I think it was because of my work in the D-League that I have the Bobcats job now." "I'm sure any parent would've given that lesson, but my dad didn't wait until we got home, and I think that moment shaped me."

Black fathers still have influence

By Hazel Trice Edney
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

LAS VEGAS - Some black fathers come home wearing a suit and tie every day. Some may arrive wearing coveralls, speckled with paint. Others come wearing a blue-collar uniform after riding the garbage truck. Still others come home after a long day of just looking for work. No matter the circumstances, if they arrive in the spirit of love, they bring a power to the home that cannot be substituted. That is the sentiment of men interviewed by the NNPA News Service during the 100 Black Men of America's 21st annual conference in Las Vegas last week.

With the theme, "Taking Control of Our Future" as a backdrop, they all concluded one thing: The experiences of a Black man in America can be transformed into a mobilizing force that every child can look up to and admire.

"You look at the way that this country was built on the backs of Black men," says record producer Kashif, a former orphan who is now raising two foster children as a single father. "You look at the fact that millions of us survived the journey from Africa to here. And we survived the journey of America. So, we have the power to instill in our young people how to build a nation of resources," he says.

"The knowledge, the energy, the development, when we're there, the whole world is an unlimited universe," says the now millionaire, who, as Michael Jones grew up in at least eight foster homes in Brooklyn, N.Y. "But, when we're absent, obviously that takes away from the power of the black family. Black men bring power into a family, even if it's not our family, just creating a family like I did by adopting two boys."

According to the National Urban League's State of Black America 2007 report, the future of the black man is critical to the American family.

Statistics on the black man run the gamut from being six times more likely than White men to be incarcerated to nine times more likely to be killed by firearms, to nearly eight times more likely to suffer from AIDS.

Of single parent black households, only 12 percent were led by men. More

than two-thirds of black children live in one-parent households in 2005, the majority headed by women.

Notwithstanding the statistics, there are millions of black fathers who are living at home or at least doing right by their children and families. Here in Las Vegas, where more than 2,000 black men registered for this conference to discuss answers to the problems, the crisis somehow appeared dwarfed.

"You can look into every community - the white community, the Asian community - and find fathers who aren't doing what they ought to do," says Thomas W. Dortch Jr. of Atlanta, president emeritus of the national organization. He and his wife have five children, including one adopted.

"The power of having a black father or having a black man in that home is tremendous because it gives symbolism. My father was a hero, a strong male figure who did not allow us to be tainted by what was out there or by the struggles that he went through. All we know is that we had a father who loved us and cared. We had a mother who loved us. We had parents who worked hard and sacrificed for us."

The 100 Black Men of America, Inc., with 110 chapters around the country, is a mentoring organization that seeks to give a strong presence of the black male to the lives of children - male and female - from all walks of life. It encourages black men to share their lives; thereby impacting the negative statistics.

"The black man should set an example and be a role model for his children and all children in his community," says Dr. William Hayling, founding president of the organization. "I'm an obstetrician. I helped to give birth to this organization. And I'm proud to see that after 21 years, the 100 Black Men is a grown man - and we're getting bigger and bigger and bigger and doing good things with these children."

Every man is able to bring something to the table, says Vaughn Evans of Sacramento, Calif., who was honored as mentor of the year. Evans, who has three children of his own, but has mentored thousands, says regardless of a father's occupation, "if you're in the home, that's

leadership. That's the role of a man. So, he is providing, he is loving, he is nurturing, he is teaching. Without that, then it falls to a woman. A woman cannot understand how to be a man. And when that man is absent, it falls to the uncles, the church, to the community and to the village."

Often the village means the drug dealers, the gang leaders, domineering friends or what ever figures of authority comes into the life of a child. More often than not, that translates into a life of crime leading to prison or death that could have been prevented.

"The power of the black father could be a revolutionizing force. Provided that more black fathers would adhere to the tradition of what fatherhood is all about instead of being one who plants the seed and does not fulfill his obligation in terms of what family really means," says John Smith, chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the official press for the conference.

Some men view manhood as a learned behavior. Whether a child grows up to become a street thug or a decent, hard-working man, can depend upon the examples in his life.

"The father brings the kind of modeling that a young man needs to see. Sometimes they will watch and learn more from watching than from hearing what you're saying," says Earl Wheatfall, a member of the 100's executive committee. "I always watched my father. Even though I did respect his words, I learned more by seeing him."

Albert E. Dotson Jr., chairman of the board of the 100, says he's experienced that right now.

"I have really come to understand the influence a man can have over his home," says Dotson, the father of Ashley, 11, and Albert, 9.

"I watch my son watch me, how I stand, how I hold my legs, how I hold my head, how I walk, the little things. He learns so many things by just watching," says Dotson.

He concluded, "A real father has to always understand that children are always watching. He always has to be able to teach. He always has to be able to show what nurturing love is all about, how to be a strong man and how to respect women."



PHOTO/RAMESSES TEMPLE 51

Harry Prince, Clown Department prince imperial director at Oasis Rameses Temple 51 in Charlotte, presents an oversized check for \$2,500 to Metro School Principal Denise Comeaux as part of the temple's community service project. Charlotte will host the Imperial Session of the Ancient Egyptian Order Nobles Mystic Shrine of North and South America in August.

Westside youth summit

Westside youngsters will meet on June 16 to discuss issues that are important to them and their families. The meeting is scheduled for West Charlotte High School with details of summer programs available for children from 10-11 a.m., followed by a youth summit from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The summit is sponsored by District 2 elected officials James Mitchell (Charlotte City Council), Norman Mitchell (Mecklenburg County commissioners) and Vilma Leake (Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board).
Herbert L. White

NOTICE OF A CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS TO I-485 FROM US 521 (JOHNSON RD) TO I-77, SOUTH OF CHARLOTTE

TIP Project NO. R-4902 • Mecklenburg County

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will hold the above Citizens Informational Workshop on June 19, 2007 between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the Town of Pineville - The Hut Facility located at 413 Johnston Drive, Pineville, NC 28134.

The purpose of this workshop is for NCDOT representatives to provide information, answer questions, and accept written comments regarding this project. The opportunity to submit written comments or questions will also be provided. Interested citizens may attend at any time during the above mentioned hours.

NCDOT proposes to improve I-485 by adding additional travel lanes within the existing median between US 521 (Johnston Rd) interchanges and I-77 interchange, south of Charlotte. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce congestion along this segment and improve safety.

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Ms. Angela Sanderson, of the Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch, at 1548 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699, phone 919-733-7844 ext. 203, or email amsanderson@dot.state.nc.us.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in this workshop. Anyone requiring special services should contact Ms. Sanderson as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.

PUBLIC HEARING

CATS is scheduled to increase transit fares and passes on all of its services on July 2, 2007. The Metropolitan Transit Commission will conduct a public hearing at their February 28, 2007, meeting. The public is invited to sign-up and comment on the proposed fare increase outlined below. To sign-up for the hearing call (704) 432-0490 or sign up by e-mail to mtc@ci.charlotte.nc.us before 3:00 pm on February 28, 2007. The public can also sign up to speak at the meeting until the start of the official public hearing. The hearing is scheduled for: February 28, 2007 from 5:30 pm - 8:15 pm at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267, 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, NC 28202.

Service Type	Current		7/02/07	
	Fare	New Fare	Passes	Fare
Local	\$1.20	\$1.30	Weekly Pass*	\$12.00 \$13.00
Express	\$1.65	\$1.75	Monthly Pass*	\$48.00 \$52.00
Express Plus	\$2.40	\$2.60	Express Monthly Pass*	\$86.00 \$70.00
STS (ADA Service)	\$1.80	\$2.00	Express Plus Monthly Pass*	\$96.00 \$104.00
Reverse Commute Express	\$1.20	\$1.30	STS Monthly Pass	\$72.00 \$80.00
Activity Center Services:			10-Ride Local Pass	\$10.20 \$11.00
Gold Rush	FREE	FREE	10-Ride Express Pass	\$14.00 \$14.85
Community Shuttle Services:			10-Ride Express Plus Pass	\$20.40 \$22.10
Village Riders, Beatties Ford, Eastland, Arrowood and other neighborhood services	50¢	60¢	*Unlimited rides	
Charlotte Trolley	\$1.00	\$1.30	Transfers	
People 62 years and up, people with disabilities, w/ Transit ID or Medicare card and children 12 and under w/Transit ID accompanied by an adult (Local/ Express/Express Plus)	60¢/80¢/\$1.20	65¢/85¢/\$1.30	Local to Express	45¢ 45¢
Children 46 inches tall or less accompanied by an adult	FREE	FREE	Local to Express Plus	\$1.20 \$1.30
Students through high school w/Transit ID (Local service only)	60¢	65¢	Express to Express Plus	75¢ 85¢
			Community Shuttle to Local	70¢ 70¢
			Community Shuttle to Express	\$1.15 \$1.15
			Community Shuttle to Express Plus	\$1.90 \$2.00
			Community Shuttle to Community Shuttle	FREE FREE



For additional information call (704) 338-RIDE or (888) 779-CATS or visit www.ridetransit.org