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Community Development

Divider Title: _____

LEVEL 1 - 23 OF 29 STORIES

Copyright 1993 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

October 11, 1993, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 4; Column 2; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 815 words

HEADLINE: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VOICES / A FORUM FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES: IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD;

SOUTH CENTRAL: BOOTSTRAP BANKING FILLS A VOID

BYLINE: Compiled by Times reseacher CATHERNINE GOTTLIEB

BODY:

Only 19 bank and savings and loan branches serve 587,000 people who live in a 40-square-mile area of South-Central Los Angeles, according to a recent City Council study. In contrast, nearby Gardena had 21 branches serving 49,800 residents. Many argue that limited access to banks translates into tighter credit for minority borrowers. According to the San Francisco-based Greenlining Coalition, a multicultural financial industries watchdog group, of 24,702 home purchase loans made by California's seven largest banks in 1991, only 11% went to African-American or Latino borrowers.

Where can people in the community turn? Nowadays, to the non-profit, member-owned South-Central People's Federal Credit Union, which opened last month after five years of wrangling with federal regulators to get its charter. Those who live, work or worship in the community and their families become lifetime member-owners of the cooperative with a minimum deposit of \$25 and a onetime fee of \$10. In return, members receive retail banking services and may apply for home and business loans from an institution guided by a lending philosophy that considers a borrower's character as much as their ability, on paper, to repay. Community development credit unions like this one gain extra capital for neighborhood loans because, unlike other credit unions, they can accept non-member deposits and use funds available through the federal National Credit Union Administration.

LOCAL POINT OF VIEW

(At a community credit union) the member is an owner, and it does make a difference. If you put \$500 in a credit union it will be loaned to your neighbor or the guy down the street or somebody you don't know, (but still) from your community. Banks come here and take a lot of deposits but they don't loan it back to the community. In South Central, \$18.5 million flowed out of this community in 1991 into check cashers' hands. Do you have any idea what that money would do if it were here? My God, you could create so many jobs with that money, you could physically clean up the area, you could put a lot of kids here to work. I don't want to knock top-down solutions, but if you look at some of (them) -- and RLA is an example in my opinion -- they never get to the street, and that's where we are.

Los Angeles Times, October 11, 1993

Diana Mullins, Consulting Manager, South Central People's Credit Union

THE BIG PICTURE

Credit unions work when they're innovative and creative. They can help break myths about what's doable for other financial institutions. They can change what is considered a safe and sound loan. They can provide a leveraging influence for the broader financial community and provide direct inner-city impact.

Credit unions are an important part of the financial pie, but their asset base is too small for them to be seen as the solution (for economic development). The real solution for economic development is for banks, savings and loans, pension funds, investment houses and insurance companies to be involved in communities, too.

Robert Gnaizda, General Counsel for The Greenlining Coalition

WHAT DOES IT TAKE

COMMON BOND AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Credit unions rely on group loyalty generated by shared interests.

VOLUNTEERS

A core group of about 15 to 20 volunteers usually coordinates organizational efforts and serve on three essential credit union committees: the board of directors, the credit committee and the supervisory committee.

BUDGET AND PAID STAFF

Many credit unions that are open for one or two days a week run as all-volunteer operations, but a paid staff is usually hired for credit unions open more than that. South Central People's Credit Union has two full-time employees.

CAPITAL

There are no capital requirements to obtain a credit union charter. Instead, organizers must document deposit commitments from individuals and organizations pledged to the credit union once it opens its doors. Successful groups usually gather \$100,000 to \$750,000 in pledges, depending on credit union's proposed membership size. South Central People's Credit Union gathered more than \$5 million in pledges.

TIME

The chartering process takes an average 12 to 18 months, although the case of the South Central People's Federal Credit Union proves it can take much longer.

SERVICE PLAN

Depending on asset base and management experience, credit unions may offer transaction services like checking, money orders and wire transfers; savings accounts; loans for housing and for businesses; and credit cards.

Los Angeles Times, October 11, 1993

TO GET INVOLVED

For membership information about the South Central People's Federal Credit Union or about their grand opening celebration on October 21, call (213) 299-9560.

For information about community development credit unions, contact the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, 120 Wall St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10005-3902, (212) 809-1850.

GRAPHIC: Map, South Central People's Federal Credit Union service area, LAUREL DAUNIS / For The Times; Photo, With her husband, Russell, at her side, Tammy Brown, center, talks to Yulonda Nichols and her son Randall Gardner, about the South Central People's Federal Credit Union. The member-owned cooperative opened last month to give community residents more access to a range of retail banking services. THEODORA LITSIOS / For The Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LEVEL 1 - 10 OF 29 STORIES

Copyright 1995 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

June 4, 1995, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: City Times; Page 10

LENGTH: 1965 words

HEADLINE: LOAN JUSTICE;

FOR YEARS, BANKING SERVICES IN SOUTH L.A. HAVE BEEN SCARCE AND CREDIT HARD TO COME BY. BUT SINCE OPENING ITS DOORS 2 YEARS AGO, A CREDIT UNION HAS STEPPED IN WHERE MANY OTHER INSTITUTIONS HAVE FEARED TO TREAD.

BYLINE: By STEPHEN GREGORY, SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

BODY:

It seemed unlikely that Olga Cook could get a bank loan to fix her ailing Ford Explorer, its spent engine bleeding oil.

Cook, 62, had defaulted on two student loans five years ago while she was studying for her job as a county psychiatric technician. So with great apprehension, she filled out an application for a \$2,500 loan from South Central People's Federal Credit Union, the fastest-growing credit union in the south Los Angeles area and one a relative had told Cook might help her.

It did, as it has done for hundreds like her since opening almost two years ago.

Many of the credit union's 1,400 clients would be turned away by mainstream banks. No matter. Born from an idea to nurture financial self-determination among the area's low-income residents, the credit union provides loans and savings accounts to anyone with \$35 who lives, works or worships in the 49 square miles bounded by the Santa Monica Freeway, Imperial Highway, Alameda Street and La Brea Avenue.

Although Cook's delinquent loans raised some concern among the credit union's volunteer loan committee members, the panel ultimately determined that her five-year employment record and steady efforts to complete payment on her defaulted student loans offset any blemish on her credit report.

That willingness to take a risk where most won't has helped the credit union grow from 380 accounts its first year to roughly 1,400 this year -- a jump 45% higher than its closest competitor. South Central People's is now the fastest growing of 20 credit unions in the south Los Angeles area, according to statistics from the California Credit Union League.

What's more, the institution is poised to gain an additional 350 members through a pending merger with a small credit union at the Frederick Douglass Head Start program.

Credit unions differ from banks because clients are shareholders and can vote

Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1995

for the volunteer board of directors that sets loan and operational policies. In addition, all profits are funneled back to members through lower loan rates or higher interest paid on savings.

At South Central, manager Tammy Brown says the institution makes extensive efforts to reach out to the community and provide banking services -- especially loans -- to people who have been historically denied them.

Poor credit histories among many in the south Los Angeles area, coupled with mainstream-bank redlining and racial discrimination, have long kept credit out of reach, experts say.

Nowhere is the credit union's mission more evident than in figures indicating it has loaned out roughly 99% of its \$1.5-million asset base. The average loan amount has ranged from \$2,000 for personal use to \$15,000 to purchase new or used automobiles.

Yet in its eagerness to extend credit to people most other financial institutions would shrink from, South Central People's has chalked up roughly 10% in delinquent loans -- more than twice the average for California credit unions designated as "low income." A loan is considered delinquent if no payment has been made in 90 days.

"I think the main thing is, we're really new to this," Brown said, adding that under early lending guidelines, roughly 80% of loan requests were granted.

The rate of defaulted loans, however, does not raise concern among national regulators since so-called community development credit unions, like South Central People's, historically operate with a higher delinquency ratio than regular credit unions, said Cherie Umbel, spokeswoman for the National Credit Union Administration.

Regional officials, Umbel said, are "satisfied that the credit union is working on the delinquency and is improving."

To curb delinquency, the credit union has begun to deny loan requests it previously would have granted and has hired a part-time bill collector to go after members who make no effort to arrange repayment on defaulted loans.

But even as South Central People's tightens its loan policy, officials say, the institution is still committed to helping members realize their goals with increased efforts to assist in credit repair and a new program that allows 100 area youth the opportunity to run their own credit union.

While South Central People's still needs a larger asset base to offer such services as checking accounts and small business loans, supporters say the institution has made great strides toward filling a near-vacuum in full-service banking in the area.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, banks began closing branches across Los Angeles, citing the need for consolidation and cost-cutting in an increasingly competitive market.

Between 1987 and 1991, the number of bank branches in the city dropped by 416, with south Los Angeles one of the hardest-hit areas. Residents of the

Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1995

Vernon-Central neighborhood, for example, were left with no banks in a three-mile radius when a Bank of America branch closed in 1988 at 34th Street and Central Avenue.

When the dust settled, the south Los Angeles area, with roughly 600,000 residents, was left with only 19 bank branches while more than 42 check-cashing businesses with high transaction fees and no savings opportunities opened to fill the void.

"You could see the capital just draining out of the community," said Gilda Haas, a lecturer at UCLA's School of Architecture and Urban Planning, who helped the credit union draft its business plan and eventually win its charter.

With shrinking financial services, activists from three organizations joined forces in 1989 to pursue a grass-roots credit union free from the whims of corporate boardrooms.

"We decided it was time we had our own financial institution so that no one could ever again deprive us of our right to credit," said credit union co-founder Juanita Tate, who also runs the Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles community organization.

"We decided the only way we could have what was important for us was to do it ourselves."

The Black Employees Assn., which represents 5,000 African American city and county employees, and the Vermont-Slauson Economic Development Corp. were also driving forces behind the effort.

But while the goal of establishing a credit union was clear, the execution was anything but smooth.

"It was a very long process, much longer than we thought it would be," said credit union co-founder and association President Clyde Johnson.

In 1989, South Central People's was the first so-called community development credit union to pursue a charter in five years, and not much technical assistance was available, recalled Diana Mullins, a credit union consultant who helped shepherd the institution through the chartering process three years later.

There was a general reluctance among state and national trade organizations to get involved in the effort, she said, because so many community development credit unions had failed in the past. "At that time, the organizers of South Central were swimming against the tide," she said.

Many community development credit unions failed because of a combination of bad loan policy and scant community and monetary support, Mullins said.

South Central People's is considered a community development credit union because more than half its members earn less than 80% of the national average wage of \$31,617. The designation also means the institution can accept deposits from individuals or entities who are not members to shore up weak assets. Mullins said a desire to help low-income neighborhoods is the primary reason non-members make deposits.

Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1995

Left basically to their own devices, organizers pounded the pavement for two years gathering the requisite pledges of support from potential members before they could file the charter application in January, 1992. Approval came nine months later, but only after Mullins had to scramble to raise \$3.5 million in deposits from other credit unions to placate concerns by the National Credit Union Administration that South Central People's asset base was insufficient.

But even with the charter, the credit union's struggle was not over.

It took another year before the facility opened in a small office at the Black Employees Assn. headquarters on Crenshaw Boulevard. Organizers say the delay stemmed from unmet hopes of moving into a vacated bank branch.

The Crenshaw location proved only temporary, however, as BEA teamed up the with the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity last year to move a former credit union building from Downtown Los Angeles to the site of a Leimert Park liquor store burned in the 1992 riots.

The new facility opened Dec. 5, but the credit union that once granted 80% of loan requests had started to change.

Faced with a high percentage of delinquent loans and \$12,000 in "charge-offs," or loans with little hope of repayment, the credit union decided to tighten its loan policy. Now only 50% of loan requests are granted.

"Initially our goal was to get as many people as possible involved," Brown said. "Our goal now is to make safe and sound loans."

She added: "What we loan out is members' money. We have a responsibility to them. What we lose is their money."

At a recent loan review meeting, Brown and credit union volunteers Robin Cannon and Rose Wright took no longer than a minute to deny one loan request because the applicant had multiple delinquent loans on her TRW credit report.

The woman -- like many in her situation -- was referred to the nonprofit Consumer Credit Counseling organization, which helps people figure out ways to budget or increase income to pay off their bills.

*

Another loan request for \$1,000, however, sparked debate among the group after Brown suggested giving \$500 to a man with two delinquent loans.

"Why give him anything?" Wright declared.

"Because someone has to give him a chance," Brown responded.

The group eventually decided to give him \$500 over six months on condition that part of the money go toward paying off his defaulted loans.

Even while the credit union decreases its flow of loans, officials say they remain committed to working with members who make an effort to repay defaulted

Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1995

loans. Reduced and even waived interest charges and late fees are among the concessions the institution sometimes makes to recover its loans.

"If you have any problems, please call," Brown tells members. "We can make arrangements."

Those who ignore this advice, however, face a possible lawsuit and even a lien on wages or property.

As part of its no-nonsense policy, the credit union in January hired a part-time bill collector who does everything from send initial late notices to plead collection lawsuits before judges.

So far this year, the credit union has filed 23 lawsuits compared to seven filed over its first two years of existence. Brown said all but 10% of delinquent loans are eventually recovered.

But while delinquency is a vexing problem, credit union officials say the vast majority of members who default on loans make voluntary repayment arrangements.

Officials are also quick to point out that more than 90% of the loans they make are trouble-free.

Take the case of Crystal Davis.

The 34-year-old director of a fledgling performing arts school did so well on paying off her first loan that she was recently given another one.

Davis plans to use the \$2,500 to make a master recording of her youth choir singing rap and traditional gospel songs.

"This'll get us going," Davis said, referring to the loan. "The credit union is a very good and positive thing for people in the inner city."

Meanwhile, Olga Cook waits for an appointment to have her Explorer's engine overhauled, happy with her treatment at South Central People's.

"They really helped me in a time of need," Cook said. "They were very supportive. I really look forward to doing more business with them."

GRAPHIC: Photo, COLOR, Olga Cook -- with grandson Donte Jones -- will get her ailing truck repaired thanks to a \$2,500 loan from the South Central People's Federal Credit Union. ; Photo, COLOR, Above from left, Rose M. Wright, Tammy Brown and Robin Cannon review loan papers. Charlotte Bullock's rental home was severely damaged in the 1992 earthquake and is uninhabitable. Because of her loss of income, she was unable to repay a South Central People's loan and was sued. But her allegiance to the facility and its community role remains unshakable. ; Photo, COLOR, ON THE COVER: Tammy Brown, manager of the South Central People's Federal Credit Union, mulls a loan application at the organization's Leimert Park office. Today, by taking a chance on those historically shunned by mainstream lenders because of poor credit histories and racial discrimination, the 2-year-old institution is the fastest-growing credit union in south Los Angeles. Officials say less than one in 10 of the loans they make become a problem -- and they approve half of the loan requests received.

Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1995

Bob Chamberlin

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 5, 1995

LEVEL 1 - 26 OF 29 STORIES

Copyright 1993 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

August 29, 1993, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: City Times; Page 6

LENGTH: 128 words

HEADLINE: COMMUNITY NEWS: SOUTHWEST: CRENSHAW;
NEW CREDIT UNION TO OPEN WEDNESDAY

BODY:

The South Central People's Federal Credit Union, billed as the largest community development credit union ever chartered, is scheduled to open for business on Wednesday.

The credit union will operate from the offices of the Black Employees' Assn., 5462 Crenshaw Blvd.

The credit union will be available to provide banking services to more than 600,000 people living and working in South and Central Los Angeles and the Crenshaw district.

As part of a community outreach program, volunteers from the Xerox Federal Credit Union, based in El Segundo, began training prospective employees last week. The Xerox volunteers will spend five to 10 days instructing six trainees as bank tellers, accountants and financial consultants.

Information: (213) 299-9560.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LEVEL 1 - 7 OF 29 STORIES

Copyright 1995 PR Newswire Association, Inc.
PR Newswire

September 18, 1995, Monday

SECTION: Financial News

DISTRIBUTION: TO BUSINESS EDITOR

LENGTH: 333 words

HEADLINE: CREDIT UNIONS REACH OUT TO LOW-INCOME AMERICA

BODY:

Calling it the "greatest consumer challenge," Stephen Brobeck, executive director of the Consumer Federation of America, cited credit unions today as a model for serving lower-income and less affluent Americans.

Brobeck, speaking at a Washington, D.C., news conference sponsored by Credit Union National Association, said the effort by credit unions is important not only because it provides essential financial services to lower-income communities, but also because it helps to reintegrate the financially needy back into the mainstream of society.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18

Joining Brobeck at this morning's news conference were, Errol Louis, manager of Central Brooklyn (N.Y.) Federal Credit Union; Patrick Adams, vice president of St. Louis Teachers Credit Union; and Lois Kitsch, manager of Sarasota (Fla.) Municipal Employees Credit Union; all of whom have had success serving lower-income members.

Credit unions over the past few years have been reaching out to the nation's low income communities as never before.

Since November 1992, when South Central Peoples' Federal Credit Union was chartered to serve the community destroyed by riots just months before, more than two million low-income Americans have had financial services made available to them by being made eligible to join a credit union. In the last three years, new credit unions have been chartered to serve lower-income areas of Washington, D.C., Brooklyn and Binghamton, N.Y., Camden, N.J., Birmingham, Ala., Omaha, Neb., Henderson, N.C., Denver, Atlanta and at least a dozen other communities.

CUNA, the leading trade association for credit unions, is a federation of credit union leagues in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Through the leagues, CUNA represents more than 90% of the nation's 12,400 state and federal credit unions, which serve more than 69 million Americans. CONTACT: Mark Wolf or Ed Roberts of the Credit Union National Association, 202-682-4200

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 19, 1995

LEVEL 1 - 5 OF 29 STORIES

Copyright 1996 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

January 5, 1996, Friday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 4; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 201 words

HEADLINE: CENTRAL LOS ANGELES;
AFRICAN AMERICANS URGED TO SWITCH ACCOUNTS ON 'CHANGE BANK DAY'

BODY:

Local black-owned banks are urging African Americans throughout Los Angeles to participate in "Change Bank Day," scheduled for this Saturday.

Carlton Jenkins, president of the Founders National Bank, said he and other bank officials are urging African Americans to switch their accounts to one of five black-owned banks or credit unions "to become more fully engaged in recycling their dollars in the spirit of the 'Million Man March.' "

"It's time for us to be responsive and fully committed," Jenkins said. "It's done in the Asian community very, very well and we want to take it to that level."

The participating banks will be open Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will have extra staff to make the bank switch easier for customers, Jenkins said.

"We're just trying to get people to react and be proactive," he said, "and we plan to do it again as an ongoing effort to keep people focused."

The participating banks are: Founders National Bank, 4143 Crenshaw Blvd. and 477 E. Compton Blvd. in Compton; Family Saving Bank, 3683 Crenshaw Blvd. and 1335 N. Lake Ave. in Pasadena, and South-Central People's Federal Credit Union, 3001 W. Vernon Avenue.

For more information, call: (310) 673-7777.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 6, 1996

LEVEL 1 - 11 OF 29 STORIES

Copyright 1995 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

June 4, 1995, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: City Times; Page 12

LENGTH: 393 words

HEADLINE: SAVVY YOUTHS CAN EARN 'EXTRA CREDIT' AND SELF-ESTEEM

BYLINE: By STEPHEN GREGORY

BODY:

Tennis shoes as collateral?

In the banking world it would never fly, but in the realm of the fledgling South Central People's Federal Credit Union Youth Program, it could be enough to get a loan.

Since February, about 100 young people have paid between \$7 and \$15 to join the program that aims at putting lending decisions in the hands of youngsters and teen-agers.

The program is still in its organizational stage, but once it's up and running, young people 17 and under will operate and make decisions for their own credit union, funded through their own deposits.

The youths will sit on a board of directors and set loan policy and interest rates. The program even envisions its own after-school and weekend office hours with teller windows and customer service desks.

"I want to learn how to manage my money so I don't go broke once I get to college," said 13-year-old Aisha Marigna, who plans to run for president of the program's board of directors "basically because I like to run things."

Organizers said they hope the program will teach young people responsible money management and build self-esteem.

"It also gets them thinking about what they can do to improve the community," said the Rev. Barbara Williams, one of 27 adult volunteer advisers.

Another adviser, Twayne Wilson, sits in on committee meetings, mostly keeping hands-off unless tempers flare. "We don't want them bickering during the meeting," he said.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation awarded a grant for the South Central People's program, which is the 15th youth credit union in the country and, organizers say, the only one in Southern California.

So far the program has assembled nine committees in charge of such areas as lending, marketing and special projects.

Los Angeles Times, June 4, 1995

The next step is a coordinated marketing effort to entice youth in the neighborhood to join. Ideas range from passing out visors and stuffed animals bearing the credit union's name to holding presentations on the program at schools and churches.

As for using tennis shoes as collateral, program director Adwoa Nyamekye said she would have no objection to such a possibility.

"The children can do what they want," she said. "The advisers will help them think through decisions, but what we want them to do is make their own mistakes and learn to correct them." STEPHEN GREGORYSOUTH CENTRAL PEOPLE

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 5, 1995

LEVEL 1 - 8 OF 58 STORIES

Copyright 1998 Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

May 15, 1998, Friday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 3; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 562 words

HEADLINE: WATCHING WATTS;

DEVELOPMENT: COMMUNITY LEADERS LAUNCH PROJECT THAT THEY HOPE WILL SPARK
CULTURAL, ECONOMIC RESURGENCE.

BYLINE: STEVE BERRY, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Perhaps Watts was still suffering from the stigma of the 1965 civil unrest and the 1992 riots when city officials tried several years ago to sell the idea of a cultural and economic renaissance in the South-Central community.

Or maybe, as one government official suspected, developers needed to see more "life and activity" in Watts before risking their money. Whatever the case, there were no takers in 1995 when the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency sought bids for building an ethnic theme restaurant, retail shops and other parts of a \$ 14-million Watts Towers Cultural Crescent.

But on Thursday, a host of city officials and community leaders gathered along the railroad tracks near the Watts Towers were betting that the community is ready for cultural and economic resurgence.

Hoping to spark that resurgence, City Councilman Rudy Svorinich Jr. presided over groundbreaking ceremonies for a \$ 1.4-million plan to build an outdoor amphitheater, walkways, bikeway and an open-air market on a 10-acre crescent-shaped strip of land anchored by the famed Watts Towers on one end and the historic train station on the other.

Despite the optimism of Svorinich and other speakers Thursday, the question remains: Will developers see this as proof Watts is now ripe for investment?

CRA officials say the answer is yes, because the project comes on the heels of the openings of the 12,000-square-foot Alma Reaves Woods Watts library in 1996 and the Watts Civic Center last year. They say such progress shows that the community has put the civil unrest behind and is creating an environment that is fertile for culture and economic development.

"One of the battles the people have fought is that Watts is not a name for a civil disturbance, but a name for a community in which great people work and live and who are leading a renaissance for the city of Los Angeles," Svorinich said.

Los Angeles Times May 15, 1998, Friday,

Completion of the first phase of the Watts Towers Cultural Crescent, reflecting African American and Latino cultures, is expected by September, in time for the annual Watts weekend of jazz, drum and art festivals.

CRA Deputy Director Roy Willis said all this activity, along with the new library and civic center, should lure developers to help finance and build the rest of the Watts Towers Cultural Crescent.

The plans include a family-style ethnic restaurant to be called the Grand Oasis, a multimedia music and film studio, and an information and tourist center.

"This is another piece of the Watts renaissance," Willis said, referring to the landscaping. " Developers have seen a steady stream of things happening since then."

The Watts riots of 1965 still mar the image of the community, but to Willis and others it made the city respond to the problems.

"It showed that things needed to be done," Willis said. "Back in 1965, it was said that one of the reasons for the Watts rebellion was that government didn't care.

"Now you've got a partnership with the government, the community and the private sector involved in this community. That's very different."

The change goes deeper than that, he said.

Willis said there is a different community psychology.

"We've got the young people involved now. They are beginning to believe that they have some control over their destiny, and that's a big difference from the psychology of 1965."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Andrew Escobar, with Jordan High School band, participates in groundbreaking ceremony. PHOTOGRAPHER: KEN HIVELY / Los Angeles Times PHOTO: Site is anchored by Watts Towers, under restoration. PHOTOGRAPHER: KEN HIVELY / Los Angeles Times PHOTO: (A2) REDEVELOPMENT: Community leaders in Watts break ground for a project they hope will spark a cultural and economic renaissance. PHOTOGRAPHER: KEN HIVELY / Los Angeles Times

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: May 15, 1998

LEVEL 1 - 2 OF 58 STORIES

Copyright 1998 SOFTLINE INFORMATION, INC.
The Ethnic NewsWatch
Los Angeles Sentinel

November 11, 1998

SECTION: Vol. 64; No. 32 ; Pg. A12

LENGTH: 620 words

HEADLINE: American Express Makes \$100,000 Gift For Watts Towers Restoration Project: Funds, Raised in Part by Travel Industry, to Spur Local Economic Development Through Tourism

BODY:

American Express Makes \$100,000 Gift For Watts Towers Restoration Project: Funds, Raised in Part by Travel Industry, to Spur Local Economic Development Through Tourism

American Express Company and the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau have made a gift of \$100,000 to help complete restoration of the internationally known Watts Towers, a unique cultural landmark in the heart of the city. The donation was made by American Express on behalf of the travel and tourism industry, which is gathering later this week in Los Angeles for the 68th annual American Society of Travel Agents Annual World Travel Congress.

At a special ceremony, city and community officials gathered at the Watts Towers to accept the \$100,000 check from American Express and discuss the city's plans for revitalizing the area by expanding its cultural and entertainment facilities.

"We applaud American Express and thank the travel and tourism industry for recognizing the cultural value of the Watts Towers--a recognition shared by the global arts community--as an important part of Los Angeles art and culture," and Rudy Svorinich Jr., Los Angeles city councilman for the 15th District. "Today's ceremony is symbolic of a strong commitment by city officials, community leaders, American Express and the travel and tourism industry to spur economic and cultural growth in the Watts community of Los Angeles as well as the city at large."

George D. Kirkland, president of the Los Angeles Visitors and Convention Bureau, said, "The Watts Towers are one of Los Angeles' earliest cultural icons and are known the world over. Their restoration will add to the attractiveness of Los Angeles as a visitor destination. Tourism is the third largest industry in Los Angeles, bringing over \$23 billion into the local economy annually."

The Watts Towers were created by Sabato Rodia, a highly skilled and imaginative Italian immigrant laborer who single-handedly designed and constructed nine interconnected ornamental sculptures, two of them nearly 100 feet tall, in the community of Watts. Rodia added 115 flying buttresses to stabilize the three tallest towers and decorated them with pottery, colorful green and blue glass, ceramic tile and sea shells. His efforts spanned more than

20 years--from 1921 to 1955.

The Towers, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark, have been covered in scaffolding for many years as restoration continued. The \$100,000 grant, earmarked specifically for repair of 54 flying buttresses to stabilize the three tallest towers, will lead to a complete restoration in the year 2000.

Half of the gift was raised by members of the travel industry who participated in an annual golf tournament sponsored by American Express whose proceeds go toward rescuing endangered historic sites and monuments around the world. American Express matched the amount raised by the golf tournament.

"This gift brings together two very important American Express communities: Los Angeles, where we serve millions of customers and have hundreds of employees, and the tourism community, the driving force behind all our businesses," said Mike Dodson, an American Express regional vice president. "We believe Watts Towers will be a beacon to travelers the world over who visit Los Angeles. We also hope the gift will inspire community pride and confidence in a place so many call home.

American Express Company is a diversified worldwide travel and financial services company founded in 1850. It is a leader in charge and credit cards, travel, financial planning, investment products, insurance and international banking.

ETHNIC-GROUP: African American/Caribbean/African

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: March 22, 1999

LEVEL 1 - 28 OF 58 STORIES

Copyright 1992 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

November 2, 1992, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 1; Column 2; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 1603 words

HEADLINE: A TOWERING SYMBOL OF HOPE IN WATTS;

RENEWAL: LANDMARK ARTWORK IS AT THE CENTER OF A PLAN TO TURN 10 ACRES INTO A PARK AND CULTURAL MECCA THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE TOURISTS TO STAY LONGER.

BYLINE: By MILES CORWIN, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

The Watts Towers, a graceful network of arching towers and gleaming spires that draws visitors from throughout the world, have suffered the same sad fate of abuse and neglect as the community that surrounds them. But after decades of failed projects and abandoned promises, there is a plan that could showcase the towers and serve as a catalyst to revitalize the community.

Planners and architects hope to transform a curving 10-acre strip of weed-choked lots, anchored by the towers at one end, into a beautifully landscaped park with the possibility of gift shops, restaurant, theater for performing arts, artist studios, galleries and other uses. This "cultural crescent," as it is being touted, could lure more tourists, encourage them to linger in the area and serve as a catalyst for rebuilding surrounding neighborhoods, residents say.

"For too long the perception of Watts has been very different from the reality of Watts," said Clinton Minnis, chairman of the Watts Cultural Crescent Advisory Committee, an organization of residents. "If this community is ever going to move forward, we need to be able to change all those negatives attitudes about Watts. Now, we may finally have a way to do that."

For years, community activists have unsuccessfully sought to revitalize the area around the towers. But recently, the Community Redevelopment Agency purchased about five acres of land near the towers, and, with another five acres owned by other government agencies, the CRA controls enough land to put together a development plan.

The cultural crescent will be on a winding strip of land, much of it on a vacant Southern Pacific railway corridor. It does not look like much now -- just empty lots filled with rusting bedsprings and sofas, and gravel-filled strips of land surrounded by chain-link fences. But its supporters envision landscaped promenades, bike paths, open markets in plazas and a number of businesses.

This blueprint for the area's development -- being drafted at a cost of \$175,000 by the architecture and planning firm Renaissance II -- is expected to be completed in about nine months. The consultants have been holding community meetings to determine what kind of uses residents want and will support.

Los Angeles Times, November 2, 1992

The project's cost has not been determined, but the plan will include a number of financing proposals -- from private investment to grants from the city, local art donors and national foundations. The consultants also are hoping to work with the Watts Credit Union, a local financial institution, to provide loans for investors.

But it is an onerous task to develop property in a neighborhood long abandoned by the business community, banks and thousands of middle-class families -- a neighborhood that does not have a single sit-down restaurant or movie theater. The project also must contend with the recession and city budget shortages. And to attract enough visitors, concerns about security will have to be allayed.

Another fear is that the slow pace of the tower's renovation will hamper the success of the project. The renovation is years from completion, the towers are only open part time and scaffolding covers several spires.

Still, the towers, a national historic monument, remain a tremendous tourist draw, attracting more than 50,000 people a year. And in the wake of the riots, corporations and nonprofit foundations have shown more interest in investing in the inner city.

Supporters of the project also note that the site will be more accessible because of the Blue Line transit system and the scheduled 1993 opening of the Century Freeway. Although there were serious concerns about safety on the Blue Line, which bisects South-Central Los Angeles, the crime rate has been negligible as a result of the highly visible presence of sheriff's deputies and security guards.

City officials are optimistic, citing signs of progress in the area. At a nearby intersection -- near the recently renovated Watts train station used as a Blue Line stop -- there is a proposed CRA project that includes a new library, an 18,000-square-foot commercial development and the first sit-down restaurant in Watts. At the other end of the property, near the towers, is the Santa Ana Pines, the first commercial single-family subdivision to be built in Watts since World War II.

Thad Williams, a partner in the Santa Ana Pines project, said the potential of the cultural crescent has been a selling point for potential home buyers.

"I think this could change the whole dynamic of the area," he said. "I think it will make it a more desirable place to live and bring in a lot more investment. And with the Blue Line taking thousands of people by the property every day and some of the development already going on, I think it could attract more private investors to Watts."

The towers were created over a 33-year span by Sabato Rodia, an unschooled Italian immigrant who used primitive tools to create an artwork of international renown. In a neighborhood with little vegetation, dominated by drab bungalows, empty lots and graffiti-scarred walls, the towers are a wildly dramatic presence.

Brightly colored and whimsically designed, the three major towers and six

Los Angeles Times, November 2, 1992

smaller ones are encrusted with broken pieces of china, seashells, edges of Spanish tile, glass shards from brilliant blue Milk of Magnesia bottles and green 7-Up bottles. Undulating spokes connect the towers, and a wall embedded with a sparkling collage of pottery scraps creates a visual base for the spires.

Break it down, and all you have is junk -- the flotsam and jetsam of a disposable society. But as a whole it is a stunning achievement, according to critics, some of whom consider it Los Angeles' greatest art monument.

Since 1985, the city's Cultural Affairs Department has been responsible for the towers. The agency has proved "very supportive and interested in renovating the towers," said Bud Goldstone, an engineering consultant who is working on the towers renovation. But its \$163,000 annual budget, he added, is inadequate.

The deterioration of the towers is not simply the fault of the city. At various times, the towers were under the auspices of private owners, a public committee, the state and the city.

But there never have been enough public or private funds to maintain them. Many residents believe that the towers and neighborhoods have been neglected for the same reason -- because Watts is a minority community.

"If these towers had been in Glendale or the Westside or other upscale communities, I know damn well they wouldn't have been treated the way they've been treated over the years," Goldstone said. "It's pretty obvious."

Harold Williams of Renaissance II said the long neglect of the towers reflects "a great deal of racism." If the landscaped park around the La Brea Tar Pits were in South-Central, he said, it would not be so well-maintained.

Complicating the renovation over the years has been a longtime dispute between art enthusiasts, mostly from outside the community, and neighborhood activists. The activists insisted that any project also include plans to aid the community, while the other group wanted to focus on the preservation of the towers.

"I always believed it was selfish and narrow-minded to just focus on the towers and ignore the world outside the tower's walls," said Sterling Barnes, head of the city planning department's South-Central-South East Task Force. "Development around the towers can provide the opportunity for jobs, for a lot of cultural opportunities for the community. . . . It can serve as a catalyst for building up the entire area."

The view held by Barnes and community activists prevailed with the adoption of the project by the CRA. Now, if the towers are made more accessible to visitors and the neighborhood around the towers is improved, it will create investment opportunities throughout Watts, said Leanne Sowande, an architect with Renaissance II.

A renewed community focus also could help generate more money for the cultural crescent and the towers, said Adolfo Nodal, general manager of the Cultural Affairs Department.

Los Angeles Times, November 2, 1992

"This is going to be one of the city's high-priority cultural projects," Nodal said. "Everyone recognizes this is as a good project. And we really need to develop more major cultural facilities outside of downtown or the Westside . . . and in places like South-Central and East L.A."

Many Watts residents were initially suspicious about the plan. But last month, at the end of the project's first community meeting, residents became more receptive. They discussed the kind of uses that they would like to see and the problems they have had attracting business. Most agreed that if the cultural crescent could be developed, and that if potential visitors could be persuaded it is a safe environment, the neighborhood's image would change.

"The towers have always shown a different aspect of Watts from what's usually portrayed and we've appreciated that," said Wilma Haynes, who has lived in the shadow of the towers for 31 years. "They've always been an inspiration to those of us who see them every day. They show us that you can start with nothing but if you dream and have goals you can create something of great value."

Showcase for Watts

Planners hope to transform a curving 10-acre strip of land anchored by the Watts Towers at one end into a park with the possibility of gift shops, a restaurant, theaters and other uses. This "cultural crescent," as it is being touted, could highlight the towers and serve as a catalyst for rebuilding Watts.

GRAPHIC: Photo, Harold Williams of Renaissance II, the firm that is designing the renewal project, says the neglect of the Watts Towers shows "a great deal of racism." Even the wall around the artwork is an intricate collage. LARRY DAVIS / Los Angeles Times; Photo, (A2) New Vision for Towers: For years community activists have unsuccessfully sought to revitalize the area around Watts Towers. A new plan calls for transforming a curving 10-acre strip near the towers into a landscaped park, with the possibility of gift shops, a restaurant and other facilities. BRIAN GADBERY / For The Times; Map, Showcase for Watts / Los Angeles Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LEVEL 1 - 19 OF 58 STORIES

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Los Angeles Times

January 4, 1995, Wednesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Life & Style; Part E; Page 1; Column 1; View Desk

LENGTH: 1013 words

HEADLINE: L.A. STORIES;
A TOWERING PRESENCE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

BYLINE: By TY TAGAMI, SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

BODY:

When Felix Madrigal came to inspect the house he planned to buy in Watts 14 years ago, he found himself impressed less by the new home than by what loomed across the street.

Plastered with seashells and shards of green 7-Up bottles, the structures soared nearly 100 feet on spidery legs. "I was shocked to find I had lived in Los Angeles for 20 years and had never heard of the towers," he says.

His daughter Noemi, now 22, recalls the day her parents told her that she wouldn't believe what was standing in front of their new house on 107th Street. She remembers piling out of the car with her brother and sister and rushing over to investigate the dreamlike Watts Towers built more than three decades ago by Simon Rodia, a reclusive Italian immigrant.

Rodia had finished his project in 1948 and six years later deeded the towers to a neighbor before leaving Los Angeles. A nearby plaque states his appraisal of his efforts: "I had in mind to do something big and I did it."

And, says Noemi Madrigal, "It was just there for us to touch."

Now the structures tower over 107th Street with their fanciful decoration covered by scaffolding. Repairs of damage from weather and earthquakes is expected to take at least three years.

When the Madrigals moved in, Noemi didn't realize that her family had moved next to more than a personal playground. They had chanced upon a window to the world.

The magic of the towers drew curious visitors from abroad -- Germany, Italy, China, Japan, India, Malaysia. And under the towers' shadow, people seemed to forget their differences.

Noemi Madrigal says her family was among the first Latinos on a street whose residents were mostly African American. Yet, one by one, the neighbors came offering gifts of food. "It was like, wow. They like us here."

As she grew up, best of all was the arts center across the street. It was

Los Angeles Times, January 4, 1995

Noemi Madrigal's little paradise when racial tension at Washington High School rose with the influx of Latinos in the '80s.

There, she learned arts from calligraphy to quilt-making to playing the kalimba. She met artists and musicians. Living next to the towers, Noemi Madrigal says, "opened our eyes to a lot of things. The visits, the festivals, the people we encountered, have all made us open-minded."

The then-teen-ager was thrilled when the director of the arts center, John Outterbridge, hired her and her older sister to work weekends. "First we moved into this place, and everyone was nice," she says. "Next we were earning a paycheck from it."

The towers stopped Outterbridge in his tracks when he first saw them in 1963. An artist who had recently moved from Chicago, he was on a shopping trip when he happened to drive down 107th Street. He was captivated by Rodia's vision, and thrilled to discover the Watts Towers Arts Center, a nexus for artists.

He says the creative spirit that lingers among the spindly struts of the towers has helped inspire a generation of artists. "Rodia possessed the kind of insanity that we need," he says. "It's all about the essence of creativity that can get anything done."

In 1976, when the director of the center retired, Outterbridge got the job. His energy and the draw of the towers helped push along a cultural renaissance in Watts. With the help of Los Angeles' music community, he established the annual Watts Towers Jazz Festival and the Watts Day of the Drum, which have drawn thousands of people to the block-long triangle of land occupied by the towers and the arts center. (This year's jazz and drum festivals will be held the last weekend in September.)

"It was the place to hang out," says Outterbridge, who retired three years ago to spend more time in his studio.

Those familiar with the center remember Outterbridge as a hands-on director who would arrive at 6 a.m. to pick up trash and look after broken street lights before spending a day on the phone with foreign dignitaries.

After Outterbridge left the directorship, a city hiring freeze resulted in a succession of temporary directors until Mark Greenfield was hired last year. The mixed-media artist says he knows he has big shoes to fill. "People are in a wait-and-see mode," he says.

Outterbridge fears that without constant effort, the image of Watts will continue to suffer. "The positive aspects of that part of L.A. have never been elevated the way they should," he says.

*

Blighted by negative stereotypes, the name "Watts" has been enough to discourage many would-be pilgrims to the towers. Noemi Madrigal, who still works at the arts center, admits to fighting the urge to hang up on the many callers to the center who inquire about the area's safety.

The towers are monitored around the clock by security guards. The night

Los Angeles Times, January 4, 1995

watchman, who identifies himself as Mr. Cardenas, says he likes to keep a low profile and stay on friendly terms with the youths in the area.

He points across the wasteland of railroad tracks and dirt to Santa Ana Boulevard, where he often sees gun fights. Two weeks ago, a couple of cars zipped down the boulevard, with the one in back blasting away.

"Rat tat tat," he says. "That's not my job." Two years ago a guard at the towers was shot to death while on duty.

But that was two years ago. On a recent day, even though only a few young people can be seen chasing each other up and down the street, Noemi Madrigal says the 45 neighborhood children "just creep out of places" for the classes and events at the center.

One night Banda music blares from a balloon-festooned house in the shadow of the towers. It's a birthday party.

On another evening, Uless Simon, 69, is out for a stroll, watching his grandson play with a friend in front of the arts center.

"I love this part of the city," he declares, an irrepressible smile breaking across his face. "It's glorious."

* Tours of Watts Towers are scheduled to resume on Jan. 7, after the scaffolding is secured. A series of events commemorating the 25th anniversary of the arts center, at 1727 E. 107th St., is scheduled to begin March 12. For information call (213) 485-1795.

GRAPHIC: Photo, COLOR, George Chavarria works on his car across the street from Watts Towers, now undergoing repairs. AXEL KOESTER / For The Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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LEVEL 1 - 43 OF 58 STORIES

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Los Angeles Times

July 9, 1989, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: Real Estate; Part 8; Page 2; Column 3; Real Estate Desk

LENGTH: 1043 words

HEADLINE: URBAN SCENE: WATTS TOWERS: SYMBOL OF HIGH EXPECTATION;
'CHALLENGE' ENVISIONS RODIA MASTERPIECE AS CENTERPIECE OF A REVITALIZED
COMMUNITY.

BYLINE: By LEON WHITESON, Whiteson is a Los Angeles free-lancer who writes on
architectural topics.

BODY:

Working for 30 years, alone and without financial help of any kind, Simon Rodia, an uneducated Italian laborer, raised his famous Watts Towers in the yard of his one-room shack between the 1920s and 1950s.

"I had in mind to do something big, and I did" was how Rodia explained the creation of his masterpiece of visionary architecture, admired by artists and designers around the world. Rodia called his towers "Pueblo Nuestro" -- "Our Town" in Spanish.

In the midst of Watts -- then as now one of Los Angeles' poorer neighborhoods -- these proud spires demonstrate that imagination and guts can raise a man above his own limitations and above the restrictions of a society that pegged him as an uneducated immigrant.

Rodia's Watts Towers provide the emotional inspiration and physical centerpiece of an imaginative new scenario sketched for the future urban design development of Watts at a recent four-day community planning workshop.

At the heart of the workshop's recommendations, contained in a report titled "The Challenge of Change," is a suggestion for an expanded cultural-arts complex to be developed around the towers at 1765 E. 107th St.

Link Pedestrian Arcade

The complex, proposed for a park to be created between the towers and the new Los Angeles-Long Beach light-rail line now under construction, would include a multipurpose performance hall, galleries and workshops for artists-in-residence.

A pedestrian arcade would link the cultural center to the recently renovated Watts train station and the adjacent 103rd Street shopping center.

The station would become a "Watts Gateway" identifying the community's "new green and creative heart," according to several members of the team that prepared the report.

Los Angeles Times, July 9, 1989

"The Challenge of Change" came out of a four-day workshop on Watts mounted June 9-12 by a Los Angeles Design Action Planning Team (LA/DAPT) made up of planners, architects, landscape architects, city and county officials and community activists. The workshop was held at Markham Intermediate School on East 104th Street.

Sponsored by the Los Angeles City Planning Department and the Urban Design Advisory Coalition, the Watts LA/DAPT was the third in a series that has already produced reports on Van Nuys and the Olive Hill district of East Hollywood.

The goal of the series is to bring to bear the combined expertise of top design professionals and city planners, with the participation of local residents, to suggest coherent and socially sensitive urban design policies for the areas under study.

The Watts district, home to 35,000 people, lies between 92nd Street on the north and Imperial Highway on the south, and between Alameda Street on the east and Central Avenue on the west.

If you were able, like Rodia, to climb to the top of the tallest Watts Tower, almost 100 feet high, you would overlook a mixed landscape of quiet, tree-lined streets lined by neat small bungalows and huge, ugly public housing projects defaced by gang graffiti and degraded by drug dealing.

In the long shadows cast by the towers you would see a community caught in the hot hollow of the Los Angeles Basin; a community that deserves an imaginative response if it is to live up to Rodia's challenge to "do something big."

"The Challenge of Change" report is a good beginning. It suggests both short- and long-range urban design plans for Watts.

Exploit Location

The short-range plan relies upon a small-scale incremental approach to development, a project-by-project strategy that stitches together the tattered urban fabric of the area piece by piece.

The long-range plan, spread over 30 years, has the ambition to transform Watts into one of the region's major economic centers by exploiting its location next to the new transportation corridors now under construction. The cultural-arts complex would form the focus of the long-range proposal.

Community members interviewed by the LA/DAPT team spoke proudly of the district's social and cultural heritage. They described neighborhoods rich in residents who care about one another and who have formed self-help groups to aid the distressed and comfort the desperate.

At the same time, several people interviewed, such as Robin Cannon of the Concerned Citizens of South Central and Gladys Carr Coleman of the Community Youth Gang Services, described a Watts social landscape that includes many single-parent welfare families headed by women and "gun-toting gang members ready to prey on people who leave the security of their homes or automobiles."

Los Angeles Times, July 9, 1989

'Drop-Out Rate a Scandal'

"Unemployment is high, development is scarce, transportation is poorly served," Cannon said. "The school drop-out rate is a scandal. The area's location, at the bottom of the Los Angeles Basin, leaves it suspended in limbo between downtown L.A. and Long Beach."

One of the local schoolchildren interviewed by the workshop panel put it succinctly: "This is a jungle, man," he said, "and there ain't no Tarzans."

The report acknowledges that in the decades since the 1965 riots, which residents term an "uprising," attempts have been made to improve the quality of life in the area.

"But the dream of a revitalized Watts community remains unrealized," the report states. "Many of the economic and social conditions which frustrated residents 24 years ago are still evident."

The completion of the Los Angeles-Long Beach light-rail line and east-west Century Freeway early in the 1990s will alleviate the area's sense of isolation by linking Watts to the rest of the metropolitan region, planners hope.

"The community has huge reservoirs of hope, imagination and energy," said LA/DAPT team member Sterling Barnes, a city planner and a member of the Watts Community Action Council. He believes that the resources for renewal are many, "if only we can put it all together, both within Watts and outside."

Barnes explained that the Watts workshop had by far the most intense and numerous community participation of the three LA/DAPT programs done to date.

"What most moved those of us who participated in the Watts workshop was the tremendous passion, interest and energy of the local residents," he said.

Like Rodia, the people of Watts have in mind to do something big.

GRAPHIC: Photo, Simon Rodia's labor of love, the Watts Towers, stand fence-to-fence to neighboring homes, above. The soaring spires, shown at their full height, at right, are expected to be the centerpiece of a design plan for the community. BRIAN GADBERY

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Watts Labor Community Action Committee

"Changing the face of a community...Moving the lives of a people"



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Watts Labor Community Action Committee Demonstrated Leadership in Community Services and Development

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In 1965, several months before South Central Los Angeles burst into the destructive frustration which became known as the Watts riots, a group of concerned union leaders organized the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. Their goal was to stimulate economic change and improve the quality of life for poor families living in South Central Los Angeles. WLCAC was established as a non-profit, community organization with longtime Watts resident Ted Watkins as president.

Immediately after the disastrous riots, WLCAC intensified its efforts to change the physical and economic despair of Watts. With a volunteer staff, WLCAC created employment training programs and began rebuilding neighborhoods. Today, WLCAC is one of the largest and most successful community-based organizations in the country, with an international reputation for expertise in community self-help and a field office in London, England.

Funding for WLCAC's many social service programs has come from federal, state and local governments, as well as from private donations and foundation grants. Unlike many similar organizations, however, WLCAC has several components which generate and recycle

income within the community it serves.

WLCAC has built, owns and manages over 500 houses and apartments for low- and moderate-income families and senior citizens in South Central Los Angeles. It owns and operates several commercial properties and business ventures. Proceeds from these operations are invested in creating additional housing and commercial development projects which, in turn, provide new jobs for local residents.

Among the community services provided by WLCAC are senior citizen nutrition and day care programs, a child care center, community transit and dial-a-ride services, handyworker programs, and employment training. While concentrating its community improvement efforts in the greater Watts and Willowbrook areas of South Central Los Angeles, WLCAC's social programs serve people living within about a five mile radius of Watts.

WLCAC has accomplished much more than any other organization of its kind, but a very large proportion of Los Angeles' poor families are still concentrated in South Central Los Angeles. Hence, there is still much work to be done.

New residential and commercial projects are planned, some with major private developers as joint venture partners. Moreover, WLCAC continues to seek financial support for expanded economic development and social service programs from government and private sources. WLCAC welcomes the support of all who would help make the South Central Los Angeles area an economically vital, self-sustaining community.

March Of Progress



1964 - WLCAC, founded by a by group of 14 union labor leaders, with treasury of \$5.38, and led by United Auto Workers International Rep Ted Watkins, is organized and develops mission statement

1965 - WLCAC organizes 300 volunteers and spearheads the campaign for what became Martin Luther King Jr. County General Hospital

1966 - First summer youth program is funded. and serves over 4 000 youth 16-21 years old, hires youth 14-21 years of age lowering working age from 16 to 14 years of age as part of experimental program funded by department of labor

Started first door to door Dial a Bus transportation program to deliver workers from Warts to in

1967 - 2.500 youth participate in 2 week summer at Camp Robert's army base

Work training program for 500 youth begins
opened community credit union

WLCAC becomes non-profit corporation

Won support for LA County construction of Martin Luther King Jr. General Hospital
1968 - gained congressional approval to lower minimum work age to 14 years old
created land bank for community development program with \$2.1 million loan from labor union
opened 587 acre youth summer camp in Saugus, California
began distribution of food stamps, (one of 5 non-financial institutions in nation)
1969 - developed first senior citizen nutrition and social service center
incorporated subsidiary, greater Watts development corporation designed by state as primary relocation contractor for century freeway
1970 - started watts feeds itself youth agricultural program beneath power lines
opened WLCAC elite market, WLCAC restaurant and Mobil gas station
opened Saugus urban residential educational center
1971 - initiated street tree planting and community beautification project
1972 - developed 7 acre One-15 Home Improvement Center
incorporated Tri Housemovers, inc. to relocate homes from Century freeway
1973 - completed construction of first 120 housing-units
1974 - organized construction trade unions to provide training for youth workers
closed Saugus urban residential educational center
1975 - created property management division to maintain housing units
1976 - held lottery for Franklin square, 39 single family homes Vs 1500 qualified applicants
1977 - opened greater Watts child care center
1980 - Ted Watkins is summoned by the queen of England to advise on youth and community development
Logan Plaza senior housing completed
1981 - King Triangle single family homes completed
1982 - partnership formed to purchase Goodyear site for housing
Alice Manor and Ramona Estates senior citizen housing completed
1986 - Ted Watkins receives Yale Award for Entrepreneurial Excellence
1987 - Theresa Lindsay Center completed
Youth Enterprise laundromat, toy and furniture stores open One-15 center
began operation of homeless shelters and homeless trailers
1992 - headquarters bum to ground during L.A. riots
Ted Watkins supervises construction of new headquarters
WLCAC founder, chairman, administrator, Ted Watkins, dies at age 71

1994 - WLCAC headquarters completed
Countdown to Eternity exhibit opens in WLCAC civil
rights museum
Annual Civil Rights Festival initiated
1995 - Teryl Watkins assumes presidency and institute
new focus on art, culture and technology as an
economic base
1996 - Mother Of Humanity statue by Nijel unveiled
in WLCAC headquarters courtyard
began Tell It Theater (children's literacy program)
original youth center Lanzit & central property
purchased to accommodate new youth center
open air market under construction
7 acre Bell Industries site purchased



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Watts Labor Community Action Committee

"Changing the face of a community...Moving the lives of a people"



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The Watts Labor Community Action Committee has surpassed my fondest dreams. We have built new homes, and beyond that, new neighborhoods. We have trained thousands of people to enter the working world, provided senior citizens with food and the comfort of social interaction, and nurtured young children in our day care center. Still, life in South Central Los Angeles remains difficult. It is isolated from mainstream employment, shopping, entertainment and recreational

areas. Indeed, most people with the means to move away from our community leave it, seeking new neighborhoods with more amenities. They quite literally leave their problems behind them. WLCAC operates with a different philosophy. We believe in bringing the best to South Central Los Angeles. And we have made a significant impact since our humble beginnings. We have been instrumental in bringing the Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital and two major shopping centers to the Watts/ Willowbrook area. The community now has a regional park in Willowbrook, operated by the state and county, and a long delayed east-west freeway, connecting South Central Los Angeles with major employment centers, is under construction. In addition, a regional mail distribution center has been built on land WLCAC purchased following the closure of a major tire manufacturing plant, and resold to the U.S. Postal Service. Few community based organizations have had a hand in such major successes. I've lived in this community since 1944. My children and grandchildren have lived here since they were born. Our family believes strongly enough in South Central Los Angeles to plan a future for the next generations here. We know we are not alone in this effort. Indeed, the WLCAC family includes hundreds of employees, thousands of South Central Los Angeles residents, and tens of thousands more who live elsewhere, but whose lives have been improved in some way by WLCAC over the years. South Central Los Angeles may never be an affluent community, but WLCAC is doing everything possible to make it a good place to live, work and shop. Ou

hope is that many more people will share our vision of a healthy, vibrant community. We believe that our efforts will ultimately improve the Los Angeles community as a whole. We invite and welcome your support.

Ted Watkins
President and Administrator
1965-1993

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LEVEL 1 - 73 OF 88 STORIES

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The New York Times

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HEADLINE: ON PRO FOOTBALL;
A Vision That Goes Beyond 100 Yards

BYLINE: By Thomas George

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES

BODY:

Solomon Wilcotts offered the most memorable line about the riots in the Overtown section of Miami that jolted the National Football League and its annual January bash, this one Super Bowl XXIII in 1989 that featured the San Francisco 49ers and the Cincinnati Bengals. Wilcotts, now a Pittsburgh Steelers safety but then with the Bengals, said: "We went to the movies to see 'Mississippi Burning.' We came out and we saw Miami burning."

The riots began after a Cuban-American police officer was charged with fatally shooting a black motorcyclist in a predominantly black section of Miami a few days before the game. The N.F.L. spun on its heels in the days that followed, bombarded with questions.

What responsibility does the league have to the communities that it uses to be host to its big show? Sure, more than \$120 million is generated for host cities from simply having a Super Bowl, but how do the inner cities directly benefit? Is the Super Bowl simply an event of bold economics and prime entertainment for the privileged?

After the civil strife in Miami, the league tarnished its image even further by awarding the city of Phoenix and the state of Arizona the 1993 Super Bowl even though the state was divided over the failure to adopt Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a holiday. The N.F.L. owners' decision was a personal affront to many and particularly to the black athletes who constitute 65 percent of the league's players.

Of course, the decision was eventually reversed, which brought this year's Super Bowl to the Rose Bowl and to Pasadena, Calif., instead. But at the time of the first vote, only one N.F.L. owner, Norman Braman of the Philadelphia Eagles, stood up and spoke out about potential boycotts and the possibility of a need to rescind the '93 Phoenix bid.

The other owners -- and N.F.L. Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, too -- either could not understand what the fuss was about or simply, initially, refused to fully address it.

The New York Times, January 26, 1993

My, the N.F.L. has come a long way.

Starting in Miami, after the riots, the league began offering minority scholarships for youths in Super Bowl cities and developed a program to insure that minority businesses large and small would gain a share of the enormous Super Bowl economic pie. Now the league has made a gigantic leap with its N.F.L./Y.E.T (Youth Education Town) idea, a \$1 million, multifaceted educational and recreational facility being built in South-Central Los Angeles.

This facility speaks to the heart of problems particular in the Compton/Watts area where it will be built, an area that has gained worldwide attention since the riots in South-Central Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict last April. The facility will give something back to the area where 104 N.F.L. players past and present grew up, including two from this year's Super Bowl, receiver James Lofton of the Buffalo Bills and safety James Washington of the Dallas Cowboys.

The facility will include four primary arenas -- library, classroom, physical conditioning room and Astroturf recreational field. The goal is for its completion between May 1 and April 1. Many businesses have offered a helping hand; Sports Illustrated has offered to coordinate the acquisition of books and creation of educational programs, book donors include Random House and the Trumpet Club/ Bantam-Doubleday Dell Publishing, and Sony has offered 50 mini-disk electronic encyclopedias.

Everyone from quarterback Vince Evans of the Los Angeles Raiders to the Football Hall of Famer John Mackey to Roy Roberts, the executive director of the Watts/Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club, has given time and input. Country singer Garth Brooks will donate the proceeds from two concerts here this weekend.

But the driving force behind the project is Reggie Williams, the former Bengals linebacker, former Cincinnati city councilman and former general manager of the New York/ New Jersey Knights of the now-defunct World League of American Football.

"I was on the city council in Cincinnati and a Bengal getting ready for the game when the riots in Miami broke," Williams said. "You could see the fires burning from our hotel. After the motorcyclist was killed, the police closed off the area and let an implosion take place. Well, this program will tear down those type of blockades. We're going in and we're trying to make a difference."

Williams was hired by the N.F.L. last fall as director of community affairs for Super Bowl XXVII.

"The first thing I did was come to Los Angeles in October and November and spend a few days just listening," Williams said. "Commissioner Tagliabue made a commitment for us to identify a community project in connection with the Super Bowl and the Rebuild L.A. Project. He made a commitment and backed it up. Listening to the people here was important. But really, all you had to do was drive through Compton and you could see the many problems on the many faces."

And one trip to the Watts/Willowbrook facility was all Williams needed to crystallize his idea.

The New York Times, January 26, 1993

There he saw a run-down, tired facility that was a refuge to more than 1,000 youths. The ceilings were full of holes. The basketball courts were full of long, ugly holes, some covered with gray masking tape, others just left bare. No showers. A trailer that served as an educational center was dark and ugly brown outside with few resources inside. And yet there was immense pride in the work being done there by Roberts and his assistants.

"I felt like maybe I have lived a spoiled life, but still, it was hard to believe," Williams said. "The standards had to be raised. What more basic promotion of self-esteem is there to have a facility that at least includes showers and an emphasis on personal hygiene?"

Williams knew what needed to be done. He began marshaling forces. He met some resistance.

"The politics of putting together something this massive calls for perseverance, and Mr. Williams had it," said Roberts, who has worked at the Watts/Willowbrook facility for 18 years, who grew up in a housing project in South-Central L.A. and who has lived in the area for 43 of his 49 years. "I don't know if it would have happened without Mr. Williams. He is leaving a legacy here. So is the N.F.L."

N.F.L. players, especially from the Raiders and the Rams, will be asked to visit the center and work with youths. This facility cannot solve all of the deep, sweeping problems of South-Central Los Angeles, but it makes a tremendous effort where effort is needed most -- among youth.

Williams makes special mention of former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who died Sunday. Marshall's impetus that sparked the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, which ended the "separate but equal" system of segregation in American schools, came in the year in which Williams was born.

"He always played a unique role in my life," Williams said. "He paved the way and issued a challenge for me. I'm trying to do the same with these youth. In a small way, a door is open for opportunity. The hope and the expectation is that the N.F.L./ Y.E.T facility will not be a goal unto itself but a catalyst for creative ways to assist youth. We tell them to stay in school and get an education, but this is a vehicle that goes beyond the advice. It puts deeds behind the words. The youth must act and seize the opportunity."

Will they?

"I don't think very much is going to change," said Amos Harris, an 18-year-old who lives five minutes from the facility and who worked at the center setting up the sound system for the N.F.L. news conference today that was to announce the facility plans. "Some people have changed, but not a whole lot has changed. But I have to look at it in the way that every little thing that is done here is good. I've never heard of the N.F.L. doing anything like this. It's a great start. They should continue."

One final thought. The site on which the facility will be built is part of a shopping center that serves as a nerve center for the area. In fact, the new facility is being built on ground where stores were burned to ashes during the L.A. riots.

The New York Times, January 26, 1993

This is how ashes can, indeed, be turned into beauty.

GRAPHIC: Photo: Ever since Super Bowl XXIII was played against the backdrop of riots in Miami, the N.F.L. has increased efforts to help communities that host the game. Darrell Henley of the Rams, left, stands alongside a member of a Hispanic gang during visit by N.F.L. players to Toberman Settlement House in Los Angeles yesterday. (Associated Press)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 26, 1993

LEVEL 1 - 14 OF 16 STORIES

Copyright 1987 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

September 18, 1987, Friday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part 2; Page 1; Column 1; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 623 words

HEADLINE: RAIL STATION RENOVATION RUNS ABOUT A YEAR LATE;
PROJECT IS PART OF WATTS DEVELOPMENT

BYLINE: By DAVID FERRELL, Times Staff Writer

BODY:

Every day, Eloise Williams looks out her office window and sees the Watts Train Station, a national historic landmark built in 1904.

But it is not a view she likes. The walls of the small beige building are splashed with graffiti and political posters. The windows are boarded. The dirt around it sprouts a bright red-and-white sign proclaiming it a city restoration project -- "Completion: July 1987" -- but Williams has yet to see it happen.

"It's an eyesore," she said. "People always come in and ask me, 'What are they going to do?' We'd appreciate it if they would do something."

Delayed 6 Months

Refurbishment of the single-story, wood-framed structure at 103rd Street and Grandee Avenue has been delayed more than six months because of technical problems in initiating contracts for the work, according to Bill Brown, the Watts project manager for the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency.

Original estimates called for the station restoration to cost about \$310,000 -- but those numbers were 3 or 4 years old by the time bids came in, Brown said. The prices that contractors quoted, ranging from \$532,000 to \$1.1 million, caused redevelopment officials to scrap the bids and start over from scratch, he said.

"We said, 'Let's go back and rebid this and get it right this time,' " Brown said.

Other less important technical problems have also delayed the work, he said. But those problems appear to be ironed out, and the agency is expecting to start the work by the end of the year. It is likely the work will cost just over \$500,000 -- an amount the agency considers reasonable, he said -- and the project should be completed by next summer, Brown said.

\$28-Million Redevelopment

Watts residents, meanwhile, expressed less concern about the delays than excitement over the project. The refurbished station will become a new ornament

Los Angeles Times, September 18, 1987

in the community's \$28-million redevelopment plan, which since 1969 has resulted in three major apartment complexes, a new health center and two gleaming new shopping centers in a neighborhood badly burned during the Watts riots.

"I remember when this area was tacky, tacky," said Byron King, 36, a lifelong Watts resident who has watched the community transformation. "Now I'm proud to live here."

Bill Benfield, 60, a longtime maintenance worker in Watts, said he eagerly looks forward to the refurbishment of the station -- a favorite reminder of his childhood. He recalled when he could spend a dime there to board the old Red Car train and travel to points from San Pedro to Santa Monica if he was inclined to make transfers.

"On Saturday mornings you would see people catching the Red Car to go downtown to do their shopping," Benfield remembered. "(Those cars) were fast, quick, no waiting. You could depend on them. If you had to be there at 8 o'clock, you'd be there at 8 o'clock. They came rain or shine or flood -- whatever."

Although the last of them came more than 20 years ago -- they gave way to an era of freeways -- the newly planned 27-mile light-rail line from Long Beach to Los Angeles will be running again past the historic station beginning in 1992 or 1993, city officials said. Work on that project is well under way next to the building.

The station, meanwhile, will be mostly for looks -- and for use by the city's Department of Water and Power, which is planning a small office in the old structure. Rail travelers who whisk past it will see something that has endured the best and the worst in Watts' history, Benfield said.

"What amazed everybody is that during the Watts riots they burned down everything in sight," Benfield remembered. "But they never touched that building. For some strange reason, they never touched it."

GRAPHIC: Photo, Historic Watts Train Station at 103rd Street and Grandee Avenue as it awaits restoration, above, and as it looked in 1905, one year after it was built. Sign promised completion of restoration project in July, 1987, but officials now say it will be finished in the summer of 1988. JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA / Los Angeles Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LEVEL 1 - 13 OF 16 STORIES

Copyright 1989 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

March 17, 1989, Friday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part 2; Page 3; Column 2; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 659 words

HEADLINE: WATTS NEW?;
REOPENING OF HISTORIC RED CAR STATION AS MUSEUM AND DWP OFFICE SEEN AS SYMBOL OF
HOPE, RENEWAL

BYLINE: By PAUL FELDMAN, Times Staff Writer

BODY:

Eighty-five years after it was constructed, the once-deteriorating Watts train station was reborn Thursday.

More than 100 people gathered at 103rd Street and Grandee Avenue to celebrate the grand reopening of the wood-frame structure, which will operate as a Department of Water and Power customer service office and a mini-museum of Watts history.

Although the station will no longer serve as a passenger platform or ticket booth, city officials and Watts residents hope that the newly restored national historic landmark will serve as a symbol of continuity, hope and renewal for a neighborhood that has seen more than its share of hard times.

The station, once a main junction for the city's famed Red Cars, is located about 90 feet from the Los Angeles-to-Long Beach light-rail line that is scheduled to open next year.

'A New Era'

"It's more than an historical occasion -- it is a magical occasion," said the Rev. Thomas Kilgore, a Community Redevelopment Agency commissioner. "If you listen closely, you can almost hear the rumbling of the Red Cars. The railroad served as a catalyst for staking a community here . . . and this will herald a new era for Watts."

Mayor Tom Bradley waxed nostalgic about the days five decades ago when he boarded the train at the Watts station, sometimes sneaking on without the 15-cent fare.

"All of us are going to be able to relive those days when we rode the old Red Cars -- some of us free," he said to loud laughter. "I won't expose you; the statute of limitations has run out, so you can fully confess it to your next-door neighbors."

"Those were great days. Those days of glory are going to return, and we are going to be at the heart of the action right here at the Watts train station,"

Los Angeles Times, March 17, 1989

the mayor said.

After the ceremony, at a reception at which croissants and kiwis were served, Bradley explained that he was not advocating that riders sneak onto the new train without paying.

"In those days, there were some of us who didn't have the 15 cents to ride the Red Car," he said. "I think that those who need to travel from their work to their home (these days) will be able to afford the fare."

The brown, single-story station, restored to its original exterior design by the CRA for \$700,000, was built in an era when farmers harvested cabbage down the block and the ethnically mixed neighborhood was known as a place where a working man could buy a home for \$1 down and \$1 a week.

Sixty years later, the train station was the only structure that remained intact when stores along 103rd Street burned during the Watts riots.

In the years since, a shopping center, a health center and 458 units of affordable housing have been constructed in the neighborhood with the assistance of \$32 million in redevelopment funds. But the historic station has been largely vacant and run down since the demise of the Red Cars, the electric rail system that carried commuters and tourists around the Los Angeles Basin until it was taken out of service almost 30 years ago.

At Thursday's ceremony, city officials paid tribute to 70-year Watts resident Freitas Shaw Johnson, who spearheaded a two-decade community effort to restore the station.

Johnson, a retired music director, said she hoped that the refurbished station and the adjacent transit line will lead to "economic growth and jobs and . . . give a better picture of our area."

Officials, who also called the rail line a stimulus for commerce, stressed during the ceremony that the gated complex that will contain the old station, a new light-rail platform and parking will be brightly lit and monitored by closed-circuit cameras to provide safety for rail riders.

However, several area residents interviewed Thursday cautioned that 24-hour security service will be necessary to avert problems.

"If they get enough security it might work," said Angelo Machicote, 22. "But just like security has guns, the gang-bangers have guns."

GRAPHIC: Photo, Rail ties of the Los Angeles-to-Long Beach transit system, which will pass the Watts station. LARRY DAVIS / Los Angeles Times; Photo, Mayor Tom Bradley and Freitas Shaw Johnson, who led a 20-year effort to reopen the historic Watts Red Car Station.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Technology Disparity

Divider Title: _____

Copyright 1996 Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

October 7, 1996, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Business; Part D; Page 1; Financial Desk

LENGTH: 2513 words

SERIES: TIMES TECHNOLOGY POLL: The Wiring of Southern California. Second of two parts

HEADLINE: THE CUTTING EDGE / TECHNOLOGY POLL SPECIAL;
COMPUTING IN THE '90S: THE GREAT DIVIDE;
WITH THE DIGITAL ERA, AGE-OLD SOCIAL SCHISMS TAKE ON A NEW GRAVITY

BYLINE: AMY HARMON, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Marty Slusser believes computer skills are vital to a successful future for himself and his children.

Aqeela Sherrills believes the same.

The Slusser residence in suburban east Orange has two PCs, two cellular phones, a fax machine and a high-speed modem. When Slusser's daughter Haley had to do a report on rock collecting earlier this month, the 10-year-old plopped down in front of her dad's Pentium-powered machine and whipped herself up a multimedia presentation.

The Sherrills' apartment in a Watts housing project has a decade-old Apple II telephone that plugs into a wall. The computer is too creaky to be of much use to 11-year-old Terrell, who sometimes must wait in line at the public library to use one of two computers there when he has a homework assignment. But usually he just does it by hand.

"There's a sign-up sheet and we only have 30 minutes," he says. "That's a pretty short time to do stuff."

The two households are on opposite sides of several traditional social divides: The Slussers' annual income is about \$ 75,000, the Sherrills' is less than \$ 30,000. Marty, who is white, is a college graduate. Aqeela, who is African American, is not.

But the families also reflect a new digital-age determinant of who is likely to get what in American society: access to technology.

Those who have it, experts say, are far better prepared to compete for jobs, affluence and power than those who do not.

And the high-tech revolution--which conjured utopian visions of digital democracy and a playing field leveled by the egalitarian properties of cyberspace--has so far mainly benefited those who are already the nation's

Los Angeles Times October 7, 1996, Monday,

most privileged.

Only 22% of Southern California households with annual incomes of less than \$ 25,000 have personal computers, compared with 69% of those with incomes of more than \$ 50,000, according to The Times Technology Poll. Of respondents with a high school education or less, 22% used computers at home, compared with 57% of college graduates.

"Two-thirds of all new jobs in the near future will require some knowledge of computers," says Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson. "If these kids graduate and are not computer-literate, what chance do they have?"

Wilson's recent book, "When Work Disappears," traces the widening gap between America's haves and have-nots to the decline of high-paying blue-collar jobs in the 1970s and '80s, when a college degree began to make a significant difference in expected income.

"The technological revolution will widen that gap further, because the people who have access to computers tend to be those from the more advantaged families," Wilson says. "Inner-city families are not going to have computers at home, and it's a very serious concern."

Not surprisingly, income and education are the most significant factors in determining who owns a personal computer, according to the telephone poll of 1,200 randomly selected Los Angeles and Orange county residents that was conducted for The Times by Mark Baldassare & Associates.

Whereas the vast majority of those polled said that keeping up with new developments in computers and telecommunications is important, only 38% of those with incomes of less than \$ 50,000 felt they were keeping up, compared with six in 10 among those earning more.

About 13% of those earning less than \$ 50,000 use a modem, compared with 41% of those earning more than \$ 50,000.

Ethnicity is also a factor in the technological divide. Compared with Latinos, twice the number of non-Latino whites polled said they own personal computers.

Such disparity, experts say, is especially striking in Southern California.

"What is so dramatic here is the way in which the poor neighborhoods of the region are just totally cut off from the potential benefits of an economy that integrates such vast scientific skill," says Los Angeles historian Mike Davis.

David Guizar, 23, of Los Angeles felt that contrast keenly at a jobs seminar he attended recently at which he met a film studio executive who described the Internet to him.

"I've heard how useful it is and that you can find information within minutes that you would have to go to a library for hours to look up," says Guizar, who works as a community organizer. "But I've never had a computer, and most people in my community don't even know what the Internet is."

At the unemployment office, he has been asked several times whether he knows how to use the computer program Wordperfect. The answer is no.

Francesca Badami, 13, knows several word-processing programs, and she's learning how to program. She was something of an America Online junkie before she got bored with it earlier this year. And her parents have promised her a pager if she makes the honor roll this semester.

Everyone at her Hollywood middle school has one, it seems.

"It seems to have become a standard of communications for a lot of younger people," says her father, 50. "They like to be in touch."

Frank Badami uses an electronic personal organizer to store his schedule and name-and-address file, and a laptop on which to do his work. The television producer began using computers six years ago. He multi-tasks, getting up-to-the-minute sports scores via the Internet while he designs mission statements and budgets for his investors.

And he visits the Rodney Dangerfield World Wide Web site for the joke of the day, every day. No techno whiz, Badami nonetheless believes his adaptation to computer technology has helped him get ahead.

"I literally don't know how I ran my life or my business before I used a computer," he says.

Victoria Olan, 54, fears that a failure to adapt to the computer age could have dire consequences. The Santa Ana nurse's aide has been told that she will soon have to use a computer at work. If she can't do it, she may be out of a job.

"I wish I could have one at home, but it's very expensive. I have payments for my car and my son has payments for his car, and we have to send the payments for other kids in Mexico," Olan says.

She hopes to go to night classes next year, but attending school after working long days at the hospital is a daunting prospect.

High-tech partisans argue that technology cannot be blamed for highlighting social disparities. In fact, they say, electronic communication has already aided the disadvantaged, providing a new method for grass-roots organizing and enabling inner-city schools to link to museums and scientists around the country.

And as prices for computers continue to decline, some contend that the high-tech gap will close. A new PC costs about \$ 2,000 today. But several firms are developing stripped-down "network computers" that would cost less than \$ 500.

"The American economic system has for years been developing structural forces that tend to marginalize segments of the population," says Phil Agre, assistant professor of communications at UC San Diego. "How big a nail technology is in someone's coffin is a big question to me."

Los Angeles Times October 7, 1996, Monday,

The advantages conferred by access to technology may well pale against other mundane forms of privilege--access to better schools, nutrition and physical safety. But sociologists note that education has long been a key determinant of social position, and familiarity with and access to computers is becoming an important factor in educational performance.

"The way our society is built today, your fate in life is very strongly connected to how you do in school," says Claude Fischer, a sociologist at UC Berkeley who is the senior author of the forthcoming "Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth." ("The Bell Curve" is the controversial 1995 book arguing that race is a determinant of intelligence.) "Parents who can provide their children with computers at home give them an important advantage."

The Educational Testing Service, for example, is moving to computerize the SAT and other tests it administers, Fischer says.

"Say two kids come in to take their SATs. One had a computer at home and spends two hours a night sending e-mail or playing games. Another has one hour a week in their school lab. Now you come into this situation where your life flashes before your eyes. That's just one example in which computer skills will make the well-off better off and the poorly off worse off."

Paradoxically, even volunteer efforts to wire the schools, such as Net Day, which took place in California in March and was launched nationwide last week, have helped rich schools more than poor ones.

John Cradler, policy specialist at WestEd, a regional educational research laboratory, says better-equipped schools with students from higher-income families tend to be the ones that benefit from various government and industry technology aid programs simply because poor schools have more pressing needs.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed Hundt has long championed a system of universal service for electronic communication, which would require communications providers to contribute to a fund that would be used to wire schools and libraries.

But a board of state and federal representatives charged with designing such a system under the 1996 Telecommunications Act is split over whether such initiatives should be publicly regulated or left to the private sector. A recommendation is scheduled to be sent to the FCC for review next month.

"I think it would be unconscionable for the United States to say the information highway is only for those who have the equivalent of a Mercedes-Benz," says Hundt. "But there is a serious division on the board."

Aqeela Sherrills isn't waiting. He's seeking out groups to donate computers for a neighborhood computer laboratory that can teach kids such as his son how to design World Wide Web sites. Some days he's optimistic. Others he's not.

"Everything's moving so fast. Five years from now, it will be so far ahead that the kids from the inner city won't be able to catch up," Sherrills says. "They'll be locked out of high-tech just like they're locked out of a lot of other fields today. Except worse."

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

How the Poll Was Conducted

The Times Technology Poll was conducted by Mark Baldassare & Associates of Irvine. The random telephone survey of 1,200 adults--600 in Los Angeles County and 600 in Orange County--was conducted Aug. 1-7 in English and Spanish. The survey results are statistically weighted to reflect the population distribution of residents in Los Angeles and Orange counties. The margin of error for the total sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For Orange County and Los Angeles County subsamples, it is plus or minus 4 percentage points. For subgroups such as individuals using home computers, the margin of error is larger.

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

Where are you on the techno pole?

How those surveyed ranked themselves in terms of knowledge:

A Techie

You know the difference between ISDN and IBM.

11%

Coping

You're no expert, but you're keeping up.

30%

Struggling

You're somewhat knowledgeable, but you're falling behind.

42%

A Disconnects

You have little to no involvement with computers.

17%

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

User Profiles

Those perched atop the technology pole in the Southland are wealthy and young. A look at how home computer users compare:

Computer owners

Techies: 68%

Coping: 65%

Struggling: 42%

Disconnects: 10%

*

Income

Income less than \$ 50,000

Techies: 34%

Coping: 42%

Struggling: 60%

Disconnects: 76%

*

\$ 50,000 or more

Techies: 66%

Coping: 58%

Struggling: 40%

Disconnects: 24%

*

Age

18-34

Techies: 51%

Coping: 45%

Struggling: 46%

Disconnects: 34%

*
5-54

Techies: 36%

Coping: 44%

Struggling: 32%

Disconnects: 17%

*

55 or older

Techies: 13%

Coping: 11%

Struggling: 22%

Disconnects: 49%

*

Feel computers make life better

Techies: 74%

Coping: 69%

Struggling: 65%

Disconnects: 35%

Source: Times Technology Poll and a 1995 Times-Mirror Survey

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

Can Computers Cure Isolation?

Residents in Orange and Los Angeles counties are less optimistic about the ability of computers to bring people together than are Americans as a whole, and they are split over the wisdom of a law granting universal access to the Internet. (Results are for Orange and Los Angeles counties unless otherwise noted. National results are from a 1995 poll.)

* Do you think computers do more to isolate people from their communities and others around them, or do more to bring together people with shared interests, no matter where they live?

Bring people together

O.C./L.A.: 48%

U.S.: 67%

*

Isolate people

O.C./L.A.: 34%

U.S.: 23%

*

Don't know

O.C./L.A.: 18%

U.S.: 10%

* Would you favor or oppose a law requiring computer networks to allow everyone to have some access to Internet features such as electronic mail regardless of their ability to pay, just as telephone companies are now required to provide telephone service to people who cannot afford it?

Favor: 44%

Oppose: 44%

Don't know: 12%

* In general, do you feel as though you are keeping up or falling behind in your knowledge of computers and telecommunications?

Keeping up: 47%

Falling behind: 42%

Don't know: 11%

Sources: Times Technology Poll, 1995 Newsweek Poll

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

Techno Status

Technology is creating new divisions among residents of Los Angeles and Orange counties. The most technology adept are overwhelmingly male and highly educated. "Techies" tend to believe strongly in the importance of technology

Los Angeles Times October 7, 1996, Monday,

and are more likely to be at least partly self-employed. A profile of users and users:

	Techies	Coping	Struggling	Disconnects	
Sex					
Men		68%	45%	51%	43%
Women	32	55	49	57	
Education					
College graduate	56	45	33	19	
Some college	17	32	23	21	
High school or less	27	23	44	60	
Employment status					
Employed by other	52	58	54	28	
Completely or partly					
Self-employed	38	25	20	13	
Not employed	10	17	26	59	
Have in home:					
Desktop computer	63	59	39	7	
Portable computer	33	20	12	4	
Home computer use:					
Modem	49	29	12	0	
E-mail	44	22	8	0	
Chat	24	14	4	0	
Very likely to buy					
computer in the next year	35	26	21	8	
Know about Internet	95	93	81	52	
Consider it very					
important to stay					
informed about technology	74	54	41	20	
Computers' impact					
Bring people together	52	53	49	33	
Bring families together	58	49	43	37	

Source: Times Technology Poll

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: THE HAVES: Marty Slusser of Orange and some of the fancy equipment his offspring can take advantage of. PHOTOGRAPHER: AL SCHABEN / Los Angeles Times PHOTO: THE HAVE-NOTS: Terrell Sherrills, 11, Net surfs at Watts Public Library. There's an old Apple II at home. PHOTOGRAPHER: GARY FRIEDMAN / Los Angeles Times GRAPHIC-TABLE: Techno Status, KIRK CHRIST / Los Angeles Times GRAPHIC-CHART: Can Computers Cure Isolation?, KIRK CHRIST / Los Angeles Times GRAPHIC-CHART: Where are you on the techno pole?, KIRK CHRIST / Los Angeles Times GRAPHIC-CHART: User Profiles, KIRK CHRIST / Los Angeles Times GRAPHIC-DRAWING: ("Techno Pole"), VAL B. MINA / Los Angeles Times

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: October 7, 1996

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Los Angeles Times

October 6, 1996, Sunday, Orange County Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 1; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 2029 words

HEADLINE: GETTING WITH THE PC PROGRAM;
TECHNOLOGY: OPTIMISM AND FEAR FUEL THE GROWING SOUTHLAND HUNGER FOR PERSONAL COMPUTERS.

BYLINE: GREG MILLER, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Fueled by a strong faith in technology and an uneasy fear of being left in its wake, the Southland has become one of the most computer-saturated regions in the country, according to a new Times technology poll.

Of all households in Orange and Los Angeles counties, 46% have personal computers, according to the survey. The most recent comparable national study, conducted late last year, showed that 36% of households in the United States have PCs.

Among Southern Californians without PCs, a remarkable 43% said they are likely to buy one within the next year--a statistic that underscores a growing perception of the computer as an appliance as indispensable to a home as a telephone, radio or television.

In fact, Southern Californians' overwhelming optimism about computers and technology was one of the strongest--and, to some, most troubling--currents running throughout the poll, which was conducted for The Times by Mark Bonassare & Associates.

More than 60% of those surveyed said they believe computers and other new technological devices, such as pagers and cellular phones, are making their lives better. Only 6% said technology is making things worse.

There is also a growing sense of pressure to keep up with technology. About 75% of respondents said they feel it is important to keep pace in the computer age, although fewer than half believe they are managing to do so.

This combination of unblinking optimism and fear of being left behind has helped push the PC far beyond the pocket-protector crowd. For some, it is still a high-tech status symbol, but for many it is a coveted ticket to the future.

Joe Lopez found his family's ticket while rummaging through a dumpster.

On his nightly rounds collecting aluminum cans along the industrial streets of Azusa, Lopez discovered a gold necklace worth \$ 450. That's nearly enough to cover a month's rent for the financially strapped Lopez family. Instead, the out-of-work handyman put the money toward what he, his wife and his children

had long wanted: a computer.

"The computer is the way of the future," said Lopez, 38, who bought a used PC with a 486 processor. "And I'm hoping it will enable my children to have a better and brighter future than I had."

Many of those polled believe that computers and other high-tech devices will give them more free time, fix schools and bring people closer together.

Few were very concerned about adverse consequences of the computer age, even though the poll also revealed such troubling trends as technology's tendency to widen the gap between society's haves and have-nots.

All of which makes some scholars fret that Southern Californians, like many Americans, have jumped aboard the technology train with barely a glance toward where it's headed.

"Americans not only love technology, they lust for it," said Neil Postman, a professor in the department of culture and communications at New York University. "But we need to become critical enough so that we can use the technology, rather than have it use us."

Few Southern Californians seem to be losing much sleep over that prospect.

A cabinetmaker for more than 20 years, Anthony Bishop is an artisan in an era of information. While other workers spend their days staring into computer screens, Bishop knows the pleasures of shaping a piece of wood with his hands.

A bit of a throwback, Bishop loves the outdoors and still spends hours tinkering with the model train set he has kept since childhood.

But Bishop, who lives in Mission Viejo, is giving up cabinetmaking to focus on building computerized homes. He makes calls with his cellular phone during hikes up Mammoth Mountain, and he is wiring his train set so he can control it with his PC.

In fact, he has embraced the computer age so wholeheartedly that he tells his 11-year-old daughter that computer skills are "vital, right next to math and English and breathing."

Bishop, 40, believes we are hurtling toward a glorious world in which computers will improve our lives in countless ways. Classrooms will be unnecessary as students all over the world get their education online. Hospitals will monitor patients at home via computer. And on those rare occasions when people actually have to go somewhere, computers will take care of that too.

"Imagine every car on the freeway being electric," Bishop said. "You just punch in which mall you want and it automatically starts taking you there."

*

Bishop's brand of optimism has a lot to do with why Americans are so enthralled by technology, and why millions of people every month rush into

Los Angeles Times October 6, 1996, Sunday,

computer stores and spend thousands of dollars to buy machines that require tremendous patience to learn and often become obsolete in just a few years.

Such optimism is "part of a long, American tradition dating back to the telegraph," said Susan Douglas, a professor of communications studies at the University of Michigan.

From the telegraph through the television, each new breakthrough has landed in the American marketplace like a stone in a lake, sending up a splash of expectations that over time dissipate into far-reaching but faint ripples.

"The basic pattern," Douglas said, "is an initial flush of enormous optimism and array of utopian hopes, followed by deep disappointment."

It's not that technology doesn't makes things better, she said, it's just that it rarely lives up to the impossibly high expectations Americans tend to set.

At TV's unveiling at the 1939 World's Fair, David Sarnoff of RCA predicted: "It is probable that television drama of high caliber and produced by first-rate artists will materially raise the level of dramatic taste of the nation."

In some ways, TV has done even better than that. It has given everyday people a glimpse of the moon and confronted them with the horrible images of war. But it has also sapped interest in reading, glorified violence and supplanted dinner-table conversation for millions of families.

DJ Brumby used to be a public health officer in the Air Force, but now the 36-year-old Culver City resident is struggling to make ends meet as a writer. For Brumby, who participated in The Times' poll, the computer is an invaluable writing and research tool.

If she is writing an underwater sequence and needs to make sure it's right, she e-mails marine biologists. "Or if I'm trying to set something in a location other than California, I can get ahold of a glider club at a field in Illinois and ask them what the conditions were like this month," she said.

But the computer's greatest application, Brumby said, may be as "a tool for peace in the world."

Conflict, she said, usually stems from a failure to communicate. "With the Internet, you can talk to people anywhere in the world," she said. "It's going to increase communications, and once you understand people, it makes it easier to deal with each other. Black versus white. Christian versus non-Christian. The computer will increase understanding."

*

But even those who are designing the computers of tomorrow are not so sure that will happen. Donald A. Norman, head of the research laboratory at Apple Computer in Cupertino, raises another possibility.

"Everybody predicts the computer will lead to world peace and better understanding," he said. "I say no, it will lead to better effectiveness of terrorists and counter-society groups."

"Suppose you have one or two people in your community who have weird views about the world," he said. "Normally, they would be completely ineffective. But computer technology allows all these people to find each other and communicate. So what would have been one or two harmless cranks can become thousands of people across the world who reinforce their own sickness."

And Norman considers himself a technology optimist.

There is no doubt that computers have had a profound impact on the workplace, making it quicker and easier to do everything from designing rockets to writing this article.

Even among technology skeptics polled by The Times, most acknowledge that the computer is an amazing machine.

"I wouldn't give up my computer for the world," said Kathleen Travers, 39, a computer expert for the city of Los Angeles' Cultural Affairs Department. "I've written a couple of full-length books, and to be able to move a chapter and have it automatically renumber the pages, that is incredibly time-saving. It's a very valuable tool."

But in some ways, she said, the computer has made work less productive because e-mail, voice mail, pagers and other devices make communication so easy and immediate that they carry an endless stream of disruptions.

Few in the poll share these concerns. About half of those surveyed said computers and new telecommunications devices give them more free time, compared to 30% who said technology is stretching their workday. But when computer owners were asked what they use their machines for, 40% mentioned "job-related tasks."

*

Respondents brushed aside the notion that computers isolate people or eat into family time. Nearly half the respondents said they believe computers bring people and families closer together, even though the most common activities--work, word processing and personal finance--are rather solitary.

Perhaps one of the most telling poll responses came when computer users were asked how much they would miss their machines if they were taken away. About 20% said "some," and nearly two-thirds said "a lot."

Joe Lopez did not have his computer when the poll was conducted. In fact, he only recently found that necklace in the dumpster. But in the short time since then, the machine has already become a fixture in the Lopez household.

His 16-year-old daughter, Michelle, uses the computer for computer class homework and for writing school reports. Sometimes, Joe fires up their free trial subscription to America Online, and the whole family gathers around to watch.

Lopez is a recent arrival to the computer age, but in some ways he is already rational than most.

While others spend small fortunes to buy computers with the latest processor and biggest hard drive, Lopez spent less than \$ 500 on a PC that's a little slow, but has a lot of mileage left.

He admits that he is awed by the machine, and hopes that it will "help my children go places they wouldn't ordinarily go." But he said he also tries to teach his daughters that, although they can learn a lot from computers, there are still things they have to learn.

Last year, he used the Marlboro coupons that he collects from dumpsters to get a dartboard.

"I watched my daughter have to count on her fingers to add up her score," he said. "And I realized, when you've got calculators and computers in school to do all that thinking for you, what do you use your mind for? I tell my daughters that the computer is a tool that will benefit them, but at the same time they have to learn that people make the world go round, not machines."

Perhaps one of the most telling poll responses came when computer users were asked how much they would miss their machines if they were taken away. About 20% said 'some,' and nearly two-thirds said 'a lot.'

FIRST OF TWO PARTS

Respondents brushed aside the notion that computers isolate people or eat into family time. Nearly half the respondents said they believe computers bring people and families closer together, even though the most common activities--work, word processing and personal finance--are rather solitary.

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

to Speed

Orange County tops Los Angeles County and the national average in terms of computer ownership. In both counties, more people were able to correctly describe the Internet than in the nation as a whole.

	Los Angeles County	Orange County	United States
Have home computers	44%	53%	36%

Have you ever heard of the Internet? If yes, can you describe what it is?

	Los Angeles County	Orange County	United States
Yes, correct answer	69%	76%	34%

Source: Times Technology Poll, 1995 Times Mirror Poll

GRAPHIC: GRAPHIC-TABLE: Up to Speed

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Divider Title: _____

990 CPH-L-4. Selected Population and Housing Characteristics
Table 1. South Central Los Angeles

Total population	523,156	Total housing units	158,933
SEX		OCCUPANCY AND TENURE	
Male	251,425	Occupied housing units	149,421
Female	271,731	Owner occupied	55,914
		Percent owner occupied	37.4
AGE		Renter occupied	93,507
Under 5 years	58,327	Vacant housing units	9,512
5 to 17 years	123,236	For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	62
18 to 20 years	28,103	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1.3
21 to 24 years	39,897	Rental vacancy rate (percent)	5.4
25 to 44 years	158,750	Persons per owner-occupied unit	3.47
45 to 54 years	40,660	Persons per renter-occupied unit	3.48
55 to 59 years	16,734	Units with over 1 person per room	47,526
60 to 64 years	15,460	UNITS IN STRUCTURE	
65 to 74 years	25,345	1-unit, detached	81,147
75 to 84 years	13,179	1-unit, attached	15,315
85 years and over	3,465	2 to 4 units	26,524
Median age	26.2	5 to 9 units	15,823
Under 18 years	181,563	10 or more units	17,650
Percent of total population	34.7	Mobile home, trailer, other	2,466
65 years and over	41,989	VALUE	
Percent of total population	8.0	Specified owner-occupied units	48,924
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		Less than \$50,000	2,067
Total households	149,421	\$50,000 to \$99,999	16,918
Family households (families)	109,686	\$100,000 to \$149,999	18,048
Married-couple families	54,496	\$150,000 to \$199,999	8,229
Percent of total households	36.5	\$200,000 to \$299,999	2,753
Other family, male householder	12,503	\$300,000 or more	889
Other family, female householder	42,687	Median (dollars)	113,400
Nonfamily households	39,735	CONTRACT RENT	
Percent of total households	26.6	Specified renter-occupied units paying cash rent	90,514
Householder living alone	33,803	Less than \$250	15,103
Householder 65 years and over	12,983	\$250 to \$499	45,413
Persons living in households	519,954	\$500 to \$749	26,605
Persons per household	3.48	\$750 to \$999	2,962
GROUP QUARTERS		\$1,000 or more	431
Persons living in group quarters	3,202	Median (dollars)	428
Institutionalized persons	811	RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLDER	
Other persons in group quarters	2,391	Occupied housing units	149,421
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN		White	12,073
White	54,670	Black	104,136
Black	290,123	Percent of occupied units	69.7
Percent of total population	55.5	American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	484
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	1,647	Percent of occupied units	0.3
Percent of total population	0.3	Asian or Pacific Islander	1,820
Asian or Pacific Islander	5,802	Percent of occupied units	1.2
Percent of total population	1.1	Other race	30,908
Other race	170,914	Hispanic origin (of any race)	44,161
Hispanic origin (of any race)	235,983	Percent of occupied units	29.6
Percent of total population	45.1		

The user should note that there are limitations to many of these data. Please refer to the technical documentation provided with Summary Tape File 1A for a further explanation on the limitations of the data.

990 CPH-L-82. Selected Social Characteristics: 1990
Table 2. South Central Los Angeles

The user should note that these data are based on a sample, subject to sampling variability, and that there are limitations to many of these data. Please refer to the technical documentation for Summary Tape File 3 for a further explanation of sampling variability and limitations of the data.

URBAN AND RURAL RESIDENCE		VETERAN STATUS	
Total population	523,209	Civilian veterans 16 years and over	27,507
Urban population	523,209	65 years and over	7,512
Percent of total population	100.0		
Rural population	-	NATIVITY AND PLACE OF BIRTH	
Percent of total population	-	Native population	359,385
Farm population	-	Percent born in State of residence	61.2
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		Foreign-born population	163,824
Persons 3 years and over enrolled in school	162,947	Entered the U.S. 1980 to 1990	97,427
Preprimary school	8,050	LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	
Elementary or high school	126,437	Persons 5 years and over	465,182
Percent in private school	7.0	Speak a language other than English	202,577
College	28,460	Do not speak English "very well"	136,315
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		Speak Spanish	195,169
Persons 25 years and over	275,404	Do not speak English "very well"	133,322
Less than 9th grade	78,380	Speak Asian or Pacific Island language	3,284
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	65,492	Do not speak English "very well"	1,912
High school graduate	57,969		
Some college, no degree	41,597	ANCESTRY	
Associate degree	15,187	Total ancestries reported	462,264
Bachelor's degree	11,095	Arab	175
Graduate or professional degree	5,684	Austrian	54
Percent high school graduate or higher	47.8	Belgian	-
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	6.1	Canadian	139
RESIDENCE IN 1985		Czech	45
Persons 5 years and over	465,182	Danish	98
Lived in same house	244,317	Dutch	71
Lived in different house in U.S.	187,351	English	1,265
Same State	177,701	Finnish	13
Same county	172,336	French (except Basque)	1,005
Different county	5,365	French Canadian	638
Different State	9,650	German	1,691
Lived abroad	33,514	Greek	74
DISABILITY OF CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONALIZED PERSONS		Hungarian	110
Persons 16 to 64 years	316,857	Irish	1,454
With a mobility or self-care limitation	55,282	Italian	863
With a mobility limitation	32,953	Lithuanian	20
With a self-care limitation	31,152	Norwegian	79
With a work disability	33,869	Polish	127
In labor force	8,507	Portuguese	86
Prevented from working	22,782	Romanian	6
		Russian	29
Persons 65 years and over	41,028	Scotch-Irish	235
With a mobility or self-care limitation	19,328	Scottish	122
With a mobility limitation	16,588	Slovak	77
With a self-care limitation	8,951	Subsaharan African	2,819
CHILDREN EVER BORN PER 1,000 WOMEN		Swedish	147
Women 15 to 24 years	596	Swiss	8
Women 25 to 34 years	1,992	Ukrainian	18
Women 35 to 44 years	2,731	United States or American	6,200
		Welsh	67
		West Indian (excluding Hispanic origin groups)	6,198
		Yugoslavian	43
		Other ancestries	438,287

CPH-L-82. Selected Labor Force and Commuting Characteristics: 1990
Table 3. South Central Los Angeles

The user should note that these data are based on a sample, subject to sampling variability, and that there are limitations to many of these data. Please refer to the technical documentation for Summary Tape File 3 for a further explanation of sampling variability and limitations of the data.

LABOR FORCE STATUS		OCCUPATION	
Persons 16 years and over	358,826	Employed persons 16 years and over	175,284
In labor force	206,819	Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations	9,729
Percent in labor force	57.6	Professional specialty occupations	11,897
Civilian labor force	206,610	Technicians and related support occupations	3,372
Employed	175,284	Sales occupations	12,242
Unemployed	31,326	Administrative support occupations, including clerical	32,974
Percent unemployed	15.2	Private household occupations	2,649
Armed Forces	209	Protective service occupations	4,180
Not in labor force	152,007	Service occupations, except protective and household	23,797
Males 16 years and over	167,579	Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	2,919
In labor force	114,510	Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	20,771
Percent in labor force	68.3	Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	28,756
Civilian labor force	114,325	Transportation and material moving occupations	9,807
Employed	96,383	Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	12,191
Unemployed	17,942		
Percent unemployed	15.7	INDUSTRY	
Armed Forces	185	Employed persons 16 years and over	175,284
Not in labor force	53,069	Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	2,425
Females 16 years and over	191,247	Mining	287
In labor force	92,309	Construction	10,241
Percent in labor force	48.3	Manufacturing, nondurable goods	21,370
Civilian labor force	92,285	Manufacturing, durable goods	23,526
Employed	78,901	Transportation	11,586
Unemployed	13,384	Communications and other public utilities	3,411
Percent unemployed	14.5	Wholesale trade	7,365
Armed Forces	24	Retail trade	22,771
Not in labor force	98,938	Finance, insurance, and real estate	8,135
Females 16 years and over	191,247	Business and repair services	13,216
With own children under 6 years	40,151	Personal services	7,969
Percent in labor force	47.1	Entertainment and recreation services	2,393
With own children 6 to 17 years only	29,656	Health services	12,368
Percent in labor force	62.1	Educational services	12,920
Own children under 6 years in families and subfamilies	63,520	Other professional and related services	8,323
All parents present in household in labor force	29,270	Public administration	6,978
Own children 6 to 17 years in families and subfamilies	100,226	CLASS OF WORKER	
All parents present in household in labor force	52,318	Employed persons 16 years and over	175,284
Persons 16 to 19 years	35,008	Private wage and salary workers	135,064
Not enrolled in school and not high school graduate	9,118	Government workers	31,869
Employed or in Armed Forces	3,160	Local government workers	19,747
Unemployed	1,330	State government workers	4,897
Not in labor force	4,628	Federal government workers	7,225
COMMUTING TO WORK		Self-employed workers	7,717
Workers 16 years and over	168,662	Unpaid family workers	634
Percent drove alone	57.9		
Percent in carpools	21.5		
Percent using public transportation	15.0		
Percent using other means	1.5		
Percent walked or worked at home	4.0		
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	29.4		

90 CPH-L-82. Income and Poverty Status in 1989: 1990
Table 4. South Central Los Angeles

The user should note that these data are based on a sample, subject to sampling variability, and that there are limitations to many of these data. Please refer to the technical documentation for Summary Tape File 3 for a further explanation of sampling variability and limitations of the data.

INCOME IN 1989		POVERTY STATUS IN 1989	
Households	149,682	All persons for whom poverty status is determined	518,153
Less than \$5,000	15,962	Below poverty level	170,369
\$5,000 to \$9,999	26,981	Persons 18 years and over	340,901
\$10,000 to \$14,999	18,600	Below poverty level	91,821
\$15,000 to \$24,999	30,535	Persons 65 years and over	41,028
\$25,000 to \$34,999	20,894	Below poverty level	7,744
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18,226	Related children under 18 years	175,782
\$50,000 to \$74,999	12,853	Below poverty level	77,470
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3,800	Related children under 5 years	56,057
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,341	Below poverty level	25,525
\$150,000 or more	490	Related children 5 to 17 years	119,725
Median household income (dollars)	18,991	Below poverty level	51,945
Families	111,140	Unrelated individuals	70,234
Less than \$5,000	10,377	Below poverty level	26,193
\$5,000 to \$9,999	16,336	All families	111,140
\$10,000 to \$14,999	14,395	Below poverty level	33,728
\$15,000 to \$24,999	23,685	With related children under 18 years	76,262
\$25,000 to \$34,999	16,316	Below poverty level	29,298
\$35,000 to \$49,999	14,513	With related children under 5 years	40,799
\$50,000 to \$74,999	10,845	Below poverty level	17,633
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3,176	Female householder families	43,612
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,096	Below poverty level	19,189
\$150,000 or more	401	With related children under 18 years	31,810
Median family income (dollars)	20,593	Below poverty level	17,239
Nonfamily households	38,542	With related children under 5 years	15,843
Less than \$5,000	6,866	Below poverty level	9,909
\$5,000 to \$9,999	12,106	Percent below poverty level:	
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5,037	All persons	32.9
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6,556	Persons 18 years and over	26.9
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4,036	Persons 65 years and over	18.9
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2,575	Related children under 18 years	44.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	908	Related children under 5 years	45.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	243	Related children 5 to 17 years	43.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	141	Unrelated individuals	37.3
\$150,000 or more	74	All families	30.3
Median nonfamily household income (dollars)	10,235	With related children under 18 years	38.4
Per capita income (dollars)	7,395	With related children under 5 years	43.2
INCOME TYPE IN 1989		Female householder families	44.0
Households	149,682	With related children under 18 years	54.2
With wage and salary income	103,768	With related children under 5 years	62.5
Mean wage and salary income (dollars)	28,223		
With nonfarm self-employment income	9,865		
Mean nonfarm self-employment income (dollars)	14,359		
With farm self-employment income	483		
Mean farm self-employment income (dollars)	5,300		
With Social Security income	34,485		
Mean Social Security income (dollars)	6,452		
With public assistance income	40,165		
Mean public assistance income (dollars)	5,953		
With retirement income	18,106		
Mean retirement income (dollars)	7,654		

CPH-L-82. Selected Housing Characteristics: 1990
 Table 5. South Central Los Angeles

The user should note that these data are based on a sample, subject to sampling variability, and that there are limitations to many of these data. Please refer to the technical documentation for Summary Tape File 3 for a further explanation of sampling variability and limitations of the data.

Total housing units	158,951	VEHICLES AVAILABLE	
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT		Occupied housing units	149,440
1989 to March 1990	1,987	None	38,073
1985 to 1988	5,735	1	61,654
1980 to 1984	4,895	2	33,236
1970 to 1979	11,266	3 or more	16,477
1960 to 1969	21,813		
1950 to 1959	34,401	MORTGAGE STATUS AND SELECTED	
1940 to 1949	38,985	MONTHLY OWNER COSTS	
1939 or earlier	39,869	Specified owner-occupied	
BEDROOMS		housing units	50,625
No bedroom	16,059	With a mortgage	33,355
1 bedroom	47,644	Less than \$300	3,154
2 bedrooms	58,436	\$300 to \$499	6,412
3 bedrooms	31,519	\$500 to \$699	5,426
4 bedrooms	4,335	\$700 to \$999	8,927
5 or more bedrooms	958	\$1,000 to \$1,499	7,691
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS		\$1,500 to \$1,999	1,222
Lacking complete plumbing		\$2,000 or more	523
facilities	1,999	Median (dollars)	758
Lacking complete kitchen		Not mortgaged	17,270
facilities	2,369	Less than \$100	2,653
Condominium housing units	3,112	\$100 to \$199	8,547
SOURCE OF WATER		\$200 to \$299	4,399
Public system or private		\$300 to \$399	994
company	158,341	\$400 or more	677
Individual drilled well	237	Median (dollars)	170
Individual dug well	64		
Some other source	309	SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS	
SEWAGE DISPOSAL		AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD	
Public sewer	153,673	INCOME IN 1989	
Septic tank or cesspool	1,391	Specified owner-occupied	
Other means	3,887	housing units	50,625
Occupied housing units	149,440	Less than 20 percent	23,651
HOUSE HEATING FUEL		20 to 24 percent	4,904
Utility gas	129,881	25 to 29 percent	4,014
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	2,121	30 to 34 percent	3,288
Electricity	13,106	35 percent or more	13,596
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	75	Not computed	1,172
Coal or coke	12		
Wood	71	GROSS RENT	
Solar energy	114	Specified renter-occupied	
Other fuel	62	housing units	92,702
No fuel used	3,998	Less than \$200	5,952
YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT		\$200 to \$299	8,412
1989 to March 1990	29,567	\$300 to \$499	32,088
1985 to 1988	41,736	\$500 to \$749	35,504
1980 to 1984	21,676	\$750 to \$999	7,917
1970 to 1979	26,783	\$1,000 or more	2,144
1960 to 1969	17,272	No cash rent	685
1959 or earlier	12,406	Median (dollars)	498
TELEPHONE			
No telephone in unit	11,111	GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF	
		HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1989	
		Specified renter-occupied	
		housing units	92,702
		Less than 20 percent	17,690
		20 to 24 percent	9,064
		25 to 29 percent	9,631
		30 to 34 percent	7,654
		35 percent or more	44,433
		Not computed	4,230

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Los Angeles Times

April 19, 1994, Tuesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Metro; Part B; Page 1; Column 5; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 1082 words

HEADLINE: LOW RATIO OF LATINOS IN MAGNETS CONDEMNED;
EDUCATION: BOARD WILL SEEK ADVICE ON WHETHER IT CAN RE-EVALUATE HOW SCHOOLS AND
STUDENTS ARE CHOSEN FOR PROGRAM. THE DISTRICT MAY ADD 21 LOCATIONS.

BYLINE: By BETH SHUSTER, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Los Angeles Board of Education members on Monday condemned the low numbers of Latino students selected for the district's highly prized magnet schools and the small number of magnets located in predominantly minority areas.

After a sometimes heated debate at Monday's meeting, the board agreed to seek legal advice to determine whether it can re-evaluate the way in which schools and students are chosen for the magnet program. Magnet schools were created after lengthy desegregation lawsuits in the late 1970s.

Board President Leticia Quezada said far too many magnet school seats are located in the San Fernando Valley and too few are available in inner-city areas. In addition, she said the number of Latino students and those who speak limited English is far too low in the magnets.

Of the 37,000 students attending magnet schools, 10,850, or 29.2%, are Latino, officials said. However, Latino students constitute 66% of the district's 640,000 students. About 3,000 magnet students, or fewer than 10%, are limited-English speakers. About 44% of the district's students speak limited English.

Board members faulted the paucity of bilingual magnet programs and poor recruiting efforts at schools with large numbers of Latino and limited-English students.

"I think these numbers clearly show that Latino students are being shortchanged in one of the best programs this district has to offer," said Quezada, who represents East Los Angeles. "There is no question that the magnet school students get a better education -- the test scores prove that. (But) these numbers perpetuate the disparity."

Board members are considering adding 21 schools to the magnet program this fall, including 10 in the Valley. The board is expected to vote in two weeks on expanding the program. The new schools would provide specialized courses in a variety of subjects, from Latin music to math, science and technology.

But board members said they are concerned that the schools would be located in areas that already have a high number of magnet classroom seats. They said the board agreed five years ago to apportion the number of seats more equally throughout the city.

Los Angeles Times, April 19, 1994

In a report to the board, Assistant Supt. Theodore Alexander said the largest number of students enrolled in magnets -- 8,086 -- are in Julie Korenstein's San Fernando Valley district. The second-highest, with 7,209 students, is Mark S. [redacted]'s district, which includes West Los Angeles and parts of the West [redacted]. The fewest magnet students -- 2,106 -- are in Victoria Castro's southeast district. Board member Jeff Horton's district, which includes Hollywood and the Mid-City area, has 2,817 enrolled.

District officials said they know of no written policy that bars schools in areas with higher numbers of magnet seats from expanding or from becoming magnet centers. Alexander said the 21 proposed schools -- more than three times the number of schools that typically apply to become magnets -- are in areas that have space for new students.

*

In addition, Alexander said the district might be in violation of the court desegregation order by denying schools that apply for the right to become magnets, especially when there might not be space in other parts of the district.

Nonetheless, board members said that they want to make the magnets accessible to all students and that the district should be doing more to recruit Latino and limited-English-speaking students.

Horton, who represents Hollywood, said he believes there is a "gross inequality" in the distribution of magnet seats for minority students.

"It just seems like such a blatant inequality . . . in a program that's supposed to diminish inequality," Horton said. "Irony of ironies."

Korenstein, an ardent magnet supporter, said Valley schools have changed dramatically and that the Valley is no longer "all white and affluent."

[redacted] know there has been a picture of what the San Fernando Valley looks like and may have looked like in the past -- that is no longer the case," Korenstein said, adding that she hopes many more schools will become magnets.

Student applications for next fall were due last Friday. If new magnets are approved, a supplemental application brochure will be issued.

Students are selected for the magnet program based on a variety of factors, including ethnicity. Magnet schools are considered to be integrated at 70% minority and 30% white.

But minority students are grouped together in the selection process so that Asian, Latino and African American students, among others, compete for space. White students are selected separately.

Created during the divisive busing battles of the late 1970s, magnets are intended to provide students from across the sprawling district with smaller, ethnically diverse student bodies and educational programs.

Administrators and teachers from the 21 schools have said they want to become magnets to boost test scores and to keep high-achieving students from fleeing

to other campuses.

side from the 21 programs -- which would open up 8,000 new seats, 5,300 of this fall -- the board also will consider next month expanding another 21 magnets to create an additional 2,000 classroom seats. The board will also consider changing the focus of eight magnets to math, science and technology.

Magnet Candidates

Twenty-one Los Angeles Unified District schools have asked to join the magnet program. About 5,300 magnet seats would become available this fall if the new magnet centers are approved by the Board of Education. More than 23,000 students are on magnet waiting lists this year. These are the schools requesting magnet status and their specialties:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- * Buchanan: Math-Science-Technology
 - * Gledhill: Math-Science-Technology
 - * Haskell: Math-Science-Technology
 - * Humphreys: Math-Science-Technology
 - * Marvin: Language Arts
 - * Multnomah: Environmental Sciences

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- * Belvedere: Latin Music
 - * Curtiss: Math-Science-Technology
 - * Holmes: International Humanities
 - * Millikan: Performing Arts
 - * Wright: Math-Science-Technology

HIGH SCHOOLS

- * Birmingham: Journalism Technology
 - * Canoga Park: Environmental/Agricultural Sciences
 - * Dorsey: Law and Government
 - * Grant: Communication Technology
 - * USC: Math-Science-Technology
 - * L.A. Central Library: Electronic Information
 - * Palisades: Math-Science-Technology
 - * Polytechnic: Math-Science-Technology

* Reseda: Environmental/Physical Sciences

Sylmar: Math-Science-Technology

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 20, 1994

(CO-98-1) County Population Estimates for July 1, 1998 and Population Change for
July 1, 1997 to July 1, 1998Source: Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census
Washington, DC 20233Contact: Statistical Information Staff, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census
(301-457-2422)

Internet Release Date: March 12, 1999

FIPS State/County Code and Area Name	7/1/98 Estimate	7/1/97 Estimate	Numeric Population Change 1997-98	Perc Populat Cha 1997
06 California.....	32,666,550	32,182,118	484,432	
06001 Alameda County, CA.....	1,400,322	1,374,804	25,518	
06003 Alpine County, CA.....	1,209	1,214	-5	-
06005 Amador County, CA.....	33,334	33,411	-77	-
06007 Butte County, CA.....	194,597	193,198	1,399	
06009 Calaveras County, CA.....	39,830	39,183	647	
06011 Colusa County, CA.....	18,572	18,375	197	
06013 Contra Costa County, CA.....	918,200	899,107	19,093	
06015 Del Norte County, CA.....	27,000	27,176	-176	-
06017 El Dorado County, CA.....	158,502	154,780	3,722	
06019 Fresno County, CA.....	755,730	750,867	4,863	
06021 Glenn County, CA.....	26,234	26,217	17	
06023 Humboldt County, CA.....	122,262	122,646	-384	-
06025 Imperial County, CA.....	144,051	142,265	1,786	
06027 Inyo County, CA.....	18,125	18,291	-166	-
06029 Kern County, CA.....	631,459	624,983	6,476	
06031 Kings County, CA.....	118,866	114,440	4,426	
06033 Lake County, CA.....	55,147	54,829	318	
06035 Lassen County, CA.....	33,285	33,415	-130	-
06037 Los Angeles County, CA.....	9,213,533	9,116,506	97,027	
06039 Madera County, CA.....	114,748	112,433	2,315	
06041 Marin County, CA.....	236,770	234,514	2,256	
06043 Mariposa County, CA.....	15,877	15,610	267	
06045 Mendocino County, CA.....	83,734	83,288	446	
06047 Merced County, CA.....	197,730	194,085	3,645	
06049 Modoc County, CA.....	9,398	9,621	-223	-
06051 Mono County, CA.....	10,288	10,421	-133	-
06053 Monterey County, CA.....	365,605	358,360	7,245	
06055 Napa County, CA.....	119,288	117,776	1,512	
06057 Nevada County, CA.....	91,334	89,986	1,348	
06059 Orange County, CA.....	2,721,701	2,663,561	58,140	
06061 Placer County, CA.....	229,259	220,580	8,679	
06063 Plumas County, CA.....	20,370	20,447	-77	-
06065 Riverside County, CA.....	1,478,838	1,439,210	39,628	
06067 Sacramento County, CA.....	1,144,202	1,128,540	15,662	
06069 San Benito County, CA.....	48,774	46,514	2,260	
06071 San Bernardino County, CA.....	1,635,234	1,608,531	26,703	
06073 San Diego County, CA.....	2,780,592	2,723,711	56,881	
06075 San Francisco County, CA.....	745,774	740,607	5,167	
06077 San Joaquin County, CA.....	550,445	540,247	10,198	
06079 San Luis Obispo County, CA.....	234,366	231,416	2,950	
06081 San Mateo County, CA.....	700,765	694,576	6,189	
06083 Santa Barbara County, CA.....	389,502	386,524	2,978	
06085 Santa Clara County, CA.....	1,641,215	1,620,453	20,762	
06087 Santa Cruz County, CA.....	242,994	238,393	4,601	
06089 Shasta County, CA.....	164,349	162,643	1,706	
06091 Sierra County, CA.....	3,380	3,368	12	
06093 Siskiyou County, CA.....	44,044	44,260	-216	-
06095 Solano County, CA.....	377,415	371,237	6,178	
06097 Sonoma County, CA.....	433,304	426,156	7,148	
06099 Stanislaus County, CA.....	426,460	419,247	7,213	
06101 Sutter County, CA.....	76,976	76,492	484	

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Local Personalities

Divider Title: _____

LEVEL 1 - 3 OF 15 STORIES

Copyright 1998 Johnson Publishing Company, Inc.
Jet

October 12, 1998

SECTION: COVER STORY; Pg. 52

LENGTH: 994 words

HEADLINE: Olympian;

FLORENCE GRIFFITH-JOYNER Leaves Legacy Of Speed And Style 1959-1998

BODY:

Before 1,500 family members, friends and fans gathered at the Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, CA, Florence Griffith-Joyner was remembered as a remarkable woman who mixed speed and style with faith and inspiration.

Bobby Kersee, her former coach, told the crowd: "She just ran and ran and ran. She ran spectacular races. What was in her heart every time she laced up her spikes was Jesus. God is her coach now. God is her manager."

In a service that lasted approximately three hours, her husband, Al Joyner, spoke of the love of his life and their 7-year-old daughter, Mary Ruth, took part in the singing of a religious song dedicated to her mother.

A number of legendary sports figures attended the service, including former Chicago Bears star Willie Gault and Olympians Bruce Jenner and Gail Devers.

William Hybl, president of the U.S. Olympic Committee, told mourners that FloJo leaves behind an important legacy for young women and others, the L.A. Times reported. The paper also reported that the USOC plans to open a special exhibit at its headquarters next spring that will honor her accomplishments.

Carol Land, a friend of FloJo's for 26 years, said, "Florence called me a rose. She called me a beautiful rose -- I said, 'it takes one to know one.' We formed a covenant and a covenant says, 'Til death do you part.' If no one else in America honors her, I can say we honored her today."

The day before the funeral, fans were able to view her body at a Los Angeles funeral home for eight hours. Some lined up hours before the funeral home in the Crenshaw section of L.A. opened.

More than any other athlete, Florence Griffith-Joyner, brought a unique brand of style and sexiness to track and field, a sport known more for speed and sweat.

The sexy, eye-opening, one-legged outfits she wore in track competition were so snug that they appeared to be painted on her strong, super-toned body. The whole world was forced to take notice of a woman who had to overcome a childhood speech impediment, poverty and weight problems to win three gold medals in Olympic competition and set records that haven't been broken in 10 years. Her 10.49 seconds in the 100-meter dash hasn't been bested. Neither has the mark

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she set in the 200-meter dash.

She was the first American woman to win four medals in track and field at a single Olympics in 1988. Gold came in the 100-and 200-meter dashes, the 400-meter relays. The silver came in the 1600-meter relay.

Her sudden death at 38 (the cause of death is still being investigated) shocked family, fans and friends. But, it also brought incredible levels of praise for FloJo, one of 11 children from the Watts section of Los Angeles who became a living sports legend.

At a candlelight vigil held in the Crenshaw section of L.A., FloJo was remembered as a fiercely-determined girl nicknamed DeeDee who wanted to win every race, whether local or international.

She was remembered as a local Watts girl who never forgot her roots. Sonya Robertson, a high-school classmate, told the L.A. Times: "She never forgot Watts. She was always willing to come back home and attend community functions. That's why she meant so much to us. She never got high and mighty. She remained down to earth, no matter what she accomplished."

Jackie Joyner-Kersey, sister of FloJo's husband Al Joyner and multiple gold medal Olympian, remembered FloJo to NBC by saying: "What I remember about Florence is that from the day I went to UCLA and being surrounded by Florence and all the other girls was that she never forgot about helping kids, wanting to see others successful by giving of her time to make sure others were happy. In the days before she passed away, Florence was extremely tired. Yet, she found time to put a smile on a young person's face."

The very night before her sudden death, she was videotaped smiling and encouraging young kids in Santa Barbara, CA, to push themselves to achieve excellence.

In an interview she gave recently, FloJo mentioned that young girls often would tell her that they wanted to be like she is. She always reminded them not to try to be like she is, but to do better than she did.

Frank Peterson, FloJo's high school track coach, recalled a young girl of incredible determination. "When she put her mind to doing something, she would do it," he said.

For many, FloJo's achievements were so remarkable because of the tremendous adversity she had to overcome to reach them. She grew up in the Jordan Downs housing projects in Watts with 10 brothers and sisters, supported by a divorced mother.

She recalled for the L.A. Times that when she was asked by a teacher what she wanted to be, she responded: "Everything! I want to be everything."

As flamboyant and self-assured as she went on to become, FloJo was shy as a little girl and had a slight lisp in her speech, the Times reported.

Fred Thompson, who coached the 1988 Olympic sprint squad, told reporters: "I don't know how this could happen. She was only 38 years old." Diane Dixon, a

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teammate of FloJo's in the silver medal-winning 4x400 relays in 1988, said: "It's just devastating. We're supposed to be so healthy. We're Olympians and something like this happens. Everybody knew FloJo. She had the whole world at her feet."

And she did. She was every bit as famous for her beauty, sexy outfits and those six-inch elaborately-colored nails as her speed.

Donna Lopiano, president of the Women's Sports Foundation, told the Times: "It occurs to me that there is no comparable male athlete, no male athlete that has brought glamour and individuality to his sport as well as being at the top of his sport. She is a combination of Dennis Rodman and Michael Jordan in one."

Her older brother Weldon Pitts, told the crowd at the vigil: "My baby sister came from a long way out and she showed . . . there's no limit to what you can do. She showed that if she can do it, you can do it."

GRAPHIC: Pictures 1 and 2, Florence Griffith-Joyner died in her sleep unexpectedly at age 38. Pallbearers carry out Griffith-Joyner's coffin from the chapel after funeral services were held at Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, CA; Picture 3, Griffith-Joyner's husband, Al, holds their daughter, Mary Ruth, as his sister, Jackie Joyner Kersee, follows behind at left; Picture 4, Mary Ruth, Griffith-Joyner's only child, received loving support from her best friend, Marisa Karlsen, at the funeral, where the two performed a song; Pictures 5 and 6, Al Joyner receives words of encouragement from his bother in-law, Bob Kersee, who was also Griffith-Joyner's former coach. Former NFL star Willie Gault consoles Joyner at the funeral; Pictures 7 through 9, Jackie Joyner Kersee is comforted by a friend following the touching funeral service. Kathleen Wiggs, Griffith-Joyner's sister, leaves the funeral service. Track star Gail Devers was among the friends who came to pay their last respects to Griffith-Joyner; Pictures 10 and 11, Olympic great Bruce Jenner was among the hundreds of people who paid tribute to the woman the world had affectionately come to know as FloJo. Famed singer Oleta Adams-Cushon performed a special song at the funeral service; Picture 12, Renaldo Owens, Jami Basnight and Leslie Davern hold hands while they and other mourners participate in a candlelight vigil for the track star in the Crenshaw district of Los Angeles; Pictures 13 and 14, Florence Griffith-Joyner won three gold medals and one silver medal at the 1988 Summer Olympics, and established herself as the fastest woman on earth. At the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials in Indianapolis in 1988; Griffith-Joyner, in a sexy lace number, reacts after winning the 200-meter dash; Pictures 15 through 17, Griffith-Joyner, affectionately called FloJo, captured the hearts of Americans not only with her speed, but her style and grace. In competition Griffith-Joyner displays the many stylish fashions that made the track and field world take notice. One of her most popular and attractive styles was the one-legged outfits which the beautiful runner showcased while leaving her opponents in her dust; Pictures 18 through 20, Griffith-Joyner, joined by her 4 X 100 relay team members Alice Brown, Sheila Echols and Evelyn Ashford, waves after accepting their gold medals in Seoul in 1988. In 1988 the lovely Griffith-Joyner is applauded by former President Ronald Reagan during a run for the U.S. Olympic team on the White House lawn. President Clinton enjoyed a jog with FloJo, who was named a member of the President's Council on Fitness, and her hubby, Al, in this July 93 photo. "America and the world has lost one of our greatest Olympians," said Clinton; Pictures 21 through 23, A vibrant and vivacious Griffith-Joyner shows off the colorfully-decorated long

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nails for which she became known. Among her many interests after retiring from competition was instructing the public on fitness and designing sports wear. In an exercise video, the talented runner demonstrated how she kept her well-proportioned, hourglass figure. She designed the Indiana Pacers' uniform here worn by Reggie Miller; Pictures 24 and 25, Named as the 1989 Outstanding Amateur Athlete of the Year by the Amateur Athletic Union in Indianapolis, Griffith-Joyner holds up her James E. Sullivan Award with the help of her husband. Also among Griffith-Joyner's survivors is her mother, Deloris Griffith, who joined her daughter and son-in-law at the Jesse Owens Award ceremony; Picture 26, A devoted wife and mother, Griffith-Joyner is survived by her husband, Al Joyner, and her daughter, Mary Ruth.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: October 15, 1998

LEVEL 1 - 15 OF 15 STORIES

Copyright 1988 Newsweek
Newsweek

September 19, 1988, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: THE SEOUL OLYMPICS; Super Sprinter; Pg. 54

LENGTH: 1640 words

HEADLINE: A Star Blazes in the Fast Lane

BYLINE: PETE AXTHELM with PAMELA ABRAMSON

HIGHLIGHT:

World-record holder Florence Griffith Joyner is a winning mixture of dazzle and determination.

BODY:

When Florence Griffith Joyner was four, her mother left her father in his house in the Mojave Desert, packed up the 11 children and "the 30 cents in my pocket" and moved into a housing project in Watts. The four-bedroom apartment was only blocks from where the worst of the Watts riots had just occurred.

"We had nothing," recalls the senior Florence Griffith. "But I explained to the children that life was like a baby. A baby comes into the world without anything. Then it starts crawling, then it stands up. Then it takes its first step and starts walking. When we moved into the project I told them, 'Start walking'."

Florence Griffith Joyner didn't settle for walking. She flies: in recent Olympic Trials, she became the fastest woman who ever ran 100 meters. She also seduces: she competes in assorted bodysuits of electric colors and shocking lace, most with one leg beguilingly trimmed off. And she shines: anyone not awed by her clockings or outfits is inevitably captivated by her radiant smiles. She brings unprecedented glamour to a sweaty and taxing sport, but she takes just as much pride in her fierce athleticism: "I lift and I reach out when I run. I run more like a guy than a girl." Win or lose, she is sure to grab the television spotlight at the Seoul Olympics.

Call her Dee Dee. Her family and close friends do. her father named her Florence, but her mother added the middle name Delorez because she was a fan of Florenz Ziegfeld and his Follies. When she arrived home from the hospital, she was Dee Dee, says her mother, "because I wasn't going to have two Florences running around."

Call her distant. "Sometimes she won't say anything," says her husband, triple jumper Al Joyner. "You just don't know what's going on. Her mother told me she once didn't talk for two or three days. She can hold things in that long."

Call her vain. A shameless self-promoter, she is en route to the Olympics by way of several television talk shows, and she and Al once appeared on "The

Newsweek, September 19, 1988

Newlywed Game." She trains her hair as avidly as she times her sprints, and spends hours on her outfits. She was left off an Olympic relay team in 1984 because officials said her six-inch fingernails were too long for passing the baton. "She was mad about that," says her sister Sissy. Most Olympians would have cut their nails. Not Dee Dee.

In sum, Griffith Joyner, 28, is as complex and fascinating as Olympic athletes come. Her life and career have been filled with steep rises and falls, and she has persevered with strength and flair. She plays up her good looks as few Olympians ever have. But she also reads the Bible daily, prays before every meal and calls her mother at least twice a day. "I'm really not a mystery," says Griffith Joyner. "Sometimes I'm just dreaming. Or maybe I don't want to share something."

"Florence is very giving," says Al. "But she has a mean toughness in her that people don't really see. No matter what you say or do to break her down, she won't break."

"I don't have that many friends," she admits. "That doesn't bother me because with or without friends I have a million and one things to do. I don't frighten people away. They frighten themselves away."

'Land of opportunity': Dee Dee Griffith's story now turns on hundredths of seconds, but it actually stretches across generations. When her mother was 20, she left her parents and one young son behind in rural North Carolina and headed for California. "The land of opportunity," she says wryly. "I thought I had a chance to be a model -- that's what I wanted to be. I modeled my life after Rita Hayworth. At that time she was known as the Goddess. I thought I could be a black goddess." She pauses. "That dream faded away." Not quite. This strong-willed and beautiful woman merely transferred the dream to her children -- eventually, especially, to Dee Dee. "All the children were special, but Dee Dee was something else," she says. "I thought of her as a ballerina. She was so light on her feet. She just floated."

Young Dee Dee inherited her mom's feisty, independent spirit. On visits to her father in the desert, she honed her speed by chasing jack rabbits. "Out of all of them, maybe we caught one or two," she laughs. But she also learned to walk silently, her thoughts her own, as she listened for rattlesnakes. At home in Watts, she could be similarly self-contained. But her charm still riveted her family.

"She told on me thousands of times," says sister Sissy. "I never told on her. She used to blackmail me and say, 'I won't tell if you wash my dishes'. I'd wash them three nights in a row, and on the fourth, she'd tell on me anyway. But I loved her so much."

The household was a strict one: no television during the week, lights out at 10 at night. "We used to have Wednesday powwows," recalls oldest sister, Vivian Johnson. "We'd use the Bible to discuss what we'd done wrong during the week. The only problem was Dee Dee. Mama would have to holler, 'Lock the doors, it's powwow time.' Otherwise Florence was gone."

As headstrong as she was, Griffith Joyner looks back on the discipline with appreciation. "Everybody in the family survived. Nobody does drugs, nobody got

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shot at. I used to say it was because we were afraid of Mama's voice. We didn't know how poor we were. We were rich as a family."

It took Griffith Joyner only about a decade to become track's overnight sensation. And like her home life, her athletic progress has not been without tempests. She started college in 1979 at Cal State Northridge, where she met coach Bob Kersee, whom she later followed to UCLA. The next year she narrowly missed the Olympic team, losing out to, among others, longtime Watts running rival Valerie Brisco. "What did those three girls in front of me have that I didn't have?" she recalls thinking. "I studied that and realized they didn't have any more. Except they were getting uniforms that said USA and I wasn't."

Flashy fashion: Characteristically, she channeled her frustration into renewed effort. But in 1984, while she took a silver in the 200 meters, Brisco was becoming a media star with three golds. This time Griffith Joyner let it affect her. She gained weight, and by the end of 1986 she was in semiretirement. "Florence is not a typical athlete," says her physical therapist Robert Forster. "the rest of them sit around and watch soap operas. Florence wants to stretch for something more."

So she wrote poetry and children's books, did sketches and designed people's hair and nails in her flashy fashion. She also worked in a bank to support herself. Even today, she says, "Running is just something else that I do with my life."

At about the same time, she fell in love and married Al Joyner, the 1984 triple jump gold medalist and brother of Jackie Joyner-Kersee. "The Newlywed Game" sent them to Jamaica. Subsequent relations with Jackie and Bob Kersee could have sent them to "Family Feud."

Things reached a crisis after Griffith Joyner's world record, when she fired Kersee as her coach and replaced him with husband Al. The Kersees and Joyners have barely spoken since. Florence says that the move "was not a family matter, because we weren't that close to begin with." She calls it a rebellion against Kersee's insistence that he handle every aspect of his athletes' lives, from training regimens to endorsements. "You can only live on promises for so long," she says. "I ran with one pair of spikes for six months."

Griffith Joyner now says that she didn't really retire in 1986: she was trying to withdraw from Kersee, who she says was charging her too much. "I would finish work, doing somebody's hair and go to the spa or park to train at 10 or 11 at night. Al was the one with me then. Not Bobby." She also resents Kersee's treatment of Jackie and Al Joyner: "He tried his hardest to keep them apart, to take the brother-sister image away. When Jackie started doing well, Bobby didn't include Al in anything."

Sugarcoating none of her combativeness, Griffith Joyner denigrates all of Kersee's athletes. "I think it is a cult," she says. "Valerie Brisco looks at Bobby as her father and Jackie as her mother. Her perspective doesn't extend any farther. And she's a 28-year-old woman."

Kersee tries to be, literally, philosophical about the attacks. "I read philosophers," he says, "and it was said that Friedrich Nietzsche tended to denounce those who had the most influence over him. It was an unconscious way of covering up his debts. Maybe she doesn't think I deserve any respect. It's

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all a good story. It's got drama, cheating, sabotage. But it's only a story. It's not true."

The ongoing story will be a major subplot at Seoul, as both Griffith Joyner (who will run the 100 and 200 meters and a relay) and Joyner-Kersey (who will compete in the long jump and heptathlon) try to outdo each other. Privately, a few of Griffith Joyner's friends worry that the brouhaha may distract her -- not only from the pursuit of more records but from the challenge of the formidable East Germans Heike Drechsler and Silke Gladisch-Moller.

But chances are she will be as collected inside as she is radiant outside. "When I was growing up," she says, "my mother was willing not to eat so that we could. Sometimes Mama would get this gaze in her eyes and I'd ask her what she was thinking about. She'd say, 'I just want to get you guys out of here. This is not a home.' I couldn't understand that until I got older."

In her world record and her husband and her magnetic presence, Griffith Joyner has found that home. She'll guard it as fiercely as her mother once protected her. "I feel like I am a survivor," she says. "You never fail until you stop trying."

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, no caption, MARK HANAUER, DRESS COURTESY OF BULLOCK'S, WILSHIRE, LOS ANGELES; Picture 2, When great looks deceive, ROBERT R. McELROY -- NEWSWEEK; Pictures 3 and 4, Al and Florence, Jackie and Bobby: A mad dash from 'The Newlywed Game' to 'Family Feud', GERD LUDWIG -- WOODFIN CAMP; Picture 5, Spoiler: Can Drechsler derail Joyner? JOHN McDERMOTT

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LEVEL 1 - 6 OF 56 STORIES

Copyright 1995 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

November 26, 1995, Sunday, Home Edition

SECTION: Magazine; Page 26; Magazine Desk

LENGTH: 4883 words

HEADLINE: WHAT IS KEVIN YOUNG RUNNING FROM?;
THE L.A. TRACK STAR, OLYMPIC HERO AND WORLD RECORD HOLDER NOW LIVES IN GEORGIA,
WHERE HE MUSES ON HIS PAST AND FUTURE. ARE THE '96 OLYMPICS JUST A PIPE DREAM
FOR HIM?

BYLINE: By Pat Jordan, Pat Jordan lives in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. His last piece
for the magazine was on Baltimore Orioles owner Peter Angelos.

BODY:

Kevin Young can trace his lineage back to West Africa and the Blackfoot Indians of North America. His more immediate ancestors were slaves in the Deep South. He himself grew up in Watts. His heroes were athletes like Jesse Owens, Dr. J. and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He became a successful track athlete. He won an Olympic gold medal. He made money. Then he stopped competing. At the age of 27, he left Watts, his family, his friends, his coaches and his track world and moved to Alpharetta, Ga., about 30 miles from Atlanta.

He bought a sprawling ranch home on 13 secluded acres for \$359,000. On his screened porch he put the wooden statue of an Indian chief. There is dried corn on a coffee table and in one corner a light fixture made out of arrows. His kitchen is decorated with posters and figurines: Uncle Remus syrup. Sambo chocolate milk. Aunt Jemima Breakfast Club. An old black servant in a red waistcoat. In his living room are three life-size carved ebony statues of West African fertility figures, women with big bellies and pendulous breasts. He has a zebra skin rug and a statue of a horse carrying Chola, an Afro-Cuban goddess. He has a shrine to Mamma Kalunga, a black mermaid, who symbolizes death in West Africa.

His office is bare except for a computer and, alongside it, the only reminder of his track successes: a photo collage of his triumphs at various track events. A newspaper headline is woven through the collage: "Overachiever Young Beats Own Record." The Olympic medal is nowhere in sight.

"I was an inner-city kid," Young says, standing in the heat of the day beside a pond surrounded by pine trees. "I fell in love with the pines, this property. It's private. People don't drop in unexpectedly. I only see my neighbors when I go on the street." Those neighbors live in faux antebellum homes and raise horses for equestrian shows. They are white. He doesn't socialize with them. He prefers to stay home, "like Thoreau," he says, "and look at my pine trees."

On those rare occasions when he goes out to dinner at a restaurant, he is usually the only black person there, except for the busboys. The other diners try not to stare at him, but they do. "They know I'm not an average African

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American," he says. "They know I must be an athlete." Once, a white female bodybuilder came up to him at the post office and said, "I know you. You're an Olympic athlete." But she didn't know which one.

It was at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain, that Kevin Young set a world and Olympic record of 46.78 seconds in the 400-meter hurdles. It broke the existing record of 47.02, set in 1983 by Edwin Moses, considered by some the Babe Ruth of American track. Young's record still stands. Hailed as the "new" Moses, Young had crashed through a seemingly impenetrable barrier that some compare to Sir Roger Bannister's breaking the four-minute mile in 1954. Young achieved that record with effortless grace, his long legs striding over the track, then floating, suspended a moment, over the hurdles.

"It was nice," says Young, remembering that race. "Effortless. In the past, I died at the eighth hurdle, but at Barcelona I hit another gear. I was running on air, flying, an almost perfect race. It was a moment in time that will never be duplicated. I was so sure of myself that when I approached the finish, I was trying to decide what hand I should put up in victory."

Young calls that race "the pinnacle of my athletic achievement." He talked track with Prince Albert of Monaco on the French Riviera. He met the King and Queen of Sweden at a formal dinner in Stockholm. "The women wore these big dresses," he says. "I was sharp, too." He laughs. "Me, a skinny little kid from Watts."

But three years later, Young, now 29, sits on the porch of his Georgia hideaway with very little besides those memories to show for the world record. He has only desultory ideas about training for the '96 Olympics in Atlanta. He is estranged from his longtime coach, UCLA's John Smith. He isn't working with anyone else, or even by himself. He has one minor Atlanta-area endorsement deal; his latest sports agent dropped him because potential sponsors didn't remember who he was. And he has simply stopped competing, both here and abroad, where he was wildly popular on the European professional track circuit. His major sponsor, Nike, lost interest in him, and gradually Young's income has dwindled to almost nothing.

In an age in which Olympic heroism is handsomely rewarded and the track and field world has figured out how to support its competitors with appearance and prize money, what happened to Kevin Young?

"What plagued Kevin was expectations," says Smith, who lost touch with Young when the hurdler moved to Georgia last year. "Before he set the record he was chasing (one). Then he was the record. People expected more of him every meet. Money and fame were not the problem with Kevin. Something was missing in him. He has nothing to prove."

On his spread in rural Georgia, Young doesn't do much except cut his grass, stare at his pine trees and dream. He dreams mostly of ways to make money to support his L.A. home (now in foreclosure), this house, his Mercedes-Benz, his Lexus SC 300 and his Honda. He dreams of becoming a corporate spokesman for some big Atlanta company, like Coca-Cola. "Why not?" he says. "I'm good-looking, I have a college degree, I'm not an idiot." Most mornings he "plays with my computer," designing his own line of clothing. "Do you want to invest in it?" he asks a rare visitor. "I'm only pushing T-shirts now, but you'd be investing in my name. I'm in the history books, you know."

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One could say Young is partly the victim of bad timing. After his Olympic triumph in August of '92, Young signed a \$100,000-a-year contract with Nike and then continued to race in Europe for two weeks, where he was paid appearance fees of about \$10,000 per meet. Most other American Olympians returned to the States, where they met with President George Bush and were honored with parades. "By the time I got home," Young says, "the hype was over. There was no shoe sponsor, nothing. I should have been making money. I expected sponsorships to be taken care of by Nike. Maybe I was complacent. Barcelona affected me emotionally but not financially."

Keith Peters, public relations director for Nike, says, "We worked with (Young) after Barcelona, and then he just disappeared. When you sign someone who's not cheap, you have reasonable expectations. But he stopped competing, and the athlete's value is tied to his current competitive value in his sport. It's a shame."

Still, Young earned \$200,000 in 1992. He made \$80,000 the following year, mostly in Europe, where, he says, "I've always been well-received." He won the '93 International Amateur Athletic Federation World Championships with the year's best time of 47.18.

But then, over the winter, he began to despair, to lose heart under the pressure of sustaining his success. He virtually stopped running in '94, when he was rated only the 40th best 400-meter hurdler in the world. He claimed a knee injury this year and has raced only five times, rarely finishing higher than seventh. (He recently had knee surgery to repair torn cartilage.) He has made almost no money in the past two years. His only sponsor is Harry Blazer, CEO and founder of Harry's Farmers' Market, a gourmet grocery chain headquartered in Alpharetta, which pays him "chump change," according to an Atlanta Constitution sportswriter. When pressed about the sponsorship, Blazer says, "It is a modest amount, but I think he was very much surprised by the generosity. It will help him get through financially."

Brad Hunt, a track and field agent, says of Young, "I have athletes who have not won Olympic titles or set world records who earn \$1 million a year. Kevin has done both."

But Smith, his former coach, says, "No track star makes money off one medal anymore. Now you have to sustain a career over years to make money. Consistency is what corporate sponsors are looking for. Moses was the first track star to get a big corporate sponsorship, \$500,000 from Adidas, but that was only after a sustained career."

After Young moved to Georgia in the summer of 1994, Young signed with Atlanta agent Bob Pelletier, but after a few months they parted ways. Young claimed Pelletier had too many clients and wasn't giving him the proper attention. But Pelletier says simply that no sponsors were interested in Young because he was too distant from his Barcelona triumph. Pelletier had to start all over again "educating people as to who Kevin Young was," he says. "His not competing was part of the problem. I guess after '92, Kevin thought it would all fall at his feet, and it didn't. Why he stopped running, I'm not sure."

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Kevin Young grew up in a house in Watts with four sisters and his mother. His older brother left early in Young's life to live with an aunt, and Young's father, whom he says he has "fond memories" of, left the family when Young was 6. "No one in my family but me saw the world," he says. "They've been in the inner city all their life."

His mother, Betty, a social worker, moved the family from Compton to Watts when Young was 7. "We didn't live in a project," he says "There were not gutted-out buildings. I always thought the East Coast projects were a lot worse than Watts."

As the new kid on the block, one with a skateboard ("The brothers used to say, 'What you doin' with a skateboard? You ain't white' "), Young was beaten up daily. He'd go to the basketball courts, where boys his age and older were already drinking beer and smoking dope, and try to join the basketball games. All they wanted from him, however, was his basketball. When he refused to surrender it, they'd chase him home.

"It was either run or get punched out," he says. "I started hurdling early, over cars on the street, running from a gang. After a while, they accepted me. I was the lookout for their drug deals. There was always a lot of peer pressure to sell drugs and join a gang. It was easy, but it wasn't a challenge. Besides, the brothers were like rats. They were always turning on one another, busting each other in the head with bottles."

The biggest influence on his life as a boy, he says, was his sister Carmen, seven years older. "Carmen was my big brother," he says. "She was totally street. My mother always had us in church, and Carmen was my break from that. She'd steal things for me. I was always her little brother, but she was tough on me, too. When I got into a fight and came home crying, she made me go back out and fight the kid. She followed me with a butcher knife to make sure the fight was fair. The other kid was older, he beat me senseless, but she didn't jump in."

As the oldest child in a house without a father and with a working mother, the supervision of the younger children fell to Carmen. "She never had an opportunity to be a child herself," Young says. When he was 3, Carmen had to take him to school with her to watch him. To make it easier, she put him in a gray dress and passed him off as her little sister.

In fact, Young says, he spent so much time with his sisters, in a house without "a male influence," that he often joined in their little girls' play. When they sewed dresses for their Barbie dolls, he sewed outfits for his G.I. Joe. By the time he reached the seventh grade, Young thought it would be "cool" to take a sewing course. When his mother had to approve his course selection, and she saw what he had picked, she was furious. "Ain't no son of mine gonna take a damned sewing course," she said. Young responded, "But Ma, why? I'm not a sissy. Do I have tendencies? I just wanna make my own clothes." But she wouldn't bend, and Young describes himself as "totally devastated." He switched to a gym course instead, which was the real beginning of his athletic career.

Between the beginning of eighth and ninth grades, Young grew from 5 foot 9 to 6 foot 3, and his fate was sealed: He was to be an athlete. First he was a

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basketball player, and then, when he discovered a distant male relative had been a hurdler, he switched to track. He was a natural runner, though at 15 he still had the ungainliness of a young colt not yet grown into its legs. By his senior year at Jordan High School, he was the third-best hurdler in the state, but he still couldn't get a college track scholarship. The best he could get was a \$1,000 check from Coca-Cola, awarded to "Future Olympians," to help defer his expenses at UCLA.

"Leaving Watts for UCLA?" he says, smiling. "Total culture shock. All these white girls and frat houses. I said 'Where are the sisters?' But they had to go home on weekends to work. I was pathetic my first year. Shy, insecure. I suffered all kinds of social illnesses, so I kept to myself."

As a freshman hurdler, Young didn't even figure in his coach's plans. By his junior year, however, the late developer had grown into his long, stringy, lightly muscled physique and had become one of the best collegiate hurdlers in the country. John Smith, who would become his Olympic coach in Seoul and Barcelona, described him as "poetry in motion."

Young held the state and collegiate 400-meter hurdles record by the time he graduated from UCLA in 1988 with a degree in sociology. He was hailed as America's brightest hope in the Seoul Olympics, where he finished a "merely respectable" fourth in the medal round. By 1990 he was ranked sixth in the world, and at the Barcelona Olympics he was not one of the favorites to win a gold medal. Which is why the headline running through his collage describes him as an "overachiever" for winning it.

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After Kevin Young left Los Angeles for Georgia, the rumors started to fly: He was having problems with his coach, John Smith. He was spooked by the 1994 Northridge earthquake, which destroyed his Reseda condominium. He was injured. He'd lost his competitive fire. He had drug problems. He was involved in a religious cult. But no one knew for sure why he turned his back on every influence he'd known for a life of seclusion in the Deep South. "One day I was in L.A.," Young says. "The next, Georgia. People wondered, 'Why'd he go?' "

Young didn't know much about his ancestors until, at the age of 12, he visited his grandmother in the small Mississippi Delta town of Brookhaven. She told him about his slave ancestors from West Africa and his Indian ancestors from the Midwest. She took him with her as she sold fish to poor families living in shacks deep in the woods.

"We pulled up in the car and everyone would scatter and hide," Young says. "Then you'd see some movement, faces peeking out, and then they'd come out from hiding. I remember one day I was eating a candy bar and all these little kids dressed in burlap stared at it. I began to cry and gave them my candy. I realized how lucky I was. I'd always thought I'd had it bad in Watts until I went to Mississippi.

"I remember going with Grandma to repay a debt she owed a white man. He was much younger than her, and yet she called him, 'Mr. this' and 'Mr. that.' I realized then why my Mama left the South for L.A. But I also had a greater respect for my Grandma, too, still dealing with it.

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"I enjoy the true nature of the South. If a redneck calls me 'nigger,' it's OK. It's out of ignorance come down from a hundred years. If they call me a racial slur in L.A., it's meant to be nasty, to hurt me. I set a world record in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, and people never acknowledged my contribution. I'm in the history books, but in L.A., they didn't value what I'd done. It was a slap in the face. I never got a ticker-tape parade in Watts. I never got respect. All my records and no one knows my name. So I left."

He talks softly, without rancor, until his attention drifts off toward one of his pine trees. He picks a white beetle out of the bark and holds it between his thumb and forefinger. "Pine beetles," he says. "They're destroying my pines. It's gonna cost me \$3,000 to cut down the bad trees and I don't have the money. (His phone was recently disconnected.) So I'm trying to get speaking engagements."

It is late afternoon at Young's house. He is sitting outside on a deck off the screened porch, staring at a small statue of an old black man wearing a fedora hat. "I could stare at that statue all day," he says languidly. And then, as his talk often does, he returns to his sister Carmen. "You know, she taught me to drive when I was 11. Mama's brand new car. I was petrified, but Carmen was laughing." He smiles, then says, "Carmen died of a hemorrhage at 31. Probably related to her drug use. She was high on angel dust the last time I saw her. She said no one loved her. I cried and said I loved her, but I wouldn't give her any money for dope. The next week she was dead and I was paying for the funeral. I was devastated."

Carmen died in 1990, two years before Young won his gold medal. When he stood on the podium in Barcelona, Young remembers saying to himself, "Man, I sure wish Carmen was here," He got down on one knee and prayed to her. "Your little brother, K.K., did it," he said. "You always knew I would and now you saw it."

A man comes from inside the house to the deck, and says to Young, "Can I get you something, Kevin?" Young asks for an iced tea and the man returns to the house. Hayes Mcleod, who is in his forties, is a dancer from New York City. He lives much of the time with Young, who refers to him as "my godfather." When pressed, Young admits that Macleod is not really "my godfather, but I made him my godfather." Mostly, Mcleod acts as Young's Sancho Panza. Early this morning, he stood outside and waited anxiously for the tree man to arrive and give him an estimate of the cost of cutting down the blighted pine trees. When a man in a Hawaiian shirt and shorts drove up, Mcleod immediately asked him for an estimate. When he found out the man was a reporter, he said, "Oh, I just assumed. So few people ever come here. You're the first reporter Kevin has let see his house."

McCleod returns with iced tea and goes back into the house. Young sips his tea, and staring out at his blighted pines, says, "I wouldn't trade this for anything. I have no social life. I just play my rap music. In L.A. . . . I'd go to the track eight hours a day. I never stayed home, never smelled the roses. Now that I've escaped that cycle, people say I'm on drugs or in a cult. They say I've been weird the last two years because I ain't chasin' no women or no butt. I done all that and realize it's dangerous. Someone told me they heard I was on drugs, and how sad it was. But that's because I never really made it clear why I left. They can't fathom that I love to cut the grass now."

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He stares off at his blighted trees. "Damn! \$3,000." He shakes his head in despair. "Man, I need someone to support me. When I was on top it was easy to get USOC money. Now it's a struggle. I mean, why?"

But Young doesn't make it clear why he left L.A. and his track world. He says his life was "unbalanced," the track world was "mundane," with too many "clingers on." He wanted to "grow as a person."

"It bothered me to see the same people day in and day out," he says. Which people? "The people who got more exposure than me. It was all so insular."

One of the more concrete reasons explaining Young's flight from Los Angeles was the 1994 earthquake. It destroyed Young's condominium, and he doesn't have the money to rebuild it. According to Young, "it shook my ass up." He saw the quake as an omen, the end of the world as he knew it, so he took flight.

Young comes across as sensitive, easily spooked. He likes to think he's mystical in a religious sense. He believes in African religions because they teach him "discipline," an odd word for a man who seems to be drifting aimlessly in Alpharetta. He's learned from his Indian ancestry to "respect the land and all the elements we came from." That's why, he says, he always cocks an ear to listen to the hawks in the trees. From his old, black Pentecostal Christianity, he learned that "God is God, which is why he doesn't want a man to be broke down and poor, or a fool either."

Yet Young sees personal slights everywhere. "People have never noticed me," he says. "I try and I try and I get nowhere." He points as proof to a conversation he had with a Sports Illustrated writer before the Barcelona Olympics.

"I asked him what I had to do to get on the cover of S.I.," Young says. "He said all I had to do was break the world record set by Edwin Moses. I put that in my head. I busted my ass in Barcelona and set the world record and still didn't make it on the cover of S.I. that week. They put Gail Deavers on the cover because she fell in the race after mine."

Young complains that people don't notice him because he's "too amiable. I'm not an a - - hole. S.I. puts Dennis Rodman on the cover because he's got purple hair. Why do I have to dye my hair to be on the cover? I gotta do something outrageous or illegal. I'm too nice, respectful. You got to show your ass to get respect. But that's self-defeating. It's a waste of energy. I don't hype myself. Only the worst succeed."

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Maybe, in the end, it has nothing to do with shaken nerves or magazine covers or hangers-on. Maybe it has everything to do with the often emotional relationship between an athlete and coach. In Young's mind, one discovers after hours spent ruminating on the deck, John Smith is the real reason why he abandoned L.A. and his track life. He claims Smith "tried to control me, to focus all the attention on himself. When (I) won, he'd say, 'I'm a great coach,' rather than, 'I've got to hand it to Kevin.' He said things behind my back to make his stuff look good. There was tension between us on the track."

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Most of that tension had to do with money. Like many track stars, Young says he paid Smith 10% of his earnings as both his manager and coach. But since Smith also worked for Nike, Young felt he had a conflict of interest whenever Young had a complaint about Nike.

"How could he serve two masters?" Young says. "So I told him he couldn't be my manager anymore, and he took offense. It all became an issue of money." Young still paid Smith a percentage of his earnings, but after Young didn't earn anything from 1994 through 1995, he says Smith told him he wanted a flat fee to coach him. "Since I wasn't making much, he wanted his money up front."

Young says he refused. Not only did he not have the fee, he didn't have the \$80,000 a year it costs an athlete to train seriously. When Smith turned his attention to other, more productive track stars, it hurt Young's feelings.

Smith says he never solicited contracts for Young, acting only as a coach and adviser. He says Young always paid him a flat fee because he was not allowed to receive a percentage of profits under rules governing college coaches.

Smith does allow, however, that Young "found fit to do some things for me, but there was never a demand. After a certain point, things were not to my liking."

Tension arose, Smith says, when the pair reacted differently to the attention they received after Young won the gold. Things turned from bad to worse when Young hired sports agent Lon Rosen who, Smith says, excluded him from deciding on the track meets that Young would attend. (Rosen, who is Magic Johnson's agent, represented Young from March of '92 to March of '93.)

"I used to approve everything Kevin was doing," Smith says. "After he won the gold, he began getting advice from other people outside my influence. I'd have practice at 1 p.m. and Kevin would show up at 2:30 p.m. That doesn't fit in with John Smith's schedule. He wasn't meeting me halfway. Finally I said I'd make a special time for him, and he didn't want that."

"I love Kevin. But all I hear from him in the media is about my ego. He said I didn't have time for him. That's bulls- - -. He's the world record holder. I'll make time. I had coached him for free. The problem was he didn't want to do the work. When guys like Kevin become successful, they don't want to do the work anymore, don't want to do the same things that got them there. That's his goddamned problem. When he was struggling on his way up, we slept on floors together. We ate half a hamburger each and saved a bit for dessert."

Smith believes that Young's drive to win dropped off after he set the world record. "You study to become a master, then you have to become a student again, humble yourself, to maintain being a master. I wanted Kevin to go back and do the things he did to win, but he didn't want to."

Young claims that one of the reasons he's been overlooked in the track world is because he broke Edwin Moses' records, that there was resentment over "some poor little skinny kid from Watts breaking Moses' record." Always, Moses looms over him. His record of 102 consecutive victories. His "mystique." Moses is a shadow Young feels he can never shake, a shadow on his Barcelona achievement, his talent, his future.

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"I can't say I idolize him. He never showed me anything. I'm still trying to figure out the mystique of Edwin Moses." Then, in the next breath, Young, unwittingly does explain the mystique of Edwin Moses. "Moses ran his ass off for years. Even if I won 140 races in a row, it would have no effect."

And so, without the will to banish that shadow, Young prefers to look back, to try to get the world to remember his one golden moment. While he does, sitting alone in Alpharetta, his talent grows rusty with disuse. The longer he stays away from his talent, the more difficult it will be to recapture it. Even his gold medal has become devalued over the years. People who remember him now see his medal not as an example of Young's shining achievement, but as a token of a winner who walked away.

So he sits on his deck in the summer heat, overlooking his pine trees and dreams. He says he's planning to return to Los Angeles to train with Bob Kersee, the husband of Jackie Joyner-Kersee, because "it's difficult to motivate myself to train by myself." By fall, that plan was shelved. He speaks of competing in the Mt. San Antonio College Relays in California in early April and the Penn Relays in Philadelphia in mid-April and then the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials in June. But he says all this the same way he talks about learning how to play golf. "I got me some golf balls and a bag," he says, "but no clubs." Without conviction.

He dreams, too, of getting a sponsor. But one reason why he has no major sponsors in Atlanta is that there are better hurdlers in the city, notably Derrick Adkins, who won this year's IAAF World Championship, and Octavius Terry, who came in third at the USA Mobil Championships. He seems not to understand that sponsors will come to him only when he competes and wins again.

"Look at this," he says, holding up a form request from the International Olympic Committee, asking him to speak to schoolchildren. "No mention of a check in here." He tosses the letter on the ground, which is strewn with mementos and newspaper clippings from his Barcelona triumph. An article from the Eugene, Ore., Register-Guard begins with "Kevin Young is no Edwin Moses. Or is he?" The story, written in 1993 and already beginning to yellow with age, describes Young's 23rd consecutive victory, a streak going back to May of 1992. After that victory, Young says, "I think I decided not to try to match Moses' record for wins in a row."

The last few paragraphs of that story refer to Young by his college nickname, Spiderman. Reminded of this, he perks up with a new idea to promote himself. "I am a superhero like Spiderman," he says. "So I contacted Marvel Comics, to see if they wanted to use me as a conflicted hero, the bastard child of track." Marvel passed.

Young is right. He is a conflicted hero. He is torn between his self-doubts and his confidence in his abilities. Only the latter has begun to wane as the former takes hold of him. Pelletier, his onetime agent, thinks that Young "blew the record away so far out of reach it could have disheartened him. Once you're on top, it's harder to stay there. You have to keep pushing yourself, and Kevin has not been working as hard as he should."

"It's still possible for Kevin to come back and make the Olympic team because he is such a skillful athlete," Smith says. "He's something like a genius. He has dexterity beyond belief. He can hurdle with either leg."

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But the way Smith sees Young's career, "Basically, he's retired. My thing is either retire, or go run, but don't go telling everyone John Smith is such a bad dude. If you got your gold and no one recognized you, then that means you have more work to do."

Young gets up from the deck and walks his visitor to the car. "I want to win the gold medal again in '96," Young says. "I'm going to break my own world record. I'm going to run the hurdles in 45 seconds."

He catches sight of his blighted pines. "Damn," he says, "\$3000."

His visitor gets into his car and starts the engine. Young leans over and says through the window, "Do you think this story will help get me a sponsor? Do you think it will get my name out there again?"

GRAPHIC: Photo, COLOR, The "overachiever" in the yard of his Alpharetta, Ga., home: "I wouldn't trade this for anything. I have no social life. I just play my rap music. In L.A. . . I'd go to the track eight hours a day. I never stayed home, never smelled the roses." Gregory Foster; Photo, COLOR, Young making history at the '92 Olympics, top. All Sport; Photo, Above, Edwin Moses, in 1984; his record appeared unbreakable -- until Young came along. Patrick Downs/Los Angeles Times

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WHEN HE WAS GROWING UP, JAMES WASHINGTON HAD A REPUTATION FOR TALKING WITH HIS FISTS. NOW THE FOOTBALL POWERHOUSE HELPS THOSE IN HIS OLD WATTS NEIGHBORHOOD FIND A BETTER WAY TO SURVIVE.

BYLINE: By BOB OATES, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

James Washington of Watts, Whittier and the Dallas Cowboys, the fierce hitter who is known in pro football as "Drive By," acknowledges at least two other interests: making it as a businessman and helping people in the old neighborhood.

Friends from UCLA still remember the night of the first Phi Beta Sigma dance of Washington's freshman year there. All evening, instead of dancing, he stood by the entrance to the frat-sponsored community fund-raiser. Around midnight, Sigma brother Vinson Boyce recalls finding him there. "I haven't seen you on the floor," Boyce scolded. "What are you doing?"

"Counting the house," Washington said. "Nobody's going to get in here free."

Washington had gotten into the habit of looking out for himself, even when there was no one to look after him. Before age 10, living alone at times, he would sometimes steal a few bucks to share with less resourceful friends.

"I've been on my own, more or less, since the day my father skipped town," he says. "He's out there some place, if he's still alive."

His mother liked to drink.

"She had two choices, and she chose alcohol over me," Washington says. "Those are all bad memories. Let's talk about something else."

He would have never survived, he says, without his maternal grandfather, his first football coach, two Jordan High classmates and his wife, Dana.

Of his high school friends, he says:

"It's a tragedy what happened (to my family), but when I knew them, no kid was ever luckier than me. Keith Solomon kept me going to class. Richard Green

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kept me off drugs."

Green has since dropped out of sight, and Solomon is dead. As he emerged from a fast-food restaurant one day six years ago, a neighborhood bully senselessly shot him.

Mourning his boyhood friends, Washington says:

"So many are dead."

★

James as a boy was on the bubble, as they say in sports. He could have gone either way: street chemist or football champion.

-- Dana Washington

★

In each of the last two years, "Drive By" Washington, a defensive back who stands 6 feet, 1 inch tall and weighs 210 pounds, has helped bring the Super Bowl championship to Dallas.

But to get to the title game last year, the Cowboys first had to beat San Francisco. On one memorable play, the 49ers sent their best receiver -- record-setter Jerry Rice, 6-2, 200 pounds -- cruising into Washington's territory.

Washington smashed him flat.

And as Rice tried to get up, Drive By lifted an arm in triumph.

In the locker room, a reporter asked Washington: "How did that feel?"

"It felt great," he replied. "I think I readjusted the guy's vertebrae."

On the field, Washington can be like that -- unsmiling, brutal. But he isn't always like that. In a more civilized setting, he can be sunny, merry, attentive.

One who knows nothing but Washington's softer side is Sweet Alice Harris, a living saint who founded the Parents of Watts. She operates nine shelters for homeless parolees, pregnant women, the mentally ill and others, and in the off-season Washington helps out, giving those who pass through someone to look up to.

Says Sweet Alice: "You can't imagine how wonderful it is having James around."

His opponents in pro football don't put it quite that way.

"The two biggest hitters of the '90s are (former) Bruins," says veteran NFL coach Sid Gillman, "Ronnie Lott (of the New York Jets) and James Washington."

Hitting, Washington says, is a skill he has been perfecting since high

Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1994

school. While classmates Solomon and Green were struggling for his soul, Washington was getting into fights -- in hallways, alleys, anywhere.

"I used to go down that avenue to solve all my problems," he says, "except I've never hit a woman."

His last fight in Watts came on what turned out to be his last day at Jordan. After completing his course work for graduation at midyear, he had been anticipating one last, easy semester. As he headed for the basketball floor one afternoon, a friend approached him, crying. She said she had been sexually abused by a security guard.

As Washington tells it now, he went looking for the man, found him in an office and picked a fight, knocking him down and out the door.

"You're suspended," the school authorities told Washington.

"You can't suspend me," he said airily. "I'm leaving."

That very week he enrolled at UCLA, returning to Jordan only once, on graduation day in June.

At 18, he fathered a child, a daughter named Shanel, whom he helps support.

"She's wonderful," he says. "She lives with her mother. I love my little daughter."

*

No matter how bright you are, you can't make it out of Watts without two things: role models and exposure. Somebody has to introduce you to the real world.

-- Anthony George, Washington's business partner

*

It isn't easy to get from where Washington was to where he is.

For one thing, rising above a boyhood in a tough neighborhood means, he says, "you've got to lose your friends -- leave them behind. If you don't, they'll eventually let you down. What you see and what they see are totally different."

The man who raised him, his late grandfather Eddie Alexander, pounded that in.

At age 10 or thereabouts, Washington recalls, he and his friends got caught shoplifting. They were arrested and taken to the police station, where Alexander came to pick up James.

Putting him in the passenger seat of the family truck, Alexander drove a few blocks, then reached out suddenly and smacked his grandson in the chest so hard that the boy flew out the door.

"Then he stopped the truck and picked me up, took me home, and whupped me

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with a handful of hangers," Washington says. "That made an impression."

Washington remembers that he sometimes got along with his grandparents, but not his uncles or mother. "One died of drugs, one died of AIDS, and I don't know what happened to Uncle Billy -- or my mother, either," he says. "Grandma was an invalid, but my grandfather worked hard and took good care of her and all four kids. And all four turned out to be bums."

Along the way, Alexander also did what he thought was best for his willful grandson. Concluding that James was smart but too ornery to deal with, he built a little shack for the boy to live in behind the house. "I was a loner then," Washington agrees, "and a troublemaker."

When he was about to enter his teens, Washington's mother persuaded him to move in with her for a while. He remembers being left alone one day with no food in the house.

So at dinner time, "I went down to the (supermarket) and made myself a ham sandwich," he recalls. "They don't arrest you if you don't take the food out of the store. The best part was the soft white Weber's bread. All we (ever) had at my house was hard bread."

He walked around the store until he finished eating, then walked away.

To this day, he is a soft-white-bread freak.

*

I knew his mom (as a child). She was a lovely little girl in those days when she came in with her brothers.

-- Paul Brown, barber

*

The first time Washington saw the inside of the Continental Barber Shop, a Watts landmark, he was 5 years old.

"He came with Eddie Alexander -- his grandfather," says Paul Brown, who, with partners Joe Sampy and Frank Simmons has been running the shop for 36 years.

"That chair over there, Eddie set him down right there," Brown says, pointing. "Then he turned to me and said, 'I've lost one boy, but I'm not going to lose this one.'"

"He was right about that. I don't know what happened to Eddie's oldest boy, but this whole part of the city is still damn proud of Pookie."

That was Alexander's name for his grandson, and to the Continental regulars it's still his name.

"As in POOHkee," Brown says.

For as long as he can remember -- almost a quarter-century -- Washington has been coming to this barber shop.

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Three photos of him hang on the barbershop wall -- along with those of many others. Hardly centerfold material, each pictures a celebrated homeboy -- rappers and such -- who made it out of Watts but returns to the Continental for haircuts.

When Washington slides into the open chair one summer afternoon, the customer to his left -- Hardy Obey, a food distributor -- tells his barber to hold it a minute and starts firing.

"You know Jerry Rice is my favorite player," Obey says. "I've told you before. Next time, don't hit him so hard."

"Sorry," Washington says. "I forgot."

Another local walks in and takes a seat where others are waiting.

"I thought it was you," the young man tells Washington. "I was across the street when you came in here, but I recognized you from the Super Bowl game."

"Were you there?" Washington asks.

"No, I was in jail," he answers. "They had some good instant replays of your touchdown. Congratulations. Where you off to (today)?"

Washington says he's en route to a building he owns at 46th and Western. He hopes to convert the structure into another shelter for Sweet Alice Harris and the Parents of Watts. He will call it Shelter 37, after his jersey number.

The young man shakes his head.

"I wouldn't go there today," he warns, explaining that an off-and-on gang treaty is off in that neighborhood.

"People are getting 'jacked there right now," he says.

Washington thanks him for the tip, pays the barber, says goodbye and hits the street. As he climbs into his black BMW, he rethinks his plan to drive up Western. His fresh fade cut and perennial headband wouldn't be much help. His aging shotgun rider wouldn't be any help.

"Let's go another day," he says.

*

It's very sad. In South-Central, a lot of intelligent brothers don't know any better than to screw up.

-- Kelvin Tolbert, Washington's business partner

*

Year-round, a pro football player protects and pampers his one priceless asset. And so Washington lifts weights seven mornings a week in the off-season

Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1994

at an uptown Whittier health club. He also works out twice a week at Los Angeles Southwest College, focusing on his speed with Coach Henry Washington, his old Jordan High mentor.

During one recent session, a young passerby stops her bicycle and, addressing Henry but looking steadily at James, says: "I'll bet you're proud of your son."

Henry grins. Although no relation to James, he is also a well-built, commanding figure. "I'm proud," he says, "of all my sons."

His proteges, he means, women as well as men. Two are Olympic champions: sprinter Florence Griffith-Joyner and hurdler Kevin Young.

But Washington the coach didn't have much hope for Washington the player the first time they met. That day in the Jordan High locker room, James had gotten into a fight and was punching away on a bigger boy.

"Stop that," Henry roared, and they did. But when the other kid ran off, James sneaked down the street after him. The fight was on again when Henry caught up.

"At Jordan High," he yelled, "every boy in my class does exactly what I say. The next time you don't, you're through."

James recalls that he was "considering a smart-ass" rejoinder when something in the coach's eyes made him pause. Although a high school junior, he had never played a day of football. He knew he was drifting. He yielded.

"Yes, sir," he remembers saying.

Washington believes his life turned that day.

"I've listened to Coach Washington ever since," he says. "He is my friend. He's the father I always wanted."

Later at UCLA, he would find the brothers he always wanted. Three of his Phi Beta Sigma fraternity pals became his Westside business partners: Anthony George, Kelvin Tolbert and Vinson Boyce.

Each had excelled at UCLA and had shown an aptitude for business, as well as a sense of personal responsibility for the community. Their frat set a UCLA record for most service projects: They painted rooms for the elderly, and collected food and clothing for the needy.

That affinity for good deeds still figures in what they do today as equal partners in the Summation Financial Co., where Washington oversees community service projects.

In a typical scenario, a man arrived at Summation headquarters, at La Brea and Stocker Street, not long ago and said: "I've had a job I like for three years. I don't have a lot of money, but we'd love to have a house of our own."

Tolbert, who handles such clients, said: "If you could put 3% down, maybe we could help."

Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1994

Four months later, he could and they did.

"Homeowners take better care of their homes and their neighborhood," Tolbert says. "We spend a lot of time pushing ownership."

They also spend money pushing other community improvements.

"Last year, we put \$100,000 into Shelter 37," George says. "We had it about ready to open just before the great (Northridge) earthquake came along and ruined it. They've red-tagged the building -- and now things are back to square one. The \$100,000 is gone."

The structure would have been the centerpiece for expanded Parents of Watts programs, housing job-training classrooms and the accredited adult school that Sweet Alice Harris maintains.

"The earthquake was a downer," Washington says. "We needed that building because we're not just out to help the homeless. We want to help those who want to help themselves."

"The guy who just comes in to sit and be fed and clothed isn't growing. They should graduate to different levels. First read and write, next a training program, then a job."

Or as Sweet Alice puts it: "We don't believe in just giving you a fish. We'll teach you how to fish. Then take you to the river."

She remains optimistic about acquiring the money to open Shelter 37. "I was raised by compassionate people in a Jewish family (who) gave me faith," she says. "I have faith that somehow we'll get that building yet."

*

I grew up mad at the world, but since then I've always thought of myself as a feisty, short-tempered person with a kind heart.

-- James Washington

*

Contemplating his boyhood, Washington, now 29, is convinced that his mother was changed by whatever led her husband, also named James, to run away.

"I think she would have been a great mom if my father had been there," he says. "The guy left her holding the bag. And left me hanging out in the streets."

No one has ever told Washington what happened, and he hasn't wasted any time trying to find out. Instead, he set about making sure things would be different for his own son.

For starters, "a man should have a name of his own," Washington says. "And Richard Washington has it."

Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1994

Richard, 3, lives with James and Dana in a cheerful two-story, four-bedroom Colonial built in 1938 on one of Whittier's big corner lots. A lattice-covered patio leads to a detached game room that doubles as James' office.

Other inhabitants include two dogs, a rabbit, countless fish of various descriptions, a peacock, a pet pig and it's hard to tell what else. "I started out to be a veterinarian," Dana explains.

Instead, with a communications degree from UCLA, she went to work for CBS as a writer-producer in the promotions department. Now, she free-lances.

Dana brought James to Whittier when they were still UCLA students. They chose a condo first. Her parents live nearby. Her father, Charles, is an aeronautical engineer at Rockwell. Her mother, Beverly, is a midwife at Martin Luther King Jr.-Drew Medical Center.

Dana recalls the night in 1990 when, sitting around a fire, she and James plotted the arrival of their son.

"I only care about three things," James told his wife. "Your health and his health -- and I want to be here when he's born."

"Well, friend," she replied, "that will take some careful planning."

Because James is off playing football more than half the year, the couple had a target window of barely five months. "Just to be safe," she says, "we closed it to three months -- February, March and April."

On March 15, 1991, her husband the football player was dressed for the occasion, like an operating-room surgeon or nurse.

"James cut the umbilical cord," Dana says.

Later in the game room, thinking back, he says: "I make my living hitting people, but she's tougher."

*

In Super Bowl XXVIII, James accounted for 17 of the Dallas Cowboys' first 27 points. In Super Bowl XXVII, he made the first big play, the interception. He got them going both times.

-- Henry Washington, coach

*

One sports truism is that NFL players, to play well, must be willing to play in pain. They hurt all season long, from the first scrimmage in July to the final play in the dead of winter.

But the pain that shot through Washington's left side after a three-man collision during a game in New Orleans was a little different, a little wilder. A teammate had hit him in the back just as he hit an opponent in front, and the blow dislocated a shoulder.

Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1994

"It just popped out, and stuck," Washington says. "I tugged at it, but I couldn't push it in, and I couldn't pull it in, either. It wouldn't move."

Back on the sideline, he dropped to one knee and purposefully smashed the shoulder into a bench. That fixed it, and he was back on the field for the next play.

"One of the bravest things I've seen," a Dallas sportswriter who observed the incident said later.

In his four years in Texas, "Drive By" Washington has given Cowboy fans a lot to see. He's generally up there with club interception leaders, usually leads the defensive backfield in tackles and forced fumbles, and always delivers big hits.

His specialty, though, has to be big-game excellence. Playing for the Super Bowl championship in January, he scored on a fumble return, set up another touchdown with an interception, and forced a fumble that put his team in field-goal range. The Cowboys won the game that the Buffalo Bills led well into the second half.

He is, nonetheless, one among many good NFL players -- unless you count what he does after a big game.

This year, two days after the Super Bowl, Washington rented a truck, drove to Rams Park in Orange County and picked up a load of surplus football shoes, football pants, sweat shirts and the like. Then he distributed them to South-Central schools and playgrounds.

Says Rams equipment man Todd Hewitt: "James phoned to remind us that he'd be here with a big truck as usual. He comes every year. Most players would be thinking about the Super Bowl. He was thinking about the Super Bowl and South-Central."

But he won't help just anyone, Washington says. He tries to help only those who try to help themselves.

"I'm here because I took advantage of the advantages I had," he says. "The guys I feel sorriest for are the ones who get a break and don't take advantage."

James Washington

Age: 29.

Native?: Yes; raised in Watts, lives in Whittier.

Family: Married to Dana Washington, with whom he has a son, Richard. He also has a daughter, Shanel.

Passions: Earning his NFL nickname "Drive By," helping people in his old neighborhood.

On creating opportunities for the homeless: "The guy who just comes in to sit and be fed and clothed isn't growing. They should graduate to different levels. First read and write, next a training program, then a job."

Los Angeles Times, September 11, 1994

On watching wife Dana deliver their son: "I make my living hitting people, but she's tougher."

On making the most of every opportunity: "The guys I feel sorriest for are the ones who get a break and don't take advantage."

GRAPHIC: Photo, This is the Los Angeles building at 46th and Western that James Washington hopes to convert into a shelter. He'll call it Shelter 37.
IRIS SCHNEIDER / Los Angeles Times; Photo, COLOR, James Washington, celebrating after an interception during the Super Bowl, says he has succeeded "because I took advantage of the advantages I had." ALEXANDER GALLARDO / Los Angeles Times

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LEVEL 1 - 47 OF 88 STORIES

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THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

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HEADLINE: Washington knows plenty about pain;
Cowboys safety adept at making, taking hits

BYLINE: Ed Werder, Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

DATELINE: IRVING

BODY:

IRVING - James Washington defends the deep perimeter with the darkest of intentions. He uncoils from his position in the Cowboys secondary and inflicts lacerating punishment to those on his hit list.

He dispenses pain with lowered shoulders or with forearms protected in plastic and wrapped hard in tape for the purpose of intimidation in the relentless attempt to win. But Washington certainly has taken his lumps and suffered his losses.

"I'm not afraid of pain," he said. "I'm not afraid of being hurt. I've been all of that so much. I'm almost immune to that."

But more pain and much disappointment underscored last season for Washington, the safety from a hardscrabble background who narrowly missed becoming the Most Valuable Player in the Super Bowl.

He had the tackles. Ten of them unassisted. He had the turnovers. Three of them. He had a touchdown. But there was no trophy. The chance of a lifetime in his lifetime of chance?

The Cowboys now prepare for their season opener with the Pittsburgh Steelers and the opportunity for an unprecedented third consecutive Super Bowl championship. Washington will open as the starting free safety with resolute optimism. He contends there will soon be another chance for him to reproduce his Super Bowl performance and perhaps to put his name on the trophy.

"This year," he said. "In Miami."

Washington turned a potential Super Bowl loss inside out for the Cowboys last season. But while the Cowboys are considered two-time Super Bowl champions who cannot lose, Washington is the often-demoted, always unappreciated defensive back who so often cannot win.

This is his perspective: former coach Jimmy Johnson took his starting position, former teammate Thomas Everett his Pro Bowl appearance and Emmitt Smith the Super Bowl most valuable player award. It was an award Washington seemed to clinch with a superlative performance in which he ran farther than Thurman Thomas and produced more touchdowns than Jim Kelly.

Agony and ecstasy

The confident Washington informed Michael Irvin in the locker room of his potential to supplant Troy Aikman and win the Super Bowl MVP. That was before the Cowboys took the field and handed the Buffalo Bills their helmets once more. The disappointment was such that Washington did not watch his taped copy of last season's Super Bowl for more than a month.

"Did it hurt? No," he said. "Was I disappointed after I saw the tapes? Yes. Last year was disappointing for me, even though we won the Super Bowl and all the success I had in the Super Bowl. How good would I have been if I played the whole year? Then Thomas Everett makes the Pro Bowl. I thought about how I played, how he played and thought maybe they had the wrong number.

"But I showed the world what I can do. When they talk about Super Bowl XXVIII, that was James Washington's day."

The difference between the Cowboys and the Bills that day was 17 points. The difference between the Cowboys and the Bills also was Washington, whose three turnovers produced 17 points. The final score on the Super Bowl scoreboard could have been: Washington 17, Dallas 13, Buffalo 13.

He forced a Thomas fumble that Darren Woodson recovered and led to a field goal. He sprinted 46 yards for a touchdown three plays into the second half with another Thomas fumble that tied the score, shifted momentum to the Cowboys and left the disconsolate Thomas on the bench with his head buried in his hands. Then, on the first play of the fourth period, Washington intercepted a Kelly pass intended for Don Beebe that set up Smith's game-clinching, fourth-down touchdown run.

To put that in perspective, Washington had intercepted one pass and recovered one fumble the entire season.

"After I intercepted the pass in the fourth period, I thought I had already won the MVP," Washington said. "When I picked it off, I was sure I won it."

Snubbed as the MVP his senior season at Jordan High School in Los Angeles, Washington threw a temper tantrum. His response this time is infinitely more mature.

His inspiring Super Bowl performance has become a platform from which Washington hopes to reach a new performance level and win a Pro Bowl appearance this season.

The Super Bowl was one of two times Washington started last season, and that was the product of the Bills' three-receiver offense. He will be in the starting lineup this season because the Cowboys want him there as the

replacement for Everett, who was traded to Tampa Bay for a fourth-round draft choice in the off-season. The salary cap pressured the Cowboys to swap Washington or Everett.

At one point, it seemed certain Washington would be traded. So sure were the Philadelphia Eagles that defensive coordinator Bud Carson watched tapes of Washington in his office. But Eagles personnel director John Wooten, who held a similar position with the Cowboys when Washington came to Dallas as a Plan B free agent, knew the Super Bowl would preclude that.

Despite their differences, Washington learned Johnson planned to keep him with the Cowboys during an off-season conversation.

Washington provides a leadership presence and probably is more of a team player than he is credited with. He compromised and accepted his situation when Johnson installed Woodson and Everett as his starting safeties last season, no matter how undeserving Washington considered his demotion. As much as his instincts told him to complain, Washington remained mute.

Tough upbringing

Washington is a territorial player out of necessity, a player who has developed a high tolerance for pain.

"The things I've been through and the adversities I've faced are such that the stuff Jimmy put in my head would break down a normal man," he said. "But he didn't know what kind of man he was dealing with. I feed off the negative and gain energy from it."

Washington has the importance of losing individual trophies in perspective because he has a depth chart of deeper loss.

He was raised in the Watts section of south central Los Angeles and narrowly resisted the pull of violence, street gangs and drugs that could have interfered with his current accomplishments.

His father left the family before Washington turned two. His mother is an alcoholic. There were many mentors who suddenly disappeared, including Keith Solomon, who combined with Washington as the safety tandem for Jordan High. More than that, coach Henry Washington made Solomon responsible for keeping watch over Washington.

"There was a friend of mine who had his head chopped off in a drug-related incident," Washington said. "My best friend, Keith Solomon, was shot in the back of the head and killed in a chicken restaurant for no apparent reason."

"I had my share of the streets - a little of this, a little of that. I was a part of it. But I really kept pushing it away because I knew I had a chance to get out."

Don Rogers, the former UCLA safety and first-round draft pick of the Cleveland Browns, inspired Washington's fearless style and penchant for powerful hits. Washington was there when Rogers collapsed and died from a cocaine overdose in 1986.

"I was supposed to be in his wedding," Washington said. "We were at the hotel, waiting for him to pick us up. He was at his mother's house in the shower. When we found out he collapsed, we took a taxi to the house, went to the bathroom, and he was there in convulsions."

A father figure

Henry Washington, who is no relation but became a father figure to James Washington, remains a confidant. Washington calls him often, sends him game tapes for review and solicits his advice.

James never played football until his junior season and almost failed to make the varsity. "He needed some special attention," Henry said. "He was a good kid but wild as hell. Our first encounter came on the practice field. He was about to fight some other kid. I told him if he fought, he would never play varsity football, and he knew I was serious."

Washington uncurled his fists and developed into an impact player. He won a scholarship to play for Terry Donahue at UCLA and was a fifth-round draft choice of the Los Angeles Rams in 1988. But Rams coach John Robinson, upset that Washington hit Ron Brown in a practice, left him unprotected in Plan B free agency. Washington signed with the Cowboys in 1990.

"We liked the way he really hit," said Wooten, then with the Cowboys. "It wasn't that long before when they talked about him like (former Seattle Seahawks safety) Kenny Easley."

Washington considers himself the first of an important, new kind of Cowboys player. He preceded Tony Casillas and Charles Haley as a player who overcame the perception that he was trouble to become a key factor in the Cowboys' success. Johnson had the ability to keep those players in line and draw spirited performances.

"Jimmy has always known that if you could get a bunch of renegades together and teach them any discipline, then you have a shot," Washington said. "The best thing about renegades, if you get him to believe and trust in you, then he'll fight to the finish."

A minor setback

But Washington and Johnson had their differences. There was considerable friction. Johnson considered Washington a liability if isolated in coverage, disliked his tendency to draw penalties and hated that he worked out in Los Angeles in the off-season.

Therefore, Washington came to his first training camp under rookie coach Barry Switzer intent on proving himself coachable.

Then Switzer reprimanded him in front of teammates for an unnecessary hit on wide receiver Alvin Harper in practice that nearly inspired a fight with Aikman, who had seen it so often when they were teammates at UCLA. But Washington appeared unaffected by the incident.

"I've been raked in front of every team I've played for," he said. "Jimmy Johnson was good at it, John Robinson was good at it."

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS, August 28, 1994

I'd have almost been disappointed if somebody hadn't called me something."

Washington continues to pattern himself after Rogers, Ronnie Lott, Dennis Smith, Lester Hayes, Jack Tatum and George Atkinson.

They were defensive backs who could distract or intimidate certain receivers.

Washington hit San Francisco's Jerry Rice with such force in their regular-season meeting last season that the receiver's chewing gum stuck to the jersey of the Cowboys player. Washington contends the Dallas secondary has clearly intimidated the 49ers receivers who chose not to run as many deep post patterns as normal to avoid Cowboys safeties.

"There are only so many positions on defense where you can dominate: a powerful defensive end, a blitzing linebacker and safety," Washington said. "I personally believe one hit can change the chemistry of a football game."

Washington has felt the perfect hit often, the stinging pain of disappointment. That is a hit Washington thinks he has taken far too often.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO(S): 1. James Washington (DMN; Irwin Thompson) 2. James Washington blitzing Broncos quarterback John Elway, sees himself as a disruptive force in the Cowboys secondary (DMN; John F. Rhodes)

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LEVEL 1 - 74 OF 88 STORIES

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HEADLINE: JAMES WASHINGTON DISCOVERS PEACE THE HARD WAY

SOURCE: 1991, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

BODY:

IRVING, Texas - It was a school teacher in the notoriously violent Watts section of Los Angeles who first demonstrated to kindergartener James Washington the concept of the string box. She instructed Washington to claim a corner of his family home and to cordon off a "personal space" that could be entered only by him. James was to seek comfort inside the string box anytime he felt depression or anger or hatred or despair. "The idea was for us to learn how to be calm, to keep us from being as dangerous as the older kids," said Washington, who 20 years later is realizing that no matter how many progressive steps his life takes, sadness keeps pace. These days, so often engulfed by depression, anger, hatred and despair, he escapes to his imaginary string box more often than ever. "I'm good at zoning out to get through the tough times," said Washington, a Dallas Cowboys safety enduring a litany of personal tragedies, most recently the near death of the grandmother who raised him. "When you're young, you play those games, especially if you're an only child like I was. Watts was a rough neighborhood, with guns shooting and police helicopters flying around. So if you wanted to get to sleep at night, you had to learn to zone out. "And when I was a kid and saw somebody dying, it was just expected. It sounds morbid now. But the only thing I really wondered was where he was headed, heaven or hell. And since he was from my neighborhood, I knew it was probably going to be the second place." His childhood lessons of mental survival have served him well. In the last few years, death has stolen from Washington his idol, former Cleveland Browns safety Don Rogers; the best man at his wedding, former UCLA teammate Al Wilson; and the man he called "Dad," grandfather Eddie Alexander, who died last summer at 68. Washington has not seen his real father since infancy. His father may or may not be dead; Washington knows little and cares even less. Washington's real mother is alive, though James hasn't spoken to her for four years. He gave her an ultimatum: Choose me or choose booze. She made a lousy choice. The latest blow came the weekend of Oct. 20, when the Cowboys had a bye, a time Washington had planned to spend with wife, Dana, and their 8-month-old, Richard. Instead, Washington returned to Los Angeles to be with his grandmother - "Mom" to him - Annie Alexander, 65, who spent a week in intensive care because of lupus and kidney problems. "This is the first time I've talked about all this," Washington said. "It feels good to let it all out. I wish this roller-coaster part of my life would end. But I cope because when people close to me pass away, I use their energy. I suck in their energy. I try to be something they wanted to be." What Washington is trying to be is a starting, intimidating, dominating National Football League safety. After spending his first two pro seasons with his

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hometown Los Angeles Rams as a backup and then coming to Dallas in 1990 as a Plan B pickup who started only because of others' injuries, his "sucked in" energy is being well spent. "I'm living everyone's dream," Washington said. "Al Wilson never got to play in the NFL. Don Rogers was an All-Pro, but because of his drug overdose (in June 1986) he never got longevity. My father (Eddie Alexander) was so proud when I was drafted, it gave him something to stick his chest out about. "I just wish," Washington said, "I could celebrate with those people who are gone." Because so many of the bad things that have happened to Washington could have been so much worse, he always has figured he had reason to celebrate. All Washington knows about his father, who left his mother shortly after their marriage, is from a yellowing snapshot and "a rumor that he was a good baker." "I've thought about trying to find him," Washington said. "But why? So I could kick the hell out of him? I've decided that I grew up to be a better person than I would've been with him around." Washington has come to the same conclusion about his mother, judged an unfit parent when James was 4, forcing her to ship the child to his grandparents' home at 97th and Anzac, near the Jordan Downs Projects in Watts. He loves his mother, James said, loves her enough to have given her plenty of second chances. "I've been around enough people who are substance abusers to understand why she's repeatedly chosen alcohol over me," Washington said. "Again, don't you think living with my grandparents probably worked out better for me?" Washington's natural parents did nothing for him. But fortunately, a series of surrogate parents, starting with Eddie and Annie, retained just a slight edge in control of Washington over the attraction of gangs and drugs. "I didn't have a bad (police) record," Washington explained, "because when you're that young, they let you off the hook. But I was a typical kid in my neighborhood. A bad kid." Whatever peace he found inside his string box in the corner of the Alexanders' house, he made up for on the streets. He sensed the malevolence of the people who owned the streets, but he didn't trust the people who were too scared to be on the streets. So he had respect for almost no one. Who the hell deserved respect from him? What did he need from anybody? It wasn't until the 11th grade at Jordan High School when he found out what he needed. Football. James McArthur Washington, All-Los Angeles-City defensive back as a junior, All-America as a senior, UCLA scholarship winner, Rams fifth-round draft pick, Dallas Cowboys starter, had toyed with the game a little bit. He was on Jordan's B team as an offensive tackle. But he never played football seriously until the 11th grade. "And even in 11th grade," said L.H. Foster, the woman who also has a mother-son relationship with Washington, "James had such a nasty attitude that he got in a fight with the coach and got kicked off the team." Washington eventually went back to the Jordan High team. But the tumult couldn't be sent to detention hall. Washington was a child himself when he fathered a child, Shanel, now 8. During his senior year, at the post-season football awards banquet, Washington threw a frightening, chair-tossing temper tantrum. Why? Because he didn't win the most valuable player award. Between Foster, still at Jordan High after 27 years, and coach Henry Washington, James' fatherly role model who now coaches at Los Angeles' Southwest Junior College, Washington was force-fed enough about discipline and education to graduate from high school early and move on to UCLA. "I didn't let him run around with the wrong crowd anymore," Henry Washington said. "I kept a foot on his neck," Foster said. "He's a peculiar kid, but he's a lovely kid. I think of him as a son. Which is why I told him to get his act together in college." But, Washington said, "I was just as bad at UCLA. A violent kid. I wasn't a racist, but it was culture shock. Growing up, the closest I came to seeing a white face was a teacher, and that wasn't someone you really looked up to. So here I am, my very first class at

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UCLA, an English class, and I'm the only black. I'd never seen so many white faces before in my life. So I stopped going. I was scared. They were so much smarter than me. I wasn't educated. I had common sense, but common sense doesn't help you much on punctuation tests in English class.' Washington had his conflicts with UCLA coach Terry Donahue - conflicts Washington now takes the blame for - but was a standout on the football field. He also graduated from UCLA with an education that has led him into business as a financial adviser. Has James Washington found peace? He's in charge of a student outreach program in Los Angeles that fights drug use. He has been back to Jordan High, preaching to Watts students about the benefits of good education and good attitudes, a speech he gave during the same football awards banquet at which he once screamed and kicked chairs. Among Cowboys players, he is a back-patter, a happy-go-lucky type who does not wear his scars on his sleeve. '(Dallas coach Jimmy) Johnson talks about staying positive, which is why I relate so well to him,' Washington said. 'The attitude you take is everything. If I let myself look at things negatively, I might jump off a bridge. 'The reason I stay upbeat is I like my environment. Not just the Dallas Cowboys, but getting the chance to play. After all the dimes I threw in wishing wells, one dream finally came true.' Before every game, as he is about to face a flood of fierce emotions, James Washington locates an empty corner in the locker room and imagines a string box. 'God,' he whispers once he's inside the box, 'don't move my mountain. Just give me the strength to climb.'

LANGUAGE: English

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