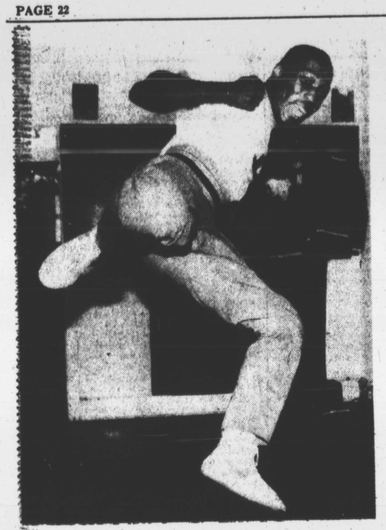


Martial arts teacher is bound for Peking

By Brion Tyson

Martial arts instructor Willie "Bam" Johnson, who teaches at Shaolin Wu-Shu, 23 W. North Ave, has his goals and ambitions well in perspective. He is an unusually confident young man for one with what he calls "a humble origin." When you take a look at some of his accomplishments, and examine his philosophy, the picture begins to get clearer. Willie Johnson is simply a person who discovered what he wanted to do at a very young age, and he began.

When "Bam" was six his big sister took him from his home in Lafayette Court housing projects to a Howard Street movie theater downtown. There he saw his hero, Bruce Lee, in "The Chinese Connection", and a positive way to avoid the pitfalls so familiar to the "brown brick communities" found in practically all of our nation's cities.

In his 15 years of involvement with the martial arts, Willie has accomplished as much in his field as one could hope. Some of his winnings include: first place in the Champion's Karate Tournament; second place in the 1979 Junior Olympics; first place in Baltimore's 6th Pro-Am Championship; first place in the All-American Open held in New York; second place in the Empire State Karate Championship.

He was Grand Champion in Baltimore's Karate Tournament, first place winner in the Maryland Gold Cup Kickbox Championship, fourth place winner in Minnesota's Diamond National Karate Championship, 3rd place in the American Karate Assoc.'s Grand National Competition held in Grand Rapids, Mich., and 2nd place in the Professional Karate Association Nationals. Johnson has returned to successfully to defend many of these titles.

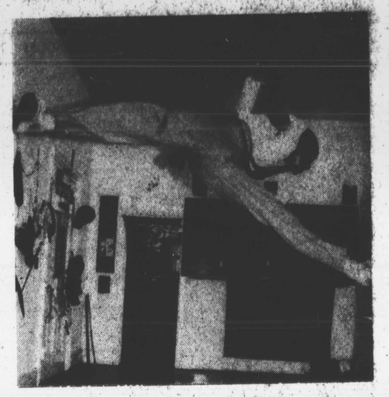
Outside of his involvement with the practical side of martial arts, Willie is building his experiences for a career in film and television. Johnson appears regularly each morning at 7:46 on Channel 50's Wu Shu Forms, and has appeared on ESPN's PKA professional karate matches.

"I am planning to go into film. In my spare time I'm writing stories that I will eventually work into scripts for my future productions, but there's still much work to do," says Willie as if proud of his versatility. "Oh yes, and I've recently completed several classes in drama at Dunbar's Career Arts School," states the Baltimore Kung Fu master.

All these things are a little further down the road Johnson states as he gets down to the business at hand. "What I'm doing now is working toward my goal of traveling to mainland China to tour and visit the ancient Shaolin Temple of Martial Arts. This means a lot to me for a number of reasons. You see, for one ....when people come through these doors and see me sitting behind the desk, automatically they assume that a black man is incapable of teaching them traditional and authentic arts. Although I am capable now, when I return from China there will be no disputing me. This is not my sole purpose for going. In fact it is not as important as my all-around personal development in the martial arts.

Looking at Willie's track record, it is hard to doubt that he'll reach the goal he's set for himself, although his greatest goal is not a self-centered one.

"All of my participation in the martial arts is aimed at helping people, and not any one particular group of people, but all people. And, also to get them to realize the true meaning of martial arts as a way of life; and to recognize it not only as a method of self-defense, but a tool that builds confidence, something needed to succeed in all walks of life....It has done this for me".



When asked why his goals are so high, he replies, "Well, I figure if I set my goals real high, I can never be too disappointed if I don't reach every single one of them, at least I'll be right up there in the running. I'll still be near the top." He goes on "I'm a competitor, I don't get mad when I lose, I just get glad when I win! I'm already one of the best in the country and I'm just starting out."

The Shaolin Wu-Shu, at 23 West North Ave., is currently offering a special introductory rate of $10.50 for the first two private lessons. Also as a special service, "Bam" gives free self-defense lessons open to all, every Saturday beggining at 2:00 p.m. He says I do this as an effort to give something back to the community that I love, and that has helped me so much."

Positive and enthusiastic about his trip slated for next April, Johnson projects, "I'll be going to several different locations there to work and advance the study of Wu-Shu. This will be a hard task. I will need the city's support, but at any rate, I'll do what I must."

On a wall near the exit of the Shaolin Wu-Shu School for Martial Arts sits a chalkboard that reads: "With faith, nothing is impossible." Of this, Willie "Bam" Johnson is a fine example.

AFRO Photos by Paul A. Greene

Alston named vice president at BUL

Dr. James A. Priest, Baltimore Urban League Board Chairman, has announced the appointment of Lloyd M. Alston, Sr. as vice-president of the league. Mr. Alston recently retired from the Baltimore City Public Schools, where he last served as assistant superintendent for the Division of Vocational Education.

Alston's assignments during thirty years of tenure with the school system began with classroom teaching and department headships in business education for twelve years, followed by an assistant principalship and eight years as principal of Bergenthaler Vocational - Technical High School in Northeast Baltimore.

Before moving into the vocational education post, Alston headed the Division of Personnel and later the Division of Adult and Community Education.

Alston's undergraduate training is in the field of business education, and he earned the B.S. degree from Morgan State College (now University) in 1954. Graduate studies were pursued at Loyola College, American University, where he earned an MBA degree, and at the University of Maryland.

Active in community and professional activities, Alston is a member of the Commission on Secondary Education, Executive Committee of Baltimore Area Council, Boy Scouts of America and Board of Directors of Junior Achievement of Metropolitan Baltimore. He is a deacon of Faith Baptist Church and is a past Basileus of Pi Omega Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

Alston's wife, Josephine Lockiear Alston, is a teacher of office occupations at Perry Hall Senior High School in Baltimore County. The family includes six children, with the youngest a college senior.

Lloyd M. Alston, Sr.

Dr. Priest commented that "we are fortunate to secure the services of Mr. Alston, whose professional and management skills will enhance the operation of the league. It is particularly gratifying that he also is knowledgeable about word processing and data processing, which will enable him to assist with the activities of the Information Processing Training Center, where we conduct training programs for employment in these fields."

Dr. Whitten, who has served as president of the Baltimore Urban League since January, 1983, expressed his pleasure at having Mr. Alston join the staff. He stated that "Mr. Alston's specialized skills and background will assist the league to strengthen its network in the community and improve its effectiveness".

Bowie's Dr. Lyons will be inaugurated Oct. 3

Bowie State College announces the inauguration of Dr. James Earl Lyons, Sr., as the seventh president of the college. The inauguration ceremonies will be held on Wednesday, October 3 at 10 a.m. on the college green.

Dr. Lyons' appointment was announced by the Board of Trustees of the State Universities and Colleges on July 14, 1983, and he began his assignment at Bowie State College on September 1, 1983.

Previous work experience includes: acting president (summer 1981) Delaware State College; vice president and dean of academic affairs, chief negotiator, and professor, Delaware State College; vice president for academic affairs, Barber-Scotia College; assistant to the vice chancellor for academic affairs and director of summer school, Fayetteville State University; assistant to the vice president for academic affairs, director of institutional research, and associate professor of education, Kentucky State University; assistant dean of students, director of Afro-American Cultural Center, black student advisor, University of Connecticut; instructor of Afro-American studies, Central Connecticut State College; public school teacher, Philadelphia Public School System.

Dr. James E. Lyons, Sr.

Dr. Lyons also served the Peace Corps as a volunteer in Ecuador.

He is the author of numerous articles for professional magazines and journals. He holds membership in many professional organizations, is a member of the Phi Kappa Pi and Phi Delta Kappa honor societies and the Omega Psi Phi social fraternity.

Dr. Lyons is married and has three children.

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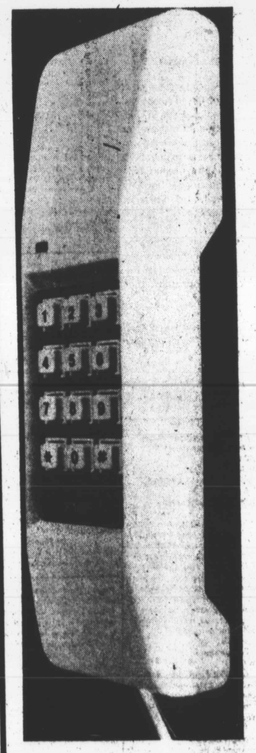

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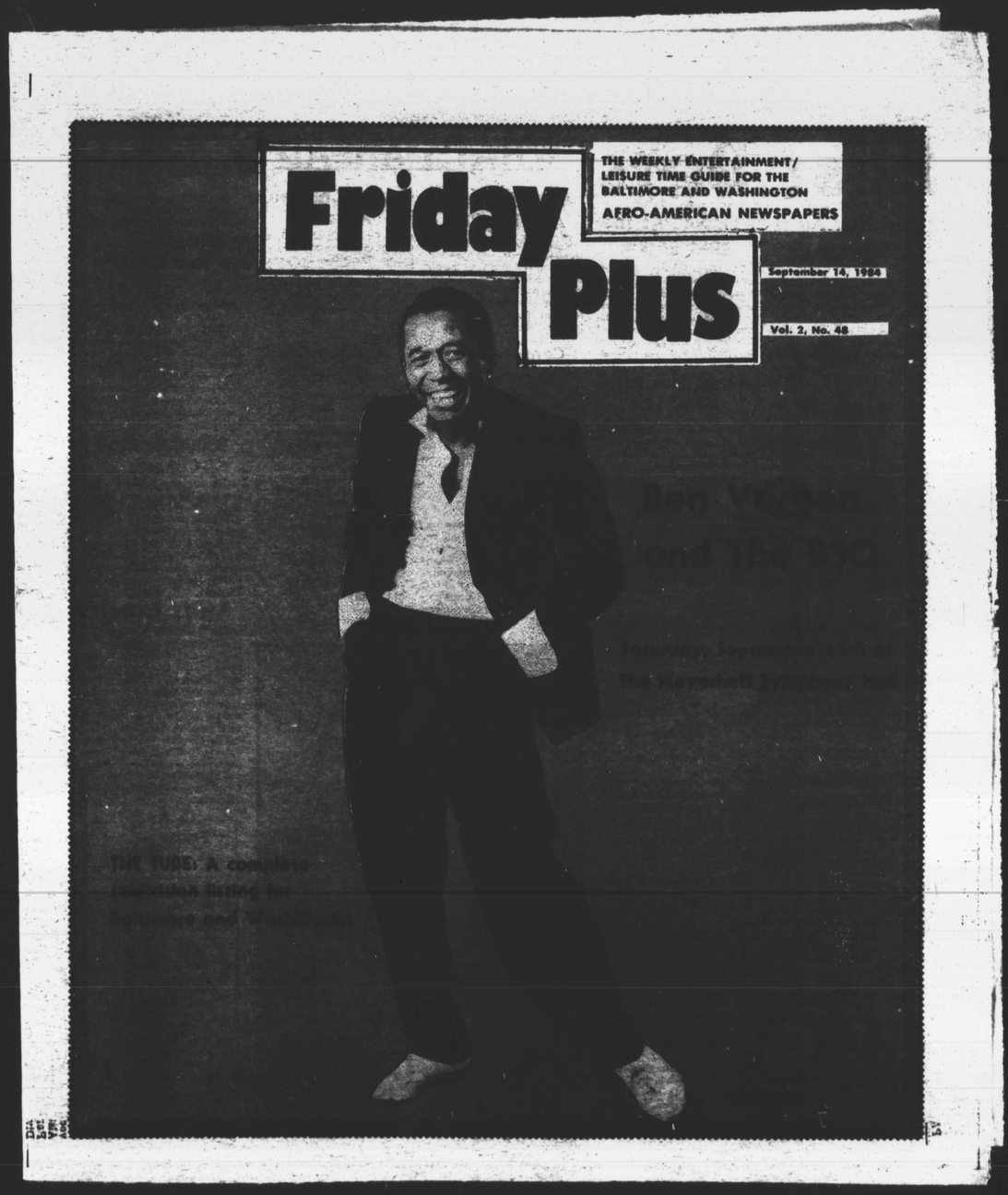
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