Mr. Willie Green's Sports Complex—His Dream HAS Come True!!! Exclusive Interview with Robert A. Williams

Editor's Note: Upon reading my April 4, 2022 article titled "Public's Opinion on: Has the Shelby Star been bought off??" Mr. Willie Green gave me a telephone call with some very good news regarding his Sports Complex status and other information that I have put together for this article.

Mr. Willie Green is best known as a former NFL top level Football Player with two Superbowl Rings with the Denver Broncos. Mr. Green finished up his many NFL seasons career with the Carolina Panthers, married a local girl, (School Board Member) Dena Green, settled in Cleveland County, raised a family and became a successful businessman. A successful "Black" Business man. Unfortunately, the first and maybe the only "High Level" Black businessman in Cleveland County, North Carolina. A County steeped in "Plantation Politics" that only recently got itself removed (maybe prematurely) from the U.S. Department of Justice "Watch List" as one of the 40 Counties in North Carolina found to be serious offenders of U.S. Voting Rights laws.

But, folks, let's start at the beginning of Mr. Green's interest in sports.

Mr. Willie A. Green Sr. was born and raised in a medium sized city in Georgia. Although he was raised in the "projects" he was fortunate enough to have two parents who both worked and instilled a "hard work ethic" in little Willie. Also, Mrs. Green, Willie's mother, was a well-respected employee in the city's Recreation Department, which introduced a young Willie

Green to organized team sports.

While other kids were out and about doing drugs and other such foolishness, Willie Green's introduction into team sports also introduced him to a regime of discipline that not only kept him out of trouble, but honed his skills as an athlete and a member of a team instead of a gang.

To make a long story short, in such a disciplined environment Mr. Willie Green thrived. He excelled in sports, played high school football, received a College scholarship and played College football and on to the Professional teams at the highest level.

As we all know, professional football player's careers don't last until you are 66, retire and go on Social Security. Mr. Willie Green retired from professional football in his mid-thirties and started a second career. In business. Mr. Green's discipline also had applied to his financial affairs. Mr. Green retired from the NFL with a pretty hefty bank account. And built upon that in his various business ventures.

The Sports Complex idea:

Mr. Green's interest in athletics also proved of interest to his children. Both boys and girls. Which, of course, Mr. Green encouraged. As the children grew and started playing team sports, Mr. Green found "Travel-Ball" was growing exponentially. Travel-Ball can be of any sort of games. Baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, etc. where the various teams travel to other cities and towns and compete against one another on weekend excursions. Depending on the season and the various games that are played, travel-ball tournaments can occur as much as 48 weekends per year. To Mr. Willie Green, always looking for business opportunities, catering to the Travel-Ball business appeared a totally logical way to form a business, provide opportunities for his own children, provide opportunities for other children and have fun in the process.

The fact that Travel-Ball travel means the parents and family members of the Travel-Ball kids, the ones who provide the financial backing ($$$) for their children's athletic development, will always be coming along too. Which offers way more opportunity for a successful business venture than something like the American Legion World Series Baseball. Something that comes along once a year. Like a flash in a pan, the ALWS comes and then it is gone for at least another year.

About the same time, Mr. Green sees the City of Shelby's 10-Year Masterplan. The City of Shelby had commissioned high-dollar consultants to study and map out what the City of Shelby should do over the next ten years for the overall benefit, quality of life and economic development of Shelby. And then filed it away without any second thoughts.

In studying Shelby's 10-Year Masterplan, Mr. Green found the opportunity that he had been looking for. The part about the City of Shelby entering into a Public-Private Partnership with a private entity to build and operate a Sports Complex. And figured that he was the best person to provide that Sports Complex.

Mr. Green went straight to work developing a plan, business model and a proposal for an ideal Sports Complex for Shelby. Tailoring this business plan to both capture exactly what Shelby was asking for. As well as for Mr. Green to provide the variety of facilities for the variety of Travel-Ball sports. Make his Sports Complex suitable for the needs of the City of Shelby during weekdays and host Travel-Ball games on the weekends. And, to capture the full potential of this opportunity, Mr. Green also planned to build a Motel on the same property as the Sports Complex.

Mr. Green found and purchased sufficient land for this sports complex as well as securing his own funding for the entire project. $8.5 Million in funding and all supplied by Mr. Willie Green, Sr. Not a single dime in up-front money from the

City of Shelby.

The City of Shelby, at first, seemed happy to have such a Sports Complex in Shelby. Shelby Mayor Stan Anthony proposed to Mr. Green to provide the Architect Services for Mr. Green's Sports Complex for $350,000. However, Mr. Green found that the building provider that he had selected included the architect services in the cost of the building plans. So, Mr. Green did not accept Mayor Anthony's architect services. At that point is exactly when things got off track for the City of Shelby and Mr. Green's Sports Complex.

Things also went off track about that same time between Mr. Green's informal proposal to the Cleveland County Commissioners to also provide team sports and recreation facilities for the county's young men and women outside of the Shelby City Limits.

Then "rumors" started to surface that were totally negative about Mr. Green. Like Mr. Green was broke, Mr. Green was a Muslim Terrorist. That Mr. Green only wanted to import a million "niggers" to the City of Shelby and other such garbage and nonsense. All the while, the youth population in Shelby, with nothing else to do, were committing crimes. Selling and doing drugs. Shooting and killing themselves and others. All the things a sports complex would help prevent. But that didn't matter to the rumor mongers and City of Shelby and County officials. Many, including myself, believe that Mr. Green's not paying Mayor Anthony's architect fees started the negative rumor mongering. Mr. Green being a black man fanned the flames of cronyism and racism that have always been imbedded deep into Cleveland County's business community. Then, the various lawsuits that continue to this very day and beyond.

All this put a stop to Mr. Green's Sports Complex in Shelby.

But, NOT for Mr. Willie A. Green, who is NOT a quitter.

In our conversation this past Saturday, Mr. Green announced to me that he had closed on a large property and that he had already begun to convert/remodel it to a Sports Facility and Entertainment Center. A property that had been built originally as a very large platform for entertainment and movie purposes by a well know entertainment personality. A property that could and would be converted and remodeled into a Sports Complex and Entertainment Center that was exactly like what Mr. Green had envisioned in the first place. And that Mr. Green was directing the renovations as we spoke. And all funding was provided by Mr. Green's own personal sources under his own signature. And the city officials were tickled pink with Mr. Willie Green's plans and were 100% behind everything Mr. Green was bringing to the table in their own fair city.

That City is NOT Shelby, NC. Nor is it in Cleveland County.

It is Athens, Georgia. Where Mr. Willie Green, Sr. was born and raised. The existing Entertainment Facility was originally built by Mr. Kenny Rogers, a famous Country singer and Movie Actor. (The Gambler-"You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em. And know when to run!") Now recently deceased.

But the property lives on and Mr. Green's dream of a chain of Sports Complexes has began in earnest. Like the "Flight of the Phoenix," the mythical bird that is "reborn" from its own ashes, Mr. Green has the almost flight-ready "Phoenix" within his own grasp now and the departure time is just as soon as the renovations are complete. And everybody down in Athens, Georgia is cheering Mr. Green on with his high level civic and business endeavors whose value is well recognized by the City of Athens.

And, what is left for the City of Shelby? Nothing but potential jury awards they will have to pay? But one thing is for certain for Shelby. No sports Facilities and plenty of

shootings, killings, drugs, overdoses, corrupt political leadership and never-ending violence. And, Like the 10 Year Masterplan itself stated, Shelby’s leadership is substandard and not capable of grasping advantageous opportunities.

And Mr. Willie Green is smiling all the way to the bank!! Way to go, Mr. Willie Green!!