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## **My Vision**

Today is the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of my term as National Commissioner of MJBL. It is important to let everyone know what my philosophy is, in addition to my vision to and my game plan to reach it. I want MJBL to be one of the premier organizations in America providing quality activities for our children.

I was born and raised in Harlem on 115<sup>th</sup> street and Lenox Avenue. If you saw American Gangster, that is the neighborhood that they tried to portray. They did not do a good job of really showing how devastating heroin was to the community. On 116<sup>th</sup> Street and Lenox was Mosque # 7. of the Nation of Islam. As a child El Hajj Malik El Shabbazz aka Malcolm X was the minister and during my teenage years Louis Farrakhan was the Minister. While I am not a Muslim, I can only give you my impressions as a child and the impact of being in the neighborhood with such a presence.

It was a big thing when Elijah Muhammad came to Harlem. Signs were all over the community and on the day he came, there was no parking for blocks, Through it all there was one profound thought that I heard and that had an influence on how I think to this day. Elijah Muhammad said “Do for Self” He said that the black man would never be free until he learned to “Do for Self”. Muhammad speaks newspapers had very creative and profound cartoons. Enclosed is one that I found over the weekend and I enclose.

A second major influence in my life was the military philosophy instilled in me at Xerox by 2 high ranking members of the Black Employees Organization who personally mentored me. One had been a captain in the Air Force during the Vietnam War and the other a Captain in the Rangers with 2 tours of duty in Vietnam. “The number one goal and purpose of an officer is to complete the mission within the parameters as ordered “

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When I look at programs for our youth, millions of dollars pumped into our community everyday, to deal with issues from drug abuse, illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, and every other thing. The problems still exist and continue to grow. My mentor once asked me what was the purpose of the money that the government spends in our community. I said to solve problems. Fine he said why not just take the money for example to solve poverty and divide it up by the number of poor people you are trying to help, and once you send them the check, they will not be poor. No there are has to be level after level of management, there has to be offices, computers and endless other things. The money gets eaten up and very little if any of the money reaches the people it is intended to help.

Haryou Act was the big poverty program in the 1960's that was intended to cure poverty in Harlem. Most of that money was stolen and wasted and little was done to solve poverty in Harlem in the 1960's to the extent that it is reported that Adam Clayton Powell Jr. said that if he knew the money would be stolen and wasted that he would never have passed the bill. Today everyone is looking for lists of kids or want you to participate in an event so then can use your list of kids in writing a proposal so they can get funds that deal with problems in our community that only get worse while their funding and salaries get bigger.

Farrakhan said in 1980 at a conference for the Black managers of Xerox, Kodak, ATT and other companies , that if the managers could take their corporate skills back home that we could free our people over night. He also said that the meeting of so many brilliant corporate minds would never happen again. Black professionals meeting on their own time and expense to discuss the issues in black America was so powerful that the powers that be would never happen again. Thirty years later there has been another such meeting.

I am being asked to lead into this decade successful men and women in MJBL to a higher level. Men and women who have worked hard through adversity, and have success in many areas of business education, government with skills. This group represents the type of talent that if bought back home, Farrakhan said would free our people

**SOUTH HARLEM REDS BASEBALL PROGRAM 212-479-0854**

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over night. He said it would not be easy to change a culture and mentality that goes back hundreds of years. “True dat”

How do we take MJBL from where it is now to one of the premier organizations in America providing quality activities for our kids in 5 – 10 years? There are those who believe in the old tried and true formulas, sign up teams and members, and write grant and funding proposals to get money to have programs. Then we just become another name list on the desk of those who give out money. Is the purpose of the funding organizations to solve problems or to make the funding organization that gives out the money look good? Isn't that the criticism of many organizations out there? More hype than substance ?

Do not get me wrong, if there is money out there to be gotten then we should pursue, but it should never be the backbone or substance of what we do. Our children are expecting more from us.

We are the 11<sup>th</sup> biggest economic power in the world. The problem with black America is not that we do not generate money, we have never fully understood how to pool our resources to effect true power or the leadership we had never effectually utilized it. How could our leadership understand? They were too busy telling everyone how poor and broke we are and why we need more grants and programs. As Chris rock told Jesse Jackson on his show after Jesse said we needed more funding “Jesse, you do not need a government grant to clean in front of your house”. Chris Rock said his mother made him sweep his house in addition to the two neighbors adjacent to his.

What we need to do is to first gain name recognition. Without millions of dollars to do this, my thought is to use the Classic and in particular the “Black World Series” as a way to do this. We need to use the public service announcements and the power of the black media. My thought is to have the contest for the singing of the black national anthem. We should be able to get that on every black radio station and media outlet in America. The Black World Series is a name that some so called potential sponsors say we should not use because that says it is not

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**inclusive. I do not believe they are willing to give us substantial sponsor dollars with or without it. We are after the 11<sup>th</sup> largest purchasing market in the world. I want the mothers and daughters who know nothing about baseball to ask what the Black World Series is. I want every person in America to know the name. The Black World Series “A League of Our Own”**

**I want to use the CIAA Basketball Tournament as our role model. It is a week long event; it attracts people from all over America. They have all types of activities in addition to the games that bring in million of dollars. They have national talk show broadcasting from the venue. Why can't we have this, why can't the Black World Series be one of the premier sporting social events in America, why can't the concert at the Classic feature big name artists and be broadcast on a major network with millions of dollars flowing in? Why can't MJBL have a clothing line that competes with anything in America, I am pretty sure that there were those that said FUBU could not make it. Why can't we have a journal or magazine type program that raises hundreds of thousands through advertisements? Why can't we have a program called Jobs in Baseballs so that our children are not just trying to be players, but also umpires, broadcasters, agents, camera men. Why can't the classic be a show case of this, with our children umpiring, taping and producing the games, putting out a daily newsletter with our children as reporters, graphic designers. My vision to use every skill possessed by our children, to give them an outlet to hone it to display it to the world and to eventually use it to support themselves their family in addition to reinvesting into our communities. I want MJBL to be the role model organization of how we help our youth. We must challenge them to use their skills. We must be open minded to new ideas.**

**By working towards these ideas over the next five to 10 years, everyone will want to be a part of MJBL, not just the ball players. Many companies who will not give us the time of day today will be knocking at our doors. Many want to build an organization from the ground up. I say let's start with a dream so big that everything will fall in place.**