



NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet David Gamble Jr.:

Lawyer and Stand-up Comedian Who is Committed to Helping the Next Generation

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Attorney and comedian David Gamble is known around Reno for his quick wit and trademark ability to bring lighthearted laughter to any situation. But just over a year ago, Gamble took the opportunity to be uncharacteristically serious. He penned a deeply personal and vulnerable essay on the racism he experienced growing up in Reno.

“To be Black in America is to be told over and over that you are not good enough, that you do not belong, that you are genetically unfit, that your physical presence is undesirable, and that everything about you — right down to your lips — is wrong. It is absolutely true that everyone experiences hardships in life, but the psychological weight of being told both explicitly and implicitly, on a daily basis, that your very existence is objectionable can at times feel unbearable.”¹

And while that level of vulnerability is not typical for Gamble, he knew he had to take the advice he often gives his children: do the right thing, *especially* when it is hard. He knew sharing his experiences was the right thing. His essay resonated,

racking up more than 150,000 shares and more than 10,000 comments on Facebook.

Gamble’s family arrived in Reno when he was 2 years old. His father relocated the family from Pittsburgh to work with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, where he trained judges to more effectively handle domestic violence cases. His father’s passion for helping domestic violence survivors and their children had a great impact on Gamble.

From an early age, Gamble knew he too wanted to pursue a career of great purpose. He would go on to graduate from University of Nevada, Reno, majoring in journalism, and the Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego. After law school, he held several positions, including stints with the U.S. Senate and at a private civil firm, before finding his passion as a Washoe County Public Defender.

Gamble recently transferred to the misdemeanor unit, defending DUIs and domestic violence cases. Prior to that, he worked as an alternate public defender in the dependency unit working on keeping families together.

“David has an impressive way of immediately putting people—including opposing counsel—at ease. And that is

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such an asset when you deal with the stress of the system we work in,” Gamble’s longtime friend and co-worker Jenna Garcia said.

When asked about the toll his job could take, Gamble said that the stress does not compare to the humble pride he experiences when he sees a former client from the dependency unit and their families out in the community or at the grocery store. A simple “hello” at the grocery store means his clients were able to stay with their families.

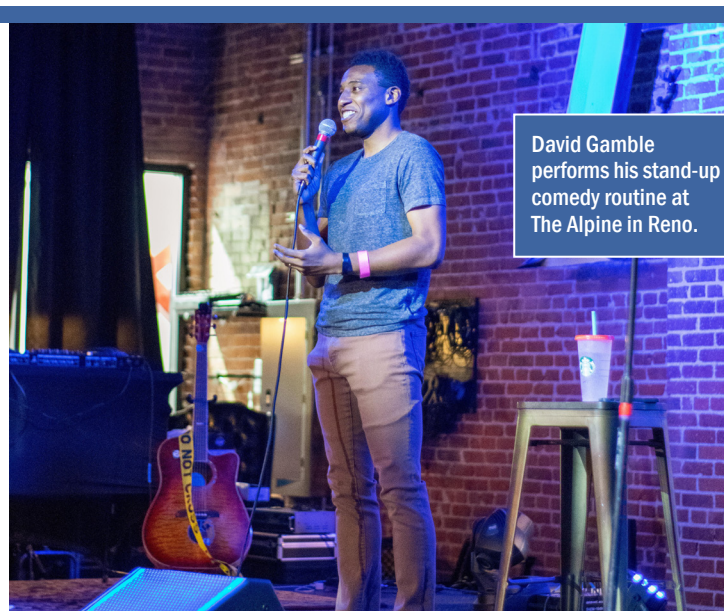
In the community, Gamble has also prioritized his passion for giving back and helping the next generation. He has served on the board of Reno Little Theater, BLACKbiz Inc., and volunteers as a “big brother” for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Northern Nevada. He also served on the boards of Community Foundation of Western Nevada, the Nevada Nurse’s Foundation and is a former president of the Young Professional’s Committee of Northern Nevada.

However, when asked his favorite job over his career, Gamble is quick to insist his first real job, sorting mail at the library at the University of Reno, was his favorite. Not surprisingly it was there where he met his wife and best friend—Leslie Gamble—who challenges him, supports him, and laughs at all of his jokes. In 2007, he married Leslie; the pair now have two children and three dogs.

When he’s not representing clients, Gamble can often be found performing stand up in various clubs in Reno, including Pioneer Underground, The Basement, and Ferino Distillery. In fact, he has opened for headliners like Taylor Tomlinson, Kevin Farley, and Chaunté Wayans, and was a finalist in the “There Goes the Neighborhood Stand-Up Comedy Competition” in 2018 and 2019. To catch one of Gamble’s acts, follow him on social media at @dgjcomedy.

ENDNOTE:

1. To read the full essay, visit: <https://www.rgj.com/story/opinion/voices/2020/06/14/growing-up-black-reno-david-gamble/3187611001/>.



David Gamble performs his stand-up comedy routine at The Alpine in Reno.



The Gamble family – Leslie (from left), Emery, Everett, and David Gamble.



David Gamble performs his stand-up comedy routine at Pioneer Underground in Reno.