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MN

Carter, Rubin

Wrongfully-convicted fighter 'Hurricane' Carter tells story to show teens 'education is freedom'

Jailed 20 years for a murder he didn't commit, former boxer Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter yesterday told a mass Glenforest Secondary School assembly he never gave up hope he would eventually be free.

"From being the number one contender for the middleweight crown, I became prisoner Number 45472," he said. "I didn't get my education in the halls of Glenforest Secondary School but from the very depths of hell itself."

Carter was convicted for the murder of three men in a New Jersey Bar in 1969. Several appeals failed. Carter lost the sight of one eye through a botched prison operation. But through it all, he never gave up hope.

"But you can't give up, I couldn't give up because to give up would be to lose everything, it would mean to die, and I wasn't about to give in to them," he said.

"So I had to fight, I had to win. How many times was I told I would have to spend the rest of my life in prison, Forget it Carter! Forget it 45472! When I was in my darkest hour, and the darkest hour in prison is not a metaphor. Darkest hour means you're underground, in a grave, no light, no sanitation, no

water, just bread to eat.

"When I was in my darkest hour, hanging on by my fingertips for dear life, one of life's surprises came along."

That surprise was a group of seven Canadians who had come together as cooperative group of workers doing home renovations during the years of flower power. They used their resources to help people.

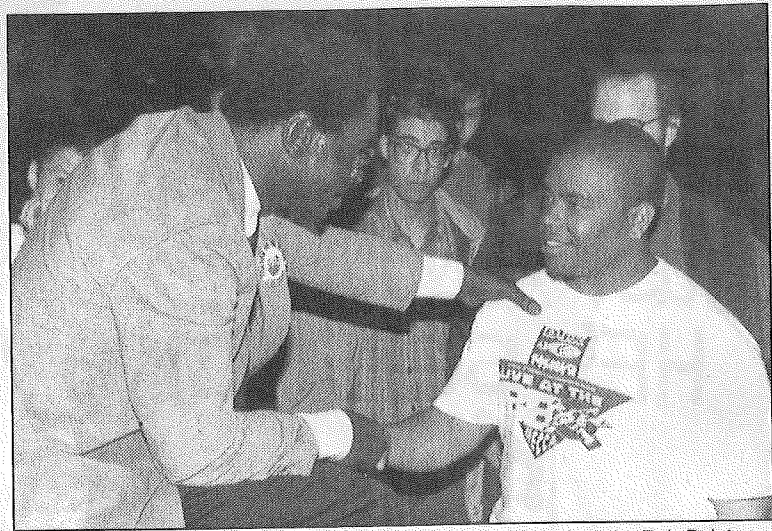
The plight of Carter had been brought to their attention by a young man they had rescued from the ghetto and had taught to read and write. They became interested and soon they learned some information had been withheld by the prosecution.

Finally, with the State of New Jersey fighting all the way to keep Carter in prison, the U.S. Supreme Court found the fighter had been wrongfully jailed and he was eventually released in 1989 with no apology and no compensation. He has since moved to Canada, married, and now lectures about his life.

His point was that "the Canadians didn't have to be lawyers or locksmiths to get me out of prison, but they had to be well educated. They had to have disciplined minds and not be afraid to use them.

"Acquiring an education will give you the ability to move free."

He told the students that he con-



Staff photo by Rob Beintema

Warm welcome...Glenforest student Mike Richards shakes hands with Rubin "Hurricane" Carter at the school Tuesday.

siders it "vital to know something of your neighbors and those around you. History is important. Things that happen today do not appear out of a vacuum.

"Today is what it is because yesterday was what it was. If you had a problem yesterday and you're still struggling with that problem today, that's the same problem you had yesterday because you failed to do something about it.

"And if today is what it is because yesterday is what it was, then tomorrow is going to be like today in the very same way unless we understand and act on it."

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