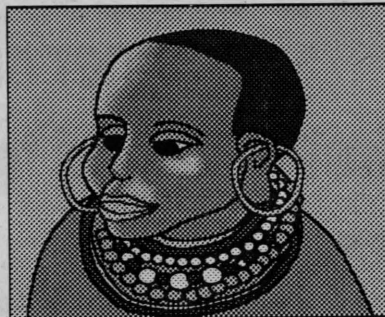


KUUMBA KORNER

by Dorothy Word

Black tennis player turns pro at 14

VENUS WILLIAMS !!
Add her name to the list of distinguished African American females in professional tennis. Venus, who turned professional less than two years ago at age 14, stands 6'2" and has a 115 mph serve! "I'm strong, I'm tall, I work hard on the



court, and I have the right technique," says Venus.

Venus comes from a tennis-playing family: dad, mom and four sisters. She was only 4-1/2 years old when her father, Richard Williams, handed her a tennis racket. She fell in love with the game and today this young teenager practices between four and six hours a day on the tennis court.

Venus says

that education is more important than tennis. She says learning is "cool." Science is her favorite subject at the small private school she attends in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. She is dismissed each day at 12:30 so she can go practice tennis.

Venus is probably the last very young female to turn pro because the Women's Tennis Association revised regulations that now keep players under 16 from

turning pro. This is an effort to prevent "burnout." Venus is confident that she will not "burnout" because she will play only five of the 14 tournaments each year and reserve time for her schooling.

Thanks to her tennis marketability, Venus is enjoying the Venus Williams Collections—her own clothing line manufactured by Reebok.

"Coming soon, to a store near you!!"

