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## Brothers turn dream into determination

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Every Saturday at precisely 10 a.m., a most unusual meeting is called to order by a 25-year-old University of Missouri-Kansas City law student named Troy Nash. The weekly gathering, held in a conference room at the university library, is attended by Nash and three of his older brothers, who say they meet to change their lives.

"What we were doing before was just not working out," said Harvey Nash, 36, during last Saturday's meeting. "We older brothers had very hard, dead-end jobs. Now, because of our little brother, we're all planning to enroll in UMKC together next fall."

Their "little" brother is 6 feet 4, holds a

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master's degree in economics and plans a career in law and politics. He has prodded his brothers into studying and planning together.

They, in turn, have appointed him chairman of the Nash family organization — which as yet has no formal name. Its meetings, though, are very formal.

The brothers all wear ties, rise when they speak, observe parliamentary procedure, and refer to one another by formal titles. Daryl Nash, 35, is called the "Gentleman

from Charlotte" because he lives on Charlotte Street near Brookside.

"For what purpose does the gentleman from Charlotte rise?"

"I rise to discuss our family objectives, Mr. Chairman," Daryl said. "First of all, we want to better our lives through education, and by doing that, set an example for our children — become role models, if you will."

Later, in a less formal moment, he added: "I've worked at a factory for 10 long years. I gave the best years of my life tearing my body down just to make the company's production quotas. But I'll be meeting my own quotas from now on."

The weekly family meetings, which the brothers began four months ago, are always

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TALIS BERGMANIS/The Star

Troy Nash  
... lead brothers in pursuits

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## Student brothers turn dreams into determination

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divided into two parts. The first hour is devoted to educational plans and goals, the second to personal problems.

"We want to make sure that nothing's going on in anyone's life to prevent them from performing — from studying hard," Troy said.

"There's no reason why anyone should have their lights or phone shut off. If there's a problem like that, we all help. It's basic stuff. We're regular urban people who grew up in the inner city. We're certainly not meeting to build our investment portfolios."

### An exhausting prospect

Last Tuesday night, three of the brothers gathered at the east Kansas City house where Troy and his wife, Sherrie, live with Troy's mother and stepfather. The Nash brothers study together three nights each week.

Todd Nash, a 33-year-old press operator, was seated at the dining room table reading an American history text. He is now preparing for a series of exams through which he hopes to earn 30 college credits in advance.

"I want to finish college as fast as possible and get on to law school," he said. "At first we laughed at Troy for trying to bring us together. The truth is, we were all scared to death. But now we're getting comfortable with it."

He rubbed his eyes. "Oh man, I'm tired," he said.

"Me, too," Troy said. "Sometimes I get so tired I can't see straight."

Troy had awakened at 2 a.m. the night before and had studied law until dawn. He gets about three hours of sleep a night.

"If it's hard, do it hard," he muttered to himself as he walked down to the basement study where his brother Daryl was doing math problems on a computer.

"We grew up in a single-parent family," Troy said. "My brothers helped raise me. They made up songs to teach me my ABCs, took me everywhere, gave me a truly happy childhood. I'm just giving a little back."

### Inspiring others

"Giving back" has become a

major theme in Troy's life.

"It sounds sort of corny, I know, but I really want to give something back to the African-American community where we grew up," he said recently. "Education is the only mechanism we have to tap into the mainstream. So I want to take my entire family — my brothers and their kids — and create a kind of model. I want to show what can be done."

Although he has always enjoyed teaching — "I used to play teacher," he said — this idea may have been born in a shopping mall near the Dover Air Force Base in Delaware where Troy was stationed. It was there that he purchased a book on memory enhancement.

"Troy drove me crazy with that memory book," said Sherrie, who is also a graduate student. "He was up every night for a month studying it."

He soon became so proficient at the method that he amazed fellow airmen by memorizing all the numbers on 10 credit cards in less than two minutes.

"How'd you do that?" was the general response, and when Troy volunteered to explain the technique, he ended up teaching a regular class at his house.

At the time, he was not only working full time but also was a full-time student at a nearby liberal arts college. He attended classes in the evening, during lunch, even during his breaks. On the base he was often seen with books in the hip pockets of his fatigues and his homework stuffed under his helmet.

"Troy became a very influential character around the base," said Master Sgt. Larry Packard, his supervisor for three years. "He encouraged a great number of his colleagues to go back to school. In fact, he actually got me to go back, and that was a real feat. I've never known anyone so determined about school. He'd always say: 'Stop whining, get up off your butt, do something about it.' You only meet a guy like Troy once in a very rare while."

Making a difference

Down in the basement study, Daryl had just completed a math quiz on the computer.

"When we're all solid with this study thing," he said, "we want others to join us. We want to share

what we're doing. We want people to point fingers at us and say: 'Hey, those brothers were barely cutting the poverty line, now look at them.' And then we'll invite

them in, too."

While the motives of the older Nash brothers seem fairly clear, Troy's unrelenting drive strikes some as an enigma.

"You know, I once asked Troy, what got him on this trip, what made him so driven," Packard said. "And he told me he wants to make a difference in this world."