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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

NATIONAL NEWS

GEORGE KIRBY DIES IN LAS VEGAS

Comedian George Kirby, whose impressions tickled audiences for more than 40 years, died Saturday in Las Vegas after a long bout with Parkinson's disease. The 71-year-old "man of a thousand voices" was known for his impersonations of Count Basie, John Wayne, Jerry Lewis, Pearl Bailey and Ella Fitzgerald. Kirby's Las Vegas gigs dwindled after several cocaine and heroin deals with undercover officers led to his arrest in April 1977. The ailing funny-man last appeared in May, when his friends organized an all-star benefit to help defray his mounting medical bills. He had been paralyzed by his illness and was confined for the past several months to a nursing home. He is survived by his wife, Rosemary, of Las Vegas.

FOSSILS SHOW MAN'S ANCESTORS WALKED EARLIER

NAIROBI, Kenya - Fossils of a new pre-human species discovered in Kenya show that our ancestors were walking upright four million years ago — much earlier than previously thought — anthropologist Meave Leakey said recently. "They show very clearly that four million years ago, our ancestors did not swing around like apes," Leakey told a news conference in Nairobi to announce the discovery. "The discoveries add very important new insights into the very earliest stages of human evolution and establish that upright posture and bipedalism go back in time to beyond four million years." The fossils were found in northwestern Kenya's Lake Turkana basin by a National Museums of Kenya research team headed by Leakey and have been named "Australopithecus anamensis." The finds include jaws and teeth, dating between 3.9 and 4.1 million years ago.

O.J. FOUND NOT GUILTY!

LOS ANGELES - Football hero O.J. Simpson was acquitted of double-murder Tuesday after a sensational year-long trial and vowed to dedicate his life to tracking down the "killer or killers" of his ex-wife and a friend.

Nearly 16 months after his arrest and less than an hour after the not-guilty verdicts were read to a hushed courtroom, Simpson was freed and issued a statement expressing relief that "this part of the incredible nightmare ... is over."

While his family and defense attorneys appeared in a televised news conference patting one another on the back in triumph, Simpson returned to the suburban mansion where he was arrested on June 17, 1994, following a bizarre highway chase.

The televised verdict created a giant coast-to-coast pause in American life, and public reaction to the trial's outcome showed how deeply Americans were divided by race over the case, with many blacks rejoicing and whites stunned.

Even President Clinton took a break from work to watch the verdict and then appealed to Americans to respect the jury's decision and pray for the victims' families.

In a remarkably swift conclusion to a trial that transfixed America for a year, the mostly black jury deliberated for less than four hours Monday before reaching the verdict, which the judge ordered kept secret overnight.

When it was announced, Simpson

— the most famous murder defendant in U.S. history — smiled quietly with relief, patted his hand over his heart and hugged his lead attorney, Johnnie Cochran.

But shocked relatives of the two victims — Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman — broke into loud sobs when they realized the man they had repeatedly called the killer would be freed. They staggered and clung to each other for support as they left the courtroom.

His voice trembling and eyes filled with tears, Goldman's father Fred told reporters it was the second "worst

nightmare" of his life after the morning he learned of his son's murder. "Justice has not been served," he said.

In contrast Simpson's family, including his wheelchair-bound mother Eunice, wept tears of joy.

Outside the courthouse, hundreds of Simpson supporters celebrated wildly on the sidewalks. But many Americans expressed shock that the jurors had ignored what prosecutors described as a "mountain of evidence" incriminating Simpson.

Simpson had pleaded not guilty to murdering Nicole Brown Simpson, 35, (See O.J., Page 11)



Analysts Say Race, Not Evidence Swayed Jury

LOS ANGELES - Legal analysts puzzled over Tuesday's jury decisions in the O.J. Simpson double murder trial, with some suggesting the not guilty verdicts were based more on racism than on evidence.

Former prosecutor Robert Emmerwein said the time of four hours that it took the jury of 10 blacks, two whites and one Hispanic to reach a verdict was "a message verdict to the Los Angeles Police Department that you have racist police officers, we do not believe your police officers."

Racism had always been a factor in the case, where a mostly black jury was asked to try a black sports hero in the murders of two white people, including his ex-wife.

But it was exacerbated by Mark

Fuhrman, the detective who told the jury he had found a bloody glove on Simpson's estate. Fuhrman also testified he was not a racist, but was proved by the defence, who had accused him of planting the glove, to be a liar.

Marvin Levine, a law professor at the University of Southern California, said, "I think the basic argument that the jury brought was that a witness who is false in one thing is false in all things. All the defence had to prove was a

reasonable doubt."

Well-known Los Angeles defence attorney Al Deblanc said he was concerned that the jury's nine months of sequestration might have hastened their snap decision. "They came out so fast they almost kicked the door down," he noted, adding that in that short space of time they must have completely rejected the prosecution's case.

"This is a very unusual jury," he said.

Legal analysts, as well as defence

(See RACE, Page 11)

The Impact Of Rett On The Stephens Family

(Part 2)

By Nichole Davis

Last week when we first connected with the Stephens family, we examined how Rett Syndrome had progressed in Candace, 4, and Camille, 17 months. This week, we focus on how having this rare incurable disease has affected the family as a whole.

Life changed for the Stephens after the girls, as they call them, were diagnosed. The Stephens had believed Candace was autistic, but a doctor noticed that Candace hyperventilated and had apnea, two signs of Rett. The accurate diagnoses was a two-edged sword for the family, because while they finally knew what was affecting their daughter, no one knew what to do about it. Doctors know how to treat autism, but Rett is a different story.

"They kind of back off when they find out what you've got," said John.

Unfortunately, family and friends can also back off. The Stephens have had to endure much of the suffering alone, because most of their relatives and friends are not helping out. Vicki's parents live in Southern California, and John's are just not involved. The girl's godfather is the only person who regularly stops by, but even he watches only one girl at a time.

Coping alone may be the hardest part for the family. Vicki stays home with the girls and rarely goes out except to the grocery store. She and John don't have any outside activities except the support group they head up, which meets every second Sunday. They used to go to church, until someone gave

(See STEPHENS, Page 10)



"Taking care of the girls is a full-time job," says Vicki Stephens

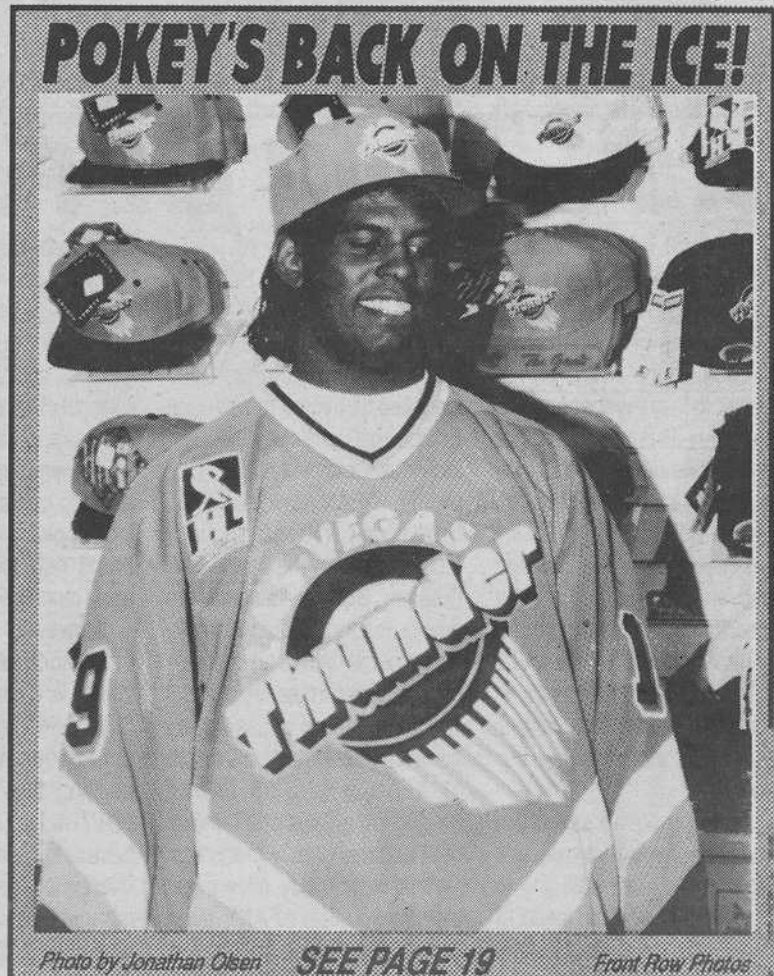


Photo by Jonathan Olsen

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