

NEWS CLIPS

STATE FARM, NNPA, URBAN LEAGUE UNITE FOR YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT

State Farm Insurance Companies will team with the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and the National Urban League in a program to promote youth achievement in urban communities. State Farm is contributing a three-year, \$1.2 million grant in support of Achievement Matters. The program is an informational campaign that will work to increase community awareness of, and their involvement in, youth achievement. The campaign will consist of advertising and editorials in black newspapers promoting the Achievement Matters theme. Sixty cities are being targeted for the program, which also will include community rallies, pledge cards, flyers and posters. Achievement Matters will be launched in Los Angeles Sept. 20 and coincide with the National Urban League's youth celebratory events across the country. "We are thrilled to have State Farm's extensive involvement and the commitment of African-American newspaper publishers in a dynamic partnership," said Hugh B. Price, president and CEO of the National Urban League. "We have always respected the work of the National Urban League and its mission of focusing on the needs of African-Americans," said Dorothy R. Leavell, president of the NNPA.

TUSKEGEE SECOND IN THE NATION IN PRODUCING BLACK ENGINEERS

Tuskegee University is second in the nation in awarding baccalaureate degrees in engineering to African-Americans, according to a July issue of "Black Issues in Higher Education." Of the five major academic colleges at Tuskegee University, the College of Engineering, Architecture and Physical Sciences is one of the largest with an enrollment of more than 900 students. "Our ranking speaks for itself," Dr. Benjamin F. Payton, the university's president said. "More than 90 percent of our faculty in these areas hold Ph.D. degrees from the nation's most outstanding universities. Our students are highly motivated, our research first-rate and corporate support continues to increase." Payton said there is still a critical shortage of African-American engineers. Dr. Ben Oni, interim dean of the College of Engineering, Architecture and Physical Sciences credits the rating to good retention efforts, including learning resource centers and tutorial and counseling programs, as well as three eight-week summer programs that give engineering students a "head start" on their studies and assist them in selecting careers.

CAUCUS SCHEDULES 27TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

"Leadership Dimensions for the New Millennium" is the theme of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's (CBCF) 27th Annual Legislative Conference Sept. 10-13 at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center. Tentative events include: The Issue Forums and Braintrusts with topics to include Affirmative Action; African-Americans and the Environment, CIA/Crack Update; a Dialogue between Civil Rights Crusaders and the Hip-Hop Generation; Empowering the Black Family; Juvenile Justice; Labor, Welfare, Workfare and Work Preparation 2000 as well as Trade with Africa. A national town hall meeting at the University of the District of Columbia will focus on race relations. The awards ceremony is set for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Five awards will be presented: The George W. Collins Award for community service; the William L. Dawson Award for research, organization and leadership in the development of legislation that addresses minority needs; the Adam Clayton Powell Award for contributions to African-American political awareness and empowerment; the George Thomas "Mickey" Leland Humanitarian Award for exceptional work in the struggle for human rights and social justice and the Harold Washington Award for excellence in coalition building.

FORMER KLANSMAN SENTENCED FOR CHURCH ARSON

CHARLESTON, S.C. - A former Ku Klux Klansman, indicted for conspiring to burn a rural black church and a migrant labor camp, said he was not a bigot and expressed remorse for his role in the crimes. "I am not a racist," Hubert "Herbert" Rowell said Monday. "I could have stopped it. I felt bad about it." U.S. District Judge David Norton sentenced Rowell to 15 years in federal prison. The 51-year-old former KKK member admitted in December that he mixed flammable liquids and gave them to two men who torched the church and camp located about 80 miles north of Charleston. Rowell pleaded guilty to four conspiracy-related charges. Prosecutors dropped 16 other counts, including weapons violations.

Tribunal to judge leaders

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

A concerned citizens' coalition will hold a mock trial Saturday charging local, state and federal officials with a bevy of crimes including police brutality and homicide.

The Peoples Justice Tribunal — an extension of the Clark County Coalition of Concerned Citizens — will preside over the public hearing which organizers say is designed to expose discrimination in the criminal justice system.

The trial is set for noon Saturday at the West Las Vegas Library Theater, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd. Citizens will testify on various charges including police brutality, homicide, corruption, malfeasance in office, conspiracy to conceal and destroy evidence and aiding and abetting crimes of genocide, said Daniel Bell of the Las Vegas Alliance, a

participating community activist group.

The coalition is composed of NAACP, the Nation of Islam, Westside Action Alliance Korp-Uplifting People and other groups.

Bell said the hearing will also focus on the disparate cocaine sentencing laws, the lack of funding for criminal defendants facing capital offenses and recommendations for the local police control board.

A press release shows the accused are local, state and federal heavyweights: District Attorney Stewart Bell and his staff, Sheriff Jerry Keller, the Las Vegas police command staff, State Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. Also listed as defendants are ex-Las Vegas officers Christopher Brady and Ronald Mortensen — the latter convicted of murder in last years' drive-by shooting death of 21-year-

old Daniel Mendoza.

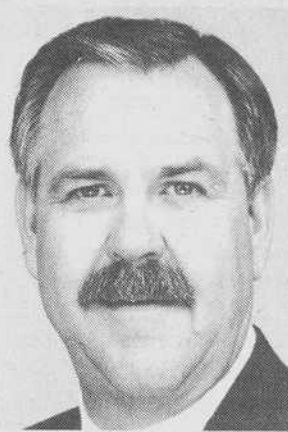
"Everyone is entitled to an opinion," Stewart Bell said. "In the last two-and-a-half years, my office has acted with integrity and under the premise that all (people) are equal under the law," Stewart Bell said.

He credited himself and Keller for implementing a zero-tolerance police misconduct policy and increasing police prosecutions. When you're charged with making hard decisions, sometimes you please some and irritate others, Stewart Bell said.

Las Vegas police brass declined to comment on the charges, according to police spokesman Sgt. Will Minor.

The charges surprised Del Papa. She said she believes she is on the list because of the Mortensen case.

"The Attorney General's Office had nothing to do with the case," she said. Brady, Mortensen's partner, drove the murder vehicle when Mendoza



JERRY KELLER

was killed. He was not charged, to the dismay of many.

"The attorney general's office deals with what is law and what is right," Del Papa said, and "someone disagrees with every decision I make." She said her accusers never made an effort to contact her. "I have an open-door policy and people know how to reach me."

Last month, James Tate, a (See Tribunal, Page 20)

NAACP calls for probe in Tenn. killing

By Tony Jones
Special to Sentinel-Voice
from the Tri-State Defender

Johnnie Turner, executive secretary of the Memphis Branch NAACP, says the local branch is suspending normal protocol and eliciting the help of the entire organization to urge federal authorities to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of 17-year-old Rodie Gossett and to assure that the Gossett family's interest is protected.

Gossett was shot in the back of the head by officer Peter L. Nicholson while in the custody of Millington police July 24, following a high-speed chase.

In a press release announcing their position the NAACP said, "We, therefore, demand a thorough investigation by the appropriate federal agencies, including but not limited to, the offices of U.S. attorney general Janet Reno, local U.S. attorney Veronica Coleman, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and state attorney general

William Gibbons. We ask that they determine if criminal prosecution for civil rights violations is warranted."

Turner said that the federal government has the expertise, the resources and the power to find the truth and the NAACP "will not compromise one inch until the entire truth is revealed."

"We decided that the NAACP should let it be known that we were going to closely monitor this particular case," he said. "Rather than acting after the fact, we want to be included in the beginning to ensure that it would be done right the first time."

Attorney Walter Bailey has been retained by the parents of Gossett, Rodie and Delois Gossett-Jones, to monitor the investigation by the Memphis Police Department. They want to find out why the officer shot their son in the back of the head at point blank range.

Bailey confirmed that his office has already received a copy of the medical examiner's report. "It says Rodie Gossett

was shot from behind the head within two feet. We know that the muzzle of the gun was close enough to leave powder burns. We know that the bullet penetrated from behind the right ear and lodged in the left temple."

Bailey said that he is seeking criminal charges in the matter. He also indicated that a civil or wrongful death lawsuit may be forthcoming pending the results of the criminal investigation.

Turner said that it may be prudent for any investigation to also probe the string of alleged homicides by Memphis

police officers which rocked the city during the fall of 1994. Most notable is the death of 68-year-old Jesse Bogard and the Rev. Dwight Montgomery, who police allegedly hog-tied and transported to jail.

Nationally known attorney F. Lee Bailey is also suing the City of Memphis, claiming that police action caused the death of Adam Pollow, who died while in police custody.

Pollow was also allegedly hog-tied before being transported. Memphis police and the Shelby County Sheriffs Department have curtailed the practice.





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