

# NEWS CLIPS

## LES FEMMES DOUZE PREPARING FOR THEIR 35TH ANNUAL COTILLION BALL AND REUNION

The ladies of Les Femmes Douze are currently preparing for the 35th Annual Cotillion Ball and Reunion. Since the organization's inception, over 600 African-American women have been presented to the community. All past debutantes are requested to contact Jackie Brantley at 646-0368 or 486-8645, or by mail at P.O. Box 4473, Las Vegas, NV, 89127-0473. To be included in this historic reunion program, please remember to include your current address, phone number and the year you were presented as a debutante. Young ladies interested in becoming 1998 Alpha Lambda Debutantes should see their high school counselor for an application if they meet the following criteria: are a junior in high school, have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 and good moral standards. For more information, call Robyn McGough, 438-9987; or Gwen Amie, 799-4230.

## FEDERAL REPORTS CONCLUDE BLACKS BEING DENIED HOME LOANS

The number of Blacks who own homes fell far behind Whites because of mortgage lenders' discriminatory practices against Blacks, according to a new report by the United States Conference of Mayors. The national rate of home ownership reached a record high of 65.7 percent, researchers found. The report, "America's Homes Ownership Gap," noted that 71.3 percent of Whites are homeowners, compared with 43.6 percent of Blacks and 41.7 percent of Native Americans. It further cited statistics from the Federal Reserve Board and the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, and found that 71.5 percent of people who live in the suburbs own homes while 49 percent of city residents are homeowners. Many banks discriminated against minorities by making mortgaged loans available to low-income Whites. Blacks are much more likely to be rejected for a mortgage than Whites with similar incomes, the Federal Reserve Board has stated. U.S. Housing Department Secretary Andrew Cuomo said in response to the report's conclusion: "This report proves that home ownership in America is still too often separate and unequal."

## MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE GETS \$1.5 MILLION FOR PROGRAMS

Morehouse School of Medicine has announced the signing of a three-year, \$1.5 million contract to strengthen Atlanta's health professions "educational pipeline" for African-American students. E. Nigel Harris, M.D., dean and senior vice president for academic affairs, made the announcement. Under the new Partnership for Health Professions Education (PHPE) program, funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, MSM will create five new projects and provide coordination for some 14 existing projects aimed at helping disadvantaged African-American youth become more competitive for careers in the health professions. Organizers said the project is expected to have a positive impact on the nationwide shortage of Black health professionals. PHPE will provide an "umbrella structure" for existing programs to track the futures of Black students from the Atlanta Public School system (elementary through middle and high school), with a goal of preparing them to enter medical school and other health professions colleges and universities. In addition to improving study skills, enhancing test performance and increasing readiness for college entrance examinations, PHPE will involve parents and college-level mentors and establish ways to monitor the project's effectiveness.

## NEW CDC REPORT DISTRESSING, LINKS SMOKING TO ADVERTISING

A debate is raging over the legislation proposed by Arizona Senator John McCain that would severely restrict the advertising and marketing practices used by tobacco companies while strengthening regulation of their products and raising cigarette prices. Sponsors of the legislation say one reason to support the measure is the rise in teenage smoking. Since 1991 smoking has increased nearly 33 percent among teens. Today, 43 percent of high school students either smoke cigarettes or cigars or chew smokeless tobacco, studies show. Supporters further point to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which revealed that the smoking rate for African-American high school students has skyrocketed 80 percent since 1991. Anti-smoking advocates blame the tobacco companies for this increasing trend. They believe the industry disproportionately targets advertising to Black communities. "You go in the Black community and see eight to 10 times more billboards pushing cigarettes and more banners on stores" than in White communities, said Father Michael Pflieger, a Chicago activist against tobacco and alcohol billboard advertising.

# 'Lettergate' puts Jackson's credibility on the line

By Linn Washington, Jr.  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Rev. Jesse Jackson returned from participating in President Clinton's historic tour of Africa with a surprising dilemma: "Lettergate."

Arising from his efforts to address discrimination within General Motors' Minority Dealer Development Program, Lettergate centers around often testy correspondence stemming from a now controversial telephone call in March involving a Black former GM dealer in Alabama who Jackson promised to help, a former top aide to Jackson and a prominent Washington, D.C. attorney hired by GM and

Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH to audit the program.

Jackson has written a letter defending the widely criticized actions of his ex-aide and the attorney during that controversial call. He has also received letters questioning both his written defense of the alleged misconduct and his very authorship of that letter.

Jackson's Lettergate, like President Clinton's Zippergate and related scandals, is about credibility. Surprisingly, the normally outspoken Jackson is silent on the issue.

During that disputed March 2 call, Jackson's ex-aide Doris Davenport and attorney Weldon Latham allegedly

suggested that ex-GM dealer Charles Bell fire his attorney and accept a \$1 million settlement from GM.

Bell is awaiting an Alabama Supreme Court ruling on GM's appeal of his \$17 million jury verdict against GM for fraudulent business practices that forced the closing of his once successful Tuskegee dealership in 1993.

Davenport and Latham deny engaging in unethical conduct and GM spokespersons back Latham.

However, lawyers for Bell claim Latham committed eight ethics code violations during that call and these allegations are reportedly being



REV. JESSE JACKSON

investigated by the Washington, D.C. Bar Association.

Jackson sent Bell a two- (See Lettergate, Page 14)

## Nashville funeral planned for convicted MLK killer

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The brother of the late James Earl Ray would like to have a funeral for the convicted assassin of Martin Luther King Jr. in about three weeks — one open to everyone, including King's family.

Jerry Ray, 62, said the three-week delay is to make sure his brother's pastor, the Rev. James Lawson, will be available to officiate.

"It will be a memorial to James to show he's done 30 years for a crime that he didn't commit," he said Sunday.

The Rays discussed having the funeral at the church in Memphis where Ray's pastor used to officiate. But Jerry Ray said he decided to hold the funeral in Nashville, where his 70-year-old brother died Thursday from liver disease.



Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jerry Ray said he hopes King's relatives, who backed efforts to win a trial for his brother, will attend.

Dexter Scott King, younger son of the slain civil rights leader, said the family does not know yet whether it will be able to make it, because of a

(See Funeral, Page 14)

## Ray's brother says tapes not confession

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Jerry Ray, brother of the man convicted of killing civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., on Monday dismissed suggestions that unmarked cassette tapes and other possessions he gathered from his deceased brother contain evidence of a confession.

"Why would he confess to something he didn't do?" Jerry Ray asked Monday as he rolled a cart loaded with his brother's belongings to his car outside the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution.

James Earl Ray, 70, died Thursday of liver failure caused by chronic hepatitis. He was serving a 99-year sentence for killing King in Memphis in 1968. He confessed, then recanted and spent nearly three decades trying to win a trial.

Ray claimed he was set up by a shadowy gunrunner he knew only as "Raoul."

Some hoped that as his health deteriorated, Ray would provide more details or perhaps even give a deathbed confession. He never did. And nothing gathered from the prison has shed any more light on the case.

There were three cardboard boxes marked "J.E.R." in black marker, laundry, a lunchbox, a fan, a typewriter, a small television and a cassette player. In the boxes were law books, a dictionary, shoes, personal photographs, a hair

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# Law Firm of Smith & Williams

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TIMOTHY C. WILLIAMS

Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

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