

NEWS CLIPS

CUOMO ANNOUNCES \$2.1 BILLION DISCRIMINATION SETTLEMENT

Washington, D.C. (NNPA) — This past April, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, Housing Secretary Andrew Cuomo announced a record \$2.1 billion settlement of a mortgage lending discrimination case and a \$325,000 settlement in an apartment segregation case. In two HUD tests conducted by Whites and minorities posing as applicants for home mortgage loans in Dallas, AccuBanc gave the eligible minority testers a smaller loan (\$85,000 and \$115,000 respectively), with an equal or less favorable financial record. As a result, AccuBanc Mortgage Corporation has signed a conciliation agreement that will provide mortgages to minorities and low- and moderate-income families in the next three years. In addition, they will spend \$24 million in mortgage closing costs. It is estimated that 15,700 families will receive mortgages because of this agreement. The \$325,000 settlement is a result of a housing discrimination lawsuit filed against the Riviera Oaks Apartment in New Orleans. The apartment owners were accused of segregating African-American tenants in apartments on one side of the 1450-unit complex, requiring them to use a separate swimming pool from Whites and denying them the same service provided to White tenants. Cuomo said the Department of Housing and Urban Development began a stepped-up campaign against housing discrimination in September at President Clinton's direction, as part of the President's One America Initiative. Cuomo has pledged to double the number of enforcement actions HUD takes against violations of the Fair Housing Act by the year 2000.

STUDY: UNITED STATES LETS DOWN ITS IMMIGRANTS

Chicago, IL (NNPA) — The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Protection said the naturalization process at the Immigration and Naturalization Service is in crisis and called for major reform and fairness at the agency. In their study entitled, "Democracy on Hold: A Chicago Perspective — How the Citizenship Process is Failing Chicago-Area Immigrants," they point out that at a time when more immigrants are applying for U.S. citizenship, INS resources are shrinking. One example cited is the INS' Chicago district office. The report stated that staff has been cut in half since 1996, resulting in a prolonged naturalization process. What used to be a six-month process now takes up to three years. The study also pointed out that there is a backlog of pending applications. Maricela Garcia, executive director of ICIRP, says the backlog "ballooned to more than 102,000 as of February 1998, and shows an increase of more than 350 percent since September of 1996. Garcia is calling on the INS to increase its staff to at least the 1996 level so that backlog cases can be reduced if not eliminated, and to improve its tracking system for applications already on file.

MUSIC VIDEOS SKEW BLACK-WHITE ROLES, STUDY SAYS

Music videos in the United States tend to over-portray Blacks as aggressors with White women most frequently the victims, researchers report. The findings came from a review of 518 music videos aired over a four-week period at times when adolescents were likely to be watching, explained the report from Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. "Attractive role models were aggressors in more than 80 percent of music video violence," the study reported. Males and females were victims with equivalent frequency, but males were more than three times as likely to be aggressors. Compared with U.S. demographics, Blacks were over-represented as aggressors and victims, whereas Whites were underrepresented, the study reported. "White females were most frequently victims," it said. "Music videos may be reinforcing false stereotypes of aggressive Black males and victimized White females. These observations raise concern for the effect of music videos on adolescents' normative expectations about conflict resolution, race and male-female relationships." The report was published in the April issue of Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

GM investigates discrimination

By Linn Washington, Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

General Motors is conducting an internal probe of its Minority Dealer Development Program, spokespersons for the world's largest corporation have confirmed.

GM has also replaced the longtime head of the minority program in the wake of the internal probe.

Widespread allegations of systemic discrimination against several minority program participants prompted the previously secret internal probe, according to GM officials.

GM initiated the Minority Dealer Development Program 25 years ago to increase the number of minority owned automobile dealerships. Presently, Blacks own 1.3 percent of GM's 8,000-plus auto dealerships nationwide.

"The entire program is involved in this review," GM spokesperson Marsha McGee

said last week. "When allegations are made, we take them very seriously. Any company would be remiss not to examine things said about it. I hate to think that allegations of race discrimination would not be examined."

Lee McDaniels, the longtime head of the program, has "temporarily stepped aside" and Eric Peterson, who worked with the program for years, "is replacing him," McGee said.

"Lee has not been fired. He is taking some time off," said McGee, who described McDaniels as "the heart and soul of the program."

McGee said she could not elaborate further on the status of McDaniels or provide specifics on the internal probe. Sources say the probe involves charges of discrimination by GM employees and financial mismanagement within the minority dealer development initiative.

"I hate to be vague," McGee

said, but "we are investigating allegations. We don't want to hurt the program or have the reputations of dedicated GM employees smeared by unfounded allegations."

Confirmation that GM's own internal probe is examining charges of systemic discrimination conflicts sharply with angry statements other GM spokespersons issued last fall in the wake of a series of articles by the National Newspaper Publishers Association detailing disturbing patterns of racism in the program.

Last fall, GM spokesperson Mary Henige attacked the NNPA articles as "patently false" and "obviously unfair" in letters sent to NNPA publishers whose newspapers carried the articles.

McGee said the allegations currently under internal investigation are "allegations well reported" by the media.

GM's internal probe coincides with an external audit

of the program's operation last summer after Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson criticized it. The external audit is mired in controversy arising from conflict of interest charges against the lawyer Jackson hand-picked to conduct the review.

The lawyer, Weldon Latham, and GM both reject the charges.

The charges revolve around Latham's dual roles as GM's paid independent auditor and a negotiator paid by GM to reach settlements with some Black dealers.

GM officials ignored a 1993 report on problems in the minority program conducted by consultant Jack Borman. His report contained recommendations for improvements.

Borman, a White man, said GM officials bankrupted his company because he sought improvements in the program.

Information from the Nommo Newsservice was used in this story.

NY Supreme Court dismisses daughter's petition

By Naya Arinde
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A petition brought by Nzingha Clarke, the 33-year-old daughter of historian Dr. John Henrik Clarke, has been dismissed by the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

Nzingha Clarke had sought to have the court appoint an individual to take over as "personal needs and property management guardian for Dr. Clarke," who is cited in her petition as "an alleged incapacitated person."

Last month, court-appointed evaluator Alfreda Kenny advised the court that Nzingha Clarke's petition was a "frivolous action," and that she found no basis for her 29-count petition.

Not only did Supreme Court Judge Stanley Sklar throw out the petition, but he went on to praise John Clarke, 83, his wife Sybil Williams-Clarke and their supporters, including Dr. Leonard Jeffries and Dr. James Smalls, who filled the court.

Nzingha Clarke's petition also chided her father's marriage to Williams-Clarke, in a ceremony performed by Rev. Al Sharpton in the spring of 1997. She stated that

"She had to withdraw her accusations because she couldn't prove anything"

— Williams-Clarke

Williams-Clarke mistreated her father, had helped to seize his extensive library and kept him from contact with his family.

Williams-Clarke has repeatedly said Nzingha Clarke's accusations were fueled by the pursuit of financial gain. John Clarke has stated strongly his faculties are fine and he controls his life and assets. Clarke, who is recovering from a recent illness and undergoes dialysis three times a week, said he was "saddened" by his daughter's behavior.

"She had to withdraw her accusations because she couldn't prove anything," Williams-Clarke told the *Daily Challenge*. "Her petition is based on her claim that she was denied action. But she charged all kinds of things that I was supposed to have done


which just weren't true."

Nzingha Clarke agreed to withdraw the charges and was instructed to pay the costs for the court-appointed lawyer, the court-appointed evaluator/investigator and her own attorney's fee.

Williams-Clarke noted that Sklar commended the court evaluator "for her thorough investigation of the case." The court evaluator/investigator visited the Clarke home and interviewed its residents and all the people named in Nzingha Clarke's petition.

Among those cited were James Dyer, a trustee of the board of African Research, Dr. Clarke's assistant Barbara True and Dr. Iva Carruthers, all accused of removing items from his expansive library.

Naya Arinde writes for the *Afro Times*.



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