

## NEWS CLIPS

### CONTROVERSIAL CHARTER SCHOOL GETS AXED AT NATION'S CAPITAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The end of the school year really will mark the end for a controversial charter school in the nation's capital. The District of Columbia Board of Education voted Monday to close the Marcus Garvey Charter School, which has been beset by controversy over finances, administration and the conviction of former principal Mary Anigbo and three staffers on assault charges. Anigbo was convicted last October of assaulting a reporter from *The Washington Times* and was fired in January over allegations of financial misconduct. The board cited "a pattern of fiscal mismanagement" in its 7-to-1 vote to strip Garvey, a school with an Afrocentric curriculum which opened in 1996, of its charter. The board's action could "trigger litigation," said Donald Temple, the attorney for the Garvey board of trustees. Temple said the school board is ignoring improvements made since Garvey's own board fired Anigbo and brought in a Roman Catholic priest, who has attracted new students, built a 3,000-book library and paired students with mentors. Temple also said the board may have singled out Garvey, holding it to higher standards than other semi-autonomous charter schools. Garvey's 73 students, all boys, in kindergarten through 12th grade, will be tested to see if they need any remedial summer school and will attend other schools in the fall.

### NEWSPAPERS ABANDON GOAL FOR INTEGRATING STAFFS BY YEAR 2000

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Newspapers need an extra 10 years to get their staffs to reflect the ethnic and racial mix of the country, says a draft proposal by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. It says the industry should abandon its previous goal of having newsrooms reflect the nation's ethnic mix by 2000. The new goal would be to have Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans and American Indians account for 20 percent of journalists by 2010. Also individual newspapers' staffs would try to reflect their community makeup "as soon as possible," according to a draft released to members. The organization set its original target two decades ago. But a survey for the organization found that minorities accounted for only 11.5 percent of newsroom employees, compared with 26 percent of the general population. The proposal, to be voted on in October, disappoints minority journalists. They say the industry has given minority placement a back seat to investments in technology, even though diversity makes newspapers more credible to the public. "They treat it like it's a problem to be dealt with, as opposed to an opportunity for expanding readership and practicing good journalism," said Vanessa Williams, president of the National Association of Black Journalists. The editors said part of the reason for the need to change is the unexpected explosion in the minority population.

### GROUPS ASKING FOR SUPPORT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVE

WASHINGTON, D.C. (NNPA) — AIDS is killing the African-American community, say the Congressional Black Caucus and the National Black Leadership Commission. They are therefore requesting that President Clinton declare a "State of Emergency" in African-American communities across the nation given the current record rates of AIDS, drug use, sexually transmitted diseases and all of their ailments. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that every hour seven new HIV infections occur in the United States and three of the seven persons infected are African Americans. Recently, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, D-Calif., chairwoman of the caucus and the commission, invited leading Black experts working to fight the spread of AIDS in the community to meet with caucus members to assist them in developing an action plan.

### INDEPENDENT COUNCIL TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST LABOR SECRETARY

Washington, D.C. (NNPA) — Labor Secretary Alexis Herman is the latest senior administration official in the Clinton government to face investigation by an independent counsel. According to *The Washington Post*, Attorney General Janet Reno requested the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate allegations that Herman received money for facilitating access to the White House and sought illegal campaign contributions for the Democratic National Council in return when she worked as White House aide during President Clinton's first term. Reno made the recommendation after much internal discussion about the merits of the allegations, the article details. It said that while the inquiry found some corroboration of the allegations, there is no clear cut evidence proving Herman's involvement.

## Record settlement could change lenders' habits

By Tony Jones

*Special to the Sentinel-Voice*  
MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The Department of Housing and Urban Development recently settled the largest housing discrimination lawsuit in history, hitting Dallas' AccuBanc Mortgage Corporation with a directive to provide \$2.1 billion in mortgages to minorities and low and moderate income families in the next three years.

The settlement addresses the issue of redlining, the practice of customizing lending to steer funding and buyers in specific directions or not making loans available to residents of certain zip codes.

The plan outlined in Dallas could trigger changes in unfair lending practices in other cities. The Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, which recently completed a report targeting the nation's capital, concluded its lending record is as dismal as any city in the country. HUD is presently studying the extent of the problem nationwide.

In Memphis, the problem of redlining is alive and well, according to research by the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center. Information from its landmark research showed Memphis' banks were

*The settlement addresses the issue of redlining, the practice of customizing lending to steer funding and buyers in specific directions or not making loans available to residents of certain zip codes.*

discriminating against certain borrowers.

"Memphis is probably not unlike many other cities," center spokesman Bill Akins said. "The statistics prove that banks are not fair in making loans to Blacks and other minorities."

A U.S. Conference of Mayors report issued Feb. 23, titled "America's Home Ownership Gap," said statistics collected by the Federal Reserve Board show that "minority households applying for mortgage credit were much more likely to be rejected than White households with similar incomes."

For example, the data showed that only 10 percent of White applicants with incomes between 10 percent and 20 percent of the area median are denied conventional mortgages.

The denial rate for Hispanics with the same income range jumps to 19.6 percent and more than doubles

to 22.8 percent for African-Americans.

The settlement announcement was timed to coincide with the nation's commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and The Fair Housing Act. The Act bars housing discrimination on account of race, color, religion, sex, disability, family status and national origin. It covers the sale, rental, financing and advertising of almost all housing in the nation.

An estimated 15,700 families are expected to benefit from the settlement with AccuBanc. With a loan portfolio in every state, AccuBanc agreed to train its staff to deal with fair lending and diversity issues and to create programs to attract more minority and low and moderate income borrowers.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 1997 that the nation's home ownership rate hit a record high of 65.7

percent. However, while the home ownership rate was 72.5 percent in suburbs last year, it was only 49.9 percent in cities, where low and moderate income residents and minorities are disproportionately concentrated.

The study also showed that the home ownership rate last year was 72 percent among Whites, but only 45.5 percent among African-Americans and just 43.3 percent among Hispanics.

HUD has stepped up its campaign against housing discrimination as part of President Clinton's One America Initiative and has pledged to double the number of enforcement actions HUD takes against violations of the Act by the year 2000. The new settlement is the first substantial move the agency has made in many years.

In 1997 it collected \$9.6 million in housing discrimination settlements, a 100 percent increase over the prior year, which netted \$4.4 million. Clinton's 1999 budget seeks a 73 percent increase for HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, boosting it to \$52 million. It is the largest single budget increase in civil rights law enforcement in two decades.

## NAACP opposes Washington anti-preference initiative

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

BALTIMORE — Sparked by the growing power of anti-preference proponents nationwide, the national board of the NAACP announced Tuesday plans to oppose Initiative 200, which would ban many public affirmative action programs in Washington.

Board members at the quarterly meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Baltimore also announced approval of an initial \$50,000 appropriation to help mobilize opposition to the initiative, which will be decided by voters this fall, and agreed to hold its October national board meeting in Seattle to amass support for affirmative action. So far, the initiative has widespread support, signalled by its healthy lead in public opinion polls.

NAACP President Kweisi Mfume said the civil rights organization is galvanizing

support to fight the initiative because much of the civil rights community was "caught off guard" in 1996 when California voters approved Proposition 209, which outlawed many of that state's affirmative action programs. That ballot initiative received strong funding from Republican and conservative sources, allowing its organizers to run a sophisticated media campaign. Opponents had much less money and relied on a grass-roots effort, Mfume said.

"During the fight over Proposition 209 we were trying to climb out of our own financial problems," Mfume said of the NAACP, and did not have the money to lead an effort against it. In Washington this time, he said, "We will fight the fight with the same weapons as the opposition."

The plans for a Washington mobilization campaign are part of an aggressive strategy designed to return the nation's

oldest and largest civil rights organization back to prominence. The group has also endorsed plans to hold a million youth march in Atlanta sometime this fall and to back the Congressional Black Caucus's appeal that President Clinton declare a "national emergency" on AIDS, now the No. 1 killer of blacks between

the ages of 25 and 44.

NAACP officials also said they are about to launch new programs giving students business development skills, promoting literacy, making basic health screenings more widely available in minority communities and teaching conflict resolution.

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