

Politics

(Continued from Page 4)

beer and a fifth of hard liquor a day. Drugs came next.

Her first two children were raised by their grandmother, where they were placed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. But when Baby T. was born, the grandmother refused to take him, in order to force Olson into a drug rehab program. Olson doesn't complain about how the Burkes have raised Baby T.

"Anne Burke seems like a loving person," she said. "I'm sure she loves him, but she acts like it's her child instead of mine."

More to the point, she says, is whether she's getting a fair chance to prove she can be a good parent.

Olson has completed an 18-month drug recovery program, and unannounced tests by the state have shown her clean since. She continued outpatient therapy and now holds two jobs, as a certified nursing assistant and with a catering company.

The Department of Children and Family Services officially intended to work toward returning Baby T. to his mother, and Olson's attorney, Anita Rivkin-Carothers, said Olson has done everything the agency asked her to do.

But in July 1997, the Burkes indicated an interest in adopting the child.

"That's when the system stopped working," Rivkin-Carothers said.

"The Cook County Democratic political machine went to work within the juvenile court system" to help the Burkes, she said.

Three months after the Burkes expressed their interest in adoption, the children and family services department changed its goal for Baby T — recommending that the boy

stay with his foster parents.

The agency said it based its about-face on a report by an independent team of social workers who accused Olson of verbally harassing them when she felt she may lose all rights to her child. One psychologist described her anger as "intense and menacing."

Olson doesn't deny being angry when she "felt they already had made up their mind. "But I didn't jump up and slap someone, I didn't act out."

Rivkin-Carothers, convinced her client had no hope against the Burkes in a Cook County court, appealed to the Illinois Supreme Court. The Supreme Court responded by appointing a judge from Republican Will County to hear the case on Olson's fitness.

When asked about the allegations of political influence, Burke spokesman Donal Quinlan said he would convey the question to Burke, but there was no response from the alderman.

Olson and her attorney are not the only ones implying that the Burkes' power is influencing the case.

Patrick Murphy, who as Cook County Public Guardian is the child's legal protector, said he found the independent social workers' report on Olson "insubstantial." He has reversed his support for adoption and arranged for an independent assessment of the mother.

The department responded by unsuccessfully trying to have Murphy removed from the case.

When a top family services official wrote him a letter accusing him of negligence, Murphy responded that never in his 30 years in the juvenile justice system had the agency initiated contact with him.

Court

(Continued from Page 4)

school system.

Smith, who is housed nearly 500 miles away in the Federal Correctional Institution in rural Danbury, Conn., was measured in her reaction to the news.

"I was happy, but not too excited," she said in a telephone interview. "Let me get a court date and then it will show me things are really moving," she said.

Kemba has physically aged and has suffered bouts of depression over her possible fate as a prison inmate for most of her adult life. She explained that she has experienced a series of optimistic surges followed by disappointment over the past few years.

"I'm remaining focused, but each day it seems to be getting harder and harder and more frustrating. There are a lot of people who filed their petitions before me," she said. "I'm just curious about how long the wait is going to be because a lot of people are waiting."

George Kendall, head of the criminal justice

project at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and one of Smith's lead attorneys, said the ruling in the Brown case could have their case back before the trial court judge by fall.

In the petition before Judge Doumar, Smith's lawyers asked the court to vacate, set aside or correct her sentence based on several claims. She asserted that in the plea and sentencing phase of her case, prosecutors never addressed her battered woman's defense. She also asserted that two of her previous lawyers made many "errors and omissions" that resulted in her pleading.

Smith has also claimed the government reneged on a promise to make a recommendation to her original sentencing judge that the totality of her situation warranted a departure from the harsh sentence she would normally have been subjected to and did eventually receive.

All these issues are expected to be argued aggressively when Smith returns to court.

Reginald Stuart writes for the Richmond Free Press

Tyson

(Continued from Page 1)

life," she said.

Tyson, 32, hasn't fought since he bit Evander Holyfield on both ears during a title fight in Las Vegas last year. Nevada regulators revoked his license and fined him \$3 million, leaving him eligible to apply for a new license after a year.

But he chose to apply in New Jersey instead, prompting criticism from many boxing insiders who said he should have returned to the scene of the bite to seek his redemption.

The Athletic Control Board heard more than three hours of testimony from Tyson and his supporters July 29, but held off on a decision.

They were to render one Friday, but Tyson's lawyer announced late Thursday that he had withdrawn the application.

"I just think for the sport of boxing, coming here is the right thing to do, and we'll have a fair hearing," said Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission. No date has been set for a hearing in Nevada, Ratner said.

\$2,250 TOTAL MOVE-IN* OR FREE BIG SCREEN TV*

SIMPLY THE BEST

HERE ARE 7 GREAT REASONS WHY...

- BEST VALUE:** From the Low 100s!
- BEST DESIGNS:** One- and Two-Story Homes!
- BEST FLOORPLANS:** Up to 2,400 sq. ft. and up to 5 bedrooms!
- BEST HOMESITES:** Pool-sized!
- BEST LOCATION:** Convenient to new schools, shopping and great freeway access!
- BEST FINANCING:** Total move-in of \$2,250!
- ALL FROM PEOPLE WHO REALLY CARE...** and know how to make your dream for a new home a comfortable reality!

EXCEPTIONAL VALUES FROM **\$116,990**



(702) 642-5808

Sales Office Open Daily
10 am to 6 pm



Take I-15 North to Cheyenne Avenue.
Turn right on Revere Street and left
on Alexander to Highlands.

*On Select Homes

