

## NEWS CLIPS

### MAE ELLA BRACKEN-WILLIAMS, ASSEMBLYMAN'S MOTHER PASSES ON

Mrs. Mae Ella Bracken-Williams, mother of Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams (District 6-D) passed away Saturday afternoon at Valley Hospital in Las Vegas. Mae Williams was 81. She had taken ill a few days prior at her home. Born in Tallulah, Louisiana, she was the remaining child of nine born to Ples and Ella Brackens, who also preceded her in death. Mae Williams married Willie Williams, preceding her in death, and had two sons, Jabari and Wendell Williams. A graduate of Grambling State University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree she taught elementary and secondary schools in the Louisiana Public School system. In 1990 she moved to Las Vegas to be closer to her sons. Mae Williams was a member of the New Bethel Baptist Church where she also served as an adult Sunday school teacher. Surviving her are two sons, both in Las Vegas; one daughter-in-law, Zelda Williams of Las Vegas; six grandchildren, two great grandchildren and other relatives and friends. Funeral services will take place today at New Bethel Baptist Church, 400 W. Adams at 11 a.m.



Bracken-Williams

### FREDERICK DOUGLAS AWARD DINNER TO BE HELD OCTOBER 22

The 5th Annual Frederick Douglas Award Dinner to benefit the Frederick Douglas Educational Fund will take place on Thursday, October 22 at the Stardust Resort and Casino. The yearly event will consist of a dinner, an awards ceremony and a keynote address. This year the keynote speaker will be Star Parker. She is the president and founder of the Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education (CURE), a non-profit educational foundation. Parker the once self-described "welfare queen" from South Central Los Angeles is now known in political circles as a conservative crusader. Parker is reaping benefits from her 1997 autobiography "Pimps, Whores & Welfare Brats: The Stunning Conservative Transformation of a Former Welfare Queen." (According to the book, the pimps are Democrats who introduced welfare programs and the whores are black leaders who benefit politically by keeping them.) Parker's in demand for speaking engagements on college campuses, leading welfare exiting workshops and lecture series. Her presentation at this years banquet will convey it's theme "Education: Key to the Future." The forty-one year old mother has been a thorn in the side of Black democrats since accepting the Republican philosophy. Honoree for the evening is Luther Mack, president of Mack Associates and the lone African-American member on the Nevada State Athletic Commission. The event begins at 6 p.m. with no host cocktails and dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

### UNITED STATES EXPERIENCED REDUCTION IN POVERTY LAST YEAR

WASHINGTON (IPS) — Despite the United States' booming economy in 1997, there was only a slight decline in the rate of poverty, which afflicted 35.6 million Americans — 40 percent of those were children, according to the Census Bureau. While the number of poor remained unchanged during 1997, the poverty rate itself fell from 13.7 percent to 13.3 percent due to the increase in the country's total population. The new figures were released on Sept. 24, one day after the Republican-led Senate rejected a \$1 increase in the U.S. minimum wage.

### WINFREY'S LATEST PROJECT HAS FANS LOVING IN MOOD

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — As Oprah Winfrey arrived at Friday night's premiere of her movie "Beloved," fans shouted "Oprah! Oprah!" Shot in Philadelphia and nearby locales in Lancaster and Elkton, Md., "Beloved" drew several hundred fans who paid \$250 to watch the film and attend a reception with the cast. Winfrey produced and stars in "Beloved," which tells the story of an escaped slave haunted by the ghost of a child she killed. Proceeds from the event benefit the African-American museum in Philadelphia, the Freedom Theatre, the Philadelphia Reads program, and Women in Transition, a supportive counseling agency for battered and addicted women.

## All but one member of race committee resigns

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Sixteen black members have resigned from a 17-person committee here on race relations because they say its influential governing group is failing to address racial problems in St. Louis.

The race-dialogue committee had met since the racial unrest of the late 1960s and is associated with Civic Progress, a 45-year-old organization that includes the heads of the metropolitan area's 30 largest public and private companies.

Resigning members criticized a draft proposal that Civic Progress will consider presenting.

The plan does not propose expanding the group's membership to include more minorities, and it vaguely

suggests that the organization re-examine the role of the race-dialogue committee.

"The issues that we addressed were not taken into consideration in the restructuring," said Sheila Stix, a former director of Confluence St. Louis who quit the Civic Progress race-dialogue committee.

"The way Civic Progress is being restructured would make being in the dialogue committee not a good use of our time ... Civic Progress needs to be more inclusive."

Civic Progress traditionally has been made up mainly of whites, although it now has two black members.

They are Southwestern Bell's Priscilla Hill-Ardoin, a voting member, and Mayor Clarence Harmon, an ex-

officio member. The draft restructuring plan, devised by Civic Progress President Richard A. Liddy, would divide the organization of chief executives into six smaller teams.

Regional cooperation and education would top the list of Civic Progress' priorities.

Although no team would focus exclusively on race, Liddy has said that the new teams would draw from all segments of the community, including blacks.

That's not enough, say the 16 black leaders who sent Liddy a joint resignation letter. Their group has met regularly with Civic Progress leaders for about 30 years.

In a letter issued to Civic Progress members, Andrew C. Taylor, chief executive of

Enterprise Rent-A-Car, said the mass resignation from the committee "clearly indicates that more needs to be done to address the issue of race."

The dialogue committee had met monthly. Members said between seven and ten Civic Progress members usually joined the black participants for meetings in the St. Louis suburb of Clayton.

One of the group's senior members, Stix had participated in the dialogue committee for the past 15 years.

"This is their organization, so they can choose to design it as they see fit," Stix said of the Civic Progress members.

"But one always has a choice as to how one spends one's time."

## Supreme Court will not hear Beckwith appeal

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court will not hear the appeal of white supremacist and convicted killer Byron De La Beckwith of Tennessee.

Beckwith is serving a life sentence at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Rankin County for murder in the June 12, 1963, sniper shooting death of Mississippi NAACP Field Secretary Medgar Evers.

Beckwith, now 78, was convicted Feb. 4, 1994. Prosecutors tried him a third time 30 years after two all-white Hinds County juries deadlocked in 1964.

"I'm not surprised, but I'm disappointed," said

Beckwith's court-appointed lawyer Merrida Coxwell of Jackson. "I thought the issues that were raised would have attracted the U.S. Supreme Court."

Assistant District Attorney Bobby DeLaughter, who successfully prosecuted the case, praised last week's decision.

"I'm both proud and pleased for the Evers family and for Mississippi," he said.

Evers' widow, Myrlie Evers-Williams, said, "As far as I'm concerned, it's finished. The highest court of the land has spoken by not speaking."

In the appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, Coxwell

argued Beckwith had been denied his constitutional rights to a speedy trial and due process.

In earlier arguments before the Mississippi Supreme Court in 1997, Beckwith lawyers charged that prosecutors waited until they were confident of a conviction to pursue the case.

Coxwell said Beckwith was denied a speedy trial between 1964 and 1969, when a Hinds County prosecutor decided against a third trial.

Coxwell said the clock also was running between 1969 and 1990 when Beckwith was re-indicted.

"The lower court

sacrificed the petitioner's constitutional rights to atone for Mississippi's past sins. The 30-year delay skewed the petitioner's ability to prepare his defense," Coxwell said.

Beckwith's next expected legal step is to appeal to U.S. District Court in Jackson. If his request is denied there, he could appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and then again to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Beckwith, a one-time fertilizer salesman, lived for years in Signal Mountain, Tenn., where his wife still lives. He is a former member of the White Citizens Council, a group that promoted segregation.

## Parents say male principle good for fatherless students

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Patricia Willis has done a good job as principal at Matthew Gilbert Middle School. But parents and other community members are circulating a petition to have her reassigned and to bring back the school's former principal because Willis is a woman.

The parents want a man to head the school because, they say, the school's many black

male students, many of whom don't have fathers in the home, need a successful black male role model.

A role model like former principal Quentin Messer, who was reassigned last year. Willis, like Messer, is black.

More than 200 people have signed the petition so far. School board member Gwen Gibson said she disagreed with the reassignment of Messer, the

reasons for which weren't clear.

"Children need role models they can better identify with — one who has the same type of cultural background that they have," Gibson said.

"Most of the men they see are men on the street," said Mary Young, the grandmother of a former student who is a leader of the petition drive. "That's the only image they see. They think, 'That's me.' With a male principal, that would be

another alternative."

Ed Pratt-Dannals, regional superintendent for the area that includes Matthew Gilbert Middle, said officials chose a black man to be the school's assistant principal to try to fill any void left by Messer.

"We try to balance schools racially and with men and women," Pratt-Dannals said.

Willis said that in addition to the black male assistant principal, five of the school's 64 teachers are black men. Eighty-eight percent of the

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## Collaboration

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of sexually contracted diseases, emphasize responsible fatherhood and reduce sexual abuse and violence among African-American teens.

"I'm here to learn about how my future may be and what to look out for," said 13-year-old West middle schooler Peter Bermudez, who attended the program at West.

"You can't really tell if a girl is pregnant because of the big clothes they wear," said Luanie Bermudez, a 15-year-old Eldorado High School student. "But there are girls that are pregnant and its not talked about."

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