



# Former NFL great in need of liver transplant

ROSEMONT, Ill. (AP)— Walter Payton ran the football with no fear. With a dashing style and incomparable flair, he could crash into a defender and run over him or just as easily juke him and go around.

He became the leading rusher in NFL history because he ran with such abandon and because, for 13 years, he was one of the most durable players — at any position — to ever put on a uniform.

Now the man they call "Sweetness" faces a crisis much more formidable than any football game that ever confronted him with the Chicago Bears, a challenge much greater than any defense that ever tried to contain him.

He needs a liver transplant to live.

"He's the greatest football player I've ever seen at any position," said Saints coach



Sentinel-Voice photo courtesy of AP/WideWorld Photos

Walter Payton (number 34) breaks away from a defender.

Mike Ditka, who coached Payton in Chicago.

"If anybody can beat this thing, it's Walter. I'd like to see when he gets the transplant and gets on level

ground."

Payton, 44, has a rare liver disease, and in his current condition would have, on average, two years to live without a transplant, his

doctor said.

The Hall of Famer appeared gaunt and frail at a recent news conference where his son announced he would play football at the



WALTER PAYTON

University of Miami. So Payton called a news conference of his own to get his condition out in the open and curtail rumors.

"We wanted to get everything straight before things got bad," said Payton, who wore sunglasses and an NFL jacket and blue jeans that couldn't hide his thinness.

Payton was composed until the very end when asked if he had a message for his

legion of fans. Then the emotions came out.

"To the people that really care about me, just continue praying," Payton said, choking up.

His wife, Connie, patted him on the back when he couldn't continue. After finishing his thought in a cracking, tearful voice, Payton put his head down and embraced his 17-year-old son, Jarrett.

"I need him around, for him to be there for me as I do things and for my sister and for my mom," Jarrett said earlier.

"For me, it was kind of scary because you see your dad going through the NFL and not coming out with many injuries. Then something like this happens and it kind of makes you look and say, 'Well, he's not invincible.'"

The disease, primary (See Payton, Page 3)

## Judge in Illinois race beating case threatened

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge who sentenced a white youth to prison for an attack on a 13-year-old black boy has received an apparent death threat and now is under round-the-clock police protection.

Circuit Judge Daniel Locallo says he won't be intimidated by the threat, which was apparently made last month.

"I'm going to continue to do the job that I

was elected to do," Locallo said Tuesday in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

He sentenced Frank Caruso, 19, to eight years in prison for the March 1997 beating that left Lenard Clark in a coma. The youngster, who was bicycling in a white neighborhood at the time of the beating, continues to suffer brain damage as a result of

the attack.

Prosecutors say race was the sole motive. President Clinton condemned the beating in a national address. Caruso was found guilty of aggravated battery after a trial. Two others arrested for the attack were placed on probation under plea bargains.

The existence of the death threat was reported Monday night by Channel 7 News in

Chicago and in Tuesday's editions of the Chicago Tribune.

The FBI said in a statement that "during January 1999 information was received... which indicated that a possible threat had been made against the life of Cook County Circuit Court Judge Daniel Locallo."

The FBI is continuing to investigate the alleged threat.

## Black doctors vote not to meet in Seattle

SEATTLE (AP) — An association representing 20,000 black doctors yanked its 2001 convention out of Seattle, citing a new state law that makes some affirmative action measures illegal.

"Such legislative enactment is counter to the basic tenets upon which the National Medical Association was founded more than 100 years ago," Lorraine Cole, the organization's executive director said Tuesday in announcing it would hold its convention elsewhere.

Initiative 200, approved by voters in November, bans state and local governments from giving preferential treatment to women and

minorities in awarding contracts, filling jobs or making admissions decisions in higher education.

The physicians' association, which has its headquarters in Washington, D.C., listed as potential alternative sites Denver; Miami; Nashville, Tenn.; Orlando, Fla.; Philadelphia; New York and Baltimore.

Nearly 60 percent of Washington state voters approved Initiative 200, although a majority within Seattle voted against it.

Mayor Paul Schell plans to ask the association to reconsider, according to spokeswoman Vivian Phillips.

John Carlson, who headed



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

Doctors perform a high-tech treatment to remove fibroids. The drive to put the initiative on the ballot, said the medical association's decision is "their loss. Unless their organization was founded on the tenets of racial quotas and preferences, they are seriously misreading Initiative 200 because that's all that it prohibits," he said.

## New Jersey court rejects death penalty bias claim

Special to Sentinel-Voice

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The New Jersey Supreme Court on Monday upheld the state's death penalty law, rejecting an argument that blacks disproportionately receive the sentence.

After two years of deliberation, the court ruled 6-1 that there was insufficient evidence to support the argument.

The case centered on death row inmate Donald Loftin, a black man convicted of killing a gas station attendant during a 1992 robbery.

Loftin's attorneys said an analysis of cases showed blacks had a higher risk of receiving the death penalty for comparable crimes than non-blacks.

The high court appointed a retired judge to study the death penalty as applied to blacks and whites. He found a nearly equal percentage of blacks and whites accused of capital crimes received the death sentence.

There are 14 inmates on death row, six of whom are black. No one has been executed in New Jersey since the state's death penalty law was enacted in 1982.