

NEWS CLIPS

BLACKFAMILIES.COM PIONEERS A VIRTUAL FAMILY GATHERING

BlackFamilies.com, the first and only comprehensive web site dedicated to African-American families, has been satisfying the appetites of seven million African-American families since Jan. 18 by serving up a smorgasbord of useful content and resources. Designed as an empowering resource for African-American adults, BlackFamilies.com is a "virtual" home where users, known as "relatives," have the opportunity to learn and interact with others on relevant, family-related matters: parenting, finances and relationships. There is also a chat room, product advertisement and a search engine with direct links to other African-American sites. "There are a variety of sites for African-Americans focusing on everything from entertainment and sports to networking, but none focus on African-Americans," said John Pembroke, brand manager of the site. "For many African-Americans, family is top priority in their lives. BlackFamilies.com understands the importance of the family unit and seeks to enhance and enrich that unit."

HOWARD STUDENTS WANT HONORARY DOCTORATES FOR FARMER, TURE

Howard University Student Trustees Jonathan Hutto and Randy Short are leading a crusade to award James Farmer and Kwame Ture, both alumni, with honorary doctorate degrees during commencement exercises on May 8. Hutto, in a commentary written for HU's Hilltop, said: "Mr. Ture and Mr. Farmer are two of the best products of, students of and alumni of Howard University. When people give unselfishly and consistently over years, like Mr. Farmer and Mr. Ture did, we must recognize and honor the work which they have done..." Farmer, who graduated in 1941 with a bachelor's degree in religion, was very active during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He is most remembered for his work with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Freedom Rides. Ture, known also as Stokely Carmichael, graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1964 with a bachelor's in philosophy. Ture not only fought for civil rights, but extended his activism to the Black Power and Pan-Africanism movements.

UNIVERSOUL CIRCUS TO EMBARK ON 24-CITY TOUR

For the second consecutive year, UniverSoul Circus, the nation's only African-American owned and operated traveling big top style circus and the first in more than a century, will travel across the country to 24 cities. Sponsored by Honey Nut Cheerios, the circus has received critical acclaim for its brilliant showmanship, high-tech production and positive messages. Dubbed "Hip Hop Under The Big Top," "Cirque du Soul" and "The Most Soulful Show on Earth," the show has picked up seven new cities among its 24 stops: Jacksonville, Fla.; Charlotte, N.C.; Norfolk, Va.; Boston, Mass.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Nashville, Tenn. The show consists of traditional circus acts, including aerialists, high wire walkers, acrobats, elephants and lions. However, in a unique departure from established circus fare, UniverSoul Circus also offers Caribbean sult dancers and a Ringmaster who sometimes wears a zoot suit and a sidekick who dances to James Brown. Under the UniverSoul Circus big top, an intimate single ring setting, children and adults sing and dance to urban contemporary, hip hop, gospel, salsa, jazz and TV theme songs.

SHARPTON ARRESTED AT DIALLO PROTEST

NEW YORK (AP) — Minutes after promising civil disobedience until the police officers who killed an unarmed man last month are brought to justice, the Rev. Al Sharpton and 10 supporters were arrested last week for blocking traffic near Wall Street. The group was charged with disorderly conduct after they sat down at a busy intersection. Sharpton had just finished speaking at a rally in front of the nearby New York Stock Exchange that drew about 2,000 people. Sharpton was cheered as he was led into a police van. All of the protesters were released after being issued summonses. The group was protesting the shooting death of Amadou Diallo on Feb. 4. Four officers who fired 41 bullets at Diallo have yet to be questioned in the shooting and remain on desk duty. A grand jury is hearing evidence in the case.

White couple loses black foster child

CHICAGO (AP) — A 3-year-old boy born with cocaine in his system should be taken from the politically prominent couple who have served as his foster parents and returned to his mother — a recovering cocaine addict, a judge ruled Monday.

The state Department of Children and Family Services had recommended that "Baby T" stay with Appellate Court Judge Anne Burke and her husband, Alderman Edward Burke, one of the most powerful men in Chicago politics.

The boy has spent all but eight days of his life with the Burkes, and they had expressed interest in adopting

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— Judge Judith M. Brawka

him.

However, since the boy is black and the Burkes are white, Judge Judith M. Brawka held Monday that the state's recommendation did not give enough consideration to the value of African-American culture.

The judge added that Baby

T needs to be with his brother, who is also in foster care.

The judge had previously ordered the brother also returned to their mother, Tina Olson.

The judge set a goal of returning Baby T to his mother within 12 months, but she warned Olson that both

children could be taken away again.

"Just as your addiction lasted for years, I must tell you that this case may not close for a significant period of time," she said.

Olson, who is in her late 30s, sat silently throughout Monday's hearing. The Burkes were not in the courtroom.

Olson successfully underwent treatment for her drug addiction and has sued to regain custody of Baby T and her older son, who is being cared for by a grandmother.

The state failed in November to have Olson ruled an unfit mother.

N. Carolina mayor quits over racial remark

TRENTON, N.C. (AP) — The mayor of a small North Carolina town who said blacks had no capacity for leadership and preferred to work for whites has quit following calls for his removal.

Joffree Leggett, 81, resigned last week as mayor of Trenton, about 90 miles southeast of Raleigh, a week after a newspaper quoted him as saying he and the Town Council did not want blacks to take over town

government.

"This is just the beginning," said Daniel Johnson Willis, whose lawsuit challenging Trenton's annexation policy prompted Leggett's comments.

"The mayor has helped us trigger what will be a major, major change in Trenton."

Willis, 64, claims the City Council has refused to annex three predominantly black areas in order to maintain a

white majority in its elections. Trenton's voter rolls include 131 whites and 49 blacks.

Leggett, who served as mayor for 16 years, told *The Free Press* of Kinston last week that blacks were not "leaders," and that a "black man would rather work for a white person."

The state National Association for the Advancement of Colored People called for Leggett's resignation.

On Friday, the town

council did the same, adopting a resolution saying Leggett made "reprehensible and derogatory comments."

Leggett said he doesn't understand the attention his comments have drawn.

He said he's had enough after getting two death threats and dozens of angry calls.

"I didn't do anything wrong," he said.

"But I think it's best if I get out of here and let somebody else deal with what's coming."

N. Carolina town agreed to annex black areas

TRENTON, N.C. (AP) — The all-white town council agreed to annex three black neighborhoods, signaling a possible end to recent racial tension in the tiny Jones County community.

Following the board's decision Monday night, black activists agreed to call off a boycott of white-owned businesses.

"Let's put this ugly thing behind us and all go back to living normal lives where we all speak to each other and are friends," said councilman Charles Jones. The decision to annex the neighborhoods

of Haiti, Monkton and Spicey-Quinn Lands came at the council's first meeting since Mayor Joffree Leggett made racial remarks that sparked a controversy.

Leggett, 81, told *The Kinston Free Press* last month that blacks were not leaders and that he did not want them in town government. He resigned last week.

Leggett's comments were in response to a lawsuit filed by Trenton resident D. Johnson Willis and four others who claim the town's white leaders refuse to share power with blacks.

About 50 blacks now live in Trenton, a town of about 200. Annexing the adjoining neighborhoods would increase the black population by about 100.

Jones said the town, about

90 miles southeast of Raleigh, will hire an independent company to survey the annexation areas and determine the best way to proceed. He said the process would take at least a year.

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