

# Reno civil rights legend Woodard passes

RENO, Nev. (AP) - Bertha Woodard, a legend in the civil rights movement in Northern Nevada dubbed the matriarch of the local chapter of the NAACP, has died. She was 83.

Woodard worked as a nurse but dedicated her life to organizing sit-ins and leading pickets to protest racism in Northern Nevada. She died last Thursday at Washoe Medical Center.

Woodard petitioned the Reno City Council in 1959 to lift a ban on minorities in local casinos and helped lead an effort to remove signs from Reno stores that read, "No Indians, Negroes or Dogs."

In 1961, she attended Governor Grant Sawyer's signing of Nevada's first civil

rights bill. "Reno was once called the 'Mississippi of the West,' and it wasn't because of the river that ran through the middle of town," said Lonnie Feemster, president of the Reno-Sparks chapter of the NAACP and a lifelong Reno resident.

"It was a statement on the social and political attitude toward race, something Woodard spent much of her life fighting."

Woodard had planned to work with a group of local university students this year to compile a comprehensive look of the civil rights movement in Nevada. Feemster said last week he hopes that project will continue with the help of

Woodard's family. "Aside from her great enthusiasm, the biggest loss to this community is she had so much knowledge and first-hand experience of what happened here," Feemster said. "Even though there are bits and pieces of what went on, we don't have a personal rendition of civil rights in Nevada."

Woodard organized picket lines in front of the Overland Hotel and Harold's Club in Reno, pushing for equal access for blacks who were not permitted as customers at most downtown establishments.

"Blacks were not allowed in casinos except for a couple of places on Lake Street," Feemster said. "Black

soldiers at Stead Air Force Base would come downtown and attempt to go to a casino, but they were told they had to go to Lake Street."

Friends remember Woodard's generous nature and boundless energy for the NAACP efforts. Onie Cooper, a former chapter president, recalled he and another friend traveled to Chico, Calif., for a civil rights conference. When they arrived they had no place to stay, but a quick call to Woodard and they found a friendly motel with an available room.

"I don't know where we would have slept if it hadn't been for her," he said.

Woodard's charge against (See Pioneer, Page 13)

# Second blast rocks black Florida college

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — After a second bomb exploded last week in less than a month at Florida's historically black university, some students said they no longer felt safe going to classes or even staying in their dorm rooms.

However, others vowed to return to class at Florida A&M University, saying that staying away would mean a victory for whoever made racist telephone threats before and after the blast.

"What they would love for us to do is not to show up," said Derric Heck, a junior from Brunswick, Ga., and the student government vice president. "Let them know that our education cannot be stopped."

Fire officials said the pipe bomb went off Wednesday in a first-floor men's room in Perry Paige Hall, which was full of students in classrooms, labs and offices. No one was injured, but classes were canceled.

Some students said they didn't want to stay in their dorms and spent the night off campus.

"Telling a freshman to not be afraid as they lay their head down for the night is something I can't see," said Nekeisha Briggs, a senior from New York City.

A caller phoned a warning into a local television station around the time the bomb went off, just as it happened Aug. 31 when a bomb went off in a campus administration building. No one was injured in that blast.

A warning that more violence could ensue came into the TV station later in the day, in a second call laced with profanity and racial slurs.

"FAMU has seen the beginning of this ... they got no business having a college where there ain't nobody ... smart enough to get a degree .... This is just the beginning, brother," station WTXL-TV quoted the caller as saying.

Officials weren't saying much about the calls and said they had no direct evidence the two bombings were (See Bombing, Page 13)

# Second supremacist gets death in Byrd case

BRYAN, Texas (AP) — A jury decided last week that racist ex-convict Lawrence Russell Brewer should pay with his life for the dragging death of a black man, sending him to death row to join a buddy who also took part in the crime.

After 14 hours of deliberations over two days, the jury rejected arguments that a life sentence would be adequate punishment for Brewer, 32.

"I'm not a death penalty fan, but this is a situation where if you don't give the death penalty to this man, he'll hurt and kill again," Jasper County District

Attorney Guy James Gray said.

Brewer's former prison buddy, John William King, 24, is already on death row, convicted in February in the murder of James Byrd Jr.

Byrd, 49, was chained at the ankles to a pickup truck and dragged to pieces in the East Texas town of Jasper last year, in one of the nation's grisliest crimes since the civil rights era.

A third man, Shawn Allen Berry, 24, goes on trial next month. Prosecutors will seek the death penalty in that case, too.

Prosecutors said Brewer and King were organizing a

white supremacist organization and wanted to do something dramatic to give their group publicity. Brewer later bragged about the crime in jailhouse letters.

Brewer showed little reaction to the verdict, pursing his lips slightly. His mother, Helen, who along with her husband had pleaded with the jury to spare his life, dabbed her face with a handkerchief.

The jurors, who convicted Brewer on Monday, told the judge they would not discuss the case with reporters.

Brewer testified that he only tried to kick Byrd as Byrd and King fought. He

said Berry slit the man's throat with a knife and he didn't realize Berry had chained Byrd to the bumper until they began driving away.

DNA evidence showed Byrd's blood on the shoes of all three men.

In jailhouse letters introduced into evidence, (See Supremacist, Page 13)

# Nigerian official to talk investments

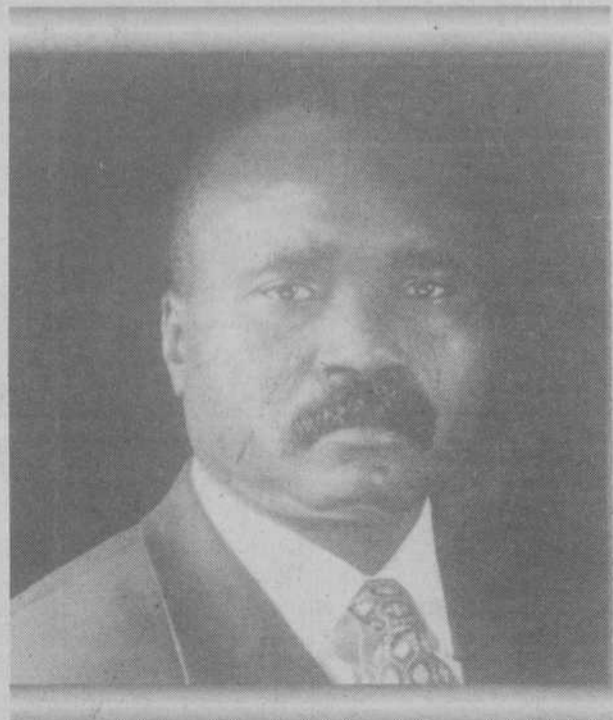
John T. Stephens III  
Sentinel-Voice

Zion Chapel Outreach, 6842 El Cordobes Ave., is sponsoring a reception to meet a top Nigerian political official to discuss the possibilities of investing in Nigeria and Africa.

Executive Governor Lucky Nosa Igbinedion, of Edo State, Nigeria, will deliver a speech on the many dichotomies of economics and business opportunities for serious investors.

Edo State is in the southern part of Nigeria. Its capitol, Benin City, is in the west delta of the Niger, about 150 miles east of Lagos.

The Nigerian municipality has a population of 200,000 as of the 1991 census, and has numerous rubber processing plants.

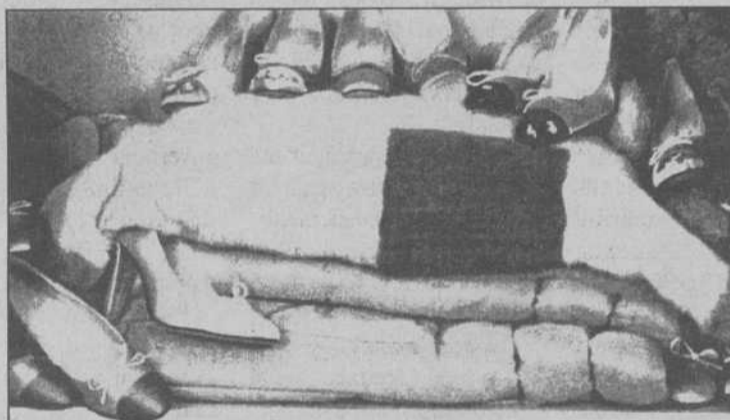


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