

Black leaders gather to scheme AIDS battle plan

TUSKEGEE, Ala. (AP) — Many blacks know little about AIDS and HIV because of a deep mistrust of white health care workers that stems partly from the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study, black church leaders said last week. About 350 clergy members from around the country met this week to address AIDS in the same town where the study, shut down in 1972, took place. It involved about 400 black men with syphilis who were denied treatment as part of a 40-year study of the disease by the federal government.

"It has resulted in a community that is very paranoid about health care and about white doctors," said Perness

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— Rev. Debra Hickman

Seele, an AIDS activist who organized the conference at Tuskegee University. "We have to get people into treatment, into care."

AIDS is the number one cause of death for black men and women ages 25 to 44, and one in 50 black men and one in 160 black women are HIV positive, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

Church leaders can help members overcome their mis-

trust of white doctors by teaching them to ask questions, said the Rev. Debra Hickman, an associate minister at City Temple of Baltimore Baptist Church.

"There's still a deep-seated mistrust of doctors among members of the black community, especially doctors who don't look like them," Hickman said.

Hickman started a program in Baltimore in which black church members and public health workers visit

poor urban areas on weekday evenings to offer free health care testing.

The conference comes about a week after the release of a study conducted at the University of Alabama at Birmingham that found poor black males' mistrust of health care givers, especially white male doctors, contributes to a high rate of AIDS in black communities.

Many poor blacks' only experiences with health care as children came when they were examined in youth detention centers or clinics that treat sexually transmitted diseases, the study found. As a result, many of the study participants associated health care with being in trouble.

Librarian noted for book controversy dies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Emily W. Reed, a retired librarian who was attacked by Alabama segregationists in the 1950s over a children's book about the marriage of a black rabbit and a white rabbit, has died of a heart ailment.

She was 89 and died May 19 at a retirement community in nearby Cockeysville, Md. Reed was director of the Alabama Public Library Service Division from 1957 to 1959 and made headlines when some Alabama lawmakers castigated the book, "The Rabbits' Wedding" for "possible anti-segregation motives."

She removed the book from open shelves of state libraries, but kept it on reserve shelves where it could be obtained on request.

Reed came under fire later for including on a state-distributed recommended reading list "Stride to Freedom," a book by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. about the bus boycott in Montgomery. She left Alabama in early 1960 to become coordinator of adult services for the District of Columbia library system, where she worked for six years before moving to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. She retired in 1977.

Voting

(Continued from Page 11) to vote in this nation would do so, we would not have to worry about anyone taking anything away from us. Most

African-Americans are more likely to lose our right to vote by our own apathy than by anything else.

Make no mistake about it,

35 years after the Voting Rights Act, there are still counties in this nation where African-Americans are still fighting for their right to cast

their ballots. But the vast majority of us are stopped only by our own laziness, our own apathy.

In April one of our greatest black unsung heroes died. Albert Turner was an advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in fact he was the one chosen to lead the mule wagon that carried Dr. King's body at his funeral. Albert Turner lived in Alabama all his life, helping to lead the Selma march where civil rights marchers were badly beaten, as well as many other demonstrations in Alabama, said J. L. Chestnut, the Selma civil rights attorney,

"Whenever there was something of unusual danger and nobody wanted to, you could count on the fact that Albert... would lead it." Mr.

Turner was one of the 40 first African-Americans registered to vote in Marion, AL in 1963 and the lawsuits surrounding their effort culminated in the Voting Rights Act itself. Albert Turner's determination to vote meant that he was threatened, he was beaten, he was imprisoned.

Mr. Turner's civil rights work did not end in the 1960's however. I met Albert Turner in the 1980's when a busload of us did a 25 year anniversary of the Freedom Rides and went to Alabama because Mr. Turner and other black leaders were under indictment by the Reagan Justice Department for so-called voter fraud. He, his wife and several others were charged with altering the absentee

ballots collected from elderly blacks in their rural area. During that time these elderly voters were visited by FBI agents and there was much intimidation in that county.

Albert Turner and his wife held their heads high because they knew they were innocent and they were eventually found innocent of the charges. But harassment of the Turners and other black leaders never really ended. Want to know why you should vote this fall and in every election? Because people like Albert and Evelyn Turner have been beaten and harassed and imprisoned so that you could. Your voting rights will expire if you don't use them, not because the law will die.

Cemetery

(Continued from Page 3) ens from people upset at both the name and the concept of designating a separate area for blacks.

"The real problem is it isolates and segregates the black clientele they are attempting to serve," said Donald Eiesland, president of Inglewood Cemetery.

Black sections in cemeteries around the country are as old as segregation, but Eiesland said they shouldn't be created today.

"This is not something they would want," he said.

"They would rather be integrated into the whole population."

To help appease critics, Williams has since changed the section's name to Glory Lawn. He and cemetery officials say any-

one can be buried there, regardless of race.

"It was a rush to judgment without hearing the concept," Williams said of the critics. "It is not a black lawn. Anyone can be buried in Glory Lawn, and blacks can be buried anywhere in Rose Hills."

Among the supporters is Celes King III, California state chairman of the New York-based Congress of Racial Equality.

"I would think that it is good because it would identify a significant group of people that have helped America," he said.

Glory Lawn will be developed on what now is about four acres of weeds and wildflowers. And it will maintain Williams' original objective of making plots affordable to his congregation.

"This is the main reason for the vision," he said. "I'm about helping people."

Jamaica

(Continued from Pg 12) stitutional reform failed to impress an electorate more concerned with the deteriorating economic situation and rising crime rate.

The NDM failed to secure any of the 60 seats in the 1997 general election and did not contest the local government polls in 1998. But party leader Bruce Golding continues to assure the country that the NDM is "organizing the work on the ground and articulating the message of change and a new vision for Jamaica."

Some observers are hoping that that new vision will become clearer by 2002, when the next general election is constitutionally due.

Business

(Continued from Page 10)

federate flag, the TV industry's white out of minorities, and the use of the word "nigger" are textbook examples of how mainstream Black groups choose soft targets to get media attention, celebrity endorsements, and political prestige. These issues do not offend governors, mayors, city councilpersons, alderpersons, state and federal officials, corporate leaders and bank lenders.

- Media hogging. They frantically maneuver to command center stage at press conferences, get their pictures and quotes in news stories and features, and put their media spin on racial issues. This further solidifies their position as the anointed Black leaders.

- Crush all opposition. They ruthlessly try to isolate, intimidate, and ostracize independent community activists who refuse to take their marching orders from them and are not in the hip pocket of politicians and corporate officials.

Those Black leaders who turn leadership into a lucrative business transaction smother new, innovative local leadership, deaden social and political activism in Black communities, and deepen cynicism of poor and working class Blacks toward Black organizations. This is good business for them, but bad business for Blacks.

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