

NAACP demonstrates outside Florida hotel

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP)—Protesters around the nation picketed peacefully outside Adam's Mark hotels on Saturday as part of a boycott to focus attention on discrimination accusations.

Police patrolled on bicycles as a group of 75 people marched in front of the Adam's Mark hotel here.

Out back, about 75 more demonstrators walked a boardwalk along the Atlantic Ocean.

"It's important we address this issue. I think it's important that we don't let it die," said Cynthia Slater, an NAACP leader in Daytona Beach.

The discrimination complaints arose in 1999 during the Black College Reunion weekend in Daytona Beach. Five black guests sued afterward, claiming they were overcharged, given inferior rooms, forced to wear neon orange wristbands and required to carry their own luggage.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People called in July for the mass demonstration and continued boycott of the 24-hotel chain.

"Nowhere in this nation are Americans made to undergo those sorts of requirements to check into a hotel," NAACP President Kaeisi Mfume said from Philadelphia, where several dozen protesters were marching outside another Adam's Mark hotel.

The company has consistently denied

treating black guests differently.

"We're not going to stand here and admit discriminatory treatment when it never happened," said Adam's Mark spokesman Stuart Arp.

In Columbia, S.C., the Adam's Mark Hotel put out cookies, lemonade and ice for about 45 protesters under a large white banner signed by workers that read "We Support Diversity and Excellent Customer Service."

In Memphis, Tenn., LeMoyné-Owen College had a major United Negro College Fund banquet scheduled at an Adam's Mark Hotel in late August, but postponed it after entertainers Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis threatened not to attend because of the boycott.

On Friday, NAACP protesters marched outside the Adam's Mark corporate headquarters in St. Louis and corporate offices in Chicago and Washington, D.C.

"We don't understand why the NAACP has chosen this avenue," said Fred Kummer III, vice president of the hotel chain owned by the St. Louis-based HBE Corp. "I don't want to dwell on the impact on business. We are anxious to present our case to a judge."

The Justice Department agreed to settle a lawsuit against the company for \$8 million and anti-discrimination policies, but a federal judge rejected the terms and a trial is set in November.



MOVIN' ON UP

Marla Gibbs, left, who starred in the late 1970s hit series "The Jeffersons" was on hand for the Mokae Resource Scholarship Foundation's annual awards banquet Aug. 4 at the Treasure Island Hotel-Casino. The third annual event honored high-achieving foster children headed to college with scholarships. Joining Gibbs from left to right are Madelyn Mokae and the legendary vocalist Ruth Brown. Sentinel-Voice photo by Joyce Hudson

White House defends race quotas

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Bush administration defended the use of racial preferences in a highway program, but made clear it was not endorsing quotas that the president has pledged to fight.

The administration asked the Supreme Court late Friday to uphold practices being contested by a white Colorado contractor in a long-running case.

President Bush's Justice Department could have abandoned the position of the Clinton administration, but that would have broken a precedent against abrupt policy changes by new presidents in ongoing Supreme Court cases.

Solicitor General Theodore Olson, who represents the administration before the court, wrote that the policy was not just about race.

"The determining factor is not the individual's race; it is having suffered discrimination on account of race, ethnicity or cultural bias ...," he said.

Further, he said, the program under dispute "is designed to ensure that aid recipients only employ race-conscious remedies as a last resort."

Conservative group leaders hoped Bush would use the case to take a stand against affirmative action.

"Being in a politically difficult position does not forgive you doing the right thing - constitutionally and morally," said Curt Levey, an attorney for the Center for Individual Rights.

Bush campaigned against racial quotas as a candidate and Attorney General John

Ashcroft also has opposed affirmative action. The filing should not be interpreted as the administration embracing affirmative action, only that the program in question was not improper, Justice Department spokeswoman Mindy Tucker said.

"This is John Ashcroft doing what he said he would do during his confirmation hearings," she said. "When there is a good-faith argument to be made in defense of a statute, he will make it."

Before President Clinton left office in January, his top lawyer filed papers defending the Transportation Department's preferential contracting program as a constitutional way to combat the lingering effects of racial discrimination.

The Bush administration did not go that far. Olson noted that the department prohibits quotas and "will not authorize the use of set-asides except in the most egregious instances of otherwise irreparable discrimination."

The suit was filed over bonuses that large government contractors have gotten for hiring "disadvantaged," or minority-owned, smaller firms as subcontractors.

Washington

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In an interview prior to the vote, Washington said he would not discuss any problems others might have with him.

"I love what I do. Not all will love me back. I was told that the higher you go, the more you have to love because there'll be more who don't love you," he said. "They could dislike me because I'm black, because I'm a man, because I'm 5 feet 8 inches instead of 6 feet. It doesn't matter. I'll still be there for the ones who are not there for me."

Wednesday morning's city council vote came shortly after an audible vote of approval from a young member of the audience, Washington's grandson.

Colorado Springs-based Adarand Constructors Inc. had submitted a lower bid for guardrail work in the San Juan National Forest in southern Colorado, but it lost out to a Hispanic-owned company because of the program. Adarand sued in 1990.

When the dispute went to the Supreme Court the first time, in 1995, justices used it to set strict limits on federal affirmative action programs.

The court decided on a 5-4 vote that assistance must be narrowly tailored to meet a compelling government interest. The Supreme Court is now reviewing Adarand's claim that a revised version of the program still gives minority competitors an unfair advantage.

Adarand's lawyer, William Perry Pendley of the conservative Mountain States Legal Foundation, said the filing means that "for the three presidents and six secretaries of transportation with whom we've fought this case, there has been no change."

Despite that, he said, "I take President Bush at his word" that he wants to end affirmative action.

The case is Adarand Constructors v. Mineta, 00-730.

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