

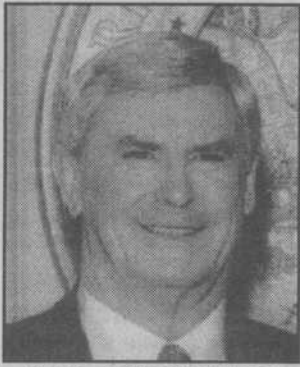
Nevada officials move to stop ethnic, religious harassment

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) - Gov. Kenny Guinn and various Nevada religious, law enforcement and community leaders pledged Thursday to stop harassment of Muslims, Arab-Americans or others targeted following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the East Coast.

"Our nation, our citizens and our sense of security have certainly been attacked," Guinn said in opening the meeting, held in Las Vegas and teleconferenced to Carson City.

"But this heinous act will not destroy our commitment to the principles of a democracy and our respect to our fellow citizens - and that's what we're really here today about," the governor said.

There have been several reported cases of harassment or discrimination since the attacks, including a threat last week against Muslims made



GOV. KENNY GUINN

by an anonymous caller to a Sparks mosque.

Guinn also noted an out-of-state case: prominent Las Vegas cardiologist Raj Chanderraj, a native of India, tried to board a plane in Philadelphia a few days after the attacks - but the pilots refused to take off with him on the plane.

The governor said such incidents "may happen more often than we want, but our job today is to talk about it and make sure it doesn't hap-

pen."

Clark County Sheriff Jerry Keller warned that anyone prompted by the Sept. 11 attacks to commit hate crimes or make threats will be tracked down and jailed.

"This is not a catch-and-release business," he added.

Washoe County District Attorney Dick Gammick also pledged to prosecute such people, saying that they would not be "cut any slack."

Nevada educators said they're circulating anti-hate crime information and mate-

rials to students at both the K-12 and community college-university levels.

Jack McLaughlin, Nevada superintendent of public instruction, said all school superintendents are getting such materials from both national and local groups.

"Ignorance and hatred are the twins we fight, and we know education is the answer," added Jane Nichols, chancellor of the University and Community College System of Nevada.

"Prejudice can't live in the light of

knowledge and truth."

Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman also warned against prejudice and hatred, saying, "We in Las Vegas have no time for that kind of nonsense."

Goodman also described the terrorists involved in the Sept. 11 attacks as "some lunatics, some fanatics, some aberration of mankind."

Mujahid Ramadan, a well-known member of the Muslim community in Las Vegas, said people need to realize that the terrorists don't

represent those who believe in Islam. Instead, he said they were following "a deranged political agenda."

"The word Islam itself means peace," Ramadan added.

Lee Plotkin, executive director of the southern Nevada chapter of the National Conference for Community and Justice, said it's important to try to educate people - especially the young - so they realize the difference between the acts of individuals and an entire demographic group.

State Supreme Court creates panel to study jury system

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) - The Nevada Supreme Court has created a commission to study the state's jury system - but the panel's working sessions won't be open to the public.

The 15-member Jury Improvement Commission holds its first meeting Thursday in Las Vegas. That will be followed by a second meeting Sept. 28 in Reno.

While working meetings will be for panel members only, Justices Bob Rose and Deborah Agosti said written comments can be submitted to the Supreme Court. They co-chair the commission.

In addition, questionnaires will be sent out to former jurors. The panel will look at all aspects of jury selection

and service, including pay, exemptions, and treatment of those called to jury duty.

"I'm sure we will consider whether there should be any exemptions to jury duty and if the \$15-a-day juror pay should be increased," said Rose.

"Citizen juries are a bulwark of our democracy," he added. "The courts have an obligation to make jury service as meaningful and easy as possible."

Besides Rose and Agosti, other commission members include three district court judges, a prosecutor, a public defender, three county officials, four private-practice lawyers and the head of a task force on racial, economic and gender bias.

Ali

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Smith, the actor who plays the boxer in an upcoming movie.

On Thursday, Ali made a morale-boosting visit to rescue workers in the rubble of the World Trade Center.

"We appreciate his coming," said Richard Sheirer, director of the city Office of Emergency Management. "I can't tell you how much we appreciate his coming."

Ali, wearing a blue Fire Department baseball cap, was presented with a special credential by Sheirer before heading to the site in lower Manhattan.

The three-time heavyweight champion said he was stunned when word of the Sept. 11 attack reached his Michigan home.

"It felt like a dream, like a movie," Ali said. "I didn't think it was something that was happening in real life."

Ali, a convert to Islam, and his wife, Lonnie, said they were saddened that some had blamed Islam for the terrorist attacks.

"Islam is not a religion of hate," Lonnie Ali said. "It's a religion of love."

Ali then offered his message to people of all religious backgrounds: "Rivers, ponds, lakes and streams - they all have different names, but they all contain water. Just as religions do - they all contain truths."

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