

## NEWS BRIEFS

### VIRGINIA STUDENTS' CRITICIZED FOR BLACKFACE PARTY

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) - A student panel at the University of Virginia cleared two fraternities of disorderly conduct accusations stemming from a Halloween party where guests wore blackface but recommended the houses discipline their members. The panel, convened by the university's Inter-Fraternity Council, determined Monday that Kappa Alpha and Zeta Psi could not be punished because the partygoers' actions were constitutionally protected speech. But the panel also condemned those at the party for "an apparent historical blindness and lack of sensitivity" and recommended that both houses discipline their members and conduct educational programs. Photos of those in blackface had circulated for several weeks on the Internet. They showed at least three costumed students with their faces painted black or brown at a party co-hosted by the two fraternities. One man was dressed as Uncle Sam and two others were dressed as tennis champions Venus and Serena Williams. Many students decried the costumes as racist and offensive throwbacks to the days of minstrel shows. But others wrote letters to the student newspaper defending the costumes as innocent fun and criticizing the backlash as political correctness. The national organizations of both fraternities sanctioned their U.Va. chapters after college officials discovered the photos Nov. 18. Kappa Alpha lifted the suspension of its chapter after two days, when leaders concluded that none of its members were involved. Zeta Psi remains on probation pending a disciplinary hearing with the national organization.

### DRIVERS PROTEST EX-FBI AGENT'S DRUNK DRIVING ACQUITTAL

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) - About 100 cars formed a procession to protest a former FBI agent's acquittal on charges he caused the death of two brothers by driving drunk the wrong way on a Florida highway. The protest last Monday during morning rush hour created a traffic nightmare for nearly an hour as the vehicles moved slowly on Interstate 95 toward the place where Maurice Williams, 23, and his half brother, Craig Chambers, 19, were killed in 1999. David Farrall, 39 was convicted last week of misdemeanor drunken and reckless driving after jurors could not determine if it was he or the brothers who were driving the wrong way. The victims' relatives have accused law enforcement of racial discrimination. Farrall is white; the victims were black. But a separate state investigation found no evidence of racism or a cover-up on the Florida Highway Patrol's part. The family is suing the FBI, FHP and the bar where Farrall had been drinking. The victims' mother, Florence Thompson, was joined by dozens of others at the crash site. Some held placards protesting the verdict. Troopers issued seven traffic citations to drivers charged with obstruction, and two people were given criminal citations for failure to disperse, police said. Farrall faces up to six years in prison when he is sentenced on Jan. 8.

### BLACK OFFICERS TO SETTLE OKLAHOMA RACE LAWSUIT

TULSA, Okla. (AP) - The city and a group of black police officers agreed recently to settle a lawsuit alleging racial discrimination at the Tulsa Police Department. The deal still must be approved by a federal judge and the police officers' union has not yet backed the agreement. The 1994 lawsuit filed by the Black Officers Coalition says blacks face a segregated work environment, are discriminated against in hiring and promotions, get no help when calling for backup and face retaliation if they complain of discrimination. Under the settlement, police hiring and promotions would be based on merit and the police force would have to avoid racial profiling. The city would also collect data on officers and their policing activities so an independent auditor can monitor compliance. In all, the agreement will cost about \$6 million to implement, Mayor Bill LaFortune said. The city would admit no wrongdoing. "This is a longtime coming," said Capt. Walter Busby, president of the coalition. "We finally got where we wanted to be. It signifies the beginning of something big."

# Black scholar to stay at Harvard

## Unlike peers, Gates will not flee Harvard for Princeton

BOSTON (AP) - Henry Louis Gates put an end to a widely watched academic tug-of-war last week, announcing he would remain as head of Harvard University's black studies department rather than follow two prominent colleagues to Princeton.

"This is for good," Gates told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "It's to rest. It's final."

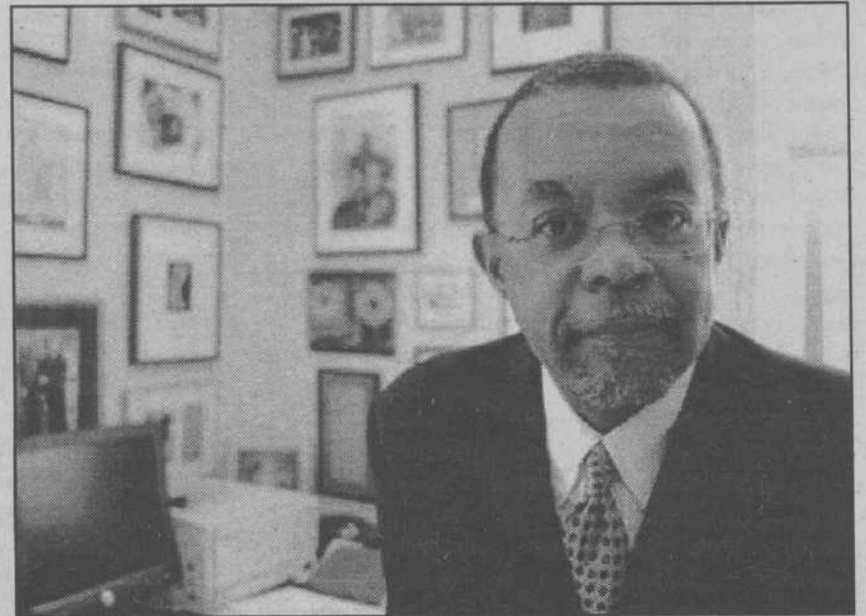
Professors Cornel West and K. Anthony Appiah were lured away by Princeton earlier this year. West left after a dispute with new Harvard President Lawrence Summers.

Gates, who is chair of Harvard's Afro-American Studies program and director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research, said that he had talked extensively with Summers since West's departure.

"We've been talking heart-to-heart," Gates said. "We've developed a warm working relationship. It's very candid, very open, very frank, and I'm absolutely persuaded that he sees Afro-American studies as fundamental to the intellectual life of a great university."

In a statement, Summers said he was "delighted" with the decision.

Gates had previously said he would not leave for Princeton this academic year, but had not ruled out the move altogether. His plans had been the subject of widespread speculation among



Henry Louis Gates Jr., poses inside his office at Harvard University, last week in Cambridge, Mass. He has decided not to bolt to Princeton.

observers who wondered whether Princeton would lure the entire black studies "dream team" Harvard had put together during the 1990s.

"It was very tempting to join Anthony Appiah and Cornel West," Gates said. "They're my two best friends in the academy and they're two great scholars, and Princeton now has virtually overnight become one of the three great centers of African-American studies."

But, he said, the Harvard department was in transition.

"It would be irresponsible of me to leave at this time," he said. "I'm very concerned with protecting the great legacy that Cornel West and Anthony Appiah and our colleagues built."

Princeton spokeswoman Lauren Robinson-Brown said the university would have been pleased if Gates had decided to come to Princeton.

"We appreciate the reasons he has stated for making his decision and we appreciate his kind words about Princeton," she said.

## Lott

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Mfume, a former House member.

"It sends a chilling message to all people," said Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., of the remarks Lott made last Thursday at a birthday party for 100-year-old Thurmond, R-S.C., who is retiring after 48 years in the Senate.

"These are the kinds of words that tear this nation apart," said Cummings, who was elected chairman of the 39-member Congressional Black Caucus on Tuesday. "We are going to do something about it."

Lott said at the party that his state of Mississippi was proud to have voted for Thurmond in 1948, when Thurmond headed the states rights, anti-integration Dixiecrat ticket that captured 39 Southern electoral votes. "And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either," Lott said.

He apologized late Monday, saying, "A poor choice of words conveyed to some the impression that I embraced the discarded policies of the past. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I apologize to anyone who was offended by my statement."

## "Hateful bigotry has no place in Congress"

— NAACP President Kweisi Mfume

Asked about the situation Tuesday, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said of Lott, "He has apologized for his statement and the president understands that that is the final word from Senator Lott."

President Bush thinks Americans should take pride in the "tremendous strides and changes and improvements" that have been made in race relations since 1948, Fleischer said, adding, "We were a nation that needed to change."

Lott was also sharply criticized Tuesday by Ken Connor, president of the conservative Family Research Council. "Senator Lott's ill-considered remarks will serve only to reinforce the false stereotype that white conservatives are racists at heart," Connor said. "Republicans ought to ask themselves if they really want their party to continue to be represented by Trent Lott."

Congress' only black Republican, retiring Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, came to Lott's defense, saying he did

not consider the comments racially motivated. "We should not trivialize the issue of race for political gain," he said.

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, outgoing head of the Black Caucus, said she called Lott on Monday and he apologized to her, saying he was caught up in the moment and did not realize his remarks would be interpreted as they were. Asked if that was sufficient, Johnson said, "We're not finished in this caucus."

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., also said Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle spoke too quickly when he said Monday he accepted Lott's explanation that he hadn't meant his words to be so interpreted.

"This is a Democratic Party issue," Waters said. "It is not enough to simply defend or to explain these kinds of statements and then at election time talk about why black Americans should turn out in large numbers."

Daschle, in a statement Tuesday afternoon, said that

while he accepted Lott's insistence that he did not condone segregation, "his words were offensive to those who believe in freedom and equality in America."

Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, who will become House Democratic leader next month, said of Lott, "He can apologize all he wants. It doesn't remove the sentiment that escaped his mouth that day."

Mfume, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said Lott should resign from his leadership post "to make way for another member of the Republican Party whose moral compass is pointed toward improving race relations and not dredging up this nation's poor, polarizing performance of the past."

Lott's comments "are dangerously divisive and certainly unbecoming a man who is to hold such a highly esteemed leadership role," Mfume said in a statement.

Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson called last weekend for Lott to quit the majority leader post. Lott's spokesman Ron Bonjean, asked about the latest criticism, said Lott "made a sincere apology and it speaks for itself."