

# L.A.'s South Park spared from school construction

By Betty Pleasant

LOS ANGELES (NNPA) — The wishes of many residents have prevailed in two areas of the city, when the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) backed off plans to build new high schools on or near South Los Angeles' South Park and Belvedere Park in East L.A.

Yielding to intense community pressure, district officials recently announced in simultaneous meetings held some 20 miles apart that they will spare the two landmarks and the historic homes surrounding them. The new high schools will be built elsewhere.

Exercising its right of eminent domain, the school district plans to acquire sufficient private property to build two new high schools in South L.A., to relieve overcrowding at Fremont and Manual Arts, and two new high schools in East Los Angeles to do the same for Garfield and Roosevelt.

Rod Hamilton, the LAUSD's senior facilities executive, told residents who packed Holy Name Catholic Church's parish hall that the district has passed on its preferred

South Park location, called Site 1, and has chosen to build the new high school on Site 23 at 66th Street and Avalon Boulevard. The site is composed of more than nine acres on which 23 properties are located, including only three single-family residences.

In comparison, the 11.62-acre South Park site, at 49th and San Pedro streets, would have required the removal of 77 residential structures, including 35 historic homes, some dating back to the turn of the 20th Century.

After learning last year of the school district's plans for South Park, angry residents formed the Committee to Save South Park and Our Homes. With the assistance of Rep. Maxine Waters and recording artist Barry White, who grew up in the South Park neighborhood, the committee staged a series of protest rallies and even stormed a meeting of the board of education demanding that the South Park site be left alone.

Hamilton told the residents last Wednesday the school district decided against building on the South Park site because "people

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## HOUSE DOCTORS

Nevada Sen. Harry Reid (right) joined Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., at the Health Care Access Rally recently on Capitol Hill. The event hosted the Congressional Black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian and Pacific American caucuses.

# Feud simmers between National Guard's top black officers

By Marcus E. Walton

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (NNPA) — A growing rift between the two highest ranking officers in the California National Guard, both of whom are African-American, came to a head this month, resulting in the organization's second-in-command being relieved of his duties.

Brigadier Gen. Ezell Ware Jr. claims he resigned from his position as assistant adjutant general a day before he was fired.

He was dismissed from his post by his superior, Gen. Paul Monroe, ending a four-year rivalry that was often played out in the pages of local newspapers.

"I no longer have the con-

fidence in your ability to work with me to provide leadership for the Military Department to meet the new challenges that will enable us to accomplish our mission in a changed dynamic environment," Monroe wrote to Ware in a memorandum obtained by The Observer.

The two had been competitors for leadership positions in the California National Guard for years, Monroe said.

Their latest rivalry was born when California Gov. Gray Davis chose Monroe as the adjutant general and appointed Ware the assistant adjutant general. Ware was also in consideration for the job.

Since then, there have been rumblings and newspaper articles documenting the tense atmosphere created by the feuding generals.

"I don't have anything to be jealous of anyone for," Ware said. "If you look at my record, I know that it measures up to anyone else's, so I don't know where this talk about there being a rivalry is coming from. He is my commanding officer and I do what a soldier is supposed to do — follow orders. If he had a problem with me, then he should have called me in to talk about it."

While the duo put on a professional face, especially after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Monroe said the two

just couldn't put their differences behind them.

"We just weren't getting along," Monroe told The Observer. "We had a difference of opinions and he wanted to be number one."

Monroe said he and Ware were not getting along but that the assistant adjutant general never disobeyed his orders.

"It's not that he didn't do what I wanted him to," Monroe said. "It was his interpretation of my policies."

Ware tells a much different story about leaving his post. He says he resigned, offering a letter dated May 1 addressed to Gov. Davis. Monroe dismissed him on May 2.

However, a spokesman in the governor's office said a letter had come in, but there was no date stamp, rendering it impossible to tell when it arrived. Ware said he hand-delivered the letter and gave an additional copy to a member of the governor's inner circle. The Observer was unable to verify those facts before press time.

"I had been considering retirement for a while, since last October," Ware said. "But the war came and I didn't want it to appear that I was anti-war or anything like that, so I waited. The president said the war was over on Wednesday night and the next day I resigned."

Instead of informing his

commanding officer, Ware said he sent his letter to the governor's office, since he was in an appointed position.

If Ware's resignation isn't accepted, he will retire a colonel instead of a general, a National Guard spokeswoman said.

"I think this was plain mean-spirited," Ware said of his dismissal. "I resigned."

The governor's spokesman, Steve Maviglio, said the assistant adjutant general is appointed by the governor, but serves at the pleasure of the adjutant general, meaning that Monroe was in his rights to dismiss Ware.

"The governor stands by Gen. Monroe's decision," Maviglio said.

# Outraged community still fighting officer's return to duty in Tyisha Miller case

By Mary Shelton

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (NNPA) — Even though it has been nearly five years since the shooting death of Tyisha Miller, Riverside residents still showed how close it was to their hearts when they appeared in mass first at an organizing meeting and then at a city council meeting to protest a judge's ruling to reinstate Wayne Stewart, one of her accused killers, to the Riverside Police Department.

More than 30 people appeared at a recent session of City Council to tell members to do the right thing by not allowing Stewart to return to work, before the council discussed the case behind closed doors.

Pastor Jesse Wilson, president of the Tyisha Miller Steering Committee, said that the city should not reinstate Stewart and instead should appeal the ruling at the California State Court of Appeals.

"This would be a terrible time to send a signal that we are not convinced this officer needs to be removed from the force," said Wilson.

Speaker after speaker walked up to the podium to voice their agreement with Wilson and to push the city to continue to fight Stewart's efforts to return to the police force.

Joan Miller, Tyisha Miller's grandmother, said that the family had already suffered through the shoot-

ing and believed Stewart's reinstatement would continue to add to their pain, as well as that of the city.

"We've been slapped in the face by the murder and the blowing out of the brains in the back of her head," she said. "We don't want to be slapped again by you not choosing to appeal the ruling of this judge."

That judge was Charles E. Stafford, based in Indio, who was assigned the case after all the Riverside County Superior Court judges in Riverside recused themselves. He decided that Stewart should return to the force with full back pay from the four years he was sidelined.

Several speakers implored

the council not to be beholden to the Riverside Police Department or the Police Officers' Association but to all of Riverside's residents.

Jim Martin, who ran for city council in 1999, said that the council needed to represent the wishes of everyone by not returning a "bad apple" to the force.

Pastor Robert Edwards, from the Kansas Avenue Seventh Day Adventist Church, criticized the city's earlier decision to settle with former officer Michael Alagna by giving him \$50,000 of his annual salary tax-free for "a life, not life, but a life."

One woman spoke in support of reinstating Stewart back on the force, and told

the council how her son was spending 20 years in prison after being convicted of a hate crime involving an attack on a Black man in Temecula several years ago. She said that the officer had made a mistake and should be allowed to return to work. She added that the Black community was engaging in blackmail against the city by demonstrating against the killing of Miller.

"It's been five years. Get over it," she said.

One speaker also addressed earlier comments made by Councilman Ed Adkison that the city had already spent too much money on the case by saying that the city has spent even more

money fighting two other cases, both involving racial discrimination against African-American city employees to avoid settling them.

A lawsuit filed by Rommel Dunbar and 16 other Black city employees in U.S. District Court in 1997 has been fought by the city every step of the way despite the evidence, resulting in the expenditure of thousands of dollars, as has a 1999 law suit filed by Black police officer Roger Sutton in the county civil courts.

The decision to speak out against the reinstatement at the city council meeting arose from a community meeting held the previous evening at

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