

**S P O R T S**

**Williams' lawyers seek records**

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) - Jayson Williams' lawyers have requested personnel files on dozens of state troopers, saying examples of racial profiling or bias would be relevant at the former NBA star's manslaughter trial.

In court documents filed recently, the defense also asked a judge to dismiss charges against Williams or, failing that, move his trial out of Hunterdon County because of an "avalanche of publicity."

The filings include a request for records on the type of shotgun involved in the Feb. 14, 2002, shooting death of limousine driver Costas Christofi, as well as an attempt to throw out testimony from a prosecution witness on Williams' blood-alcohol content at the time of the shooting.

Williams, 35, is accused of recklessly handling the shotgun that killed Christofi. He could face nearly 55 years in prison if convicted on all charges, the most serious of which is aggravated manslaughter.

"These motions directly challenge the integrity of the second grand jury that indicted Jayson," defense lawyers Joseph Hayden and Billy Martin said in a statement. "They also challenge the notion of future trial fairness and evidence reliability."

First Assistant Hunterdon County Prosecutor Steven C. Lember declined to comment on the motions until he had reviewed them.

Williams' attorneys said the prosecu-

tion witness list includes 70 state police employees. After searching public records and the Internet, the defense said it found racial bias allegations against nearly one in 10. Williams is black.

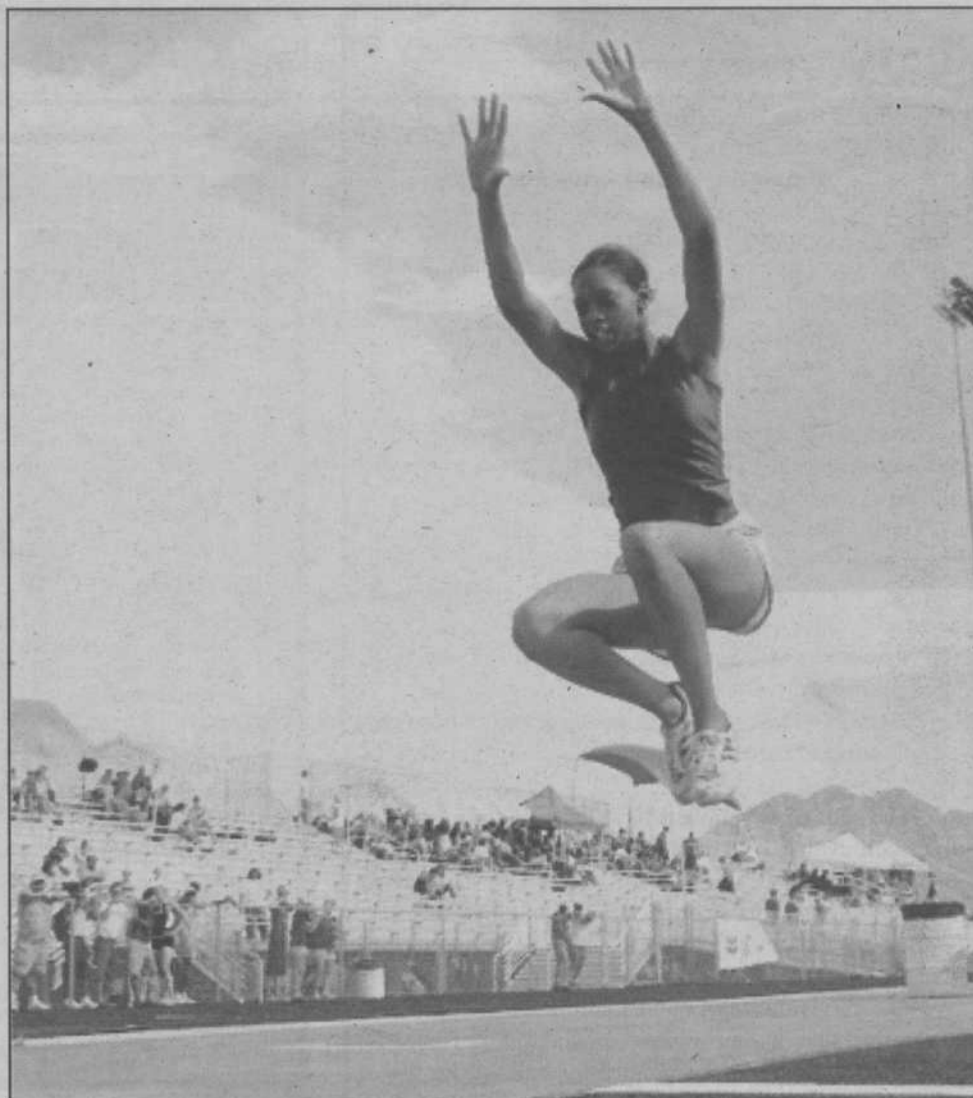
Defense lawyers contend they are entitled to review the witnesses' personnel files to see whether they contain evidence of racial bias that could be used during cross-examination.

Last month, defense attorneys requested a racial and ethnic breakdown of the grand jurors who indicted Williams, saying those numbers are needed to know whether one group is routinely excluded from the county's grand juries.

The defense sought the dismissal of the indictment - the second returned in the case - arguing that prosecutors made too many mistakes before the grand jury. A similar challenge to the original indictment got to a state appeals court before prosecutors substituted a new one.

If the indictment is upheld, defense lawyers want the judge to dismiss two individual charges, including a weapons charge they say was added to the second indictment in retaliation for their appeal of the first.

The 6-foot-10 Williams was among the NBA's best rebounders when leg injuries led to his retirement from the New Jersey Nets in 2000. After the shooting, he was suspended from his job as an NBA analyst for NBC.



**HIGH FLYER**

Ashley Rae Mathis leaps through the air on a triple jump. Mathis realized her dream by jumping 38 feet, 9 inches to tie the state record in the girls' triple jump at the recently completed Nevada State Championships. Mathis, who earned a 4.0 grade point average, will attend the University of Nevada, Reno on an athletic/academic scholarship and major in journalism.

*Photo special to Sentinel-Voice*

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