

## Civil rights eatery to be demolished

ATLANTA (AP) - The restaurant that served as unofficial headquarters of the civil rights movement will be demolished to make way for a college dormitory, officials said.

The decision to raze Paschal's restaurant was based on finances, said its owner, Clark Atlanta University. The eatery is losing \$500,000 a year, an amount that the university cannot afford to cover.

Clark Atlanta itself faces a \$7.5 million operating deficit.

"We understand the historic legacy of this establishment," said university President Walter Broadnax. "But we are not restaurateurs and cannot be competitive."

Clark Atlanta bought Paschal's Motor Hotel and Restaurant in 1996 as a conference center and residential complex. The university obtained a demolition permit in April and expects to close the restaurant Monday.

Some Paschal's supporters continued to insist that the restaurant be preserved.

"It is a very, very important piece of Americana, particularly black Americana," state Rep. Tyrone Brooks said. "We can always find land for dorms. Paschal's is too valuable, too significant to have a bulldozer come and knock it down."

Throughout the 1960s, the restaurant run by James and Robert Paschal was a key meeting place for the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph David Abernathy. The Paschal brothers often posted bond for arrested protesters, served free meals and stayed open late so families could have a place to greet their relatives when they got out of jail.

Broadnax said he understands the opposition.

"People have tried to make it look like we don't care about civil rights," he said. "But the civil rights movement, above everything else, was about educating young men and women of color. Dr. King understood how important education was."

## Illinois to reform death penalty law

CHICAGO (AP) - Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed a bill Thursday requiring police to tape interrogations and confessions in murder cases, calling it a key step in reforming Illinois' death penalty system.

"It is our moral duty to restore the integrity of the criminal justice system as we know it today in Illinois," said Blagojevich, whose predecessor gained national headlines for his attack on capital punishment.

The law requires police to use audio- or videotape when they question murder suspects; agencies will have two years to come up with procedures.

"This is the most substantial criminal justice reform

measure since the 1960s in Illinois," said Rob Warden, executive director of Northwestern University's Center on Wrongful Convictions.

The bill is one of several passed this spring to address a system that former Gov. George Ryan had declared deeply flawed.

After capital punishment resumed in Illinois in 1977, 13 men were released from the state's death row after they were found to have been wrongly convicted. In response, Ryan imposed a moratorium on executions in 2000 and then commuted every death sentence in the state before leaving office this January.

Blagojevich has not decided whether to sign other

measures passed by the Legislature. Even if he does, he said, he is not sure the changes will make him comfortable enough with Illinois' capital punishment system to lift Ryan's moratorium.

Two other states, Minnesota and Alaska, already require tapings. Because courts and not legislatures required those states to do so, the Illinois law is the first of its kind in the country, Warden said.

The taping is intended to reduce the chance that confessions are coerced or even tortured out of suspects, a claim made in several cases in which condemned men later were freed from death row in Illinois.

But John Piland, president of the Illinois State's Attor-

neys Association, a prosecutors group, said videotaping may not show the circumstances leading up to a confession. "To say this is going to end all claims of police misconduct, it won't," he said. "The imagination isn't confined to that which is captured on tape and is in the room."

Also Thursday, Blagojevich signed bill requiring police to record the race of people they pull over during traffic stops. The state Transportation Department then would review the data for signs of racial bias.

Another bill signed by the governor will allow people to have their arrest records expunged if they are later found to be innocent.

## Chided candidates apologize for missing NAACP forum

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

After a stern public scolding by NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, humbled democratic presidential candidates Joe Lieberman, Dick Gephardt and Dennis Kucinich reorganized their schedules and apologized for missing the organization's forum.

The candidates arrived on the final day of the NAACP convention.

"I'm sorry I'm late in coming," said Connecticut Sen.

Lieberman, who acknowledged that the NAACP's voter-registration drive in 2000 almost made him vice president as Al Gore's running mate.

"But I hope you agree with me that it's never too late to do the right thing, and the right thing was being here."

Although the candidates received restrained applause from the audience, Mfume stopped short of embracing their efforts.

Ohio's Rep. Kucinich

told reporters that he missed the forum to remain in Washington for a key Medicare vote and to maintain his perfect voting attendance record.

All three cited Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with Lieberman recalling his participation in the 1963 March on Washington, Missouri Rep. Gephardt saying that he quotes the civil-rights leader in every campaign speech and Kucinich speaking of Dr. King's commitment to non-

violence.

Mfume told reporters, "We're glad that they had a change of heart and recognized in many respects why it is so very important not to ignore such a large voting bloc in this nation."

Asked if the apologies were satisfactory, Mfume said he accepted them but could not judge further.

"It's difficult for me to measure how I perceived them," Mfume said. "I just heard them."

## Inmate

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ing of a false statement implicating Patterson.

Patterson accuses Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine, former Office of Professional Standards Director Gayle Shines and CPD Superintendent Terry Hillard of being involved in a cover-up of his innocence and torture by suppression of evidence, failure to investigate police officer misconduct and public defamation of his character. He further sues the City of Chicago and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office for upholding de facto policies and practices that foster such alleged victimization of countless incarcerated individuals.

"Since there's no checks and balances in the system, we're forced to file lawsuits like this," Patterson said.

Devine was a lawyer during the time of Patterson's incarceration. The suit claims he was retained, over the years, by the City of Chicago to represent officers Burge and Byrne in other torture cases and accuses him of withholding evidence in those cases that could have exoner-

ated Patterson. Becoming the State's Attorney in 1996, the suit further reads that Devine "used his influence and decision-making power to continue the wrongful conviction and imprisonment" of Patterson.

John Gorman, spokesman for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, said in a statement, "After Mr. Devine became State's Attorney in late 1996, the office took the position that the three-year statute of limitations on any events at Area 2 had long since run. We will vigorously defend our prosecutors against these allegations."

The City of Chicago and CPD refused to comment on the pending litigation.

Present at the press conference, in support of Patterson, was Rev. Oscar Walden Jr., who contends he was unlawfully imprisoned in 1952 and served 14 years for the rape of a White woman. He said that police bent his fingers back while beating him, forcing him to confess to a crime he didn't commit.

"It's the same pattern in the last 50 years," he said.

"Absolutely nothing has changed."

Gov. George Ryan also pardoned Rev. Walden in January, expunging records of the conviction.

Nathson Fields, a fellow inmate with Patterson during his confinement, was also in attendance at the press conference. Released May 9 on a \$100,000 bail posted by Patterson, Fields argues that he was unlawfully arrested by CPD, wrongly convicted of and served 18 years—11 on death row—for a double murder.

"We had made an agreement that whichever one of us gets out first would reach back and get the other one," he said. "After I had been severely beaten by the prison authorities at Cook County Jail and hospitalized, he knew that my life was in danger if I remained there any longer."

Fields claims that Cook County Judge Thomas Maloney sent him to death row in order to cover up the fact that the judge allegedly accepted a bribe during the case. Later, in an FBI investigation, this evidence was presented and Judge Maloney

was imprisoned, affording Fields a stay of execution and a new trial that he now awaits.

Fields said that a "not guilty" verdict in his case could possibly lead to the reopening of up to as many as 2,000 cases of inmates questionably sentenced by Judge Maloney and, because of this, he has been offered freedom based on the time served, if he pleads guilty and agrees not to press charges.

"I told them I can't plead guilty to something I didn't do," he told The Final Call. "Had I been White, they would have freed me after the judge was indicted."

"We hope to send a message to the mayor [Richard Daley], Devine, Hillard and others that the system needs to be corrected as soon as possible," said Patterson, who would like to have depositions filed for these accused individuals to testify at trial.

Patterson, if awarded the settlement, wants to use the money to fund programs to help others who have been wrongfully convicted and imprisoned.

Cinque Muhammad writes for The Final Call.

## Crime

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While lawyers like Paellmann can use the statement as support in lawsuits, those involved in other areas of the movement also can gain some momentum from the speech.

"The Bush administration is not friendly to the entire movement at all and we don't expect them to be friendly," said David Horne, spokesman for several reparations movements and a professor of Pan African Studies at California State University-Northridge. "Whenever we have a chance to gain more leverage, we need to take it and even though he didn't intend to give us ammunition, we appreciate the statements and we definitely think they are useful," he said.

The White House failed to return calls seeking comment regarding the president's support for H.R. 40 or issuing and apology on behalf of America for its participation in the slave trade.

Kevin Herrera writes for WAVE Community News.

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