

Official's 'dirty girl' quip draws intense scorn

LOS ANGELES (AP) - State Education Secretary Richard Riordan jokingly told a child her name, Isis, meant "stupid dirty girl," prompting widespread criticism and posing a quandary for the man who appointed him, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Riordan, the wealthy former Los Angeles mayor known for his support of public schools, startled even friends last week with the comments at a promotional event for summer reading at the Santa Barbara library.

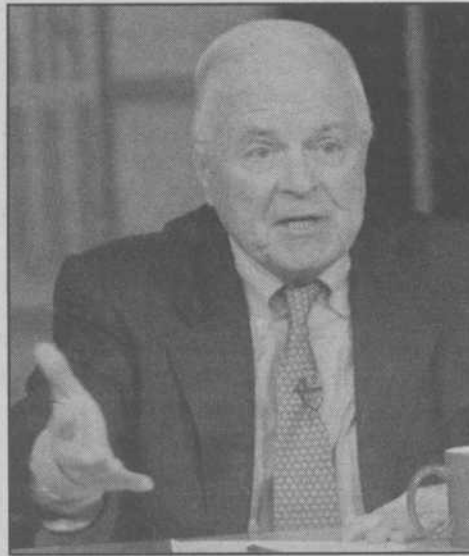
Schwarzenegger, his longtime friend, called Riordan's statement to the girl "unacceptable in any context" but gave no hint his job was in danger.

But Alice Huffman, president of the California chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said Thursday that Riordan "is not suitable to lead education in our state" and should be removed.

The conversation, videotaped by KEYT-TV, took place July 1. The girl, 6-year-old Isis D'Luciano, asked Riordan if he knew her name meant "Egyptian goddess."

Riordan replied, "It means stupid dirty girl."

After nervous laughter in the room, the girl once again told Riordan the meaning



Education Secretary Richard Riordan in a March 2002 photo in Santa Monica, Calif.

behind her name.

"Hey, that's nifty," he said.

A day later, Riordan issued a statement that said he "teased" the girl. "I immediately apologized to her, and I want to do so again for the misunderstanding," Riordan said.

The governor's chief spokesman, Rob Stutzman, said Thursday Riordan had not been asked to resign and, "That's the end of

the issue, as far as we are concerned."

The girl's mother, Trinity Lila of Goleta, said her daughter was fine, and she considered the issue over.

"Obviously it hurt her feelings, but she didn't take it personally. She knew he was wrong and she let it go," Lila said. "I'm not going to sue them for therapy bills."

"He's already apologized repeatedly," Lila added. Although Riordan's office has tried to contact her, "I don't see what else is to be done."

But the issue has persisted. In an editorial Thursday, The Sacramento Bee said California "shouldn't have an education secretary who makes offensive, damaging remarks to young children for no apparent reason."

"He's the governor's top person on education, which means we would expect him to have some love and respect for children," Huffman said. "I think he is the wrong man for the job. There is no way for him to explain this away."

Riordan, a venture capitalist who started a foundation supporting literacy, has a reputation for awkward — some might say insensitive — remarks and behavior.

As mayor, he once greeted hunger strikers outside his office eating a hamburger. In a

speech to school administrators earlier this year, he told a story about a nun physically disciplining a student that startled some in the audience.

"There wasn't an uproar, but some people felt the comment was inappropriate," said Joseph Jones, assistant executive director of the Association of California School Administrators.

Democratic state Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, who had scheduled a protest by civil rights organizations, canceled the demonstration after an apparent mix-up over the girl's racial background.

Dymally was quoted in the San Jose Mercury News Thursday saying the child was "a little African-American girl. Would he (Riordan) have done that to a White girl?"

The girl is White, with blond hair.

Dymally did not return telephone calls. His office issued a statement Wednesday calling Riordan's remarks to the girl "outrageous and irresponsible," then issued another statement Thursday saying, "To err is human; to forgive is divine."

"Race is not a factor in this issue," Dymally said in Thursday's statement, adding that Riordan had apologized a second time. "It is time for us to move on."

Urban League eyes financial literacy

By Queshonda Moore
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial will announce later this week a new partnership with Citigroup, a major financial services company, aimed at educating African-Americans in six cities on personal finance issues.

"These financial educational programs will give us an opportunity to train people in the community about banking, money management, saving, investing, spending, and credit," Morial says in an NNPA interview. "One of the goals of this financial education program is to assist people in attaining home ownership."

The \$900,000 grant will focus mainly on New York City, Rochester, N.Y., Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, and Chicago. Urban League professionals will receive specialized training in financial education that will enable them to teach others in the community.

Citigroup's foundation has agreed to award the Urban League with \$300,000 per year for the next three years for the program. Morial says he hopes the grant will be renewed. Morial, Citigroup president and chief operating officer Bob Willumstad, and Darwin Davis, president and CEO of the New York Urban League are expected to announce the new program on Friday in New York.

Citigroup, which bills itself as "the world's preeminent financial services company," specializes in financial management and investment services, including banking services, credit, loans and insurance.

Within the African-American community, less than 50 percent of U. S. citizens are homeowners in comparison to White home ownership, which is more than 70 percent, according to the Urban League.

The new partnership is being driven by an environment in which 47 percent of African-Americans have no investments and only 33 percent have savings accounts, the Urban League reports.

"The economy has become so much more complex and it is important that consumers are empowered with information, accurate information, so that they can make the very best decisions about their money, spending their money, investing their money, and also borrowing money," Morial says. "It's going to give us a chance to further our agenda of economic empowerment in the Black community."

Alleged cop abuse testing LAPD's Bratton

Special to Sentinel-Voice
from Wave Newspapers

LOS ANGELES (NNPA)

— Acknowledging that he still has much to learn about the African-American community here, Los Angeles Police Chief William J. Bratton publicly apologized Saturday for what some consider offensive remarks he made about Blacks during a recent community meeting on the June 23 televised police beating of suspected car thief Stanley Miller.

On the popular KJLH-FM radio show "L.A. Speaks Out," Bratton told listeners that he did not mean to offend anyone when he declared a war on gangs, calling them "terrorists," and "tribal thugs." Nor did he mean to insinuate that crime in Los Angeles had a "Black face." Those remarks came just days after Bratton was forced to apologize for calling community activist Najee Ali a "nitwit" on a national television news show.

"I'd like to extend an apology, a sincere apology, if there is anybody in the community — or any other community — for that matter — that have been offended by any of the comments and remarks I've made in the course of this investigation," Bratton said. "They were certainly not intended to be insensitive or to offend... Life is a learning process, and sometimes we stumble."

While Bratton said his apology was from the heart

and his intent is to protect all Angelenos, many African-Americans are still perturbed, with the fringe calling for the chief's resignation because they believe Bratton is prejudiced or, even worse, racist.

It remains to be seen whether Bratton will ultimately be seen as another Daryl Gates, who many African-Americans considered an enemy, but one thing is certain: The chief's attempt to build a better relationship with the Black community — an effort he has committed himself to since arriving in Los Angeles more than a year ago — has suffered tremendously.

"In all honesty, it checked his progress," said Deputy Chief Earl Paysinger, who appeared on KJLH with Bratton and has become one of the Police Department's most recognized figures in the wake of the Miller arrest. "His apology was sincere, but it is going to take a while to regain and hold some of the ground that he had forged in our various communities. It's like a marriage. When something flies south, you don't immediately gain ground. The test will come with how he reacts now in all communities."

Even though his remarks were not the most egregious ever uttered by a public official — local residents have often called gang members worse things than terrorists — Minister Tony Mohammed, the western re-

gional director of the Nation of Islam, said the remarks were hurtful because they could spark an all-out war on the Black community. "When Bratton came to town we warned him about the use of such language because the culture here is different... and what this language does is it releases the vigilante spirit in (the LAPD). Once again, it's open season in the Black community... (Bratton) just doesn't get it."

At a supermarket on the corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Western Avenue, African-American shoppers uttered the same sentiments as the minister.

"I was offended by (Bratton's) comments," said 56-year-old Joseph Crosby as he loaded groceries into his car. "It really showed a lack of respect on his part for us. Yeah, he might have built a good relationship with so-

called Black leaders, but for the rest of us, there's no trust there."

Toi Anderson, 25, said she had heard about the chief's comments, but she is not discouraged; she has no faith in the LAPD. "I don't trust cops and I don't know if I ever will," she said. "No apology can make up for what he said, because obviously it was what he thinks. He may not be racist, but it seems like there's some prejudice there."

Several African-Americans interviewed said they do not have complete trust in Bratton, and that his latest remarks definitely take him back to square one.

"If there were more jobs around here and things for these kids to do, they wouldn't be out on the street," said Diana Alsenat, 34, standing with groceries and waiting for a taxi to take her home.

(See *Brutality*, Page 10)

James from LA to LV knows hair

**Keep it Healthy,
Keep it Workable,
& Keep it Simple**

Call James at
(310) 413-5014 cell
or
Ty's Hair Tricks
6108 W. Charleston
(702) 862-4247
By Appointment
Only

Ask Cassandra Black, Owner of Sweet Georgia Browns