

LAPD

(Continued from Page 4)
sandwiched in" and "if he hadn't jumped he would've been hit." Carthron said the officer made "a split-second decision" to shoot.

"While Officer Garcia's exact location or movements at the time he fired his weapon cannot be precisely determined, it is undisputed he was exposed, with a high degree of risk of being struck by the oncoming vehicle," the district attorney's report states. To convict Garcia, prosecutors would have to be able to convince a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that the officer had no justifiable

fear that his life was in danger during the few seconds in which he decided to fire his weapon.

Given the high burden of proof, as well as recent failures on the part of prosecutors to convict police officers, the district attorney's decision not to file charges came as no surprise to lawyers, the chief, Police Commission President John Mack or community activists.

"Jurors in general don't like to convict police officers," said Laurie Levenson, a professor at the Loyola School of Law. "The burden of proof is beyond a reason-

able doubt and even in the most egregious situations like Rodney King, it's hard to win cases against police... In this case, the first thing jurors will be thinking is not about the police officer's actions, but that the boy shouldn't have been out there that late riding in a stolen car."

Bratton said if community members are not happy with the decision, "they can elect another district attorney."

The incident is fueling a long-standing belief in the Black community that a civilian review board with prosecutor power needs to be

established so that corruption and political influence do not come into play. To do so would mean changing the state's constitution, Levenson said.

Activist Najee Ali said his organization, Project Islamic Hope, is ready and willing. Members will begin collecting signatures for a ballot initiative that could appear as early as next year, he said.

Bratton said calls for an independent review board were "baloney," and emphasized the power of the police commission comprised of civilians appointed by the mayor.

"We have a former U.S. attorney, a former assistant U.S. attorney and the former president of the Urban League for 35 years," he said. "How much more independent can you get?"

Trying to remain positive, Mack said the community should take comfort in the fact that Brown's death did bring reform in the passage of a new LAPD policy regarding shooting at moving vehicles. "This was at least one concrete action that can be seen as the lone positive in this terrible, tragic incident," Mack said.

Brown's mother, Evelyn

Davis, filed a wrongful death lawsuit and civil rights suit against Garcia and the city in May. A jury is set to hear that case in April.

"Unfortunately, we're not surprised by this finding," Davis' attorney, Brian Dunn, said. "We have found consistently that the district attorney's office has been reluctant to initiate criminal prosecutions of police officers who kill civilians. And we have always maintained that this shooting was completely unjustified and represents an intolerable abuse of power."

Kevin Herrera writes for WAVE newspapers.

Movement

(Continued from Page 14)

doing was important for the rights of all people. She added there were laws and codes that kept Black people from having any kinds of rights.

"We could only enter an establishment through the back door, even though we paid the same money as Whites," said Coad.

There was discrimination everywhere from the G.I. Bill to the segregated water fountains. After the war, Black veterans could not choose to build or live in any neighborhood they wanted. Coad said for her the movement for social justice was about really knowing her rights and being tired of people "stepping" on her dignity.

"Progress was definitely made. There are things happening right now bringing about

this (renewed) awareness, but it's going to take much, much more," said Coad.

Until African-Americans have equal access to good schools, and economic opportunities, Coad said it's never going to be over. "Leaders such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton are in the public eye, but there are other people working and using strategies to come together. When those names are mentioned, there are individuals and grassroots organizations not recognized who are making a difference," she said. Coad added the movement needs more and more people to make things happen.

"What moves me today is to see young people ignited and involved bringing a new perspective and strength to the movement," said Coad.

Brandon Clark, 24, Vice President of the North Carolina A&T State University History Club, said young leaders must come together and collaborate. He said too many young people are not cognizant of what is really going on in the world or where African-Americans stand. Instead, they are focusing on reality shows, music, and movies and in prisons. "Like the ratio of men to women in colleges. Black women earn 57 percent of all bachelors degrees. Where are all the Black men? What's really going on?" asked Clark. Clark said the main issue that should be addressed is the incarceration rate of Black males.

"Why are they there, and how are they expected to survive once they return to society?" Clark believes that reparations for the

atrocities of slavery, discrimination, and domestic terrorism committed by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and approved by the government should be addressed because America was built on the free labor of slaves.

"The country was made off cotton. During that time there was trade and industry and immigrants entering the country for better opportunities. There were banks created and businesses merged. For every person or company that owned slaves there was an uneven playing field. Blacks have gone through slavery, Jim Crow and segregation. People today are still lacking due to the effects of each era," said Clark, who suggested that reparations would benefit African-Americans in various forms. Dater Blackwell writes for the Carolina Peacemaker

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