

South offers pardons in rights cases

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - Lillie Mae Bradford is downright proud of her criminal record, but she wouldn't mind an official pardon.

The 77-year-old woman from Montgomery, Ala., got arrested for disorderly conduct in 1951 just for walking to the front of a bus and asking for a transfer. Black passengers were not allowed up front back then.

"I thought to myself, 'If you don't stand up for your rights now, you never will,'" she recalls.

Long after the South's segregation laws were declared unconstitutional, charges against Bradford and other Blacks have remained on their records. But that could change as some Southern states move to offer pardons to those convicted of acts of civil disobedience during the Civil Rights Movement.



Like many Blacks during the segregation era, Lillie Mae Bradford wasn't afraid to challenge Jim Crow. Bradford is pictured at her Montgomery, Ala., home Thursday.

Last year, Alabama became first state to pass the Rosa Parks Act, which gives people the option of having their records expunged, and Tennessee's version won final approval in the Legislature this month and awaits the governor's signature. A similar measure failed in Florida.

"Unlawful assembly, disorderly conduct, refusal to move — all of these were catchall charges under Jim Crow," said Rep. Thad McClammy, a Black Montgomery Democrat who sponsored the Alabama law. "A lot of these followed individuals throughout their lifetime, and they shouldn't be

criminalized."

Bradford, a retired school custodian, knows that having her record cleared now won't have any real effect, but she wants to apply for a pardon certificate anyway.

"I want to have it removed, frame it, and put it on the wall," Bradford said. "It will show I was arrested fighting for my rights."

The Alabama law grants a pardon, but then sends the criminal record to the state archives or for other educational purposes. Tennessee's proposal would allow a person to have his or her record destroyed, unless that person specifically requests it be preserved for public display.

Both states also would allow posthumous pardons, and that could apply to Parks herself, whose arrest in 1955 for refusing to give up her seat to a White man on a Montgomery, Ala., bus led to the Montgomery bus boycott that established the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as a national figure. Parks died in 2005. McClammy said he plans to contact Parks' estate about a pardon for her.

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Newspaper Analysis: Blacks stopped more

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (AP) - Black and Hispanic drivers are more likely to be stopped for minor traffic offenses than Whites by police in Winston-Salem, the *Winston-Salem Journal* reported Sunday.

The city manager ordered an internal review of the police practices after he was shown the newspaper's analysis.

The newspaper said that in 2005, 49 percent of the 11,055 Black drivers stopped by the city's police were pulled over for minor offenses, such as a broken tail light or expired license plate.

Hispanics had similar findings, the report said. Police stopped 2,827 Hispanic drivers in 2005 and 44 percent were for minor offenses.

By contrast, 31 percent of 14,167 Whites stopped by the police were for minor offenses.

The report was compiled from traffic stop data from the State Bureau of Investigation to conduct its analysis.

When passengers were searched by police, Blacks were searched more often than Whites, 53 percent to 47 percent, the newspaper said.

Hispanic drivers were the most likely to be arrested. The data showed that 2.9 percent of the Hispanics stopped by police were arrested, but 1 percent of Blacks and 1.1 percent of Whites were taken into custody.

City Manager Lee Garrity told the police department to conduct a thorough review of their practices. The order comes three months after police took diversity training.

"I can tell you that I am committed to making sure that our police department treats all citizens fairly and does not profile any group," Garrity said.

The newspaper looked at the four-year period of 2003

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Abu-Jamal

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ecutor Joseph J. McGill; and Abu-Jamal's eldest brother, Keith Cook.

"I was encouraged by their interest in the questions," Cook, 64, said of the judges. "One thing we've always done as a family is maintain hope."

A financial planner, Keith Cook was overseas in the military when Faulkner was killed in December 1981.

William Cook has uttered only a single line publicly about the shooting. "I ain't got nothing to do with it," he said at the scene.

Faulkner's widow said after the hearing that she believed any jury would have convicted Mumia Abu-Jamal.

"No matter who was on the jury, I think they would have come to the same conclusion... that Jamal was guilty of first-degree murder," said Maureen Faulkner, 50.

About 500 pro-Abu-Jamal protesters demonstrated at the courthouse, including several from France, where one Paris suburb has named a street after him.

Marcus Shell, 35, of Philadelphia, said Abu-Jamal did not get a fair trial because of his identity as "a former Black Panther, the voice of the voiceless."

"Mumia represents a lot of Blacks locked up in prison today," Shell said. It's uncertain when the court might rule, but decisions typically are issued within several months.

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