

Black Press asked to tackle youth literacy

By Heather Faison
Special to Sentinel-Voice

SEATTLE (NNPA) - Ron Sims clearly recalled the day his father told him to do a book report on James Baldwin's "The Fire Next Time" after his high school teacher told him that "African Americans had no history worth reporting."

Sims, now the county executive of the Martin Luther King Jr. County in Washington, said that moment led to the changing of the course of his life and allowed him to dispel the stereotypes of African-Americans and the ignorant perceptions of their history that even some teachers espouse.

In a keynote speech at the National Newspaper Publishers Association's Black Press Praise Breakfast, Sims stressed that the link to success is literacy. He challenged the Black Press to step up its critical role in making sure more youth are positioned for that success.

"When we have an opportunity to make sure young people have access to literacy, we know we can change them and the world," he said during the organization's annual conference, held in Seattle this year.

With the backdrop of music and dance performances from the city's youth ministry groups, local dignitaries were among the attendees who gathered to pay tribute to the bedrock of the Black Press — the

Christian faith.

The Black Press whose first paper, *Freedom's Journal* was founded by clergymen, celebrated the message of enduring the trials of life and injustice by faith at their Black Press Prayer Breakfast during the NNPA national conference in Seattle, Wash., recently.

NNPA Foundational Chair Dorothy Leavell, who started the prayer breakfast tradition during her tenure as NNPA President in 1995, said the event reiterates the importance of relationship with God and added that it helps African-Americans to "continue in our beliefs in prayer and continues to move the inspiration that Black people still use largely to guide their lives."

The atmosphere was contagious.

Seattle's Chief of Police, and sports coaches from the University of Washington were among guests at the breakfast that sang along with a young gospel band and swayed to a stirring performance by an all-girl dance troupe.

Sims also recognized the commemoration of the King County logo, a black and white sketch of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which was unveiled in March. He said the unveiling was a welcome addition to the list of the county's municipal achievements and that the name change is long overdue. King County is the only county named af-

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Dry cleaner victor in lost pants case

WASHINGTON (AP) — No pair of pants is worth \$54 million. A judge rejected a lawsuit Monday seeking that amount by taking a dry cleaner's promise of "Satisfaction Guaranteed" to its most litigious extreme.

Roy L. Pearson became a worldwide symbol of legal abuse by seeking jackpot justice from a simple complaint — that a neighborhood dry cleaners lost the pants from a suit and tried to give him a pair that were not his.

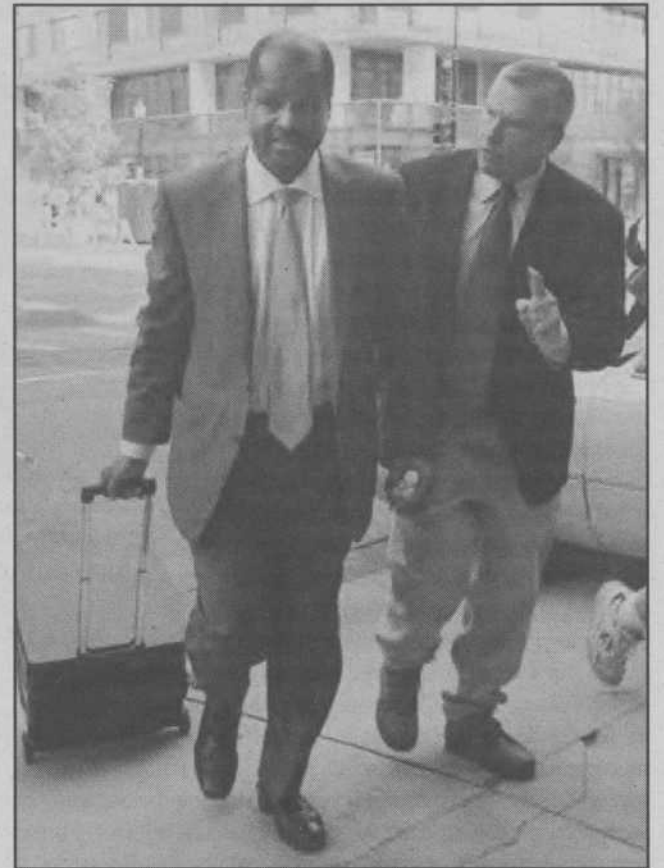
His claim, reduced from \$67 million, was based on a strict interpretation of the city's consumer protection law, which imposes fines of \$1,500 per violation, as well as damages for inconvenience, mental anguish and attorney's fees for representing himself.

But District of Columbia Superior Court Judge Judith Bartnoff ruled that the owners of Custom Cleaners did not violate the consumer protection law by failing to live up to Pearson's expectations of the "Satisfaction Guaranteed" sign once displayed in the store.

"A reasonable consumer would not interpret 'Satisfaction Guaranteed' to mean that a merchant is required to satisfy a customer's unreasonable demands," the judge wrote.

Bartnoff wrote that Pearson, an administrative

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Administrative law judge Roy L. Pearson, left, is questioned by a member of the media as he leaves court after the second day of his lawsuit in Washington in this June 13 file photo. A judge on Monday ruled in favor of a family operated dry cleaner that was sued over a missing pair of pants in a case that garnered international attention and renewed impassioned calls for real litigation reform.

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Another custody dispute regarding Taylor is ongoing in a California court, he said.

Davis' mother last spoke to her daughter June 13, a day before authorities say she was killed at her home in nearby Lake Township. Davis was reported missing June 15 after the mother found her grandson home alone, with bedroom furniture toppled and bleach spilled on the floor.

The boy, Blake, gave investigators some of their first clues, saying: "Mommy was crying. Mommy broke the table. Mommy's in rug."

Family members have told Blake that his mother is in Heaven, said Porter, who was granted temporary custody of the boy Monday in Stark County Family Court.

"Blake is doing as well as can be expected for a 2 1/2-year-old whose mom is not coming home," Porter said. "He has an old cell phone and he calls her and talks to her."

Davis' body was found nine days after authorities believe she was killed. Determining the cause of death will take weeks due to advanced decomposition, the medical examiner's office said Monday. The office will test the paternity of the fetus and conduct toxicology and

DNA tests and a skeletal analysis.

Authorities have not said how the body was found about 25 miles from Davis' home in an area of a national park with a dirt road, a small dirt parking area and a couple benches overlooking a grassy field. Thousands of volunteers searched for Davis for several days in the few miles around her home.

The sheriff's office, which is leading the investigation, has not released further information about the obstruction of justice charge against Ferrell.

Her attorney, Jean Madden an assistant public defender, declined to comment at her office.

Sheriff's deputies and FBI agents with a search warrant broke down the door of Ferrell's apartment Saturday night, authorities said. She was not home during the search.

Justin Lindstrom, 27, an upstairs neighbor, said officers left after two hours with several full, brown paper bags and bottles of bleach from the basement. Authorities would not describe what the deputies seized.

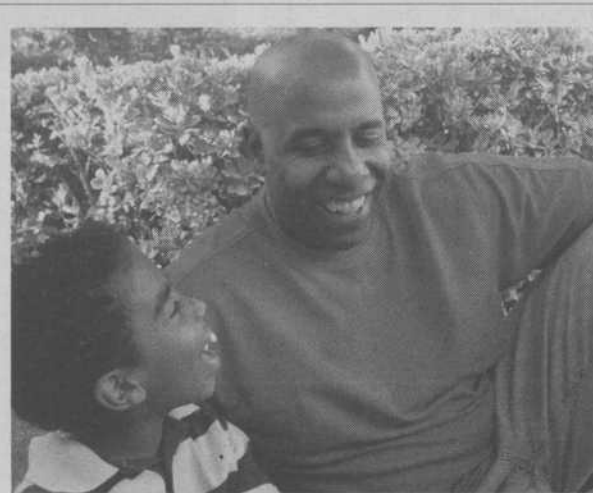
Lindstrom said Ferrell lived in the apartment downstairs with her 11-year-old daughter and had parties ev-

ery night.

Asked if her sister would get justice, Whitney Davis said, "Everybody knows what happened here."

As she continued, her mother stopped her.

"We do not want vengeance," Porter said. "We want justice."

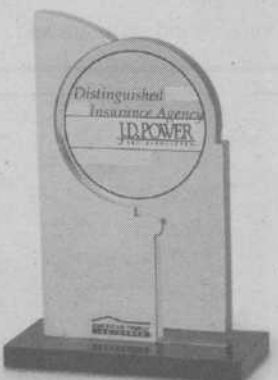


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