

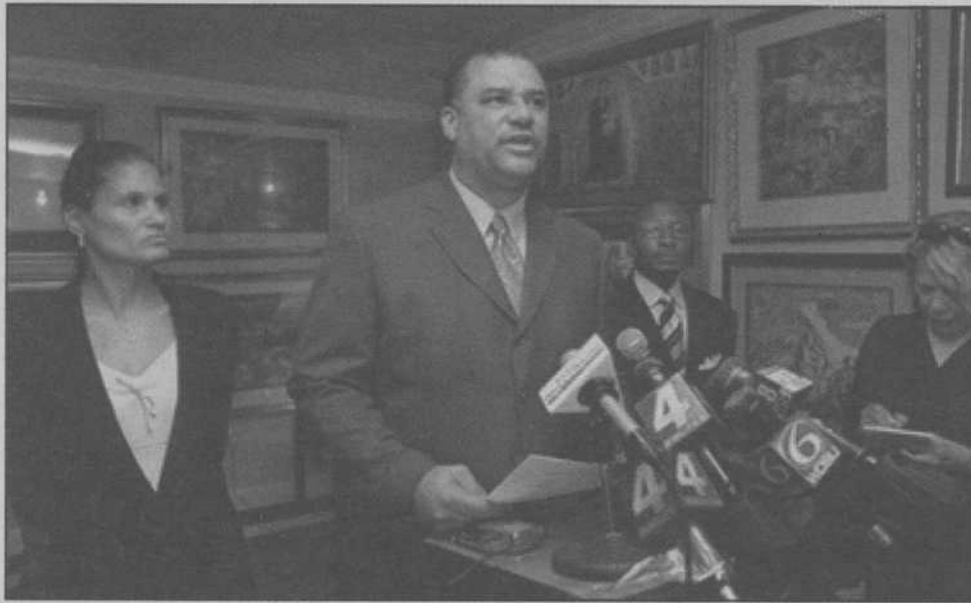
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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



New Orleans City Council member Oliver Thomas, center, speaks at a press conference with his attorney Clarence Roby Jr., right, and his wife Angelle Thomas, left, as he announces his resignation in New Orleans, on Monday. Thomas pleaded guilty to bribery.

New Orleans council member scandalized

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - The vice president of the New Orleans City Council, once thought to be a likely candidate for mayor in 2010, pleaded guilty Monday to taking \$15,000 in bribes from a prominent businessman and resigned from the council.

The councilman, Oliver Thomas, apologized at a news conference and said he hoped his troubles do not become a distraction to Hurricane Katrina recovery.

"I'm sorry I didn't live up to the faith you put in me," he said. "It was wrong and I accept full responsibility for this action and for using incredibly poor judgment."

Thomas, 50, was released on \$25,000 bond, pending sentencing on Nov. 14. He also said his resignation was effective immediately after 13 years on the City Council.

He pleaded guilty to taking the money from Stan "Pampy" Barre, a member of former Mayor Marc Morial's inner circle and a key figure in a long-standing federal investigation into City Hall corruption.

Mayor Ray Nagin, who grew up with Thomas, said he was taken aback by the revelations. He called Tho-

mas "a true man" for admitting his mistakes and said he should not be judged on this misdeed.

Barre is cooperating with investigators after pleading guilty in a separate case. Morial, now the president of the National Urban League civil rights group, has not been accused of wrongdoing.

U.S. Attorney Jim Letten told reporters that Barre contacted Thomas in early 2002, asking him for help in maintaining a contract to operate two parking lots near the French Quarter section of the city.

Morial's second term was coming to an end and he could not legally seek a third consecutive term. Barre was concerned that a pending change in administrations would lead to his loss of the contract.

Thomas had influence as a council member and as a member of the French Market Corporation, a city agency that owns and manages the buildings at the edge of the French Quarter. Barre's contract was with the corporation.

In the separate case, Barre pleaded guilty in January to plotting to skim more than \$1 million from a \$64 million, 20-year contract for energy

management services signed in the last days of Morial's administration in 2002.

Thomas's troubles come as the city continues to struggling with recovery from Katrina two years ago. The City Hall investigation and a years-long probe of the city school system have netted numerous guilty pleas, including other members of Morial's inner circle.

Barre funneled payments to Thomas through a middle man, Joseph Jourdain, Letten said. Jourdain, described in court documents as a friend of Thomas, pleaded guilty in the case earlier this month under a deal kept secret until Monday.

Jourdain received several thousand dollars in kickbacks, some of which were funneled to Thomas, court documents said.

"My greatest hope is that I will not become a distraction to the thousands of people who are trying to recover their lives, their families and their homes," Thomas told reporters.

The corruption probe apparently took a heavy toll on Thomas. On Monday, he left the courtroom in tears after pleading guilty and was choked with emotion during

(See Bribery, Page 2)

MySpace blog costs substitute NLV judge

LAS VEGAS (AP) - A substitute judge in North Las Vegas lost his job last week after Clark County's top prosecutor objected to hostile comments toward prosecutors that the judge put on his MySpace.com Web page.

Jonathan MacArthur, a 34-year-old criminal defense attorney, listed among his interests beating prosecutors and used a graphic phrase that he said was common "among Blacks, people who associate with Blacks or in a sports context."

District Attorney David Roger said the posting showed bias.

"He has displayed a bias against prosecutors," Roger said. "Therefore, I do not feel the state of Nevada would get a fair shake by him."

Roger told North Las Vegas Justice Court Administrator Terri March last week



Jonathan MacArthur

that if MacArthur continued as a substitute judge, he planned to file a motion to have MacArthur recused from all criminal cases.

March showed the MySpace comments to North Las Vegas Justice of the Peace Natalie Tyrrell, for whom MacArthur substituted, in a role called being a "pro tem judge."

They decided not to use MacArthur's services any

longer, March said.

"A judge's job is to be unbiased in all matters, and on that MySpace page, it appears he definitely has a bias against prosecutors," March said.

The comments were inappropriate and "unbecoming of a pro tem," March said.

MacArthur said his comments were related to his work as a criminal defense attorney, not as a judge.

"It's obvious to the casual reader this is an overstatement just for the effect," he said.

MacArthur said the controversy will not stop him from running for a job with the new judicial department that opens in North Las Vegas in 2009.

MacArthur said he blogs often and tries to provoke discussions on controversial (See Judge, Page 2)

Rutgers hooper sues Don Imus, CBS radio

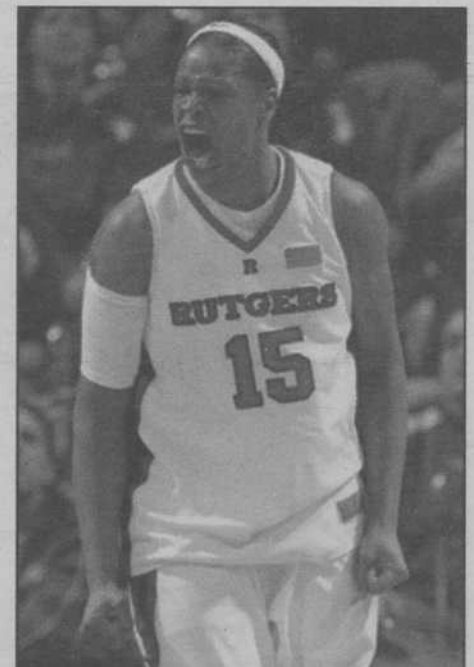
NEW YORK (AP) - A member of the Rutgers women's basketball team has sued Don Imus and CBS, claiming the radio personality's sexist and racist comments about the team damaged her reputation.

Kia Vaughn filed the lawsuit alleging slander and defamation of character in state Supreme Court in the Bronx Tuesday, the same day Imus settled with CBS Radio in a deal that pre-empts his threatened \$120 million breach-of-contract lawsuit against CBS. The settlement allows him to make a comeback bid at a new station.

Vaughn's lawsuit, believed to be the first by a player in the case, says Imus and his former co-host Bernard McGuirk, along with CBS Corp. and CBS Radio, are legally responsible for damage done to her character and reputation. There is no dollar amount listed in the suit.

Vaughn was humiliated, embarrassed and publicly mocked for the comments, the lawsuit claims. Her attorney, Richard Ancowitz, said: "The full effect of the damage remains to be seen."

(See Rutgers, Page 12)



Rutgers' Kia Vaughn yells in celebration after scoring during a college basketball game against Michigan State, in this March 20 file photo. Vaughn sued Don Imus and CBS for his comments.