



Earl Ofari Hutchinson, syndicated columnist and president of the Los Angeles Urban Policy Round-table, left, speaks as Eddie Jones, president of Los Angeles Civil rights Association, listens during a news conference Monday, in front of Martin Luther King Jr.- Harbor Hospital, in Los Angeles. Community activist called for officials to keep open the emergency room at the troubled hospital, that has failed to pass two federal inspections.

## Feds pull funding for troubled L.A. hospital

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Federal regulators said Friday that they are pulling \$200 million in funding from a troubled hospital that serves one of the city's poorest neighborhoods, forcing it to all but shut down.

The decision came after the county-run Martin Luther King Jr.-Harbor Hospital failed two federal inspections.

At a news conference late Friday, Los Angeles County's chief medical officer told reporters that the hospital would close its emergency room Friday night and that patients would be moved to other hospitals within two weeks. The emergency room was closed at 7

p.m. Friday.

"We brought every resource to bear, but in the end it just wasn't enough, fast enough," Dr. Bruce Chernof said.

King-Harbor will remain open 16 hours a day, seven days a week, to offer outpatient care to people with routine medical problems, Chernof said. Ambulances will be available to take the more seriously ill to other hospitals.

During the past few years, Los Angeles County tried to improve patient care through disciplining workers, reorganizing management, closing the trauma unit and reducing the number of inpatient beds to 48.

Yet Herb Kuhn, acting deputy administrator for the U.S. Centers of Medicare and Medical Services, said a federal inspection as recently as last month found "conditions at the facility have placed the health and safety of patients at great risk."

"While some progress has been made, significant problems persist," Kuhn said in a statement.

The federal agency plans to end its hospital provider agreement with King-Harbor effective this week. The hospital can apply for reinstatement, but that would take three to four months because federal regulators would want to be assured that King-

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## Kmart uses ethnic dolls as lure to get new consumers

CHICAGO (AP) - Toy store aisles are getting a multicultural makeover.

Bolstered by the success of Nickelodeon's popular bilingual children's character, Dora the Explorer, and the spending power of the nation's growing minority population, toy retailers across the country are filling their shelves with dolls whose skin colors and facial features reflect the girls and boys who play with them.

Although Black and Hispanic dolls have been around for decades, the newer incarnations try harder at authenticity, rather than simply tinting the hair and skin from "White" doll molds.

Now, discount retailer Kmart hopes to cash in on a growing appetite for ethnic toys among minority consumers, and their rising spending power. It's launching its own initiative this month, putting dozens of multicultural dolls on shelves in each of its

1,400 stores.

Although other retailers are stocking more multicultural dolls — often in predominantly minority neighborhoods — Kmart claims it's the first mass-market retailer to have such a wide selection available in every store.

When the rollout is completed next week, Kmart stores will sell nearly four dozen types of ethnic dolls — a nearly fourfold increase from what's currently available. The dolls are flanked by an advertising campaign in the store's circulars and designed to appeal to Black, Hispanic and Asian parents.

"We needed to be relevant to them," said Philipp Elliott, a toy merchandise manager at Kmart, a subsidiary of Hoffman Estates-based Sears Holdings Corp.

Becoming relevant to minority shoppers can reap big benefits. About one in three Americans is a minority, according to the U.S.

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## Civil rights matriarch bus protestor passes

GLOUCESTER, Virginia (AP) - Irene Morgan Kirkaldy, a Black woman whose refusal to give up her bus seat to White passengers led to a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, has died at 90.

Kirkaldy died Friday at her daughter's home, said Fred Carter, director of Carter Funeral Home in Newport News.

Kirkaldy, born Irene Morgan in Baltimore, Md., in 1917, was arrested in 1944 for refusing to give up her seat on a Greyhound bus heading from Gloucester to Baltimore, and for resisting arrest.

Her case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court by civil rights lawyer Thurgood Marshall, who later became the first Black justice on the high court.

The Supreme Court held in June 1946 that Virginia law requiring the races to be separated on interstate buses — even making passengers change seats during their journey to maintain separation if



Irene Morgan Kirkaldy

the number of passengers changed — was an invalid interference in interstate commerce.

At the time, the case received little attention, and not all bus companies complied with the ruling at first, but it paved the way for civil rights victories to come, including Rosa Parks' famous stand on a local bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955.

Kirkaldy also inspired the first Freedom Ride in 1947, when 16 civil rights activists rode buses and trains through the U.S. South to test the Supreme Court decision.

In 2001, President Bill

Clinton awarded her the Presidential Citizens Medal — the second highest civilian honor in the United States.

Asked where her courage came from that day, Kirkaldy said simply: "I can't understand how anyone would have done otherwise."

She was not part of any organized movement, unlike Parks, who was an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People when she challenged segregation.

Kirkaldy, then a young mother, boarded the Greyhound bus in Hayes Store, Va., and took a seat toward the back for her ride home. She was recovering from surgery and had taken her two children to stay temporarily with her mother in Gloucester.

A few miles down the road, the driver told her to move because a White couple wanted to occupy her row.

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