

# Sharpton leads march, challenges prosecutions

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Rev. Al Sharpton, preparing to lead a march in Jena, La., on Sept. 20, in support of the Jena Six, the case of the six Black high school students hits home across the nation, and the issues are no longer contained to the small Louisiana town.

"It gives a real focus on

the fact that all over this country, young Blacks, particularly young Black males, are being overcharged by a criminal justice system and prosecutors who have gone wild. It is also important because of the double standards of justice being used against young Blacks," said Sharpton.

The march is set to start at 9 a.m. at the Court House

in Jena. Sharpton will be accompanied by Martin Luther King III, author and radio talk show host Michael Baisden, as well as other national leaders.

The march was to coincide with the sentencing of Mychal Bell, who could face up to 15 years on an aggravated second-degree battery conviction.

Jena (pronounced Jee'-

nah) is a small town still considered segregated in rural Louisiana, is the largest in LaSalle Parish with a population of nearly 3,000. Of that number, 85 percent are White, while there are only 350 Blacks in the entire area. Black students make up about 20 percent of the school's population.

The trouble surrounding this case began at the school in September 2006. Black and Whites sat separately from one another outside during their school breaks — Whites under the shaded "White tree," while Blacks sat on dilapidated benches.

One day, a Black student asked permission from a school official to sit under the tree and was told to sit wherever they liked. The following day, three nooses were seen hanging from the same tree, apparently, in response to a Black student having sat under the tree.

The school principal found the three White students responsible and advised that they were to be expelled from school permanently. The superintendent of LaSalle Parish schools, Roy Breithaupt, who is White, overturned the principal's decision and instead gave the White students a three-day suspension, which upset many Black students and their parents.

In a December fight at the school, which followed previous taunts and conflicts and directly related to the noose controversy, six Black male

students, now called, the Jena Six, were arrested for beating up a White student, Justin Barker, whose wounds were so minor that he attended a school function later that day, his mother acknowledged in a televised interview.

Initially, five Black students were charged as adults with attempted second-degree murder. Following the national protests and Black Press-led publicity surrounding the story, charges against three of the students were

in the case and to file misconduct charges against District Attorney Reed Walters, the prosecutor in the cases.

"If they can put the prosecutor at Duke [Mike Nifong of the infamous lacrosse case] in jail, certainly they can deal with this prosecutor, [what] Whites committed against the Blacks in Jena, and then overcharged these young Black students," Sharpton said.

Marcus Jones, father of Mychal Bell, told the *Sentinel-Voice* in an telephone in-

*"Young Blacks, particularly young Black males, are being overcharged by a criminal justice system and prosecutors who have gone wild."*

— Rev. Al Sharpton

reduced from attempted second-degree murder to aggravated second-degree battery. A sixth student is being charged in juvenile court.

Sharpton says a double standard exists because the prosecutor failed to file criminal charges against the students who hanged the nooses, viewed as a life-threatening gesture, or against a young White man said to have pulled a shotgun on three Black students at a local store amidst the controversy. Instead, three Black teens were arrested and accused of aggravated battery and theft after they took the gun from him.

Sharpton says he plans to request a state investigation

interview recently about problems in the case.

Jones said he heard from a juror who publicly said they convicted his son on second-degree aggravated battery and conspiracy to commit second-degree battery "because the judge allowed the district attorney in his directions to say 'the shoe was a deadly weapon.'"

The shoe "weapon" was a tennis shoe, Marcus Jones said.

Jones pointed out that the jury was all White and that members of the jury were friends with the district attorney, as well as family friends of the victim.

"We found out that one of (See March, Page 11)

## Your Horoscope Says ...Sept 13-19

### ARIES

If you need some time to yourself this week, take it. You'll be doing yourself an act of kindness. Since you do so much for others, why not treat yourself as well as you treat them? Your world is the way you are living. Live with love.

Soul Affirmation: I remain hopeful through adversity.

Lucky Numbers: 19, 39, 42

### TAURUS

Remember that exercise is a wonderful tension-reliever if things get too intense this week. A walk over your lunch hour could make all the difference in how you feel this afternoon. Love yourself and reward yourself with perfect health and happiness.

Soul Affirmation: Faith keeps me calm in the storms of life.

Lucky Numbers: 44, 49, 51

### GEMINI

You've done some of your own love homework. Hopefully, you've had an opportunity to learn a new way of seeing the world, and, in that way, you've found a way of loving that is more natural for you. The combination of sexiness and joyful focus can create for you a wonderful love experience.

Soul Affirmation: I get joy from giving good things.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 23, 37

### CANCER

If you want to keep your positive outlook intact, avoid gossip and those who might want to just cry the blues for no good reason. You'll be happiest this week if you keep busy and keep your opinions to yourself. However, good advice is available from an older female relative.

Soul Affirmation: Love is easier than breathing.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 30, 50

### LEO

You've done a lot of things in life that no one has agreed with at the beginning. Finding agreement this week will be difficult, but it should not deter you from moving forward. Feeling sorry for your loneliness will discolor what you are doing. Be happy that you are alone.

Soul Affirmation: I appreciate the wonders of life.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 18, 31

### VIRGO

Eternal optimist, eternity is now. Get in touch with your hopefulness and be a beacon to others. Try not to be taken in by promises made by others or promises you've made to yourself. Concerning your own affairs, avoid contemplating lofty subjects and seeking long-ranged solutions.

Soul Affirmation: Time is the greatest

peacemaker of them all.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 28, 39

### LIBRA

Some say optimism is fantasy. Suppose the good thing you're optimistic about never comes? This week you'll know that the joy of anticipating it is joy enough. Just the certainty of coming goodness is present goodness. The joy of tomorrow is available this week.

Soul Affirmation: This week is the week the Lord has made. I rejoice in it.

Lucky Numbers: 22, 36, 38

### SCORPIO

You might be looking into the buying or selling of a piece of property, and this week seems to be a favorable week for this type of negotiation. Be careful with the intricacies of the matter. Pay attention to details or it could cost you a great deal later.

Soul Affirmation: I care deeply about the feelings of others.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 21, 35

### SAGITTARIUS

Your multi-tasking abilities will kick into high gear this week. While it's sometimes difficult for you to know how to handle a particular situation, this week you'll know the perfect answer. Everything good is unfolding!

Soul Affirmation: New intuitions create new plans and a new cast of characters.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 8, 25

### CAPRICORN

Your self-discipline helps you to do more this week. People will be watching as you zip around with style and grace. Broaden your cultural horizons by trying new foods and meeting new people. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

Soul Affirmation: I am patient with all that comes my way this week.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 12, 10

### AQUARIUS

Sociable, lovable you! You can have a wonderful week this week if you hook up with like-minded friends. You'll find that many are on your wavelength this week. Appreciate your ability to bring people together.

Soul Affirmation: Luck is my best friend this week.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 16, 29

### PISCES

You'll be full of good ideas this week, so make sure you write down the ones you don't have time to put into action. You'll want to share your thoughts on a grand scale, and your mind will seem truly universal to you. Try to be patient with those who are staggered by your brilliance.

Soul Affirmation: Light from my soul shines in many directions.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 9

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