

Victims of Chicago police get redress

By Ashahed M. Muhammad

Special to Sentinel-Voice

CHICAGO (NNPA) - The Chicago City Council recently unanimously voted to approve a nearly \$20 million legal settlement in the cases of four Black men who accused members of the Chicago Police Department of racist actions, torture and brutality under former Commander Jon Burge.

Attorney Joey L. Mogul of the People's Law Office, which helped win the settlement, said many "progressive righteous aldermen" are outraged and continue to speak out against police department abuses.

There needs to be "continuous outrage" because there are still 27 men behind bars as a result of tainted and corrupt investigations by those under the direction of Cmdr. Burge, he said.

"We are going to continue to seek justice in these Burge torture cases, and we will continue to go back to the international arenas until the U.S. government, the City of Chicago and Cook County take responsibility for these human rights violations," said Mogul.

Aldermen voted 45-0 to pay Leroy Orange, Stanley Howard, Aaron Patterson and Madison Hobley financial settlements totaling \$19.8 million. The vote occurred Jan. 9.

According to sworn testimonies and numerous reports, former Area 2 Commander Jon Burge led a group of rogue officers that used cattle prods to electric shock the genitals of suspects, handcuffed suspects to hot radiators and beat suspects to coerce confessions and to obtain information.

Burge has never admitted any wrongdoing. Though

fired from the Chicago Police Department in 1993, he still receives a pension. The city is also paying Burge's legal bills.

Activist priest Michael Pfleger of the Faith Community at Saint Sabina expressed measured praise with regard to the settlement and advised continued community vigilance.

"I am glad to see this initial settlement to four individuals who suffered at the hands of Commander Burge, but we must not get complacent. We must be vigilant until Burge is in jail and a message is sent that anyone who is involved in torture will be prosecuted and sent to jail," said Father Pfleger.

A spokeswoman for Mayor Daley's legal department, Director of Public Affairs Jennifer Hoyle, said a settlement agreement was drafted and signed by all parties.

"The settlement is final, and the individuals should receive their payments within 90 days of the day of approval. That would be the final step," said Hoyle in a Jan. 17 phone interview. "The settlement resolves all claims against the city related to these cases," she added.

Orange will receive \$5.5 million, Howard will receive \$800,000, Patterson will receive \$5 million and Hobley receives \$7.5 million.

The same day the settlement was approved, the city council voted to make 49-year-old J.P. "Jody" Weis, a 22-year veteran of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the new police superintendent and head of city emergency operations. He is the highest paid city employee with an annual salary of \$300,000.

Ashahed M. Muhammad writes for the Final Call.

Remark

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port itself, Adams defended himself and said he disagreed with the inspector general's conclusions. He alluded to administrative disputes with some on his staff, whom he indicated may have timed their complaints to "potentially cause me the most embarrassment."

Adams said he was particularly troubled by the accusation that he used race or ethnic origin as a factor in deciding whether to recommend a pardon.

"As any person who has known me for any length of time will attest, I am neither racially biased nor insensitive," Adams wrote.

Portions of the inspector general's report became public in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. It surfaced first in an op-ed article published in Monday's editions of *The New York Times*.

Judge scolded for bias remark

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (AP) - A county judge was reprimanded for calling three Black female lawyers "the Supremes" in court and advising the defendant to get "an experienced male attorney."

Washington County Circuit Judge W. Kennedy Boone has acknowledged that his comments suggested racial and sexual

bias. In his written response to a complaint, Boone said he was trying to protect the three public defenders from representing a difficult defendant.

The Maryland Commission on Judicial Disabilities concluded the comments Boone made during a court hearing last April were "undignified and disparaging."

The notice of reprimand was published Jan. 18 in the

Maryland Register.

A stipulation by Boone and the Commission said that in June the judge offered to recuse himself from other cases the three attorneys handled.

Offering to recuse himself was the right thing to do, said Maryland Public Defender Nancy Forster, who filed the complaint in her official capacity.

Boone told the *Herald-Mail* of Hagerstown that he apologized to the three attorneys, and that even though he offered to recuse himself, each has appeared in his court since the April case. "I appreciate their acceptance of my apology," he said recently. He also said he had never before had a sanctionable complaint filed against him.

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