

NATIONAL BRIEFS

FEDERAL COURT IN DETROIT TAKES UP PROP 2 FIGHT

DETROIT (NNPA) - "We're here to remind you that affirmative action is not dead," said attorney Michael J. Steinberg, ACLU, during a recent press conference at the Detroit Branch NAACP. "Proposal 2 creates a double standard." Proposal 2 was again to become front and center Feb. 6 as oral arguments on the constitutionality of the ballot measure passed nearly two years ago. It was slated for the Theodore Levin United States Courthouse. The case, *Cantrell v. Granholm* continued the debate on the end of affirmative action in Michigan, say critics of the measure. "It's about keeping children of color on equal footing," said Melvin "Butch" Hollowell, Detroit Branch NAACP general counsel. "It does violence to the equal protection clause. We want justice now. We're asking Judge Lawson to solve this lawsuit. We can't wait. The case is so strong." Kevin Gaines, professor of history at the University of Michigan, spoke at length about the university's efforts to strive for diversity on campus. "The University of Michigan is a world-class university that is being disadvantaged," Gaines said. "Proposal 2 really threatens to reduce the number of students of color." Heaster Wheeler, executive director, Detroit Branch NAACP, agrees. "This issue is far from over. ...The fact that Prop 2 passed does not end the discussion. It makes the legal debate a very important component."

EBAY BUYS BACK ITEMS STOLEN FROM HISTORIC ARCHIVE

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - Documents dating from the Civil War, letters written to and from U.S. presidents, and Black Americana items are among hundreds of stolen documents sold online that eBay is agreeing to buy back and return to New York's archives, a state official said recently. In January, state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's investigation found that about 200 documents had been stolen from the archives and sold in the past two years. The online auction giant has no liability in the sale of the stolen artifacts but agreed voluntarily to offer buyers the amount that they paid, according to the official who spoke on the condition of anonymity during the investigation. The official said the buyers of record were likely unaware the items were stolen and would probably "do the right thing" when contacted by Cuomo and eBay in the buyback; therefore, no criminal charges would be made. The total cost to eBay is estimated at \$68,000, saving the state the expense. A state employee was recently charged with the theft. If convicted, a court could order restitution.

W. VA. GRAND JURY INDICTS FIVE IN RAPE-TORTURE CASE, ONE HATE CRIME CHARGE

RALEIGH, N.C. (NNPA) - A Logan County, W.V., grand jury indicted five of six White suspects recently in the alleged rape, torture and kidnapping of a young Black woman for at least a month last summer. Only one of the five, a White female, was indicted on one count of committing a hate crime. It may be the first time in West Virginia history that a suspect in a state where only three percent of the population is Black has ever faced that charge. Black activists across the nation had hoped for and, indeed, demanded that hate crimes be leveled against all six defendants in the Megan Williams case. All six suspects were career criminals. At least three of them were women. According to published reports, it was one of the female suspects, Karen Burton, who was indicted for one count of committing a hate crime, in addition to kidnapping and malicious wounding. Burton, 46, reportedly stabbed Williams in the ankle with a knife, then telling her, "This is what we do to niggers around here." Prosecutor Abraham has the unindicted suspects, George Messer, and Alisha Burton, Karen's daughter as corroborating witnesses to what allegedly happened. Both Messer, 27, and Burton, 23, struck plea deals in return for reduced sentences on charges of kidnapping and assault during the commission of a felony. They allegedly helped to detain Williams, and then beat her repeatedly. Each will serve 10 years for kidnapping, and 2 to 10 years in prison for the assaults. Both will testify against the others at trial. Megan Williams and her family reportedly approved of the plea bargain in order to secure their testimony.

Fisk University's art deal tossed

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - A judge recently threw out Fisk University's \$30 million proposal to share an art collection with a museum founded by a Wal-Mart heir in Arkansas.

Chancellor Ellen Hobbs Lyle said the deal was not in keeping with the wishes of artist Georgia O'Keeffe, who donated the 101-piece collection to the Historically Black College and University member in 1949.

Lyle said O'Keeffe never meant for the cash-strapped school to use it for fundraising purposes.

The art-sharing proposal would have seen the collection travel between Nashville and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Ark. The museum was founded by Wal-Mart heiress Alice Walton.

A trial scheduled for later this month will now determine whether Fisk should

forfeit the entire collection to the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in New Mexico.

The Santa Fe museum is the legal representative of the artist's estate. Its lawyers argue that the school has been violating O'Keeffe's conditions that the collection be kept on display and not sold.

Fisk put the art into storage in 2005 because the gallery where it was exhibited was falling apart, and there were fears the works could

get damaged.

At issue is a collection of art that belonged to O'Keeffe's husband, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz.

It includes what is considered one of O'Keeffe's masterpieces, the 1927 oil painting "Radiator Building-Night, New York," as well as works by Picasso, Renoir, Cezanne, Marsden Hartley, Alfred Maurer and Charles Demuth.

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Navy

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gigs in the first Black band during World War II. Holloway and his fellow seamen were the first group of Negroes who were not enlisted as Mess Attendants in the Navy. They were the members of the B1 Band.

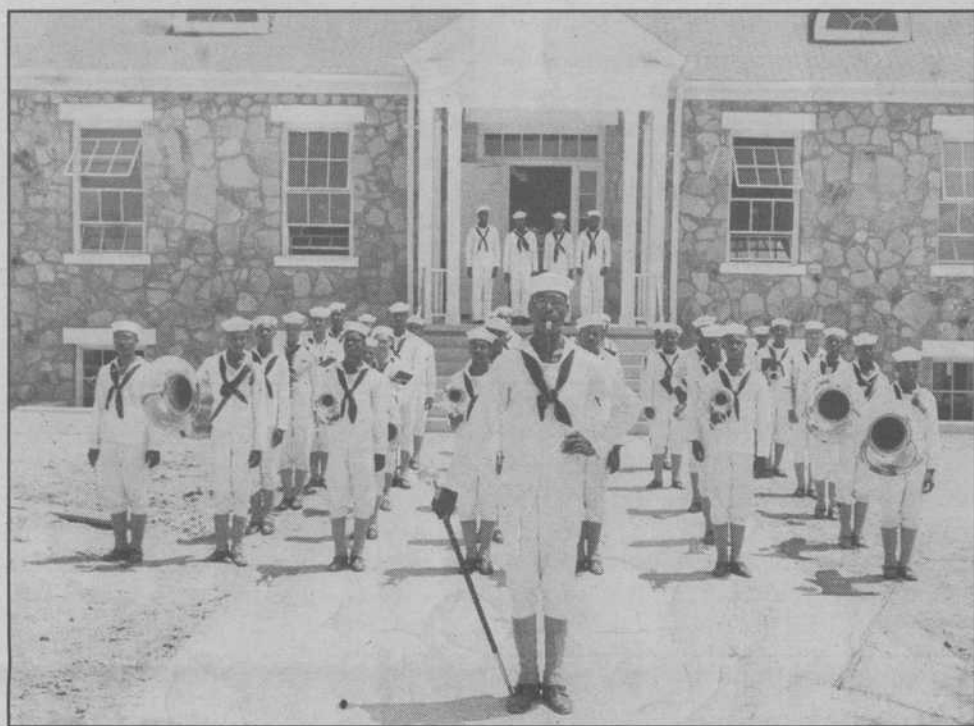
Holloway is one of twelve survivors of the B1 Band. He works at keeping the story alive. The owners, workers and managers in the restaurant immediately ceased cooking, cleaning and serving customers to pay homage to Holloway during the interview.

Holloway sincerely wants young people and others to know that he and his peer musicians are a notable chapter of American history and that he and his fellow musicians played on the sidelines during that era and endured wartime conditions and harsh racism, as well.

Holloway's story marks a significant historical bridge. The B1 Band has provided opportunities to African-American professionals who have gone on to excel in education, music, civics and life. The United States Navy School of Music was established, in part, due to sacrifices made by Holloway and his peers. As a result, thousands of Black musicians have been enrolled in the music school.

When former President George Bush Sr. was a Cadet in the U.S. Navy, Bush marched beside his White peers, to the sounds of the B1 Band.

Holloway's fondest memory of playing in the band occurred in Chapel Hill, N.C. His greatest memory dates back to 1945 on V-J Day in 1945 post-World War II. Holloway's band played for Kate Smith as she sang "God Bless America" during the launching of ships. As America celebrated the end of World War II, the band performed dur-



Members of the First Black Band (B1 Band) played Navy shows during World War II.

ing jam sessions, war bond rallies, picnics, dances and victory parades.

Holloway believes that enlistment of the B1 Band was the workings of two powerful women friends — Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Holloway believes that First Lady Roosevelt made the recommendation to allow selected musicians to enlist in the U.S. Navy on May 27, 1942. Similar to McLeod Bethune and Roosevelt in their time, Holloway and the B1 Band veterans have continued to work since 65 years ago to change injustice and to educate the masses on the B1 Band's significant contributions to Black History and civil rights. Unfortunately, the U.S. Navy has no record of the B1 Band, according to Holloway and his peers.

Upon arrival at Chapel Hill on July 31, 1942, the Unit Band #1 was welcomed with enthusiasm by Pre-Flight students and personnel who were excited about the arrival of Navy music-makers. During two and a half years of service there, B1 Band members faced housing discrimination.

"We did not live on the

University of North Carolina Pre-Flight Navy Training School campus as did White Cadets," said Holloway of the early segregation he and the other Black military men experienced.

In 1981, nearly 40 years later, the B1 Band received national recognition from the Naval School of Music, in Norfolk, Va., and living members of the band were granted Honorary Music degrees. This act of the Navy's reconciliation can be attributed to the Veteran's numerous years of continuous coordination of annual reunions, photo displays and story telling. They did not let the story be written out of history.

One of the glimpses Holloway gave an account of to help others understand life on the seas during WWII was also a tale of more segregation and racism.

Holloway spoke about sailing through choppy water aboard an old, dinky, Army transport ship, to

Hawaii, and segregation waved high amongst the tides. The unstylish outdated naval ship carried smartly dressed Black Naval musicians who proudly played

their instruments on the sidelines. White Naval Cadets proudly marched in formation to the sounds of the band at social functions; however, discrimination policies set forth by the War Department made socialization amongst White and Black soldiers unlawful. Unjustly, teasing and agitation was often directed at African-American soldiers as they prepared to play at cadet formations, football, baseball and summer concerts on land or at sea.

Today, Veteran Holloway networks with businesses, schools, religious, governmental and social agencies and groups to share his heroic story and displays memorabilia of the World War II, first, all-Black, U.S. Navy band — the B1.

Each day, Holloway makes strides to gain press and notoriety for B1, because in doing so, African-Americans continue to learn and to be enriched by Black history, he says.

Holloway and the members of the B1 Band are to be saluted for pioneering the way for former, current and future Blacks to experience greater freedom and desegregation.