

Paterson discusses past extramarital affairs

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ALBANY — The day after he was sworn in to replace a governor who left office in disgrace because of a prostitution scandal, Gov. David A. Paterson admitted that he had had relationships with women other than his wife, including one who is on the state payroll.

Paterson made the disclosure at a news conference at the State Capitol, accompanied by his wife, Michelle, who held his hand as they entered the Red Room.

"I betrayed a commitment to my wife several years ago," Paterson said with his wife at his side.

"And I do not feel I've betrayed my commitment to the citizens of New York State. I haven't broken any laws. I don't think I've violated my oath of office. I saw this as a private matter. But both of us committed acts of infidelity."

He said he and his wife had been on a course toward divorce but had been able "to patch things up" with the help of counseling. "We're very much in love with each

other now," the governor said. "I was in love with Michelle even when I knew the marriage was in grave danger."

He added: "The fact is, for my own action, I was angry, I was jealous, and I exercised poor judgment. One day, I realized it and I just decided I would go to counseling."

He said he believed the couple had benefited by improved communication. "When we appear in public now you will see the real relationship," he said.

It was yet another surreal scene in Albany, a city still reeling from revelations last week that Gov. Eliot Spitzer had become ensnared in a federal investigation into a high-priced prostitution ring and his resignation. That another governor could have questions raised about his sex life, so soon after being sworn in, seemed agonizing to many here.

For his part, Paterson continued with state business on Tuesday, holding an open "leaders meeting" in the afternoon to discuss the state budget with Joseph L. Bruno,



Michelle Paige Paterson, left, looks on as her husband, New York Gov. David Paterson, discusses marital infidelities during a news conference at the state Capitol in Albany, N.Y., Tuesday, a day after they told the Daily News of New York City that both had affairs during a rough patch in their marriage several years ago.

the majority leader in the Republican-controlled Senate, and Sheldon Silver, the Democrat who is speaker of the State Assembly.

In the earlier news confer-

ence, Paterson said he was speaking out because he did not want the state to become embroiled in another sordid distraction.

"I wanted to come for-

ward because I didn't want it hanging over my head," Paterson said.

"I didn't want to be compromised, perhaps, by innuendo or some sort of message that you better not do something or we're going to out you about the infidelity in your marriage."

Paterson flatly denied that he had ever used any campaign money in connection with the affairs. "I would never use campaign funds for that purpose," he said.

Paterson did most of the talking during the news conference. But twice Michelle Paterson spoke in a hushed, soft voice. "There's no marriage that's perfect," she said at one point.

In response to a question, Gov. Paterson said he had had an affair with a state employee who was not under his supervision at the time. He acknowledged that the employee still works for the state and "we will try to accommodate that employee's wishes."

By midmorning, word of Gov. Paterson's admissions had filtered through the Capi-

tol. And once again, the state's top political leaders found themselves fielding questions about how the state could weather the personal crisis of a governor.

Bruno, the majority leader, said the Patersons' marital problems were nobody's business but their own as he brushed off suggestions that the affair threatened to interfere with the state's business.

"His personal life is his personal life, and he has to share what he's comfortable sharing," Bruno told reporters.

"And as long as it doesn't interfere with how he's governing, it's nobody's business. David is able to handle himself. He's always been a good friend and handled himself properly, and I expect he will continue to handle himself properly."

Silver, the speaker of the State Assembly, said he admired Gov. Paterson's courage in admitting the infidelity and suggested that the couple's past problems, which he called "a nice story," could serve as an inspiration to other couples who find their marriages imperiled.

"He basically said: 'Here are the facts. It's not an uncommon occurrence in people's lives when marriages are failing, and this is how we worked it out,'" Silver said. "I think it should be a message to people who maybe find themselves in similar circumstances."

Detroit Mayor criticized for exhuming slur

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick stood before hundreds of people last summer and triumphantly proclaimed: "Die, n-word, and we don't want to see you 'round here no more."

But although Kilpatrick and other Black leaders symbolically buried the racial slur in a mock funeral last July, he uttered it in his State of the City address, which was carried live on local television and radio stations.

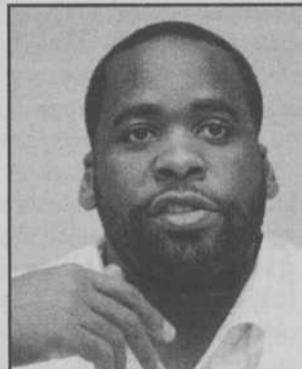
Facing possible perjury charges from testimony during a whistle-blowers' trial and criticism over sexually explicit text messages he sent to his former top aide, a defiant Kilpatrick lashed out at the media and opponents. He said he and his family have been subjected to racial slurs, as well as threats over the past month.

"In the past 30 days, I've been called a nigger more than any time in my entire life," said Kilpatrick, 37. "In the past three days, I've received more death threats than I have in my entire administration."

Kilpatrick's use of the slur drew a sharp response from state Attorney General Mike Cox, who called it "race-bait-

"In the past 30 days, I've been called a nigger more than any time in my entire life."

— Kwame Kilpatrick
Mayor of Detroit



ing on par with David Duke and George Wallace" said the mayor should step down for the good of the city and region.

"What he said cannot be unsaid, and he is not fit to be mayor anymore," Cox, who is White, said in an interview on WJR-AM. "He's a very talented guy, but he has overstayed his day. He should resign, he should quit, whether he's charged or not."

Kilpatrick spokesman James Canning said Cox "has the right to his opinion" but said the mayor will remain in office.

He said Kilpatrick used the slur in his speech as an example of how hurtful the epithet can be.

"He was explaining to the citizens of Detroit the situation he and his family have

been put in by some very vile individuals who have decided they will thrust upon he and his family some very threatening forms of communications," Canning said.

Some Black leaders criticized Kilpatrick, saying he chose the wrong forum and wrong language for his outburst. "It most especially was not a place to use the same word that, supposedly, we buried last summer," said Rev. Edgar Vann, pastor of Second Ebenezer Baptist Church in Detroit. "You can make references to it without using it."

But others said the context in which the mayor used the word should be considered.

"He was trying to make a point. He wasn't using it in the typical vernacular," said Richard J. McIntire, the na-

tional spokesman for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The n-word has been used as a slur against Blacks for more than a century. It remains a symbol of racism, but also is used by Blacks when referring to other Blacks, especially in comedy routines and rap and hip-hop music. Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, as well as other national Black leaders, have called for an end to the use of the word.

Kilpatrick has been under fire since excerpts of sexually explicit text messages between Kilpatrick and his chief of staff at the time were reported in January by the *Detroit Free Press*.

In a trial over a lawsuit against the city brought by two police officers who said they were wrongly fired, Kilpatrick and Christine Beatty denied under oath that they had been romantically involved.

Kilpatrick and Christine Beatty denied that they didn't have a romantic relationship during a lawsuit against the city brought by two police officers who said they were wrongly fired.

The City Council settled

the lawsuit for \$8.4 million, but councilors didn't know about a secret deal to keep mention of the text messages out of the settlement.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy is deciding whether to charge Kilpatrick and Beatty with perjury.

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