

Black Press pioneer Tatum passes in Croatia

NEW YORK (NNPA) — The *New York Amsterdam News* has announced the death of 'Black Press giant' Wilbert "Bill" Tatum, publisher emeritus, CEO and chairman of the board of the newspaper that is in the midst of its centennial celebration.

Tatum, 76, died in a hospital in Croatia on Wednesday evening, February 25, after a brief illness.

His wife, Susan, and family were working to bring Tatum's body back to the U.S. from Croatia, a country in Central Europe. His daughter, Elinor Tatum, publisher and editor-in-chief of the nationally known and respected weekly newspaper, has expressed her gratitude for the outpouring of support and condolences from leaders in the Black Press, political, public service and Black leadership communities across the nation.

"He was much loved and greatly respected in the Black community and in the media world in general. An international traveler, Bill Tatum saw it as his ambition, mission and accomplishment to grow the Harlem-based



Wilbert 'Bill' Tatum

Amsterdam News into the world-renowned publication that it is today," states the official announcement on www.amsterdamnews.com.

Ms. Tatum, who was named editor-in-chief in 1997, assures readers that the paper will continue in its outstanding tradition of service to the local, national and international community to keep 'The New Black View' in the forefront.

As funeral plans were still incomplete at NNPA deadline, salutes were being echoed across the nation for Tatum, who during his tenure, expanded the readership and influence of the *Amsterdam News*, New York's oldest Black newspa-

per. "The Black Press has lost a giant," said Dorothy R. Leavell, chair of the NNPA Foundation. "The death of Wilbert Tatum reminds me of his call for integrity in our own industry as well as the public. Wilbert's presence and wisdom will be missed by me and so many others that he influenced in his journalistic and activist-inspired leadership."

NNPA Chairman John B. Smith Sr., who has known Tatum more than 30 years, describes him as "a true and stellar newspaperman, who personified fairness, justice and determination to better the beloved community... He made certain, throughout his four decades at his publication, to [write] truth-to-power editorials to advance the African-American diaspora, in particular, and the nation and world, overall."

Tatum, highly esteemed as a businessman as well as a publisher and civil rights leader, gained respect from every facet of society and across political lines.

Democratic Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a former New York senator, said, "Bill was a dear friend,

an inspiration, and a leader among journalists and indeed throughout his community. As the longtime publisher of New York City's oldest African-American newspaper, and former Deputy Borough President of Manhattan, Bill's leadership and advocacy on behalf of civil rights, his community, and journalistic integrity is an inspiration to all of us."

Republican Mayor Michael Bloomberg, with whom Tatum frequently sparred, saluted him in a heartfelt statement upon his death.

"It's a big loss for a paper that has been influencing and reflecting City politics for over 100 years now," said Bloomberg. "Bill helped build the company into a major employer in Harlem, but the paper's voice really was heard across the city — and, on many occasions, around the world. He covered issues of concern to African-Americans in ways that other media outlets did not, and he gave many young writers opportunities they might not otherwise have had."

From politicians to civil rights activists, Tatum carried major influence.

New York Action Network President Al Sharpton described Tatum as "an iconic and vitally important figure in both journalism and civil rights. I first met him when I was a teenager involved in civil rights work in New York and have known him over 30 years," he said. "His courage, his tenacity, his sagacity, and his advocacy are unparalleled in African-American journalism. We have lost a great advocate, a penetrating writer, an unmatched institution builder, and for me, a great friend and father figure."

The newspaper was founded in 1909 as a Black-owned and operated institution. In 1996, Wilbert Tatum bought out the last remaining investor. Though he stepped down as publisher, he continued serving as the publication's publisher emeritus, CEO, and chairman of the board.

Tatum was a journalist and businessman who began his career as a community activist more than half a century ago as executive director of the Cooper Square Committee. Cooper Square served as a housing organization of the New York's Lower East Side, which aimed to stop the city's Slum Clearance Committee, under the chairmanship of the legendary Robert Moses, from leveling the housing for the poor in that area and replacing it with high-rise, high-income housing.

In the effort to defeat the city's plan and replace it with the Alternate Plan for Cooper Square, Tatum came to the attention of then Congressman John Lindsay, who supported the plan during his first successful run to become mayor of New York City.

Shortly after his election, Lindsay set into motion the machinery that would designate Cooper Square an urban renewal area and allocated the first city funds that began the implementation of the Alternate Plan.

In the 1960s, the newspaper was not yet owned by Tatum, had become the premier newspaper for the Civil Rights and Black Nationalists movements. The paper gave a platform to both the non-violence, civil disobedience philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Black Nationalist teachings of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X.

Tatum, along with a group of businessmen, purchased the newspaper in 1971. Under the AmNews Corporation the paper was observed to have made a transformation to a more "liberal" viewpoint until 1984, when Tatum bought the newspaper outright and became its publisher and editor.

Tatum had a brief stay in the mainstream media in 1993, when he was named publisher and editor of the *New York Post* amid the bankruptcy fight at the paper as well as discrimination allegations at both the *Post* and *New York Daily News*. Both publications had no reporters of color on their city desks and no minority editorial managers.

Under Tatum's guidance, the *Amsterdam News* continued to publish amid the disappearance of brother and sister Black newspapers across the country. He took the paper back to what had been described as a "more militant and progressive position."

NNPA Editor-in-chief Hazel Trice Edney contributed to this article.

Cops

(Continued from Page 10) when we finally have somebody really about justice, doing the right thing, we can't afford to leave him out to dry," he said.

In its 1999 report entitled, "Shielded From Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States," Human Rights Watch indicated that race has played a central role in police brutality in the United States.

"In the cities we have examined where such data are available, minorities have alleged human rights violations by police more frequently than White residents and far out of proportion to their representation in those cities. Police have subjected minorities to apparently discriminatory treatment and have physically abused minorities while using racial epithets," the document read.

Human Rights Watch hasn't followed up on that major report made a decade ago because of money problems and has discontinued domestic monitoring of police misconduct.

Charlene Muhammad writes for the *Final Call*.

NFL

(Continued from Page 12) found alive, it's important to recover their remains so families can have closure, Johnson said.

"This kid is going fight to the bitter end," said Cooper's father, Bruce Cooper. "And so in my heart of hearts, I just believe he's out there somewhere just waiting to be found."

Schuyler told Bleakley's mother the harrowing account of the friends' fight for survival, describing how they swam back to the boat despite repeatedly being slammed by waves. Bleakley and Schuyler managed to stick together for about 24 hours and they talked about how they would live their lives differently, Betty

Internship

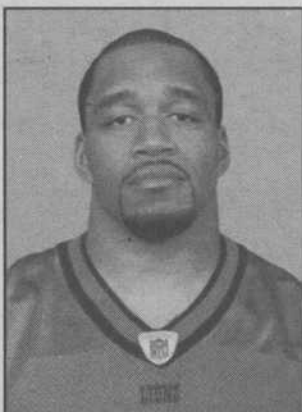
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The following is a list of departments in the Office of the President and the Office of the Vice President where interns could be placed:

White House Department of Scheduling and Advance; The Office of Cabinet Affairs; The White House Communications Department; The White House Office of Public Liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs; The Office of the First Lady; The White House Of-

fice of Legislative Affairs or OLA; The Office of Political Affairs; The Office of Management and Administration; The Office of White House Counsel; The Domestic Policy Council; The White House Office of Presidential Personnel; and the Office of the Vice President.

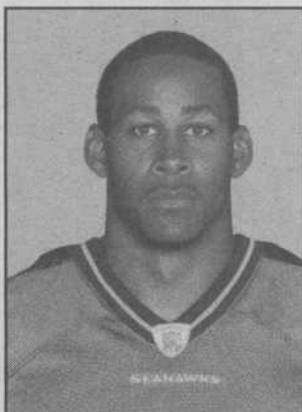
More information on the White House Internship Program, including application instructions, can be found at: www.Whitehouse.gov/about/internships



COREY SMITH

Bleakley said. "He said they huddled together, they just kept climbing back on the boat after getting knocked off," she said. "They fought. They fought."

She said her 25-year-old son's actions were heroic, including swimming under-



MARQUIS COOPER

neath the boat to get life vests for the other men and then using a cushion for floatation himself. "That was Will," she said. "Will was calm and level-headed and would just try to think things through. As painful as it was talking to Nick, it's providing some closure for us."

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