

National

PolyGram Buys Motown for \$301 Million

LONDON (AP) — The Dutch recording and entertainment group PolyGram has announced that it will buy Los Angeles-based Motown, the world's leading black music label, for \$301 million.

PolyGram NV, which is majority-owned by Dutch Philips Electronics NV, said the purchase agreement will cover Motown's current roster of more than 30 artists, including Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder.

It also includes Motown's huge catalogue of releases dating back to the 1960's, its new MoJazz label, television, film and video production interests as well as its merchandising activities and rights to the famous Motown trademark.

PolyGram has been Motown's exclusive distributor in the United States under an agreement signed in September 1991 and

January 1992, with exclusive rights to manufacture, distribute and market all of Motown's master recordings worldwide.

The purchase will be partly funded by an offering of 10 million new shares this fall, PolyGram said in a statement.

Founded in Detroit in 1959, Motown's recording artists have included The Supremes, the Jackson Five, Lionel Richie, The Four Tops, Marvin Gaye and Smokey Robinson. Today, its roster still boasts Ross and Wonder, as well as Boyz II-Men, Johnny Gill, Shanice, Janet Jackson, Bobby Brown, New Edition, Jody Watley and Another Bad Creation.

The company had been owned by a group headed by the private media investment partnership Boston Ventures.

"Motown has always been



Berry Gordy

synonymous with the best in black creative talent," said Alain Levy, PolyGram's president and chief executive officer.

"With PolyGram's additional investment in Motown, particularly in the artist and repertoire area of

the business, I believe we can help this important label to expand its influence and success, not just in music but in other entertainment fields," he said in a statement issued by PolyGram International Ltd.

Jheryl Busby will continue as president and chief executive of Motown, posts he has held since 1988 when Motown founder Berry Gordy sold the label.

PolyGram has been aggressively expanding its recorded music and film industry lines in recent years. It purchased Island Records in July 1989 and A&M Records in January 1990.

PolyGram is based in the Netherlands and 20.6 percent of its stock is traded on the Amsterdam and New York stock exchanges. The remaining 79.4 percent is owned by Philips Electronics NV.



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Judge's 'Happy Face' on Execution Order Upsets Inmate

HOUSTON (AP) — A death row inmate is upset because State District Judge Charles J. Hearn of Houston, after signing an order earlier this month setting an Oct. 15 execution date, added a little happy face symbol.

Attorney William Kuntzler of New York City said he and his client, Robert Nelson Drew, were not amused.

"My client was shocked by it," Kuntzler said. "I've never seen anything like that before. Doesn't it seem terribly inappropriate?"

Drew, a native of West Pawlet, Vt., has been on death row for a decade in the slaying of Jeffrey Mays, 17, who was picked up while hitchhiking in Louisiana and stabbed to death. The body of the Alabama teen-ager was dumped along Interstate 10, east of Houston.

"It's not intended to take away from the seriousness of any-

thing," said Hearn, 62. "It's just become part of my signature. My driver's license is signed that way."

It's uncertain when Hearn added the happy face to his autograph, but it created comment last year when he used it on the bottom of a letter to other judges announcing a peer's death.

Robert Flowers, executive director of the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct, was somewhat nonplussed when asked about the propriety of adding happy face logos to legal documents pertaining to situations as grim as executions.

Hearn's beatific style of dealing with defendants attracted a lot of attention in the latter part of his 14-year career as judge of the 263rd District Court in Houston. Before his 1992 retirement, he'd started saying "God bless you" to each person he had just sent to prison.

The judge could sometimes be

seen praying with defendants before they were led away to Huntsville.

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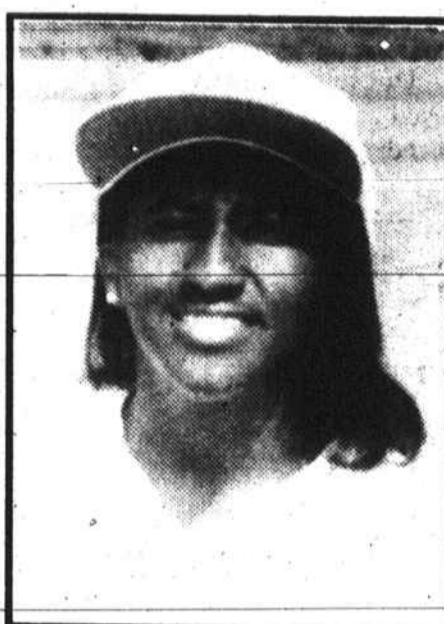
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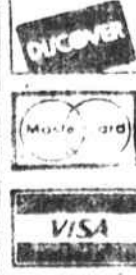
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