

At a Glance

News briefs compiled from the Associated Press

Not about to quit

Dorothy Height poses Friday, Dec. 5, in Washington. Height gave up the president's chair at the National Council of Negro Women over the weekend, but at age 85 — two decades after many stop working — the civil rights activist isn't retiring.



(AP Photo/Brian K. Diggs)

Black churches convene

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — Some 300 black leaders who represent eight major denominations of black churches met this week to discuss issues that go far beyond church walls.

Topics at three-day meeting of the Congress of National Black Churches include: leaders in government, business, medicine and other fields.

"This affords the Shreveport community an opportunity to hear some of the greatest minds in America. I hope it will be an impetus for our young people to strive for excellence," said the Rev. Joe Gant, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church and a member of the local steering committee for the event.

Vernon Jordan, a former National Urban League president who was chairman of President Bill Clinton's transition board, was the keynote speaker.

Other speakers included Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, and John Hope Franklin, chairman of the President's Advisory Commission on Race.



(AP Photo/Dave Martin)

Glickman at Tuskegee

Tuskegee University President Dr. Benjamin Payton, left, talks with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman Monday, Dec. 8, at the campus in Tuskegee, Ala. Glickman, whose agency is accused of discriminating against black farmers addressed university officials and met with local black farmers during his visit.

Judge refuses to block film

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A federal judge refused to block the release of Steven Spielberg's "Amistad," saying the filmmaker did not appear to have plagiarized a novel about a mutiny aboard a slave ship.

U.S. District Court Judge Audrey Collins on Monday rejected a move by Barbara Chase-Riboud that sought to stop the film's Wednesday premiere in New York and Los Angeles, but he allowed her lawsuit to proceed.

The author claimed much of the "Amistad" screenplay was stolen from her book "Echo of Lions."

The allegations challenge the reputation of Hollywood's best-known director over a movie Spielberg calls "perhaps the most important of my career." In turn, DreamWorks studio is attacking the integrity of the award-winning novelist who filed the lawsuit.

The dispute has turned increasingly personal and vitriolic.



(AP Photo/Florida Today, Malcolm Denemark)

A solemn recognition

Thirty years to the day after Maj. Robert H. Lawrence Jr. died in a crash of a training jet, his name was added to the Astronaut Memorial Foundation's Space Mirror at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor's Center in Florida on Monday, Dec. 8. Left to right, Dr. Barbara E. Lawrence, sister of Maj. Lawrence, Gwendolyn Duncan, mother of Maj. Lawrence, Barbara Lawrence, widow of Maj. Lawrence, and Arnold Richman, chairman of the Astronauts Memorial Foundation, all watch the fly-over by the USAF 1st Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Wing, after the wreath placement by the family at the dedication.

Afrocentric program criticized

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Federal court monitors have urged the Kansas City School District to avoid a legal challenge by halting an African-centered studies program proposed for one high school.

Critics say the program is inaccurate and racially divisive. However, district officials note that the program hasn't even been implemented yet at Southeast High School.

The Board of Education will hold a closed session Monday night to discuss the issue.

Afrocentricism is an educational philosophy that focuses on the social, historical, cultural and spiritual development of people of African descent. The approach has caused a debate about the accuracy of information taught in Afrocentric schools.

SCHOOLS

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tion, county commissioners, school administration and the community had a hand in the construction of North Hills Traditional Academy. The building was built with funds from the successful school bond campaign of 1995. According to Richard E. Bagley, vice chairman of the school board, redistricting was an answer to the overcrowding in the school system. When the school board called on the community to help push the bond issue, they responded. The bond issues had failed in Guilford County and in Forsyth for many years. However, this day, one more school was dedicated to Zone 4, which includes Old Town, Rural Hall, and Old Richmond.

Bagley recognized the members of the board of education who were in attendance, as well as Grace Efrid, former board chairman, and Gloria Whisenhunt, county commissioner. Bagley expressed great pride in their collaborative efforts.

The pride of the students was evident in the rap they performed during the program, entitled "My School."

"My school is a very fine school, my school ... My school is the place to be," they sang as they clapped to the beat.

Amber Smith and Shanique Harris performed solos in "One Moment in Time."

Fifth graders Andre Glenn and



Amber Smith was one of the soloists for the North Hills Elementary School chorus selection "One Moment in Time."

Jerdei Dillard are glad to be some of the first students to attend North Hills Traditional Academy. They both sing on the school chorus, and Jerdei is also a safety patrol officer.

"I make sure that students are not running in the building but are being quiet," she said. "I gain a little respect from the other students."

Andre is impressed by the beautiful building and the technology on campus. He is grateful to his mother,

NAACP

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"Now the trick is how to accomplish that," Cavanagh said.

The mayor said that he would rather someone else on the board bring up the matter at Monday's meeting. But he did not say what action he'll take if the aldermen decide to approve Norlander's recommendation.

What's to become of the Police Review Board?

The problem, Womble said, is a

lack of credibility.

"So far as some of the citizens see it, the Police Review Board is just a rubber stamp for the police," the state legislator said. "It should be an advocate for what is right."

Cavanagh agrees that the board should be supported. He said that he had no criticism of the concept that created it and suggested that people refrain from turning the board into yet another political issue. According to the mayor, police who violate policy stand to incur "greater punishment from their own internal affairs

April Miller, for enrolling him in this academy. One of his favorite songs to sing in the chorus is the rap entitled "My School."

Following the performance of the rap, Martin came forward to give comments. He noted that many people have contributed to the success of the school. He recognized Principal Parker who shepherded the logistics of the construction with the assistance of a planning committee of 12 teachers, who assisted with the theme. He informed the audience of the international award Dr. Reginald Teague received for his contributions as assistant superintendent of operations. Martin recognized Amanda Bell and Toni Bigham, the two assistant superintendents of elementary administration, for their support.

Martin then turned his attention to those who did the hands-on building of the site. Fred W. Butner was the architect for the school, a replica of Union Cross Traditional Academy, which Butner also designed. Two construction specialists, Jim Morefield and Jim Powers, and members of the school district maintenance staff assisted with the laying of the carpet. Mechanical engineer William G. Robinson Jr. was recognized, as was R.K. Stewart, the general contractor. K-Ham Plumbing and Heating of N.C. Inc. installed the plumbing, and Logan Heating and Air Conditioning served as the heating and air conditioning contractor. Watson Electrical Construction Company served as the electrical contractor.

In addition, Martin honored the eight business partners of the school: AMARR Garage Doors, Darryl's, T.W. Garner, Heilig-Meyers, I.L. Long, Vulcan Materials, and Wal-Mart.

Martin concluded his presentation with a recitation from "Everyone else's children."

"Each of us must come to care about everyone else's children," he said. Explaining that the destiny of one's children is linked to the destiny of all children, Martin reminded the audience that the only way the "good life" can be secured for all is that each person have concern for "everyone else's children."

Butner performed the presentation of the building as he placed the master key to the 173 opening of the edifice into the hands of Parker. The principal thanked all of the school board members for their support and recognized Shirley Miller, the chorus director who serves as a substitute for Ms. Burchette, who is currently "in a battle for her life," he said. "We are praying she will win this war," he added. "Please add her to your thoughts."

The last two people to leave the building following the dedication ceremony were Vincent and Jacqueline Parker. Mrs. Parker said she is very proud of the success of the school and of the dedication program. "This new school has been a dream-come-true for my husband and has presented him with a new and exciting challenge," she said.

ACTION

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Students seek diversity on campus.

From his perspective, this country is "undergoing a major and social transformation." In that process men and women coast to coast are evaluating government policies, particularly where they pertain to race. Many people, black and white alike, Connerly contends, are trying "to arrive at the same place." The difference, he pointed out, is that some people think there are different ways of getting there.

"There always has been tension between the university and society regarding race and its use," Connerly said. "When the university pushes the envelope, as I submit to you is the case with affirmative action, we lose the support of the community and test

tolerance."

Connerly said he supports "outreach, recruitment and things that make good business sense" but is opposed to "preferences solely on the basis of race."

One student questioned why Connerly would speak out against racial preferences yet tolerate other preferences in admissions. For example, some universities reserve spaces for the children of major donors. Athletes and children of alumni also are given special consideration when decisions are made on who will be given an opportunity to earn a college degree.

Those preferences, the student observed, usually work against black applicants. She argued that affirmative

action is no different. Her remark drew applause from the black people in the audience. But black students were not the only people opposing Connerly and his desire to kill affirmative action. A coalition of student groups, many with white members, also joined in the protest.

What worried some of those who protested the night of Connerly's speech is that North Carolina now appears to be following in California's foot steps. "I believe that affirmative action is not a black or white issue," said Matt Ezzell, a junior from Wilmington. Ezzell is white but handed out literature calling for diversity on the UNC campus.

Two weeks ago,

Molly Broad, president of the 16-campus UNC system, called for a review of affirmative action. Although students have protested in Chapel Hill, other campuses have not become impassioned over the issue.

At NC A&T and Winston-Salem State University, for example, public information officers say there have been no demonstrations regarding the possible end of affirmative action in this state. Chancellors at the historically black colleges in the system have been mum as well. Neither Edward Fort, A&T's chancellor, nor WSSU's Alvin Schexnider have returned calls seeking comment on Broad's request.

EXECUTION

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"The state is rushing to judgment and trying to avoid giving Mr. Allen his day in court," said Ken Rose, director of the Center for Death Penalty Litigation in Durham, which represents Allen.

A federal district court has not reviewed Allen's case, Rose said. The case has been passed over by the U.S. Supreme Court, which reviewed the North Carolina Supreme Court's affirmation of the death sentence. But that's not the same as an appeal through the whole federal court system, Rose said.

But Barry McNeill, special deputy

attorney general, said 12 years wasn't a rush and pointed out in court briefs that this defense tactic is the kind of delay the law was meant to stop.

Allen confessed to the slaying after his arrest. He said later he lied because he was scared by the way police officers handled him. He also said he was denied access to a lawyer.

As the attorneys debate the law, Worley's widow waits.

"It's time to do something or quit," Jacqueline Davis Worley said in an interview with The Daily Herald of Roanoke Rapids.

"If you do things, you have to answer for it. If people keep getting away with

things it's going to get worse. I hope all the people who are on the Highway Patrol will keep their guard up, because it's happening time and time again."

Worley, who said the execution won't bring closure for her, has declined a seat in the witness room at Central Prison. Her husband was killed at 5 a.m. May 14, 1985, about 1 1/2 hours before his shift ended, after he pulled over Allen's vehicle on Interstate 95.

John Wood, who delivered the news of her husband's death to Worley, now is the Northampton County sheriff. He will be one of the official witnesses at the execution. Other official witnesses are Highway Patrol commander Col. E.W. Horton of Raleigh, Highway Patrol Sgt. Ervin D.

Marshmon of Roanoke Rapids, Halifax County District Attorney Robert Caddle II, Halifax County Sheriff Jeff Frazier and Lt. Donald Standfield of the Halifax County Sheriff's Department.

At issue in the appeal is the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, passed by Congress to streamline death-penalty appeals and shorten the period between sentencing and execution.

Allen's case is the first time North Carolina has tried to speed up an execution using the new one-year deadline for state prisoners to file federal appeals.

Allen's lawyers said their computation shows Allen has until Dec. 11 to file an appeal in federal court.

MWBE

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for M/WBE firms so the city can solicit their input on issues affecting the development of these firms; and provide additional information to general contractors and M/WBEs to increase the likelihood of M/WBE participation on construction projects.

"We have done fairly well in terms of spending with women and minority businesses," said business development director Janet DeCreny. The program's goal is to provide opportunities for businesses owned by women and minorities to participate in all aspects of city contracting and purchasing.

The city tracks spending in four categories: materials and services, construction and demolition, discretionary spending and subcontract activity. According to the report, overall spending with businesses owned by a woman or minority increased by 8.9 percent over last year. Winston-Salem spent \$7.87 million in business dealings with M/WBE companies.

Category	Minorities	Women
Materials	94	4.81
Construction	2.47	7.84
Discretionary	1.61	5.63
Subcontract	7.44	5.63

in the 1995-96 fiscal year to \$35.6 million in 1996-97. Despite the decrease in actual spending, the percentage of spending with M/WBEs in this category rose slightly, from 5.73 percent to 5.75 percent.

Because a company owned by a woman — P&H Construction — received a single contract award in the amount of \$1.8 million, city spending with M/WBEs in the construction and demolition category jumped 128.6 percent. In the city's program, a company owned by a black woman would be classified as a minority-owned. So of the \$2.6 million the city spent contracting with the M/WBE program, roughly \$800,000 was awarded to firms owned by African-

Americans.

Like construction, the area of discretionary spending is also influenced more by the city's relationship with companies owned by white women than those run by African Americans, men or women. In the last fiscal year, city officials spent \$7.76 million in

discretionary funds. That's up from \$5.32 million the year before.

"However, the amount awarded to M/WBE firms decreased from \$384,414 to \$310,149," the report states. According to the report, the decrease occurred because a firm owned by a white woman received a large contract in FY 95-96 but did not receive an award in the last fiscal year.

City officials spent considerably less on subcontract work in the last fiscal year than in years past (\$44 million in FY 95-96 down to \$18.8 million in FY 96-97). Of that, \$2.9 million was awarded to M/WBEs.

The M/WBE staff has continued its efforts of identifying and recruit-

ing minority and women owned businesses, and assisting minority and women owned business development relationships with majority companies," the report states in regard to staff activities over the past year. "In addition, the staff has been meeting with the purchasing staff to improve opportunities for M/WBE vendors, and networking with other M/WBE coordinators statewide to stay abreast of information affecting M/WBE initiatives."

For example, the city sponsored a 10-week training seminar for contractors who are also residents of public housing or other low-income neighborhoods. Eighteen of those participating graduated from the program. Participation in training seminars, however, does not necessarily evolve into a business contract with the city. "During this fiscal year more emphasis was put on the solicitation process, which directly increased the percentage of spending with minority and women businesses," the report says of efforts to increase the percentage of spending with minorities and women in the area of materials and services. Yet, of the \$2 million credited for passing through the M/WBE program, the vast majority did not end up in a company run by an African American.