

Civil Rights Museum picks recipients of annual awards Oct. 23 in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The National Civil Rights Museum has chosen Julian Bond, chairman of the NAACP, and Rigoberta Menchu, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, for its annual Freedom Awards.



Menchu

The museum, built on the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, gives the awards to "individuals who have made significant contributions in civil rights."

The new honorees will receive their awards Oct. 23 at a banquet at The Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis. Earlier in the day, they will take part in a public forum.

Menchu, 43, of Guatemala, received the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize for her work in seeking equal rights for Indian peasants in her country.

Bond, 62, joined the U.S. civil rights struggle while still in college and has been active in civil rights causes ever since.

Past recipients of the museum's awards include Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Nelson Mandela, Jimmy Carter and Colin Powell.

NBA star Chris Webber denies federal charges of dealings with college booster

DETROIT — Sacramento Kings star Chris Webber denies the federal allegations that he lied to a grand jury about his dealings with a University of Michigan basketball booster.

Webber, who led Michigan's "Fab Five" team to within a victory of the 1993 national title, was charged early last week with obstruction of justice and making a false declaration before a grand jury, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Former booster Ed Martin pleaded guilty in May to conspiracy to launder money, admitting he took gambling money, combined it with other funds and lent it to several players while they were still amateurs.

Webber, 29, has publicly denied taking significant amounts of money from Martin.

"I didn't lie," Webber told USA Today for a story published last week.

"I went to court to help the prosecution," Webber told the Sacramento Bee, saying he had not spoken to Martin in more than 10 years.

The maximum penalty on each charge is five years and a fine of \$250,000.

Webber's father, Mayce Webber Jr., and his aunt, Charlene Johnson, also were indicted on the same charges. The indictment alleged they conspired to conceal the cash, checks, clothing, jewelry and other benefits provided to Webber and his family.

Webber told the Bee he was angered by those charges.

Martin "knew the best way to hurt me was to hurt my family," Webber told the newspaper.



Webber

Biko's South African cell cleansed

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The 25th anniversary of the death of Steve Bantu Biko, the Black consciousness leader, was marked with the cleansing of a Port Elizabeth police cell where he was detained before his death, SABC television news has reported.

Biko died at the hands of apartheid security police on Sept. 12, 1977. He was brought to the Port Elizabeth police cells in August 1977. He was always kept in chains, and slept in urine-soaked blankets, often naked and cold. He was tortured to death on Sept. 12. Many leaders across the world remembered Biko's death, which changed the political landscape of South Africa.

In a special supplement by the Steve Biko Foundation, "Steve Biko 25 years on," former president Nelson Mandela said: "His life was extinguished with more callousness and casualness than a person snuffing out a candle flame between calloused thumb and forefinger."

Miriam Tladi, a well-known novelist, said: "Steve was one of those leaders who charted the course for our self-image and for their relentless efforts paid the ultimate price for doing so."

Members of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) visited the cells last Sunday as a symbolic restoration of their mentor's dignity. The clergy cleansed it to remove the spiritual and physical humiliation Biko suffered.

"This is to us an emotional connection with Steve once more and to ensure that we don't forget what happened to many of us who brought our freedom," said Mosibudi Mangena, Azapo's president.

Azapo insists that Biko's legacy will always be relevant as long as the ideals he lived and died for are not fulfilled. "Our country is not equal," Mangena said. "Equal only in Constitution and in the ballot, we still have to struggle to build that."

— Compiled from staff and wire reports

Blacks miffed in Florida — again

BY ALLEN G. BREED
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI — Lawrence Moss was 66 and voting for the first time. He had doubts that a black man's vote counted for much, but he'd made a promise.

He walked to the polls at the bunker-like elementary school in his impoverished Miami neighborhood Sept. 10, only to be told the machines weren't up. Like many other south Florida blacks, he didn't get to vote — a sad reminder of the botched 2000 presidential election, when many minorities here felt their votes didn't count and their candidate lost by just a few hundred votes.

"In America, who would think that something would happen like with the presidential election?" said the retired social worker and Air Force veteran, who lives in Liberty City, a neighborhood where the ice cream man drives a van with cages over every bit of glass and residents yell to visitors through barred windows.

"In this day and time, in America?"

It wasn't supposed to happen again. The state spent \$32 million and counties spent millions more to train poll workers on high-tech voting systems to replace the punchcard ballots and hanging chads of the last election.

Miami-Dade County alone spent \$25 million preparing for this election.

But when Christopher Edley Jr. and other members of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission visited the state in June, elections officials said they weren't ready. And Edley warned that "a disaster seemed to be in the making."

"My fear is that officials haven't taken the necessary steps to counter these traditional patterns, starving poor communities and minority communities of the



KRT Photo

Former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno greets supporters on a campaign stop. Reno's recent loss in the Florida gubernatorial race is being blamed on election irregularities.

resources they need for the democratic infrastructure," said Edley, a Harvard Law School professor.

"The Constitution no longer permits votes to be discounted on the basis of color and class. And whether that happens by intention or by accident, it's a problem we ought to fix."

As in the 2000 presidential race, this year's Democratic gubernatorial primary came down to a relatively few votes — several thousand this time, instead of several hundred. And with the narrow margin came allegations of widespread irregularities at the polls.

Electrical sockets with no juice. Machines crashing for hours at a time. A precinct closing two hours early because the

bar it occupied was opening.

In Jacksonville, Millie Surrency was voting last week at the office of the election supervisor. But when she went to vote for former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno for governor, she didn't see her candidate's name on the ballot. The precinct workers had given her a Republican ballot, and Surrency says they refused to correct the mistake.

Surrency, a Hispanic who is married to a black Army veteran, volunteers in a get-out-the-vote campaign that targets young blacks, many of whom had little faith in the system already. Now, she doesn't know what to tell them.

"I have a 20-year-old daughter who told me, 'Mom, I will never vote again,'" she said, near

tears. "I got lots of young blacks to register ... and this happens? They've lost all faith."

As in 2000, many of the problems were in predominantly black precincts.

In black precinct after black precinct in Miami-Dade, hundreds of people stood in line, some returning two, three, four times after being told the machines were down. Yet in several of those precincts, the voter turnout was listed as zero.

Elections officials say workers may have missed a step, causing votes to go uncounted, and they are scrambling to recheck every machine before Tuesday's state deadline for official results.

County Commissioner Dorrien Rolle, a black man whose dis-

See Voters on A10

GOP uses reparations in yanked ads

BY LIBBY QUAD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Controversial radio ads aimed at black voters in the Kansas City area were abruptly pulled off the air Sept. 12, but the same audience can expect more pitches from Republicans this year.

GOPAC, the Republican interest group that paid for the commercial, yanked it after receiving calls from reporters. However, the local media company that produced it will continue to run ads in the same market for GOPAC and other Republican organizations.

"You've heard about reparations, you know, where whites compensate blacks for enslaving us," an announcer says. "Well, guess what we've got now? Reverse reparations." The commercial says blacks earn thousands of dol-



Bond

lars less in retirement benefits than whites because they have shorter life spans.

"So the next time some Democrat says he won't touch Social Security, ask why he thinks blacks owe reparations to whites," the ad says.

The spot riled national Democratic Party and civil rights leaders.

"To believe that broadcasting these falsehoods in such a racially colored way aimed at African-American voters — obviously thinking they'd buy it hook, line and sinker — is insulting," NAACP Chairman

Julian Bond said last week.

Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe and former Kansas City Mayor Emanuel Cleaver also denounced the ad.

GOPAC spokesman Mike Tuffin said that a company hired to produce dozens of radio spots for GOPAC had mistakenly submitted the ad to KPRS-FM, an urban contemporary station with a wide audience of black listeners.

"We disavow it and have seen to it that it was immediately pulled," Tuffin said. "We did not know it was going to be run and never intended it to be run."

However, the local media company, Access Communications, still will produce more radio commercials for GOPAC, a grass-roots training operation for U.S. House candidates that helped catapult former Speaker Newt Gingrich



McAuliffe

and the Republicans to control in 1994.

John Hancock, Missouri Republican Party executive director,

said the party is using the same company to run radio ads in the same market on tax cuts and school choice, but that the party would not sign off on anything resembling the reparations commercial.

"We would never put anything offensive" on the air, he said.

Kansas GOP spokeswoman Kari Austin said the state party has a contract pending with the company, but, "We need to examine that."



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