

News at a Glance

Navy admiral to become Senate chaplain

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Navy's top minister will become the new Senate chaplain, the first black and first military chaplain to hold that job, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has announced.

Rear Adm. Barry C. Black, the Navy's chief of chaplains, is expected to be approved by the Senate as the new chaplain before the end of the month. The Baltimore native replaces Lloyd Ogilvie, who announced his retirement earlier this year after serving since 1995.

"I look forward to this great opportunity and challenge, and I am grateful to the senators already because they certainly have made me feel at home," Black said.

Black would become the 62nd Senate chaplain. He also would become the first Seventh-day Adventist to serve as either House or Senate chaplain. There have been two Catholics and 119 Protestants among the chaplains of the two legislative bodies.

The chaplain opens the Senate with prayer each day and is available as a spiritual counselor to senators and their families.

"Admiral Black has provided spiritual guidance to thousands of servicemen and women during his 25 years of service," Frist said. "We're honored he has offered to bring his moral leadership and counsel to the United States Senate."

Black, who was the Navy's first black chief of chaplains, may be best known to the general public for delivering prayers at the Pentagon's Sept. 11 memorial services and for officiating at John Kennedy Jr.'s burial at sea aboard the USS Briscoe in 1999.

Black, 53, will retire from the Navy before joining the Senate staff. He has been chief of chaplains since 2000.

The Senate chaplain is paid \$125,700, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Black is originally from Baltimore, and has a wife, Brenda, and three sons. He holds three master's degrees, a doctorate in ministry from East Baptist Seminary in Lancaster, Pa., and a doctorate in philosophy from the United States International University in San Diego.

He was first commissioned as a Navy chaplain in 1976.

Man says he was a slave in the 1960s

(Special to the NNPA) - Lawyers seeking reparations for African-Americans have identified a 104-year-old rural Louisiana man who claims he and his children were slaves up until the 1960s.

The lawyers believe this discovery could be critical first-hand evidence of slavery in America, but U.S. District Judge Charles Norgle in Chicago has denied their request to take depositions from the man.

Edward Fagan, a lawyer for the slave descendants, asked Norgle to decide on the deposition quickly, so that an appeal could be filed to a higher court if necessary.

The man, who is uneducated and worked primarily in cotton fields, alleges he moved from Mississippi to Louisiana with his master in the 1930s. Questions remain on how the man could have been enslaved a century after the abolition of slavery.

Diane Sammons, a New Jersey lawyer, said the family was afraid to escape for fear of rape and other physical abuse.

Lawyers said the family endured rape, kidnapping, torture and other abuses by their masters and they feared retribution if they went public with their story. They also said this is not uncommon for certain areas of the South.

According to court papers, African-Americans were held in servitude on plantations in the 1920s and '30s. Reports indicate that as late as 1954, the U.S. Justice Department prosecuted two Alabama brothers for forcing blacks to work as slaves.

Relaunched Oprah book club is good news for publishing industry

CHICAGO (AP) - Oprah Winfrey resurrected her book club last week by recommending her viewers read John Steinbeck's "East of Eden" - a move that could put the novel on best-seller lists more than 50 years after its publication.

Winfrey discontinued her book club last year, saying she did not have enough time to keep up with monthly selections. But she decided to relaunch it with a focus on the classics.

She said "East of Eden" might be the best novel she had ever read.

"It's the perfect book for the summer, I guarantee it," said Winfrey, who read the book last summer. "It's a saga."

Steinbeck is more famous for "The Grapes of Wrath," but Winfrey said she thinks this novel, published in 1952, might be even better. Steinbeck died in 1968.

The revived book club is good news for the publishing industry. In the past, Winfrey's selection has guaranteed hundreds of thousands in sales.

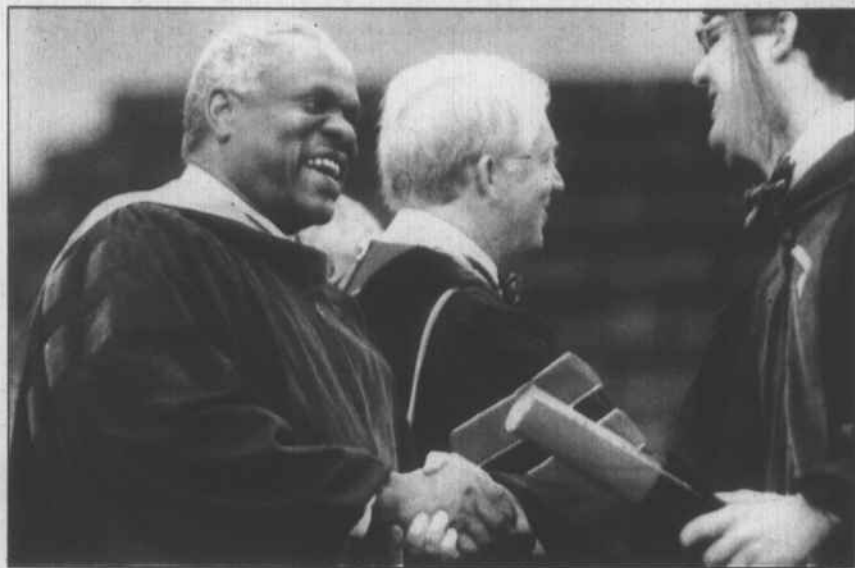
The TV talk show host is expected to make three to five classic selections a year.

Winfrey started the book club in 1996, with Jacquelyn Mitchard's "The Deep End of the Ocean" as her first pick. The book was released with a printing of 100,000, but within a week of Winfrey's announcement 640,000 copies were in print and the book moved up to No. 1 on the fiction best-seller lists of The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

Other television shows, including "Today" and "Good Morning America," have launched their own clubs since Winfrey discontinued hers, but none has had the impact of Winfrey's.



Winfrey



KRT Photo by Grant Blankenship

Clarence Thomas congratulates a University of Georgia School of Law graduate in May.

Thomas part of Michigan dissenters

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, the only black member of the court and an opponent of affirmative action programs, disagreed with the court's decision Monday to uphold a University of Michigan law school program that seeks to boost minority enrollment.

He agreed with the court's finding that a similar undergraduate program is unconstitutional.

"Because I wish to see all students succeed whatever their color, I share, in some respect, the sympathies of those who sponsor the type of

discrimination advanced by the University of Michigan Law School," Thomas said, dissenting, in part, from the 5-4 decision upholding the law school's program.

"The Constitution does not, however, tolerate institutional devotion to the status quo in admissions policies when such devotion ripens into racial discrimination," he said.

In its majority opinion, the high court said the Constitution "does not prohibit the law school's narrowly tailored use of race in admissions decisions to further a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body."

But Thomas disagreed and accused the law school of maintaining "an exclusionary admissions system that it knows produces racially disproportionate results."

"Racial discrimination is not a permissible solution to the self-inflicted wounds of this elitist admissions policy," he said.

Thomas agreed with the court's 6-3 conclusion that a similar undergraduate program at the University of Michigan is unconstitutional. He said a state's use of racial discrimination in higher education admissions is categorically prohibited by the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

Jewish lobby trying to woo blacks

BY ASKIA MUHAMMAD
THE FINAL CALL

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Reports are true that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is making special overtures toward influential black leaders, including the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). The meetings are no cause for alarm, participants insist.

As part of its annual Washington convention activities, AIPAC "honored" CBC chair Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) and the rest of the caucus at a special dinner in March, attended by roughly 1,000 AIPAC donors from around the country," JTA Global News Service of the Jewish People reported.

Then, on April 24 in New York, hip-hop music producer Russell Simmons attended a luncheon with AIPAC Executive Director Howard Kohr and other Jewish leaders.

The various meetings grew out of black concerns about the Jewish community's roles in the 2002 primary election defeats of Reps. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) and Earl Hilliard (D-Ala.), both of whom were vocal critics of U.S. policies favoring Israel before they were defeated by candidates who received strong financial backing from AIPAC members living outside of the contested districts.

"They invited me to come speak. I spoke," Cummings told The Final Call at the Capitol. "I don't think we got an award... We didn't get an award. Some (CBC) members appeared at their dinner."

"First of all, this actually started way back. We were concerned about the Jewish community's roles in the McKinney race and in the Hilliard race," Cummings said. "Back then, we wanted to make sure that we at least began a dialogue to explain - at least to our Jewish members of Congress - what our concerns were all about."

"As a result of that, many of them said, 'Well, you all ought to really start talking to AIPAC.' We then engaged in a dialogue with AIPAC. There's been quite a few dialogues with AIPAC and Jewish members of the Congress."

"To be frank with you, it's more of a pre-emptive sort of situation. We tried to make sure that we don't have that happening

again. Dialogue is helping that," he said.

Simmons also, in fact, attended a New York meeting where there were discussions with leaders of AIPAC and other major Jewish organizations about how to improve black-Jewish relations,



Muhammad

according to Minister Benjamin Muhammad, spokesman for the Hip Hop Summit Action Network. "I think that Russell's meetings are part of his overall outreach to all ethnic groups to promote better ethnic understanding, ethnic tolerance. The issue is tolerance," Muhammad said.

"We're very concerned that after 9/11, it appeared the American society was moving in the direction of intolerance - racial profiling of various groups based on race, based on religion, based on ethnicity."

"Our position is, that's wrong. And so, as part of Russell's campaign to promote ethnic and racial tolerance, he's meeting with Jewish leaders, he's meeting with Muslim leaders, he's meeting with Christian leaders, and he's meeting with persons of all walks and persuasions to raise the question that there should be more tolerance in America, and not intolerance."

AIPAC officials organized the events in order to "strengthen relations between our community and members of the Congressional Black Caucus," according to the JTA report. In addition, they wanted to honor Cummings "and the members of the CBC for their long-standing support of Israel and to reaffirm to our own community that most members of the caucus support a strong and secure Israel."

CBC members are decidedly not pro-AIPAC, however, not in comparison with the rest of the House.

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Maynard Jackson remembered

THE ATLANTA DAILY WORLD

ATLANTA (NNPA) - People around the nation paid tribute Monday to former Atlanta Mayor Maynard H. Jackson - Atlanta's first African-American mayor - who died of heart failure after collapsing at Ronald Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C. He was 65.

Jackson was resuscitated at the airport but suffered a heart attack in the ambulance and died at about 9 a.m. at Virginia Medical Center in Arlington, Va.

Jackson was a lion of a man, said current Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin.

"He lived his life with courage, compassion and dedication to public service," she said. "His groundbreaking election as mayor in 1973 ushered in a new generation of leaders."

Jackson was a great man as well as leader, said W. Bruce Gow, Jackson Securities LLC chief operating officer. "We respected and loved him, and we will miss him."

Jackson founded the investment banking and brokerage services company after completing his third term as Atlanta mayor in 1994.

At age 36, Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr. became the youngest and first African-American mayor of Atlanta when he was elected to his first of three four-year terms 30 years ago.

It was a new day at City Hall. Jackson brought his commitment to inclusion with him as mayor. No longer would the white business community have total control over the city's finances and, most important, over the city's contracts worth millions of dollars.



Jackson

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I N D E X

OPINION.....A6
SPORTS.....B1
RELIGION.....B5
CLASSIFIEDS.....B9
HEALTH.....C3
ENTERTAINMENT...C7
CALENDAR.....C9