

News at a Glance

Veteran journalist Vernon Jarrett dies

CHICAGO (AP) - Veteran journalist and broadcaster Vernon Jarrett, a prominent commentator on race relations and African-American history, is dead at age 84.

Jarrett, who became the first black syndicated columnist for the Chicago Tribune in 1970, died late Sunday at the University of Chicago Hospitals, where he had been under treatment for several months for cancer of the esophagus, said his son, Thomas, 48, who works at WLS-TV.

Thomas Jarrett was at his father's bedside when the elder Jarrett died, as was the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"He was a legend of rare vintage," said Jackson, who spoke of Vernon Jarrett's interviews with such civil rights leaders as W.E.B. DuBois, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and Roy Wilkins, as well as with the boxers Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson.

Jarrett began his journalistic career in the 1940s at the Chicago Defender and later worked for the Associated Negro Press before making the transition to radio in 1948. He then spent three years in partnership with the composer Oscar Brown Jr. as producers of Negro Newsfront, which was believed to have been the nation's first daily radio newscast created by African-Americans.

Jarrett was a founder and former president of the 3,000-member National Association of Black Journalists, which had planned to present him with its legacy award at its annual convention in August.

Black pastors protest gay marriage

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) - Black pastors representing thousands of congregants in the Dallas-Fort Worth area are calling for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages.

The pastors, who formed the Not On My Watch Coalition six weeks ago, kicked off efforts Saturday with a rally at Arlington City Hall that drew 1,000 supporters. The group included representatives from Promise Keepers, an international men's ministry.

As gay and lesbian couples celebrate in Massachusetts, the first state to make same-sex marriages legal, the coalition denounces parallels drawn between the gay rights movement and the civil rights movement.

Members say legalizing same-sex marriages will have irreparable repercussions on the country.

"We've taken the blow of cohabitation. We've taken the blow of divorce. We've taken the blow of absentee fathers," said the Rev. Bryan Carter, pastor of Concord Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas. "Homosexual marriage could be the knockout blow."

The group asked attendees to sign a petition asking lawmakers for a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as being between a man and a woman.

Tennessee State alumni protecting Hefner

NASHVILLE (Special to the NNPA) - Local Nashville lawyers who are alumni of Tennessee State University (TSU) have formed a committee to review past, present and future actions of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) toward University President James A. Hefner. The lawyers are examining, in particular, whether the TBR is applying fair standards in its governance of Hefner and TSU when compared with other TBR institutions.

Attorney David Danner, a 1991 alumnus of TSU, said, "We want to make sure that this matter is handled in an environment of fairness and that this audit is not a pretext for the removal of Dr. Hefner."

Attorney Terry Clayton said: "The issue surrounding Dr. Hefner's funding of some scholarships does not reflect his ability to run the university. We are confident that Dr. Hefner can lead TSU effectively, given fairness and time. This 'cloud of doubt' cast over the university is a distraction to the mission that Dr. Hefner holds dear, which is to make sure students get a quality education."

The lawyers are also concerned about the TBR's actions toward Hefner and TSU, the state's only historically black university. The 18-member governing body includes only one African-American and no Tennessee State University alumnus. In a state that has a considerable percentage of African-Americans, the lawyers believe this inadequate representation on a state governing body for public higher education is unacceptable and could negatively affect TSU's future.



Hefner

Group rallying for monument to remember lynching victims

BOSTWICK, Ga. (AP) - A small cast-aluminum plaque remembering the four victims of a 1946 lynching at Moore's Ford Bridge in Walton County currently marks the site of the notorious slayings, but a local group is rallying to erect a much larger memorial.

About 65 people attended a public forum on Saturday to hear ideas for a permanent memorial in honor of the two black couples - Roger and Dorothy Malcom, and Mae Murray and George Dorsey - who were killed when 12 to 15 white men ambushed them as they crossed the bridge. They were bound and their bodies riddled with bullets.

No one was ever charged in the lynchings. The site needs a bigger monument so that "lynching won't be forgotten," said Roy Durham, who was a longtime member of the Moore's Ford Memorial Committee, which sponsors community events, such as public forums where participants discuss past and present racial problems.

The committee discussed several possibilities, including a wall inscribed with quotes about the incident leading to four abstract sculptures representing the four victims or a memorial garden.

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Women rise to top of police ranks

BY KAREN TESTA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON - The new police chiefs at four of the nation's biggest cities - Boston, San Francisco, Milwaukee and Detroit - share some similar credentials.

All boast more than two decades of police experience. All have worked their way up the ranks. And all are women.

Some say it's just coincidence that four women within six months have been named to the highest ranking police position in four major cities, a natural evolution two decades after consent decrees and affirmative action cases forced departments to hire more women.

But others say a shifting paradigm in policing - from an emphasis on a paramilitary structure to one more reliant on communication and community relations - has contributed to the increasing success of women in the field.

"When I first came on the police department, we were trained in a more paramilitary-type environment," said Kathleen O'Toole, 50, who was named Boston police commissioner in February. "We were trained as soldiers to go out and fight the war on crime, and it was the police versus the community."

"We came to realize in the mid- to late '80s that that model of policing was failing miserably," she said.



Detroit Police Chief Ella Bully-Cummings, the first female chief of police in the Detroit Police Department's 138-year history, receives an honorary doctor of public service degree from Central Michigan University President Michael Rao on May 8.

O'Toole joins Detroit Chief Ella Bully-Cummings, Milwaukee Chief Nan Hegerty and San Francisco Chief Heather Fong in a unique sorority. Fairfax County, Va., a community of about 1 million outside Washington, also has a woman - Suzanne Devlin - as its acting chief.

For most of these women, being named to the top cop

job was not the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. In fact, as girls they did not see these jobs as even a possibility because women simply didn't hold those positions.

"Not in my wildest dreams did I think I'd be in this position," O'Toole said.

Women still make up an average of only 13 percent of police officers, according to

the National Center for Women and Policing, a division of the Feminist Majority Foundation in Arlington, Va. Of the 18,000 police departments across the nation, approximately 200 have women chiefs - yet only four of those are in 62 cities defined as "major" by the fed-

See Police on A5

Nobel winner Soyinka arrested in protest

SPECIAL TO THE NNPA FROM IRIN

Police fired tear gas to disperse an anti-government demonstration in Lagos recently and briefly arrested dozens of protesters, including Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka.

The protest was organized by a coalition of opposition groups, human rights groups and civic groups under the name of Citizens Forum. It kicked off at Campos Square on Lagos Island.

Among the 500 or more protesters were banners and placards demanding the resignation of President Olusegun Obasanjo and denouncing last year's elections that gave him a second term in office as fraudulent.

The demonstration took place against a background of rising religious tension in Nigeria, following the massacre of more than 600 Muslims in the small town of Yelwa in Plateau State on May 2 and reprisal killings a week later of at least 36 Christians in Kano, the largest town in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria.

Heavily armed riot police blocked the route of the protesters in Lagos and shot tear gas canisters into their midst, forcing them to scatter.

The marchers included human rights lawyer Gani Fawehinmi and doctor Beko Ransome-Kuti, a leading human rights activist, as well as Soyinka, who was the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

They defied the tear gas and the afternoon drizzle and re-grouped to continue the march but were then arrested by police. All those detained were later freed without charge.

"We were protesting the increasing dictatorship in this country, which is bordering on fascism," Soyinka told IRIN after his release. "We will continue to protest the manipulation of elections, the bla-



Soyinka

tant abuse of the electoral protest which has put people in power," he added.

Soyinka accused the police of "very deliberately" using tear gas on peaceful protesters.

Opposition and civil society groups in Nigeria accuse Obasanjo's government not only of rigging general elections last year and local elections in March, but also of implementing policies that

See Soyinka on A9

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ONE FANTASTIC VOYAGE LEADS TO ANOTHER

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