

Now at a glance

Clooney campaigns to raise Darfur awareness

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — George Clooney arrived in Egypt recently, campaigning to raise awareness about killings in Sudan's Darfur region.

The Oscar-winning actor was joined by fellow actor Don Cheadle and two former Olympians. He came to Egypt from China.

Clooney organized the trip to make a personal plea to Chinese and Egyptian officials to use their ties with the Sudanese government to help stop the violence, Rosenfield said.



Clooney

Egypt has been a key mediator with neighboring Sudan, trying to persuade the Khartoum government to allow a larger peacekeeping force into the war-torn region, where 200,000 people have been killed and more than 2.5 million have been driven from their homes in more than three years of warfare.

Clooney was expected to meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul-Gheit.

China is a close ally of the Sudanese government and has become a major trade partner, buying Sudanese oil. It has opposed sanctions on Sudan to force it to accept a U.N. peacekeeping force.

Clooney, a liberal Democrat, is well known for his activism and has been urging Congress and the United Nations to help end atrocities in Darfur.

In September, Clooney and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel met with U.N. Security Council members to urge them to act on Darfur. The actor and his father, Nick Clooney, visited the Sudanese region in April.

Romney agreement allows State Police to arrest illegal aliens

BOSTON (AP) — Gov. Mitt Romney, a potential presidential candidate, signed an agreement with federal authorities last week allowing Massachusetts State Police troopers to arrest and seek deportation of suspected illegal aliens they encounter during their normal duties.

Under the terms of the deal with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, an initial group of 30 troopers will receive five weeks of specialized training next year, paid by the federal government.

The troopers will be drawn from the Violent Fugitive Apprehension Squad, the Criminal Investigation Section, the Anti-Gang Unit, the Drug Enforcement Unit and the Community Action Team.

After their training, the troopers will receive a certification allowing them to question, detain and arrest suspected illegals, charge them with a violation of immigration law and place them in removal proceedings.

Yet the durability of the new policy is in doubt, because Romney leaves office Jan. 4 and his successor, Democrat Deval Patrick, has said he opposes placing the additional burden on the troopers.

Xavier's Francis will receive Presidential Medal of Freedom

FAIRFAX, Va. — The White House has announced that Xavier University President Norman C. Francis, Ph.D., will receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award given to a civilian, for his 40 years at the helm of Xavier University and his lifelong commitment to education.

"No one deserves the Medal of Freedom more than Dr. Norman Francis," said Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D., president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), of which Xavier is a member.

"Many know Dr. Francis as chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. But to generations of Xavier alumni, and to his colleagues in the community of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), he has earned his acclaim by helping thousands of young men and women obtain college degrees and launch productive careers." Lomax continued, "Dr. Francis has always been a hero to his colleagues at UNCF institutions and other HBCUs. Now, as a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, he is a national hero as well."

Dr. Francis and Xavier University represent the traditions of excellence for which UNCF is known, said Lomax.

Established by Executive Order 11085 in 1963, the Presidential Medal of Freedom may be awarded to the president "to any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to (1) the security or national interests of the United States, or (2) world peace, or (3) cultural or other significant public or private endeavors."



Francis

Texas minorities' dominate House Dems

WASHINGTON (AP) — Back in the majority, Texas' Democrats in the House are mostly minorities.

The 13 Democrats include six Hispanics and three African Americans. Two of the African Americans are women.

Republicans still dominate the delegation, thanks to a redrawing of district boundaries in 2003 that boosted election chances for GOP candidates.

But the composition of the Democrats is more reflective of the state population, which officially became a majority minority state in 2005 when minorities made up about 50.2 percent of the population.

Texas equals California in the number of Hispanics in its delegation. No other state has more. Texas also is on par with New York with three African American members, behind in California and Georgia, with four each.

The number of minorities in the delegation won't change for the 110th Congress that begins in January.

But Rep. Ciro Rodriguez's defeat of Republican Rep. Henry Bonilla, both Mexican-Americans, leaves the Texas Republicans without a single minority. One of the state's Republicans in the House is a woman. All of the minorities in the delegation are elected from majority-minority districts created under the Voting Rights Act.

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Kwanzaa slow to catch on in S.C.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. — It has been four decades since Kwanzaa was created as an African-American celebration of family and community, but in that time it has not resonated widely in South Carolina, a state where one-third of the population is black.



Cox

"I personally don't know a single person who celebrates the holiday," said Marcus Cox, founding

director of the African-American Studies Program at The Citadel.

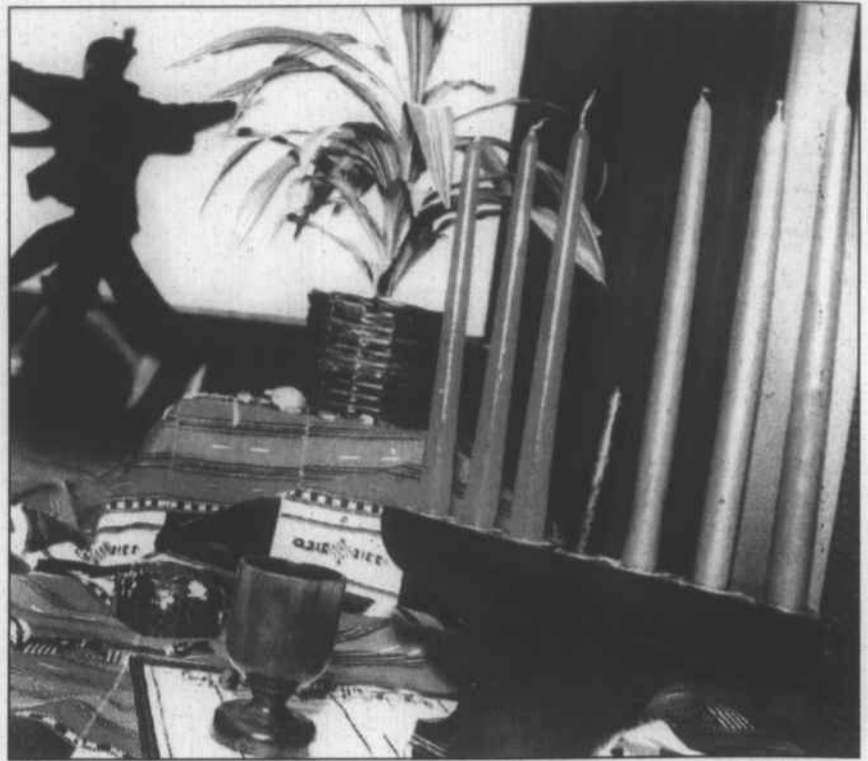
The holiday was created in 1966 by California State University at Long Beach professor Maulana Karenga and a survey conducted for the National Retail Federation in October found 2.3 percent of Americans celebrate it.

Cox said he and many other blacks respect the holiday, but there are barriers to its broader acceptance.

One of them is the timing of Kwanzaa which is celebrated from Dec. 26 through Jan. 1 Christmas.

"Christmas is a religious holiday. And most African-Americans are Christians," Cox said.

But Kwanzaa does not conflict with Christmas, said the Rev. Joseph Darby, a civil rights activist and pastor of



Morris Brown A.M.E. Church in Charleston, who celebrates both.

"The principles are basically Christian principles," he said.

Kwanzaa celebrates unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

Khurhu, a black Columbia store owner who uses a single name and sells Kwanzaa merchandise, said the idea of a holiday for blacks is unpopu-

lar with some whites.

"In its infancy, it was something that was hated by the establishment," said Khurhu. "You'll find some negativity. It has its detractors."

But Khurhu continues to celebrate the holiday.

"It's been a part of the fabric of my life," he said. "I embrace the principles and live it in my life."

Cox said that more blacks might celebrate the holiday if they felt stronger ties to

Africa. "Most African-Americans recognize that their ancestors came from Africa. But very few African-Americans take it beyond that," he said.

"The low number of African-Americans who know anything about Africa is mind-boggling," he said. "In some ways, I think that's sad. You should know your history. But on the other hand, African-Americans see themselves as Americans, not Africans in America."

Civil rights projects attractive to donors

BY ERRIN HAINES THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — When Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin needed \$32 million to buy the personal papers of Martin Luther King Jr. from auction house



Franklin

Sotheby's, the city's corporate community stepped up with the necessary pledges within days.

Organizers boast of the same excitement surrounding the King National Memorial to be built on Washington's National Mall. Within hours after its historic groundbreaking last month, the project raised another \$6 million toward its goal of \$100 million, thanks to corporate sponsorship.

Supporters of building a civil rights museum in Atlanta are hopeful the same excitement will carry over to their effort, especially in the wake of the city's King papers acquisition and the emotion surrounding the January death of King's widow, Coretta Scott King.

Organizers of such projects

say they hardly have to compete to raise money for such popular causes.

"People want to be a part of things that have a sense of permanency and purpose," said Harry E. Johnson Sr., president of the

Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project. "There's enough money to do anything we want to do. There may be a lack of interest, but there is never a lack of funds."

For proof, Franklin points to

the King Papers campaign, which came together in a matter of days in June when more than 10,000 of King's documents, notes and other items were set to be auctioned off in New York. More than 50 corpo-

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