

News at a Glance

Homicides drop in D.C. area, rise slightly in Baltimore

WASHINGTON (AP) — Homicides were down in the Washington area in 2006, while Baltimore showed a slight increase, according to preliminary figures released by police.



Dixon

There were 167 killings in the District of Columbia, down 15 percent from the 2005 total of 196.

Baltimore city recorded 274 homicides in 2006, according to preliminary figures. That was an increase from the 2005 count of 269, but significantly lower than the record 353 homicides in 1993.

Baltimore City Council President and Mayor-to-be Sheila Dixon told The (Baltimore) Sun that in recent years the federal government has focused on overseas wars instead of helping cities deal with crime. But she also said the city's agencies have to work together.

"Our police department, our state's attorney, our court system ... have to be on the same page," Dixon said.

James Baker, the mayor of Wilmington, Del., where homicides reached an all-time high of 23 in 2006, echoed Dixon's comments.

"Look, absent a federal policy with resources, the amount of killings in cities, particularly in the African-American community, is only going to get worse," Baker said.

Overall, police in the Washington metropolitan area recorded 417 homicides last year, a drop of about 10 percent from 2005, when there were 462 killings. About half of the cases have been solved.

The count by The Washington Post combined preliminary figures from D.C. and municipal, state and county police departments within the boundaries of eight Maryland counties and five jurisdictions in Virginia.

Oprah Winfrey opens school in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Oprah Winfrey opened a school Tuesday for disadvantaged girls, fulfilling a promise she made to former President Nelson Mandela six years ago and giving more than 150 students a chance for a better future.

"I wanted to give this opportunity to girls who had a light so bright that not even poverty could dim that light," Winfrey said at a news conference.

Mandela, 88, attended the opening ceremony of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in the small town of Henley-on-Klip, south of Johannesburg. He looked frail as he was helped on to the stage by his wife, Graca Machel, and Winfrey. But he beamed with joy and his speech resonated with pride.

"It is my hope that this school will become the dream of every South African girl and they will study hard and qualify for the school one day," he said in a firm voice.

Mandela thanked Winfrey for the "personal time and effort" she devoted to the school.

Singers Tina Turner, Mary J. Blige and Mariah Carey, actors Sidney Poitier and

Chris Tucker, and director Spike Lee also were in attendance. Each guest was asked to bring a personally inscribed book for the library.

The \$40 million academy aims to give 152 girls from deprived backgrounds a quality education in a country where schools are struggling to overcome the legacy of apartheid.

Jesse Jackson says Saddam hanging will make violence worse

NEW YORK (AP) — As American deaths in the Iraq war reached the sobering milestone of 3,000, a prominent civil rights leader warned that the execution of Saddam Hussein would only worsen violence there.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson also said the deposed Iraqi dictator's death would not make the United States safer.

"Killing him intensifies the violence, reduces our moral authority in the world," Jackson, who has traveled to the Middle East on peace missions, said Sunday. "Today we are not more secure. We're less secure. We've missed a moment to appeal to those in Iraq to break the cycle of violence."

Saddam was hanged Saturday, three years after being captured. He was buried Sunday. There was no immediate sign of a feared Sunni Muslim uprising in retaliation for the execution, although loyalists marched with Saddam pictures and waved Iraqi flags outside the Sunni insurgent stronghold of Ramadi.

Jackson said Saddam was not to blame for the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

'60 Minutes' has no immediate plans to replace Ed Bradley as others step up

NEW YORK (AP) — Faced with the need to replace Ed Bradley in the middle of the TV season, "60 Minutes" won't even bother.

His workload will be spread around, and, in a unique arrangement for the CBS newsmagazine, his top producer will run a reporting unit for stories available to all on-air correspondents.

"It's a long-term project to find the next full-time person who can show the abilities that are expected of a '60 Minutes' correspondent," said Jeff Fager, the show's executive producer.

Even before Bradley's death on Nov. 9, it was a transition year for TV's longest-running newsmagazine. Mike Wallace has retired, Morley Safer has cut back his hours and Dan Rather is gone. Katie Couric and Anderson Cooper are new contributors.

Bradley, who died at 65 of leukemia, had only a year to enjoy a status of first among equals at the ensemble. His was the first face shown during the weekly introductions, a subtle indication of status that only Wallace had previously achieved, and he was gone before many even realized it.



Bradley

Leaders brace for adverse school ruling

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON

Although the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of affirmative action in the University of Michigan Law School case three years ago and *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, Black leaders say affirmative action and school desegregation are among the most important issues facing



Ogletree

Black America in 2007 — both being at risk. "The Supreme Court is likely to issue a devastating opinion in the Seattle cases [this] year and it will possibly set back the premise of *Brown v. Board of Education* to provide quality education for all children," says Harvard University law professor Charles Ogletree. "And I think that it will unsettle plans by conscientious school districts, surveyors and educators."

The two cases heard by the Supreme Court recently, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* (Kentucky), could end voluntary programs that use race in order to maintain racial integration in public schools.

"I was at the argument and I heard the questions," Ogletree



says. "And there was little enthusiasm among the majority of the justices to support a voluntary integration plan that both Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Wash. had devised to protect the interest of children."

Successful campaigns to end affirmative action in Michigan, California and Washington state will likely spread, civil rights advocates say. Conservative activist Ward Connerly is researching possible ballot initiatives against affirmative action in at least nine more states.

From academia to activism, Black leaders fear 2007 could bring an end to affirmative action, causing a reversal in decades-old policies established for racial and economic justice.

If it happens, activist Al Sharpton says the same way that Blacks got equal justice programs, they will have to fight for it again.

"We got it through mass mobilization and putting pressure on the Senate and the Congress to enact legislation that would offset it. And that's the only way we're going to do it

this time," Sharpton says. "The minute we start deluding ourselves that we don't need a movement, Whites will use that as a license to stop dealing with us in ways that are adverse to our progress because they feel that they can."

What the new Democratic-majority Congress will do on behalf of Black people is yet another major issue facing Black America, political observers say.

"The 2006 mid-term election was the most important story of last year and the high

See Ruling on A9

Blacks, whites promoting Miss. Civil Rights museum

BY EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For all the talk about America being a multiethnic melting pot of cultures, the complex history of race relations in Mississippi is written primarily in two colors.



Frazier

Black and white. Now, with the advent of successful civil rights museums in

Memphis, Tenn., and Birmingham, Ala., some folks in Mississippi are starting to see a new color.

Green. As in the color of tourist dollars. Several public officials — from Republican Gov. Haley Barbour, who is white, to Democratic state Sen. Hillman Frazier of Jackson, who is black — are promoting the idea of building a museum dedicated to telling the history of the civil-rights movement in Mississippi.

"The irony is that we have the executive branch and the legislative branch in Mississippi talking about a civil rights museum. I never thought that I would live to live to see the day when this would happen," says political scientist Leslie B. McLemore, who serves on the

Jackson City Council and is director of the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy at Jackson State University.

Mississippi's civil-rights history includes slavery, lynchings and systematic suppression of voting rights. The prospect of putting that brutal narrative on

display comes during an election year, no less. Barbour and most lawmakers are expected to seek new terms in 2007.

For decades, many Mississippians have cringed at the mere mention of the state's civil rights record.

Then-Gov. Kirk Fordice, running for re-election in 1995,

roared at the Neshoba County Fair that the state should not look back.

"I don't believe we need to keep running this state by 'Mississippi Burning' and apologizing for 30 years ago," Republican Fordice said, eliciting a rowdy cheer from his

See Museum on A9

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