

# News at a Glance

## Montel Williams to try radio

**NEW YORK** — Air America Media ([www.airamerica.com](http://www.airamerica.com)) has signed a multi-year deal with Montel Williams to host "Montel Across America," which will debut on April 6. The program will air weekdays from 9 a.m. — 12 p.m. on radio stations across the country, and streamed live online at [www.airamerica.com](http://www.airamerica.com).



Williams

"After being on television for more than 17 years, I'm looking forward to engaging in lively conversations and interacting with the American public," said Williams. "Air America is providing me with the perfect environment to do this every day from New York City, as well as reporting from cities around the world as a travelling correspondent."

Williams was the Emmy-award winning host and executive producer of "The Montel Williams Show," one of the longest running daytime talk shows in the history of television. In addition to his talk show and several acting appearances on hit television programs, Williams is an accomplished author, having published eight books with four "New York Times" best-sellers.

As an entrepreneur, Williams is currently launching a multimedia business based on the "Living Well with Montel" brand, as well as creating the International Team Poker League (ITPL), acting as commissioner and chief-executive officer. He also owns the exclusive franchise rights to Fatburger in Colorado.

After being diagnosed in 1999 with multiple sclerosis, Williams established the Montel Williams MS Foundation, which has granted over \$1.5 million to research.

## Civil Rights Museum being redesigned

**MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)** — Administrators at the National Civil Rights Museum are planning to remodel the museum and seeking visitors' help.

Design firms from Boston and Washington went to Memphis this week with competing renovation plans that would remove any doubt that the museum might be a seedy motel sitting in stark contrast to the trendy art galleries, restaurants and upscale condos. The Commercial Appeal reports.

The museum opened in 1991 at the Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered in 1968, and holds exhibits tracing the history of America's struggle for equal rights.

Visitors can watch videos summarizing the design concepts and vote for features of each proposal on the museum's Web site.

Museum president Beverly Robertson said the museum renovations will be completed in 2011.

## Black lawmakers walk out of Georgia House after Obama vote

**ATLANTA (AP)** — Frustrated black lawmakers staged a walkout Friday after the Georgia House decided to delay another vote on a resolution that would have honored President Barack Obama as a politician with an "unimpeachable reputation for integrity, vision and passion."

House Speaker Glenn Richardson vowed the decision to send the resolution to a committee did not "bury" the bill, but the move outraged black lawmakers, who stalked out of the chamber seconds later. They saw it as an effort to snub the nation's first black president by a group of white Republican legislators.



Richardson

"It drips with racism," said state Rep. Al Williams, a Midway Democrat who joined about two dozen black legislators outside the chamber. "I call it just like it is."

The furor began last Thursday when the Republican-controlled House voted 70-68 to reject the resolution, which would have made Obama an honorary member of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus. The members said it would have been the first such proposal in the country.

State Rep. Austin Scott, a Tifton Republican, said he took issue with language that said "no one could be more worthy of special honor and recognition by the members of this body and the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus than this extraordinary leader."

But state Rep. Keith Heard, the resolution's sponsor, said the wording was stock language that has appeared in countless other resolutions and was approved by the Legislature's attorneys.

## Ayers says he's sorry

**MILLERSVILLE, Pa. (AP)** — Bill Ayers says he's sorry for helping found a group that carried out bombings during the Vietnam War.



Ayers

He says it was an effort to stop the deaths of thousands of U.S. servicemen and Vietnamese in the Vietnam War. He told the Intelligencer Journal newspaper in central Pennsylvania: "There has to be some accounting for those lives, too."

Ayers has served in the past on boards with now-President Barack Obama and the relationship between the two was an issue in the presidential campaign.

Ayers is now an education professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago. He spoke Thursday at Millersville University about urban education, a profession he says "is powered, at its best, by love." A small number of protesters outside were outnumbered by curious onlookers.

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Nubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636



Photo by Carole Geary

NNPA Foundation Chair Dorothy Leavell, publisher of the Obamas' hometown newspaper *The Chicago Defender*, poses with the President and First Lady.

# Black publishers give and receive honors during White House visit

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY  
NNPA EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**WASHINGTON** — A historic delegation of 50 Black publishers and their guests, who convened at the White House last week for a Black Press Week award to President Barack Obama and his family, received equal praise from the First Family for the work of the Black Press of America.

It was a delegation of the more than 200-member National Newspaper Publishers Association, honoring America's first Black President for his NNPA Newsmaker of the Year selection

by awarding him with a book of front pages of Black newspapers from his historic Nov. 4, 2008 election.

"The reason that I've been able and Michelle has been able to do what we're doing is because of the extraordinary support and thoughtfulness with which you've covered our campaigns and our activities and so I am very thankful to you," President Obama told the publishers during the ceremony in the State Dining Room March 20. "You are welcome in this house, the people's house, and we are looking forward to continuing to spread, not just our stories, but the stories of struggle and hope

and hardships that so many people are going through right now, making those stories real and putting a face to the numbers and statistics because that's how we end up being able to inspire the country as a whole to make the kind of forward progress that we need."

It was a light-hearted atmosphere for the president and First Lady Michelle Obama, dealing with dire issues, as well as for the publishers whose daily lives are focused on the long-held mission of equal justice for African-American people. In remarks

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# Tuskegee president to retire after 28 years

*Benjamin F. Payton will leave the school in 2010*

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**TUSKEGEE, Ala.** — Tuskegee University President Benjamin F. Payton has informed the board of trustees he will retire in June 2010, ending a 28-year tenure at the helm of the historically black school founded by Booker T. Washington.



Payton

Payton, who became the fifth president of Tuskegee in August 1981, was praised by trustees for successfully guiding the university through three institution-wide accreditation cycles by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and completing several major capital fund campaigns.

Andrew F. Brimmer, chairman of the board, said Payton led the university "through some very tough times to its current status of financial stability, academic excellence and even distinction in athletics."

Brimmer said Payton had to take on "tough actions at the outset of his presidency," including changing the name of the school from Tuskegee Institute, as it was known when it gained wide recognition under Washington, to Tuskegee University.

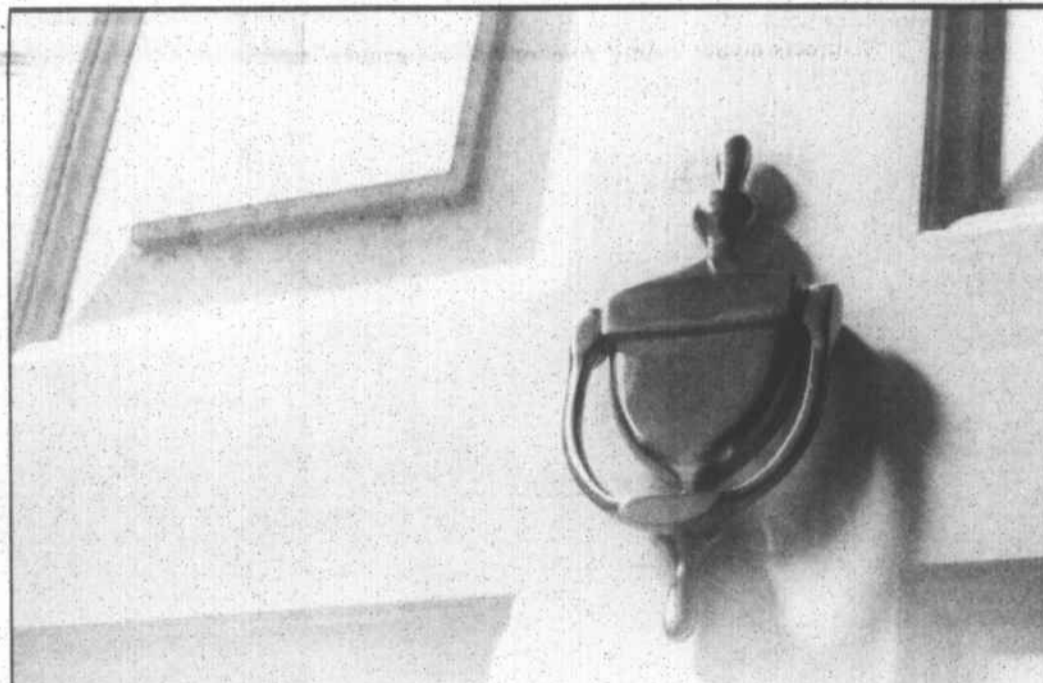
Other decisions include closing the school's costly hospital, restructuring academic programs into five colleges, developing the Tuskegee University Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center and launching the university's first Ph.D. programs.

During Payton's tenure, the university's endowment grew from under \$15 million to over \$102 million, by July 2007, according to a statement Saturday from the university.

The Orangeburg, S.C., native holds undergraduate degrees from South Carolina State University and

Harvard University, with a master's from Columbia University and a doctorate from Yale University.

Founded by Washington in 1881, the university now has about 3,000 students from more than 30 countries.



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