

# News at a Glance

## Basketball player Randy Smith dies

**NORWICH, Connecticut (AFP)** — Randy Smith, who once owned the National Basketball Association record for consecutive games played, died Thursday at the emergency room of Backus Hospital. He was 60.

Smith was a star small forward in the 1970s for the Buffalo Braves, playing from 1971 through 1983. He averaged 16.7 points, 4.6 assists and 3.7 rebounds.

Smith appeared in 906 NBA games in a row to set an all-time NBA "Ironman" mark before A.C. Green appeared in 1,192 consecutive games from 1986 through 2001.

After seven seasons with Buffalo before the team moved to San Diego, Smith went on to play for Cleveland, New York and Atlanta.



Smith

## Charges dropped in dragging death

**DALLAS (AP)** — Murder charges were dropped at the prosecution's request last week in the dragging death of a black man in east Texas, and the two white men who had been accused of killing him were released from jail.

Shannon Finley and Charles Crostley were released in Paris, Texas, after a judge granted the special prosecutor's motion to dismiss the case. The two men had been charged with fatally striking 24-year-old Brandon McClelland with a pickup truck in September following a late-night beer run the three friends had made to Oklahoma.

The case was hampered by a lack of eyewitnesses and physical evidence. Last month, a gravel truck driver gave a sworn statement acknowledging he might have accidentally run over McClelland.

"After investigation, it has been determined this case should be dismissed in the interests of justice," special prosecutor Toby Shook said. "The decision is about the state of the evidence in the case as it exists today."

Shook said the investigation will continue. The gravel truck driver is unlikely to face charges.

The dismissal was met with incredulity by civil rights activists who had protested how county authorities handled the case.

"His body was dragged, and nobody gets charged?" said Brenda Cherry, a Paris resident and the president of Concerned Citizens for Racial Equality. "Even if a trucker came forward, that's all it takes? Even the trucker's not charged?"

## Evers' family praises pavilion honor

**JACKSON, Miss. (AP)** — The widow of slain civil rights activist Medgar Evers fought back tears last week as she and dozens of others gathered at an airport pavilion featuring the words and images of the NAACP field secretary gunned down 46 years ago.

Myrlie Evers-Williams has spent a lifetime reminding others that her husband died while fighting for racial equality and said she was thankful for efforts to keep his legacy alive. She spoke at Jackson-Evers International Airport, Mississippi's largest, named in his honor.

Medgar Evers was a promoter of social change who was killed in the driveway of his Jackson home on June 12, 1963.

"I just want to thank you for what you have done — for remembering Medgar in this way because keeping his memory alive has been foremost in what I have done in my life," Evers-Williams, 76, said as she stood in the Medgar Evers Pavilion at the airport. "Two things: keeping his memory alive and taking care of his children, everything else has come after that."

She was joined by their children and grandchildren at an open house for a pavilion dedicated to his life. The pavilion was unveiled last week and the ceremony was one of several events scheduled to coincide with the 46th anniversary of Evers' death.

Byron De La Beckwith was convicted of killing Evers and sentenced to life in prison in 1994, more than 30 years after he shot Evers in the back with a rifle. Beckwith died in 2001.

## Connecticut apologizes for slavery

**HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)** — Connecticut became the second northern state to apologize for slavery, segregation and other racist policies its lawmakers once condoned after a unanimous vote last week by the state Senate.

The resolution expresses "profound contrition" for the General Assembly's role in perpetuating slavery and other practices. The House approved it last week.

New Jersey last year became the first northern state to apologize for slavery. Five other states — Alabama, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia — have approved similar measures.

Slavery was practiced in Connecticut in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries before it was abolished in 1848. About 5,100 slaves — or about 3 percent of the population — lived in the Connecticut colony in the mid-1770s.

"I believe the brand of slavery still exists throughout the African-American community to this day, so I believe an apology and a recognition of the impact of slavery ... is something that will go a long way in making things different," said Democratic state Sen. Toni Harp, a black legislator from New Haven.

The resolution includes a provision to emphasize the apology is not meant to provide grounds for reparation claims, lawsuits or other legal actions.

Connecticut was an early leader in the mid-1800s abolition movement, but only after nearly three centuries of allowing and profiting from slavery within its own borders.

Connecticut legislators rejected emancipation bills in 1777, 1779 and 1780, and its new state constitution in 1818 specifically denied blacks the right to vote.

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# First Lady inspires D.C. graduates

BY DOROTHY ROWLEY  
AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

**WASHINGTON (NNPA)** — First Lady Michelle Obama recently told a high school graduating class in the District of Columbia that she could relate to their anxieties as they prepare to tackle their next round of educational goals.

In commencement activities held June 3 at Howard University, Obama shared with the Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School Class of 2009 her own fears about starting classes at Ivy League Princeton University.

In doing so, she assured her attentive audience that any doubts they have about how well they would perform in college were not unusual.

"For those of you who may be doubting and questioning yourselves — maybe, [because] you may be just ready to roll," said Obama. "But if you are, trust me I know how you feel. I can assure you you're more than ready so get to work, and congratulations."

All 98 of the school's graduating seniors are attending college.

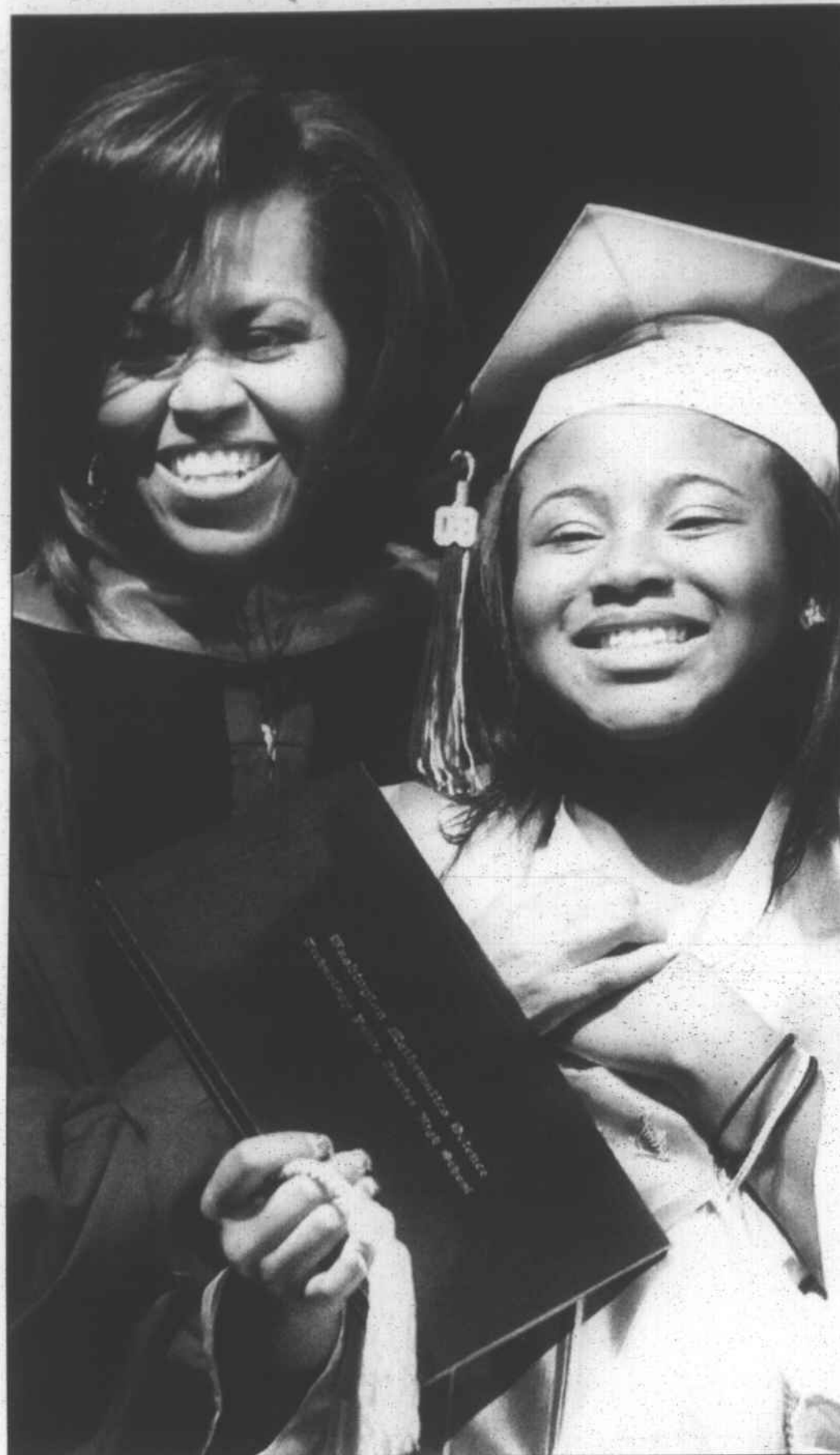
Class member Jasmine Williams wrote a letter to the Obamas inviting the first lady — or the president — to speak.

"Where we come from, being a young minority means we have little chance to succeed," Jasmine wrote. "The world already has a predetermined thought that our generation is full of criminals."

She continued, "There are a lot of us that live above the influence and strive to be our best."

Obama also took the opportunity to pitch the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor, who if confirmed, becomes the first Hispanic woman to

See Obama on A11



UPI Photo by Roger L. Wollenberg

Graduate Martina Partee stands next to First Lady Michelle Obama during the commencement ceremony for Washington Mathematics Science Technology Public Charter High School.

# Biden honors late Rep. Tubbs Jones

BY DENA POTTER  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WILLIAMSBURG, Va.** — America is at "one of those inflection points in history," where the decisions being made will influence generations to come, Vice President Joe Biden told members of the black caucus and their spouses Saturday.

Biden said the problems facing America are immediate, and that the administration can't pick and choose which issues to tackle.

"We don't do anything in Pakistan, it careens off a cliff. We don't do anything in Iraq, we don't do anything with Iran... We don't do anything in energy, it's not like things aren't going to get worse. We don't do anything on the environment, it doesn't mean it doesn't get worse," he said.

"The downside's big, man," he said. "We miss, we miss a generational opportunity."

Biden talked about progress that's been made — especially in race relations — during a fundraiser for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the Congressional Black Caucus Spouses at Kingsmill Resort & Spa.

He spoke of watching Wilmington, Del., go up in flames after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and how the National Guard protected parts of the city for months, including a train station in a black neighborhood. Then he talked about leaving that same train sta-

tion on his way to be sworn in as vice president, and the reaction of the people who lined the journey holding their infants high so they could witness history.

"Don't tell me there is no progress," he said the raucous cheers. "Don't tell me there is anything beyond our capabilities."

Biden also paid tribute to

the late Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio, who died in August of a brain hemorrhage.

He described Tubbs

See Biden on A11



Tubbs Jones



Harp

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<b>alive after five</b>	CORPENING PLAZA THURSDAY 5:30PM-8:30PM
<b>JUNE 11   DIRTY DOGS</b>	IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZIGGY'S PRESENTS
<b>downtown jazz</b>	CORPENING PLAZA FRIDAY 5:30PM-8:30PM
<b>JUNE 12   MELVIN MILLER &amp; TONI REDD</b>	IN ASSOCIATION WITH POST ENTERTAINMENT
<b>summer on the grade</b>	SIXTH & TRADE ST. SATURDAY 7:00PM-10:00PM
<b>JUNE 13   STEADY ROLLIN' BOB MARGOLIN</b>	IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE GARAGE

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*Barbara A. Steele  
Retired School Teacher  
Crisis Control Ministry Interviewer*

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