

Now at a glance

First female NAACP chair dies

The NAACP family is saddened by the passing of Margaret Bush Wilson, an activist and lawyer who was the first African-American woman to chair the NAACP Board of Directors. Wilson died on Aug. 11, at the age of 90.

The importance of the NAACP and its mission were instilled in Wilson early in life, as both of her parents were active in the St. Louis Branch of the NAACP, of which she became a member as a youth. Following her graduation from Talladega College in 1940, she entered Lincoln University School of Law in Missouri, set up one year earlier after the Supreme Court ruled that black students must be admitted to the University of Missouri Law School or provide equal educational opportunities elsewhere.

In 1953, following her graduation, she incorporated black brokers, organized by her father, who brought the successful *Shelley vs. Kramer* case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1956, she began work as volunteer for the St. Louis Branch NAACP when they formed a Job Opportunity Council to get local white businessmen to hire black citizens. In 1958, she became president of the St. Louis Branch.

In early 1960, she organized the first statewide NAACP Conference in Missouri which became the Missouri State Conference of NAACP Branches, of which she also served as President. She was later elected to the NAACP Board of Directors in 1963 and was a member for the next twelve years, until her election as Chairman in 1975 and served in this position for nine years through 1983.

After her election as Chairman, when male board members inquired "What shall we call you? Chairperson? Chairlady?" she responded, "As long as you recognize that I'm Chairman of the Board, I don't care what you call me."

Man pleads guilty to Facebook threats

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — An African-American man from Mississippi admits posing as a white supremacist to send a death threat across state lines by Facebook.

The U.S. Attorney's Office says 20-year-old Dyron L. Hart of Poplarville pleaded guilty last week in federal court to making a threat in November 2008.

Hart admitted creating a name and using a white supremacist's photo to pose as a white man who planned to kill blacks because Barack Obama had been elected president.

He originally was charged with threatening three black students at Nicholls State — where he had attended one semester — but pleaded guilty to one count.

He sent the threats from a computer in Poplarville.

The maximum sentence is five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine; sentencing is Nov. 18.

Head of seminary named African ambassador

ATLANTA (AP) — The head of Atlanta's Interdenominational Theological Center has been named the U.S. ambassador to the African Union, an intergovernmental organization consisting of 53 African states.

ITC officials announced last week that Michael A. Battle has accepted the new post after six years at the historically black seminary. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Aug. 7.

A swearing in ceremony has been scheduled for Aug. 21 in Washington. The ITC board plans to name an interim president by the end of the month and will begin a search for a new leader to put in place by the 2010-11 school year.

No charges for white cop who killed black colleague

NEW YORK (AP) — A white police officer who killed an off-duty black colleague in a friendly fire incident that raised questions about racial profiling will not face criminal charges, prosecutors said last Thursday.

After hearing from 20 witnesses and examining 68 documents, a grand jury voted not to indict Officer Andrew Dunton in the May 28 shooting of Officer Omar Edwards on a dark street, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said.

Edwards, 25, had drawn his gun and was chasing a man who had broken into his car. Dunton apparently mistook the off-duty officer for an armed suspect and shot him.

Since then, some civil rights advocates have charged that race was a factor in the shooting.

The Rev. Al Sharpton said that the decision was expected, as grand juries rarely indict officers in friendly fire shootings.

"We will continue to call on the governor to authorize a special prosecutor in this case," Sharpton said.

Edwards' mother, Natalia Harding, said in a television interview that she believed Dunton shot her son because he was black.

"I would like to see him go to jail," Harding said.



Edwards

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Group wants officers to give up Tasers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBUQUERQUE — Members of a Hispanic rights group are calling for authorities to give up their Taser guns:

A crowd from the League of United Latin American Citizens chanted Saturday, "Tasers are lethal, make them illegal" at Albuquerque's City Hall.

The protesters claim the weapon is deadly, and authorities are using it target ethnic minorities more frequently than whites.

They want lawmakers to take the high-voltage weapons away from law enforcement officers.

"Our community and the African American community are getting tased and getting killed by these taser guns," New Mexico's LULAC district director Ralph Aréllanes said.

There have been 437 stun gun deaths nationwide since the weapon was introduced in 2000, according to statistics compiled by LULAC, which is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights organization.

The protesters also pointed to cases in New Mexico in which they say Tasers were used inappropriately.

In July, 14-year-old Kailee Martinez was shot with stun

gun darts in the hip and head by the Tucumcari Police Chief Bobby Rose, who was later placed on administrative leave over the incident. It took 18 staples and six stitches to piece Martinez's head back together.

In Raton, Jesse Saenz died in 2007 after he was shot with a Taser gun. Three officers face charges in connection with Saenz's death.

"We don't want to come across (as) not supporting law enforcement, but we want to hold those accountable who are using these types of tools and not using their good judgment," LULAC State Director Pablo Martinez said.

A Taser shocks with 50,000 volts, temporarily disabling its target.

The Albuquerque Police Department declined to comment on the protest, but said it has not had problems with the use of Taser weapons.

"The department feels it's a good tool; it keeps the officer safe, it keeps the citizens safe and it saves lives," Albuquerque police spokeswoman Nadine Hamby said.

Albuquerque police cadets get tasered during their training for the department, Hamby said.



Highly Unlikely Allies

Sharpton, Gingrich push Obama's school reforms

BY LIBBY QUAD THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Education Secretary Arne Duncan is joining forces with two unlikely allies, the Rev. Al Sharpton and Republican former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, to push cities to fix failing schools.

The trio will visit Philadelphia, New Orleans and Baltimore later this year. They plan to add more stops as their tour progresses.

"These are cities that have real challenges but also tremendous hope and opportunity," Duncan told reporters on a conference call last Thursday.

Duncan and Gingrich were scheduled to be guests on Sharpton's radio show Friday afternoon. The reverend was recording his show in Atlanta during the National Action Network's annual conference.

The idea came from a meeting they had with President Barack Obama in May at the White House.

Education is high on Obama's priority list. He is seeking to boost achievement, keep kids from dropping out of high school and push every student to pursue some form of higher education.

The president has vowed to make the United States the world leader in the number of people who graduate from college.

He argues that students who do better in school will help themselves in a work force that increasingly depends on high-skilled jobs, and that the country will benefit as well.

Obama discussed education issues in an interview with Damon Weaver, an 11-year-old Florida student.

"On Sept. 8, when young people across the country will have just started or are about to go back to school, I'm going to be making a big speech to young people all across the country about the importance of education, the importance of staying in school, how we want



Sharpton



Gingrich

to improve our education system and why it's so important for the country," Obama said.

Sharpton, the liberal Democrat and community activist, said teachers and administrators aren't the only ones responsible for improving schools.

"The parents need to be challenged with the message of 'no excuses,'" Sharpton said.

Interviewed on NBC's "Today" show last Friday, Gingrich and Sharpton were asked how they had agreed to work together on education in view of the many differences they've had on other issues.

"I think that he has it exactly right, that education has to be the No. 1 civil right of the 21st century, and I've been passionate about reforming education," Gingrich said. "And we can't get it done as a partisan issue."

Sharpton said the time has come to "change the conversation ... to say we need to put everybody's hands on the table."

He said he believes that "if

Gingrich applauded Obama for showing "real courage on the issue of charter schools." Obama wants to increase the number of charter schools, which have a controversial history and are a divisive issue for his party's base.

Charters get public tax dollars, but operate free from local school board control and usually from union contracts, making them a target of criticism by many teachers' union members.

"I strongly believe that when you can find common ground, we should be able to put other differences aside to achieve a common goal," Gingrich said.

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