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'Modified duty' for medics after fatal NYC arrest

By Verena Dobnik

NEW YORK (AP) - Four emergency workers involved in the medical response for a New York City man who died in police custody after being put in an apparent chokehold have been placed barred from responding to 911 calls, the Fire Department of New York said.

The two EMTs and two paramedics removed from the city's emergency response system are the latest public safety workers to face reassignment as questions mount about Thursday's death of Eric Garner. Two police officers - including the one who put his arm around Garner's neck - have been put on desk duty.

The medics' modified duty restrictions will remain in effect pending an investigation into their actions, fire department spokesman James Long said Sunday.

Video of the arrest shot by a bystander shows one officer wrap his arm around Garner's neck as he is taken to the ground - arrested for allegedly selling untaxed, loose cigarettes - while Garner shouts, "I can't breathe!"

The fire department disclosed the medics' reassignment after a second video surfaced showing at least a half-dozen police officers and emergency workers circling a man who appears to be Garner lying on the sidewalk, handcuffed and unresponsive.

Long said placing the emergency workers on modified duty - which includes a notice in their state health department file that they are not to respond to medical calls - is department protocol when questions arise about a medical response and was not a reaction to the post-arrest video.

The fire department said the emergency workers are employees of Richmond County Medical Center, the Staten Island hospital where Garner was taken by ambulance and pronounced dead. Authorities said the father of six likely had a heart attack, but more tests are needed to determine the exact cause and manner of his death.

A Richmond County Medical Center spokeswoman did not immediately respond to messages.

Long said the fire department took action against the hospital's emergency responders because it oversees the city's 911 system, a patchwork of public and privately-operated emergency services.

The restrictions on the medical personnel came a day after the police department said it reassigned Officer Daniel Pantaleo, the officer who used the apparent chokehold on Garner, and another unidentified officer while prosecutors and internal affairs detectives investigate. Chokeholds are banned under department policy.

The department said it stripped Pantaleo, an eight-year veteran of the force, of his gun and badge.

Court records show that within the past two years, three men sued Pantaleo in federal court over allegedly unlawful, racially motivated arrests. Pantaleo did not return a telephone message.

Earlier Sunday, the Rev. Al Sharpton demanded justice for Garner and accountability from citizens who attack police officers during an appeal from the pulpit at Manhattan's Riverside Church.

Garner was "choked by New York City policemen," the Harlem preacher told the congregation. "What bothers me is that the nation watches a man say 'I can't breathe' and the choking continues, and police surround him and none of them even say, 'Wait a minute, stop! He can't breathe!'"



MS. ALICE COACHMAN DAVIS

First black woman to win Olympic gold dies in Georgia

ALBANY, Ga. (AP) - The first black woman to win an Olympic gold medal, Alice Coachman Davis, died early July 14 in south Georgia. She was 90.

Davis' death was confirmed by her daughter, Evelyn Jones.

Davis won Olympic gold in the high jump at the 1948 games in London with an American and Olympic record of 1.68 meters (5.51 feet), according to USA Track and Field, the American governing body of the sport. Davis was inducted to the USA Track and Field Hall of fame in 1975, and was inducted to the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame in 2004.

"Going into the USOC Hall of Fame is as good as it gets," she told The Associated Press in a 2004 interview. "It's like Cooperstown, Springfield and Canton," she said, referring to the sites of other prominent Halls of Fame.

Davis was the only American woman to win a gold medal at the 1948 games. According to Olympic historian David Wallechinsky, Coachman was honored with a 175-mile motorcade in Georgia when she returned from London. However, the black and white audiences were segregated at her official ceremony in Albany.

Recollecting her career in the 2004 interview, Davis speculated that she could have won even more Olympic medals, but the Olympics weren't held in 1940 or 1944 because of World War II. She retired at age 25 after winning the gold medal in London.

"I know I would have won in 1944, at least," said Davis. "I was starting to peak then. It really feels good when Old Glory is raised and the National Anthem is played."

Davis attended Tuskegee University and also played basketball on a team that won three straight conference basketball titles. She won 25 national track and field championships - including 10 consecutive high jump titles - between 1939 and 1948, according to USA Track and Field.

Growing up in the deep South during the era of segregation, Davis had to overcome multiple challenges.

The New Georgia Encyclopedia says she was prohibited from using public sports facilities because of her race, so she used whatever equipment she could cobble together to practice her jumping.

"My dad did not want me to travel to Tuskegee and then up north to the Nationals," Davis told the AP. "He felt it was too dangerous. Life was very different for African-Americans at that time. But I came back and showed him my medal and talked about all the things I saw. He and my mom were very proud of me."

Davis won her first national high jump title at age 16 according to USA Track and Field, and worked as a school teacher and track coach after retiring. An elementary school in her home town is named in her honor and opened in August 1999 according to Dougherty County schools officials.

Vera Williams, a secretary at Meadows Funeral Home in Albany, said Meadows will be handling Davis' memorial service, but plans haven't been finalized yet. Davis' cause of death was not immediately disclosed.



THE NEW CAPTAIN AMERICA

Marvel unveils black Captain America

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The new Captain America will be an African-American.

Marvel superhero Sam "The Falcon" Wilson will take over as the patriotic Avenger in an upcoming installment of the long-running comic book series, Marvel Comics chief creative officer Joe Quesada said July 16 during an appearance on Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report."

Wilson first appeared as winged superhero Falcon in 1969 and was one of the first African-American superheroes.

The change will come this November in "All-New Captain America" No. 1. The character was recently portrayed by actor Anthony Mackie in the film "Captain America: The Winter Soldier."

Marvel Executive Editor Tom Brevoort said in a statement that former Captain America Steve Rogers will be a mentor to Wilson as he takes on the new role.

"Steve's spirit is as willing as ever, but his body is no longer up to the task of being Captain America, so he'll employ his skills as the new Cap's remote strategic adviser," Brevoort said. "He'll also tutor Sam in how to throw the shield, a skill that's deceptively difficult for the new Cap to master."

It's not the first time an African-American character has portrayed Captain America in the comics.

Several characters have taken up the shield for Rogers over the 73-year-old history of the character, including an African-American character named Isaiah Bradley in the 2003 series "Truth: Red, White, and Black."

Marvel has announced several superhero shake-ups this week, including that hammer-wielding Thor will now be portrayed as a woman and Tony "Iron Man" Stark is relocating to San Francisco and releasing a new app.

Online:
<http://marvel.com>



President Obama hugs a young girl in the audience following his remarks on the economy at Sheesman Park, in Denver Colo. July 9. (Official white House photo by Pete Souza)