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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Scalia's Racist View of Black Students Based on 'Myth'

Republican nominee to Supreme Court

By George E. Curry
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George Curry Media

WASHINGTON - Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's view that students of color are "less able" than those at "a less advanced ... slower track" schools is a myth that has been thoroughly debunked. Scalia touched off a firestorm Wednesday as the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, a case brought by a white student challenging the university's affirmative action program.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The university selects 75 percent of its freshmen class (some years it has been as much as 92 percent) through a process that guarantees admission to the top 10 percent of each high school graduating class. The remaining students are chosen through an individualized affirmative action program that considers such factors as demonstrated leadership abilities, extracurricular activities, honors and awards, essays, work experience, community service, and special

circumstances such as applicant's socioeconomic status, family composition, special family responsibilities, socioeconomic status of applicant's high school and race.

Even though points are assigned to any category, Abigail Fisher decided to sue on the basis of race, saying the consideration of race violated the Equal (Continued On Page 2)



JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA



President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama dance with a stormtrooper and R2-D2 from Star Wars in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House, Dec. 18. (Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson)

Leonard, who created Harvard affirmative-action policy, dies

WASHINGTON (AP) - Walter Leonard, an attorney and university administrator who designed an admissions process at Harvard University that led to more minority students being admitted, has died. He was 86.

Leonard died Dec. 8 in Kensington, Maryland, of complications from Alzheimer's disease, said his wife, Betty Leonard. The couple lived in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

In 1971, Leonard was named as a special assistant to Harvard president Derek Bok. Leonard had already worked as an assistant dean and assistant director of admissions at Harvard Law School, where he was credited with increasing the number of black, Latino and female students.

The admissions formula he created for the entire university included race or ethnicity as one of many factors that could weigh in a prospective student's favor. The affirmative-action policy was emulated by other universities and has survived four decades of constitutional scrutiny. However, similar policies at the University of Texas are currently under review by the Supreme Court.

At the time Leonard crafted the policy at Harvard, the university was in danger of not meeting federal standards for admission of minorities. Bok told Harvard Law Today that Leonard helped the university become more diverse both in its student body and on its faculty.

"The Harvard model provides a standard," Ronald Workin of the New York University School of Law wrote in an essay for the 2002 book "The Affirmative Action Debate." "If the admissions officers of other universities are satisfied that their plan is like the Harvard plan in all pertinent respects, they can proceed in confidence."

From 1976 to 1983, Leonard served as president of historically black Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he raised \$12 million to help rescue the school from financial difficulties.

Leonard was born in Alma, Georgia, in 1929. At age 16, he enlisted in the Coast Guard during World War II. He attended several historically black universities and earned a law degree from Howard University in his mid-20s. He worked as a waiter in Washington to earn money for tuition.

In 2011, Leonard and Bok were awarded Harvard Law School's highest honor, the medal of freedom.

Related story on page 2.



Walter J. Leonard, left, in 2011 with Derek C. Bok, a former dean of Harvard Law School and president of Harvard University. (Credit: Martha Stewart Harvard Law Today)

Henderson resident shot, killed in Durham

(AP) - Durham police have identified a man who was shot and killed in the city.

Police spokesman Wil Glenn says that 21-year-old Jamel Small of Henderson, North Carolina, was found dead in a vehicle from a gunshot wound.

Police responded around 9 p.m. on Thurs., Dec. 18 to a report of a shooting.

North Carolina redistricting upheld again by state justices

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina's highest court on Dec. 18 again upheld maps drawn by Republicans for General Assembly and congressional districts, months after the U.S. Supreme Court told state judges to review boundaries through the lens of its Alabama redistricting decision.

A majority on the state Supreme Court reaffirmed its December 2014 decision upholding the boundaries, finding that they still withstood the scrutiny of federal and state constitutional and redistricting guidelines.

This latest legal inspection also included the U.S. Supreme Court's majority opinion in March that Alabama lawmakers had relied too much on "mechanical" numerical percentages while drawing legislative districts in which blacks comprised a majority of the population. The federal justices threw out the first North Carolina Supreme Court ruling and told the state court to try again.

Friday's ruling still keeps in place the boundaries approved by the GOP-led legislature in 2011 and used in the 2012 and 2014 elections. They have helped Republicans expand and sustain their majorities in the state House and Senate and hold 10 of the 13 seats in North Carolina's congressional delegation.

The ruling also makes it more likely that 2016 primary elections set for March 15 will be held under the same boundaries. Two other redistricting lawsuits are pending in federal courts.

The ruling "once again makes clear the General Assembly protected the rights of voters and established voting boundaries that are fair and legal," redistricting leaders Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, and Sen. Bob Rucho, R-Mecklenburg, said in a news release.

Democrat Margaret Dickson of Fayetteville, a former lawmaker and a lead plaintiff in the case, said a petition will be filed quickly with the U.S. Supreme Court to rehear the case. Friday's ruling reflects "continued misunderstanding of the facts in this case and the law," Dickson said.

Dickson is one of dozens of Democratic voters who, along with election reform and civil rights groups, challenged North Carolina's maps. They said the Alabama decision affirmed their arguments that GOP mapmakers created too many unnecessary and irregularly shaped majority-black districts that amounted to racial gerrymandering. They say surrounding districts became more white and Republican.

Looking again at the 2013 ruling of a panel of three North Carolina trial court judges who held a trial on about 30 of the districts and upheld the maps, Associate Justice Paul Newby wrote the lines still didn't violate the rights of those who sued.

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