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Federal panel strikes down N. Carolina legislative districts

Justice James Wynn Says Blacks Suffered Harm

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - Federal judges on Aug. 11 struck down nearly 30 North Carolina House and Senate districts as illegal racial gerrymanders, but will allow General Assembly elections to be held using them this fall.

The decision by a three-judge panel comes six months after another set of judges struck down North Carolina's congressional districts for similar reasons. Thursday's (Aug. 11) ruling covering 19 House and nine Senate districts is yet another blow to the GOP lawmakers in North Carolina, which has seen several laws it enacted either partially or wholly overturned by the federal courts.

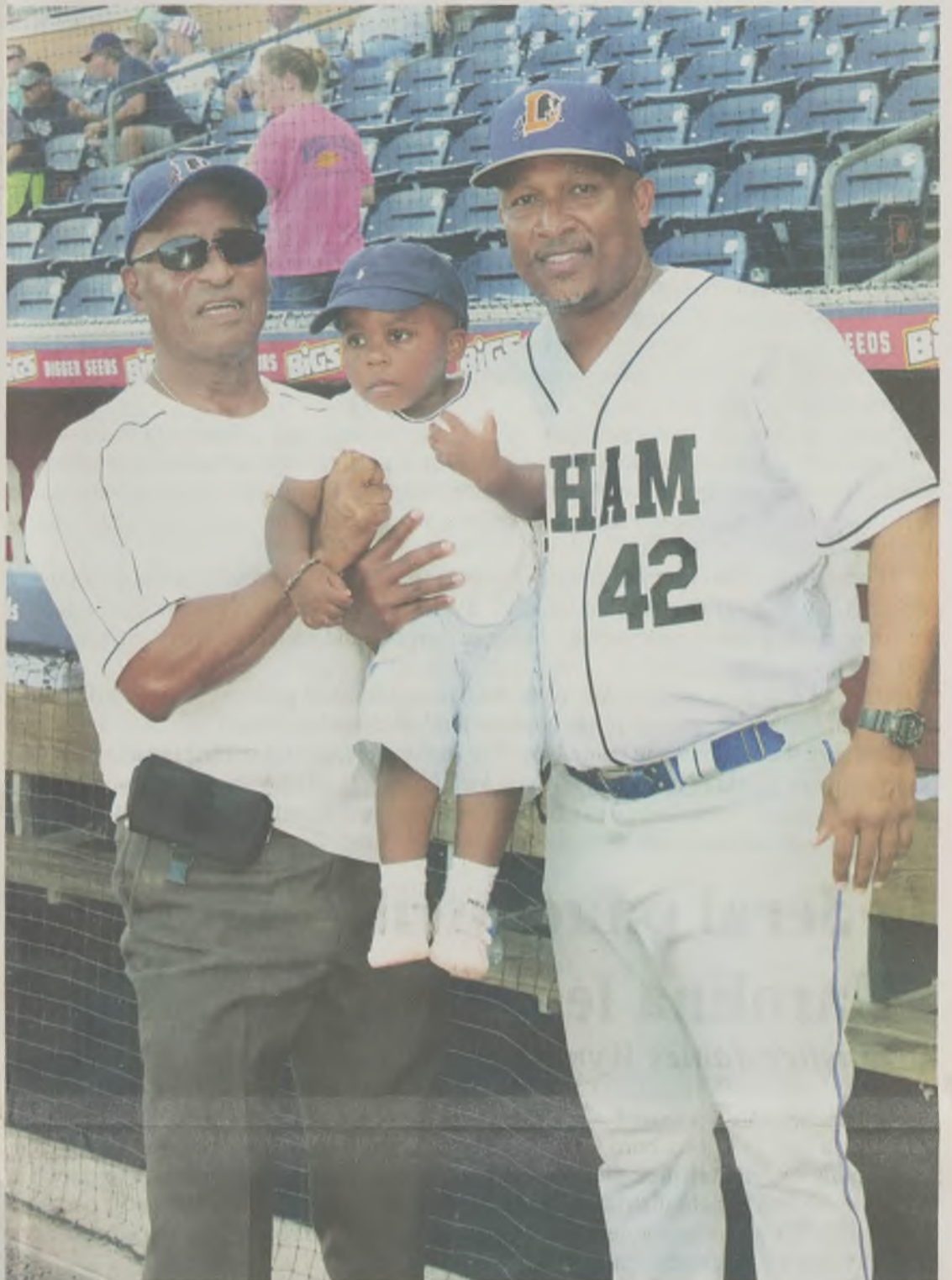
The U.S. Supreme Court announced in June that it would hear the appeals of Republican state leaders in that case, where two majority-black congressional districts were thrown out. The previous map drawn in 2011 and still being challenged helped give the state GOP more seats within the congressional delegation in the swing state.

The legislative maps, also approved in 2011, also helped Republicans pad their majorities in the two chambers after they took control of the legislature for the first time in 140 years the year before.

Writing for the panel in Thursday's (Aug. 11) ruling, U.S. Circuit Judge James Wynn said requiring lawmakers to redraw maps now would result in confusion for voters, candidates and election officials. State lawmakers will be required to fashion new plans when they reconvene for their legislative session early next year.

Postponing the 2016 legislative elections "would cause significant and undue disruption to North Carolina's election process," Wynn wrote. "Nonetheless, plaintiffs, and thousands of other North Carolina citizens, have suffered severe constitutional harms stemming from defendants' creation of 28 district racially gerrymandered in violation of the equal protection clause."

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The Durham Bulls baseball team celebrated local Negro League players on Sun., Aug. 14 at the Durham Bulls Ball Park. At left is Dickie Edwards of the Indianapolis Clowns. Edwards and the Indianapolis Clowns were in "Bingo Long and the Traveling All-Stars" movie with Richard Pryor. At right is Ozzie Timmons, hitting coach. The Little Leaguer, center, is Edwards' grandson, 2-year-old Ashton. See photos on page 7.



NCCU Eagle smoved in fo the start of a new year. See photos on page 7. (NCCU Photo)

150 years On: Johnson C. Smith marks university founding

CHARLOTTE (AP) - Johnson C. Smith University is kicking off a yearlong celebration marking the 150th anniversary of the university's founding.

The historically black university in Charlotte has a student body of about 1,500 and was chartered in 1867.

Special programs are being planned at the university throughout the coming school year. The new academic year began on Aug. 15 with an event on campus featuring coffee and an address by university president Ronald L. Carter.

The university's sesquicentennial logo is also being unveiled and 150 biodegradable balloons in the school colors of gold and blue are being released.

Michael Jordan pledges \$5 million to African-American museum

WASHINGTON (AP) - Michael Jordan has made another major donation, pledging \$5 million to the Smithsonian's new African-American history museum on the National Mall.

Officials at the National Museum of African American History and Culture announced the gift from the basketball great Aug. 8. The museum is set to open Sept. 24.

In recognition of the gift, the museum will name a section of its sports gallery after Jordan. He also donated a jersey he wore during the 1996 NBA Finals to the museum's collection.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to support this museum," Jordan said in a statement. "I also am indebted to the historic contributions of community leaders and athletes such as Jesse Owens, whose talent, commitment and perseverance broke racial barriers and laid the groundwork for the successful careers of so many African Americans in athletics and beyond."

Museum Director Lonnie Bunch said the gift will aid the museum's vision of exploring how black athletes changed sports and changed American society.

"We are extremely grateful to Michael Jordan for his game-changing support," Bunch said in a statement. "His gift will enable our visitors to explore how sports were used to break barriers as a way to gain full participation in American society."

Last month Jordan spoke out on racial tensions in America in hopes of easing conflicts between blacks and law enforcement.

The NBA great and Charlotte Hornets owner also announced he was giving \$1 million to the Institute for Community-Police Relations and another \$1 million to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The aim is to help build trust after several shootings across the country.

Justice Dept. report critical of zero-tolerance policing

By Eric Tucker

WASHINGTON (AP) _ To supporters, zero-tolerance policing has long represented a logical crime-fighting approach: Crack down on minor infractions before they mushroom into more serious and disruptive violence.

But a scathing federal government report on the Baltimore Police Department suggests the costs of that strategy outweigh any reduction in crime. The Justice Department report released Wednesday blames zero-tolerance policing for a legacy of discriminatory law enforcement in which black residents are disproportionately stopped and searched without cause.

"The police department's 'zero tolerance' street enforcement strategy became a quest to produce large numbers of enforcement actions _ pedestrian stops in particular _ often without enough consideration of their limited impact on solving crime and their caustic damage to community relationships," Vanita Gupta, head of the Justice Department's civil rights division, said at a news conference.

The conclusion forcefully rejects a strategy critics condemn as unduly harsh and one that has fallen out of favor in some of the same cities, including Baltimore, where it was developed and regularly employed. The report also revives a public dialogue that surfaced repeatedly on the presidential campaign trail, particularly as former Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, who still defends the zero-tolerance policy, sought the Democratic nomination.

Over the years, the strategy has divided academics and police and government officials.

"It reflects a debate that's been going on for quite a while, and to the extent that we can find the government acknowledging those costs and downsides, it's about time," said David Harris, a University of Pittsburgh law professor who specializes in police policy and conduct.

Zero-tolerance emerged as a popular strategy in Baltimore more than 15 years ago. Its effectiveness was touted by O'Malley, who was elected in 1999 at a time when homicides were regularly topping 300 a year. A similar "broken windows" philosophy was promoted even earlier in New York City and elsewhere, with the theory that policing petty offenses, such as graffiti and public urination, can protect against more serious crimes.

In Baltimore, officials advocated "stop and frisk" policies and cracked down on public drunkenness, disorderly conduct and similar offenses. In 2005, more than 100,000 people were arrested _ roughly one sixth of the city's population.

The city's homicides remained below 300 for the next decade, but complaints swiftly emerged that citizens were being targeted for misdemeanor offenses. A grand jury (Continued On Page 2)