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White Rock Baptist Church, 3400 Fayetteville Street in Durham, will present a Community Gospel Concert featuring Durham's own pastor Shirley Caesar as part of the church's 150th anniversary celebration Sunday, September 25, beginning at 4:30 p.m., in the auditorium at Hillside High School. Tickets are available online at whiterockbc.eventbrite.com, as well as in the church office. Pastor Caesar is widely known as the "First Lady of Gospel Music", and was recently honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Lawyer: Former Mississippi officer indicted in 2015 shooting

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) - A lawyer said Sept. 8 that a former Mississippi police officer who is white has been indicted in the October 2015 shooting death of a black man.

Attorney Jim Waide said a prosecutor told him Canyon Boykin, a white former police officer in Columbus, has been indicted for manslaughter in the death of Ricky Ball. Boykin hasn't yet been served with the indictment, but Waide said he's scheduled to appear in court Sept. 9 in Columbus.

District Attorney Scott Colom transferred the case to Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood in July, saying it would prevent appearance of bias. Hood's office agreed to present the case to a Lowndes County grand jury.

A spokeswoman for Hood declined to comment Sept. 8, citing court rules. Indictments remain secret until served in Mississippi.

Boykin has said he shot Ball after the 26-year-old appeared to point a gun at Boykin during a foot chase. Ball's family has disputed whether Boykin had cause to shoot Ball, one of many shootings under heightened scrutiny after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2015.

Philip Stinson Sr., a criminal justice professor at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, found that from 2005 to 2015, 65 police officers were charged with murder or manslaughter after shooting and killing someone while on duty. Stinson found that only 22 percent of those charged through 2014 had been convicted. Stinson said 18 officers were charged in 2015, the most during the time period.

"Juries seem reluctant to second-guess the split second life-or-death decisions of police officers to employ deadly force in street encounters," Stinson wrote in an online research brief.

Waide said in July that Boykin's actions were justified, saying there was "absolutely no basis for a criminal indictment."

The city fired Boykin as he was trying to resign within weeks of the shooting, saying he had broken department policy by not turning on his body camera, by inviting his then-fiancee to ride along with the patrol without permission, and by making social media posts that were derogatory toward African-Americans, women and disabled people.

Boykin sued the city in February, claiming officials violated his First Amendment rights by firing him over social media posts, violating his due process rights by not giving him an unbiased hearing, and knuckling under to "uninformed public pressure." He's seeking money damages and reinstatement in a suit that remains pending. City officials have denied wrongdoing.

In the lawsuit, Boykin said he shocked Ball with a stun gun, and then saw while Ball was lying on the ground that he had a handgun. Boykin said that Ball recovered from the shock and began to run again, turning as if to shoot the officer. Boykin said that's when he shot Ball. Hit twice by bullets, Ball was taken to a local hospital and died from blood loss.

A pistol that had been reported stolen from a Columbus police officer's home was found near Ball's body, as was a substance believed to be marijuana, authorities said. Boykin said Ball also threw away some cocaine he was carrying during the chase.

Investigators have released no findings on Boykin's claims. Colom said in July that because he deals so closely with local police and is the former Columbus city prosecutor, people could question his impartiality.

Colom, who himself is black, unseated longtime prosecutor Forrest Allgood last year in an expensive race where Colom said he would spend less time prosecuting people for low-level drug crimes. Liberal financier George Soros spent more than \$700,000 to support Colom and attack Allgood, who had attracted criticism for prosecuting people later found innocent.

Appeals court blocks proof-of-citizenship voting requirement

By Sam Hananel

WASHINGTON (AP) - A federal appeals court on Sept. 9 blocked Kansas, Georgia and Alabama from requiring residents to prove they are U.S. citizens when registering to vote using a national form.

The 2-1 ruling is a victory for voting rights groups who said a U.S. election official illegally changed proof-of-citizenship requirements on the federal registration form at the behest of the three states.

People registering to vote in other states are only required to swear that they are citizens, not show documentary proof.

The three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia acted swiftly in the case, issuing a two-page, unsigned ruling just a day after hearing oral arguments. A federal judge in July had refused to block the requirement while the case is considered on the merits.

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A Correction



Ms. Mayme Webb-Bledsoe was honored as an honoree at the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People Founder's Banquet. She was misidentified in the Sept. 3 issue. We regret the error and apologize to Ms. Webb-Bledsoe and Mrs. Annie Clement.



Michael Palmer, chair Civic Committee, Durham Committee, left, is shown with Mrs. Annie Clement, wife of the late A.J. Howard Clement, III who was remembered during the Durham Committee Founder's Banquet. She was misidentified in the Sept. 3 issue.

Eyes on North Carolina as GOP-led board settles voting

By Gary Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina's Board of Elections worked county by county Sept. 8 to approve early-voting plans that were redrawn after a federal court voided much of the state's election law as discriminatory toward African-Americans.

The board's three Republicans and two Democrats debated before a standing-room-only audience that was watching carefully as they settled disputes in 33 of the state's 100 counties where local boards failed to present unanimous plans.

Generally, the state board was favoring the local majorities' proposals for the dates, hours and sites where in-person early voting will now cover 17 days before the November election, to comply with the federal court.

Whether to allow Sunday voting has been a contentious question, which the court left to the state's discretion. African-American churches have traditionally driven members to vote in "souls to the polls" efforts on Sundays, benefiting Democratic candidates more than Republicans.

In two key counties - Rockingham, north of Greensboro; and Gaston, west of Charlotte - the GOP-led board approved Republican plans that keep early-voting sites closed on Sundays.

In Craven County, near the coast, however, the board's three Republicans made a concession, agreeing to open a single early voting site for four hours on a Sunday. Democrats had wanted two Sundays of voting before Election Day.

Civil rights activists have accused some Republicans of seeking to undermine the appellate court ruling by proposing still more barriers to ballot access.

GOP leaders have countered that it's fair for Republicans to use rules to their advantage, and that Democrats need to stop whining and play the game.

Florida Supreme Court Justice James Perry forced to retire

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) - Florida Supreme Court Justice James Perry is stepping down from his post because he has reached the mandatory retirement age.

Perry sent a letter to Gov. Rick Scott on Sept. 9 telling him that he would leave the court on Dec. 30. Perry was appointed by then-Gov. Charlie Crist to the state Supreme Court in 2009. He was the fourth black justice appointed to the court.

Florida law requires that justices retire once they turn 70, although they can serve out their term if their birthday falls in the last three years of their six-year term. Perry is 72.

Perry's departure gives Scott a chance to alter the makeup of the Supreme Court, which has angered Republican legislators with some of its decisions. Scott will appoint a successor from a list given to him by a nominating commission.

North Carolina NAACP sets tours in eastern North Carolina

NEW BERN (AP) - The North Carolina chapter of the NAACP is joining with local chapters and other advocacy groups in a tour to mark what it calls victories against voter suppression.

The NAACP says in a news release that its tour is scheduled for Sept. 10, and starts at noon in New Bern. Another tour stop is slated for Elizabeth City. Along with the state chapter, representatives of the Craven and Pasquotank branches will be represented on the tours.

Democracy North Carolina and local advocacy groups are scheduled to join the tour stops.