

Death Row Mistake Brings \$7M Suit

SAVANNAH, Ga. The Southern Poverty Law Center has filed a \$7.2 million damages suit in federal court on behalf of Earl Charles, a black man who was wrongfully sentenced to death here in 1952.

double murder, despite the eyewitness testimony of his employer at the trial that he had been at work in Tampa, Fla. Several hundred miles away, at the hour of the crime.

Charles, who had lived his entire life here until he moved to Tampa two weeks before the murders, spent more than three years under sentence of death in the Chatham County jail. He was released in July 1978 after a law enforcement officer in Tampa came forward and corroborated the testimony of Charles' employer.

The suit alleges that, using suggestive methods, police officials encouraged two eyewitnesses to the crime to identify Charles as the murderer and that crimi-

cial evidence was withheld from defense attorneys, including results from a "dusting" of the crime scene for fingerprints that failed to show Charles' involvement in the

Defendants are the City of Savannah and police officials connected with the investigation that led to Charles' conviction.

"Earl's experience shows us that our system is imperfect and that it's very

easy for a person to be found guilty and sentenced to death for a crime that person did not commit," attorney Dennis Balske, who is handling the case for the Center, said.

"The cost of us can't begin to imagine the trauma Earl has gone through. No amount of money could make him whole again, just as no amount of money could make a paraplegic victim of an accident physically whole again."

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presentably that they had to wear a suit and tie, but they could have combed their hair. Most of the guys looked as though they had gotten out of bed and come straight to court.

Shirttails were out, if they wore a shirt. Tee shirts were worn and even they were dirty.

I know a judge should make his decision based on the evidence and not on how a person looks but I can't help but believe, if you make a good first impression, it may weigh heavily in that judge's mind.

-Yvette McCullough



Staff Photo by Templeton

Consumer Protest

Rev. Rayford Thompson launches a one-man demonstration against Roger West Chevrolet, Inc. as the latest part of a dispute over who should pay for a car Thompson brought to the dealer for service that was apparently stolen off the lot. The dealership rests on a disclaimer against liability for theft losses, but Thompson says he will picket the firm every day until he is reimbursed.

Lynching Victim Awarded

MOBILE, Ala. An innocent black robbery suspect who had a noose slipped around his neck by several city policemen in a threatened lynching in 1976 won an out-of-court settlement recently of \$41,500 from this city, which has been the site of several acts of official terrorism against the black community in recent years.

In this instance every officer suspended or fired pending formal investigation of the incident was later returned to the force.

Two officers tried separately on criminal assault charges have been acquitted by all-white juries. Similar charges against three other officers were dropped.

The mock lynching began on a night late in March 1976 when Glenn Diamond was arrested near his stalled car in front of a fast-food restaurant for suspicion of a "robbery" that police allegedly believed was about to take place.



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One Big Family

NAACP Confab Attracts Diverse Group

By Milton Jordan
Convention Coverage
News Service

Louisville--The overriding attitude of the 70th annual NAACP convention here last week emphasized the pressing need for black folks to recognize that we are just one big national family and to ACT-SO.

From the drive to add 1 million members to the rolls by 1980, to the effort to register more than 4 million high school seniors this year, to the national competition in the ACT-SO arts and science program, the NAACP calls for blacks to work better together.

From the grassroots to the national board of directors, the NAACP mixes young people and old people in an efficient blend of commitment to the improvement of conditions in this country for black people.

Last week's convention reflected that mixture, both in delegates, as well as staffers, workshop participants and others.

Two of the best examples of the mix are Jocelyn Travis, 23, a member of the national board, and Eva Carmen, 95, a local branch president in Irvington, Ky.

"I've always wanted to be involved with the NAACP," said Ms. Travis of Cleveland, and a 1977 graduate of Alabama State University. "As far back as junior high school, I wanted to become a NAACP lawyer."

Currently, looking for a job that will pay enough to support her financing trip to law school, Ms. Travis was elected to the National board last year to represent the youth of Region 3.

Region three includes

Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois.

Mrs. Carmen's NAACP involvement began in 1951 in her Irvington hometown where she helped start the local branch, "to better conditions among my people."

Though seven decades and a world of experience separate them, both Ms. Travis and Mrs. Carmen reflect the zeal and dedication that has kept the NAACP at the forefront of the fight for human rights.

"We're just like one big family," said Ms. Travis, "and like any family we have problems, but we work them out, and continue to put together a united fight for our people."

Ms. Travis, who helped launch a youth branch in Cleveland before entering college in

1974, where she organized a college chapter, is a tall, dark, woman, with a ready smile, and an infectious personality. She speaks boldly and forthrightly, emphasizing a need for more young people to get involved with the NAACP, or any other organization devoted to community service.

"But I also think that adults have a responsibility to increase the awareness of young people concerning their history," she added, "and the things the organization has done for our people."

Looking back over her more than 20 years of involvement with the local NAACP branch, Mrs. Carmen, a widow, with six children, said the organization has always been dependable when it comes to helping black people.

NAACP

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serious trouble."

The NAACP raises most of its money through \$5 annual membership dues, \$2.60 of which goes to the national office. Recently, the organization added an annual assessment to be taxed to each branch, based upon its membership rolls. An assessment provision blocks a branch's delegates from voting at the national convention if the branch's assessment isn't paid in full.

Opposition to the provision, however, caused the rule to be waived during last week's convention.

The convention's biggest floor fight came when the annual assessment was proposed for youth councils and colleges chapters. A proposal from the resolutions committee on internal affairs sought to amend the youth's constitutions to make assessments payable 60 days before the convention, the same as it is for adults, if youth delegates are to vote at the convention.

But after long debate, the proposal was tabled.

For all the problems, there was a moment of exhilaration during the convention when word came that the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled 5-2 that companies and unions can work out voluntary affirmative action plans whether there is any clearcut history of discrimination or not.

Hooks, completing his second year as director of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, said that the NAACP won't sit back and let the country's media misinterpret the court's ruling to the extent that a victory is turned into a loss.

"We're going to get the troops out through our state conferences, and through local branches, with the truth," Hooks said, "and we're going to leave here and tell the world we won just as loudly as we complain about a loss."

NCNW

JULIE ALISON FLINCHUM, winner of the 1979 Sixth District Contest in Charleston, S.C. in April has won the right to represent the district at the 1979 Omega National Conclave in Denver, Col. August 11. Flinchum is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ray Flinchum of 1748 Virginia Road. She played the piano in competition. She also plays the flute at the North Carolina School of The Arts, where she is an 11th grader. Her current piano teacher is Mrs. Julie Ager.

Negro Women will worship with Grace United Presbyterian Church on Sunday, July 8 during the 11 a.m. worship service. All members are asked to meet at the church at 10:40 a.m.

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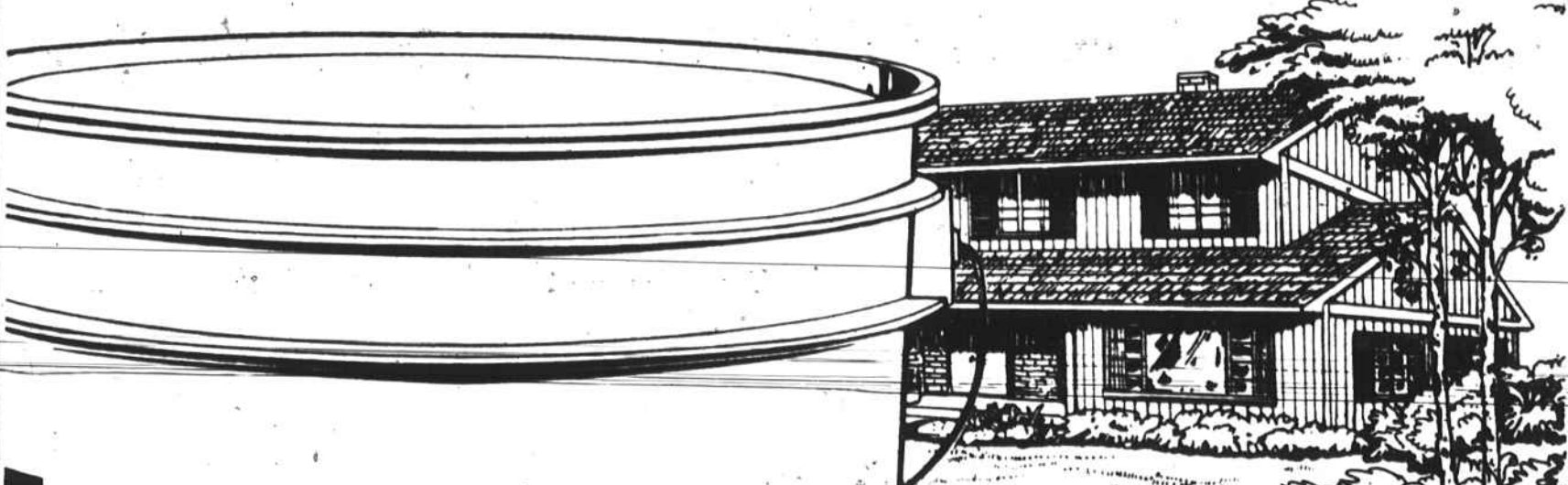
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