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Mr. Ram
WSSU's newest monarch begins reign.

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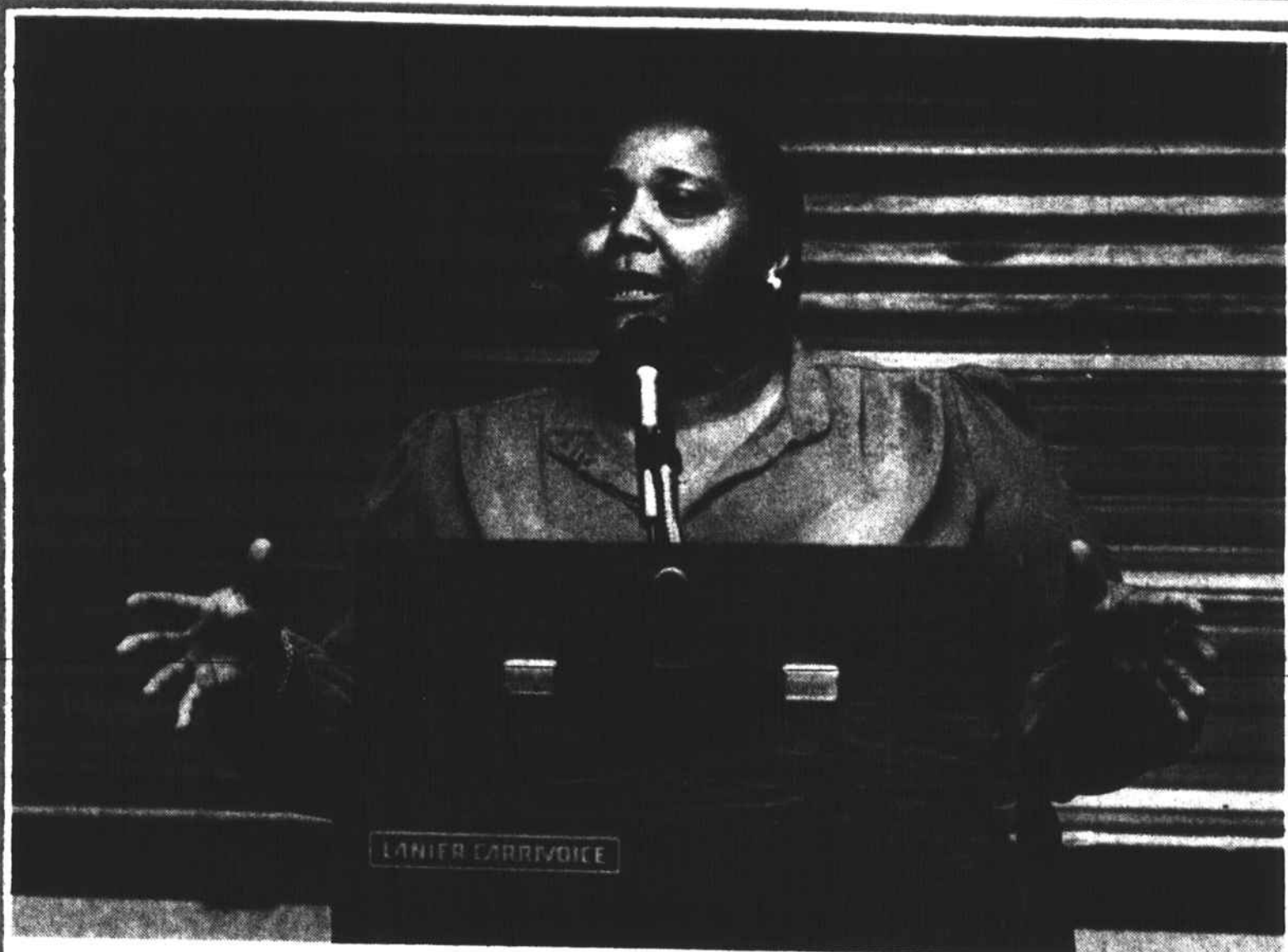
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30 Pages This Week



Washington, D.C., resident Kimi Gray preached the gospel of self-help last week, and we like what she had to say. We explain why in this week's editorial on Page A4 (photo by James Parker).

Tisdale criticized police handling of Sykes case

According to letter to Masten in October '84, district attorney listed a 'series of mistakes'

By ALLEN H. JOHNSON and L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writers

Local police "made a series of mistakes that might very well be insurmountable" in their investigation of the Deborah B. Sykes murder, wrote District Attorney Donald K. Tisdale to then-Acting Police Chief Joseph E. Masten in a letter dated Oct. 19, 1984.

Tisdale also admitted in the letter that his case against defendant Darryl Eugene Hunt, who was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, was weak, while the police's actions misled the public to believe it was solid.

Among a number of ways in which police bungled the case, Tisdale wrote in the letter, copies of which were sent earlier this week to the aldermen, was their near-arrest of a suspect named Terry Thomas for the Aug. 10, 1984, murder based solely

on information from witness Johnny Gray (alias McConnell).

Police later discovered that Thomas could not have murdered Mrs. Sykes because he was in jail at the time of the crime.

"If he had not been so fortunate as to have been incarcerated," Tisdale wrote, Thomas "would have been charged, and we would be trying him. The police investigation would have been shut down."

Tisdale also questioned the credibility of Gray, who phoned police to report the crime, identifying himself as Sammy Mitchell, the name of Hunt's best friend. Gray later said he had made up the name and did not know Sammy Mitchell when he made the call.

Tisdale told Masten in the letter that "your investigators have been all too ready to believe Mr. Gray"

"There are certain things about Mr. Gray that Please see page A2

Hunt's supporters encouraged by city report

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

While commending a recently released city manager's report for addressing questions concerning local police's handling of the Deborah Brotherton Sykes murder case, some believe the study may not have gone far enough.

Aldermen and Hunt supporters all expressed appreciation for the work of City Manager Bill Stuart and Assistant City Manager Al Beatty in compiling the report but also expressed their concern that gaps in the report still leave many questions unanswered.

Stuart was requested to conduct the investigation by Alderman Vivian H. Burke, chairman of the aldermen's Public Safety Committee, to address what she said were

widespread concerns among citizens about the case, which led to the conviction last summer of 20-year-old Darryl Eugene Hunt.

Many believe Hunt did not receive a fair trial, and the report cites the police for repeatedly violating standard procedures in their investigation of the case.

Southeast Ward Alderman Larry W. Womble said he is generally impressed with the thoroughness of the report. "It goes a long way towards letting the chips fall where they may," he said.

However, Womble said the report is only a beginning.

"I think we should use this report as a springboard for further action," Womble said. "We want to give the city manager a clear-cut

message that we intend him to follow up on this.

"I think it reflects that citizens of this community and the Darryl Hunt Defense Committee related some very valid concerns. I think it goes a long way toward vindicating the Defense Committee. There is a strong possibility that all the evidence in this case has not come out or has been distorted. There's also a strong possibility that Darryl Hunt did not get a fair trial. This shows that, when citizens take an active role, it can make a difference."

However, Womble still said he was not satisfied that the report addressed some areas thoroughly enough, including the payment of state witness Johnny Gray by the police, the Please see page A3



The Rev. John Mendez at last week's Darryl Hunt Defense Committee press conference (photo by James Parker).

Adams: We need power in order to live in dignity

By L.A.A. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

A high-ranking church official said black people face a local, national and international crisis of survival Saturday night during the Fifth District Black Leadership Caucus' Second Annual Conference and Banquet at the M.C. Benton Convention Center.

John Hurst Adams, presiding bishop of the Second District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, asked a mostly black audience of approximately 250 to return to the things that have

allowed them to come as far as they have.

"Let's build a new Black America and let it begin in Winston-Salem," Adams said.

"We must recover the ability to do so much with so little," he said. "We are not nearly as money-poor as we are value-cheap."

Adams cited the building of black colleges by "our uneducated mommas and daddies" as an example of how black people historically have turned Please see page A15



John Hurst Adams charged his audience to return to the basics that blacks have used in past struggles (photo by James Parker).

Black business leaders offer words of advice

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

The heads of two national minority business organizations conducted a seminar last week in Winston-Salem to help acquaint minority businesses with current purchasing issues.

Mary McDuffie, the national vice president of the National Association of Black Women Entrepreneurs, offered counseling to black business women and to black women considering starting their own businesses.

Meanwhile, Al Whittfield, the

head of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, presented information to the local business community on methods of gaining a foothold in the purchasing industry.

The seminar and reception were sponsored by the Hanes Group in what coordinator Al Arrington said "was an effort to continue to establish open lines of communication with local minority vendors." Arrington is director of government compliance and employee law for Please see page A2

Researchers cite one mistake for every 20 U.S. executions since 1900

Special To The Chronicle

SAN DIEGO -- At least one innocent person has been convicted of a capital crime for every 20 executions in this country since 1900, conclude two researchers in a paper presented Nov. 13 to a national conference of criminologists.

Professors Hugo Adam Bedau of Tufts University in Massachusetts and Michael L. Radelet of the University of Florida have identified 343 cases of persons convicted of capital offenses between 1900 and 1985 who were, in fact, innocent.

Either the crime had not happened at all or the defendant had not participated in it. The study excludes the many more cases in which capital defendants had their convictions reversed because of

trial errors or other due-process-of-law reasons.

As a result of these 343 mistakes in capital cases, 25 innocent people were executed; others came within days, even hours, of their executions.

Many spent long years of their lives in prison, some as long as 25 years and more, say Bedau and Radelet.

In releasing the Bedau-Radelet findings, Henry Schwarzschild, director of the Capital Punishment Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, said, "These figures show that in every year of this century at least one person who was falsely and innocently sentenced to death has been awaiting execution."

At present, there are about 1,600 people on death row in the United States.

"These horrible facts are dramatic proof of the on-going fallibility of our death-sentencing laws," Schwarzschild added. "Judges, legislators and the American public are entitled to know about the unavoidable risk of executing the innocent. We are therefore releasing the study even before its formal publication in the scholarly literature."

The Bedau-Radelet paper was summarized at the meeting of the American Society of Criminology in San Diego.

It shows that, since the beginning of this century, there has been an average of about 38 wrongful capital convictions in this country per decade. It lists 49 such cases in the 1970s and 15 so far in the first half of the 1980s.

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