

NEWS DIGEST

Compiled From AP Wire



Murphy



Watson



Bristol

Murphy strikes out against critic

Actor Eddie Murphy has taken out a three-page advertisement in a Brooklyn weekly newspaper responding to criticism that his new film, "Coming to America," makes fun of black life. Murphy, in his response, said that the film was meant for entertainment.

Case sets discrimination precedent

The Supreme Court ruled recently that Clara Watson improperly was barred from using statistics in trying to prove she was discriminated against because she is black. The ruling makes it easier for workers to prove their bosses are guilty of illegal discrimination.

S. Africa to withdraw from Angola

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa -- South African soldiers prepared Tuesday to withdraw from Angola as part of a peace accord, but their rebel allies threatened to fight until they are included in peace talks.

South Africa began a three-week pullout of its troops in Angola on Wednesday under terms of a cease-fire reached with Angola and Cuba. The accord also sets a Nov. 1 starting date for a U.N. plan to bring independence to South-West Africa, also known as Namibia.

N.C. official denies Klan permit

DURHAM -- Durham City Manager Orville Powell has denied a request by Ku Klux Klan members for a parade permit on Sept. 3, and instead will offer to let them march in downtown Durham on Sept. 10.

Officials in Raleigh, however, today decided to grant the Klan's request for a Sept. 3 permit. It also appears likely that the Klan will be allowed to march in Hillsborough that day.

Durham police would be "too thinly stretched" to provide security for the Klan group on the Labor Day weekend, Powell told The Durham Sun.

Two N.C. insurance firms charge blacks higher rates

RALEIGH (AP) -- Two North Carolina-based insurance companies will be asked to alter life insurance policies from the 1960s that force black people to pay higher premiums than white people, the state Department of Insurance said Thursday.

Durham Life Insurance Co. of Raleigh and Charlotte Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. of Charlotte were named in a nationwide survey as being among 21 companies that continue to collect on such policies. However, both say they have ceased to write and sell them.

The survey was released Tuesday by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

"(Such policies are) not expressly prohibited by state statute," Ed Bristol, spokesman for the state Department of Insurance, said Thursday. "But it appears discriminatory."

Bristol said state insurance officials plan to meet with the two North Carolina companies still carrying the policies to try to persuade them to alter them.

He said the department also would ask the Legislature to enact laws that specifically prohibit race-based insurance rate adjustments.

According to some actuaries, blacks have a shorter life expectancy than whites and so once were charged higher rates. How much depended on the company and the amount of insurance.

However, most insurance companies gave up the practice years ago, relying on other factors to set rates -- such as whether a policy holder smoked, had high blood pressure or was overweight.

A spokesman for Charlotte Liberty told the News and Observer of Raleigh the company had 5,482 of the policies still in effect in North Carolina, representing total

annual premiums of \$134,547.

But the spokesman could not say immediately what, if anything, would be done about those policies.

R. Douglas Pennick, senior vice president and chief actuary for Durham Life Insurance Co., said he did not know how many of the policies his company still had in force.

"I wouldn't think it would be too many because they are so old," Pennick said. "The very newest ones are 20 to 22 years old. Realistically, most policies that old have been terminated."

He said his company discontinued writing the policies in 1964.

The association described the policies, often called "industrial life insurance," as those sold to many low-income, blue-collar families. They carried face values of about \$500 and up -- but no more than \$2,000. Insurance agents usually collected premiums in person, generally by charging perhaps a quarter a week or a dollar a month.

Companies listed in the survey as still collecting fees for the policies were small, mostly Southern firms who issued the policies decades ago when race was a common -- and legal -- factor in judging the life expectancy of a policyholder, said officials of the insurance association.

However, the association, which represents insurance regulators in every state, recently issued a statement calling the existence of such policies today "inherently unfair and unacceptable as a matter of public policy."

It called on the companies to lower the rates charged black customers, increase their benefits or issue refunds.

The survey was spurred by a complaint last year from a Delaware resident whose grandmother had paid premiums for more than 20 years.



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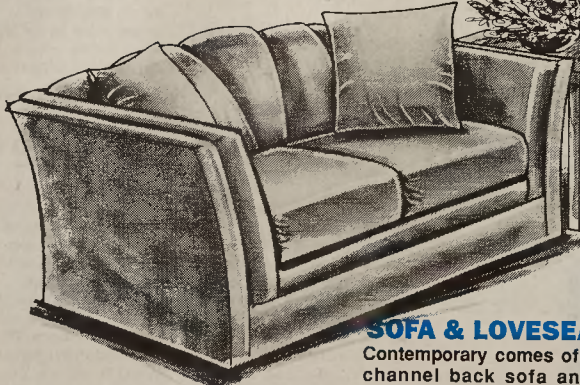
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