

Rep. Lukens: 'Darkie' toothpaste is racially offensive

CINCINNATI (AP) -- "Darkie," a toothpaste marketed in Taiwan depicting a grinning black minstrel, is offensive and could create racial problems, Rep. Donald E. "Buz" Lukens, R-Ohio, said Tuesday.

Lukens is a member of the Congressional Government Operations Committee returning from a three-day visit to the Republic of China. Committee members accused the manufacturer of perpetrating racial

stereotypes, according to the American Institute in Taiwan. The toothpaste manufacturer is a subsidiary of the Hong Kong-based Hawley and Hazel Chemical Corp., partially owned by Colgate Palmolive Co.

The six congressmen told Taiwan's authorities and business community that racism would not be tolerated.

"The sad part is (the Chinese government) really never intended (the

toothpaste) to be a racially stereotyped thing," Lukens said.

Chinese government officials "were sympathetic to our complaint" and it is hoped they would take steps to change the name of the toothpaste and symbolic figure on the product, Lukens said.

Lukens called Colgate Palmolive a "very fine and very progressive company," and why it would be a part of the toothpaste product "is beyond me."

Lukens said the product is not selling well in Taiwan and is "gradually losing sales."

The package of toothpaste bears the English word "Darkie" and a Chinese equivalent, as well as a drawing of a black minstrel. The manufacturer has said it does not plan to change the name because the toothpaste has been known locally since 1937 and is not for export.

UNC system desegregation dispute ends officially

CHAPPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) -- More than a decade of wrangling with federal officials over how to desegregate the University of North Carolina system ends today, but the dispute over the success of those efforts may go on.

While black enrollment at the University of North Carolina system's traditionally white campuses never has met a target of 10.6 percent, UNC officials say, they have made great strides in diversifying the schools' student bodies.

This year, black students account for 8.3 percent of the 118,960 students enrolled at UNC's mostly white schools, up from 3.1 percent in 1972.

But Reginald Wilson, director of the American Council on Education's Office of Minority Concerns in Washington, said the state still had a long way to go in desegregating its universities and should be more aggressive in working to diversify the campuses' racial mixture.

"If you have a (desegregation) plan which has not achieved the success that it ought to have achieved, then it should be reviewed for changes," Wil-

son told The News and Observer.

Wilson served on a panel appointed by federal officials in 1986 to review the Southern states' efforts to desegregate their systems of higher education.

In 1981, UNC system officials entered an agreement with the U.S. District Court in Raleigh to increase black enrollment at the predominantly white schools to 10.6 percent.

Known as a consent decree, that agreement represented a compromise in a bitter legal battle between UNC system and federal officials over how to desegregate what was described at the time as North Carolina's "dual system of higher education," five schools that blacks were routed into and 11 schools that attracted whites.

The terms of that agreement expired Dec. 31, 1986, with the court continuing to monitor the UNC system's efforts for two more years.

With the last vestige of federal oversight of the desegregation efforts ending, Wilson said there was some concern that the university system may grow complacent about the issue.

"North Carolina did not eagerly move into this arena of desegregating its system of higher education and had a history of being one of the most resistant states," Wilson said.

But Raymond Dawson, senior vice president for academic affairs for the UNC system, said that boosting black enrollment would remain a top priority.

"The reason we made the progress we made is not because we were under the jurisdiction of the court," Dawson said.

"The reason is each of our campuses, chancellors and our presidents are personally, genuinely committed to those goals. That's why they work at it. Not because they're out there visiting kids because the judge said they had to."

The consent decree was one of 10 agreements made with state university systems in the South, all of which expired some time in 1986. Like North Carolina, none of those states has met its target of black enrollment.

Increasing black enrollment significantly has proved an elusive goal for many colleges across the country for

a number of reasons. The number of black high school graduates nationally has declined, dropping 9.3 percent from 1980 to 1984. Also, the shift in federal financial aid from grants to loans has discouraged many black students from going to college.

The consent decree grew out of a 1970 suit that the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund had filed, charging the U.S. government with violating the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by funding several Southern university systems it claimed were insufficiently desegregated.

Under the decree, UNC system officials promised to increase white enrollment at the five historically black campuses to 15 percent, a goal that has been accomplished. White enrollment at the schools is 16.5 percent.

And they agreed to upgrade the historically black campuses through increased funding and the addition of new academic programs.

Bill Friday, who was president of the UNC system when the suit was

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Fire chief responds to rescuers' claims

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"I'm sure that could be extended to driving the (fire) truck since that would be part of my job," said McCummings.

McCummings is presently unemployed. Beatty said when he spoke with McCummings a day or so after his arrest, he said he didn't have a license.

"This is the first I've heard of any driving privileges," said Beatty. "During our last conversation, I told him, 'If you have the necessary credentials to do your part of the work as a firefighter you can come back to work.' I asked him if he had a driver's license and he said no. I asked him could he do his job without one and he said no."

If McCummings really wanted his job back, he should have gone to chief Ervin and told him of any driving privileges he had and asked for his job, Beatty said.

"It's too late now," Beatty added. "We've got six new firefighters that we're already committed to starting this coming Monday (Jan. 9)."

Most of those who survive the rigorous testing imposed by the city and Ervin's intensive interview can look forward to a long and rewarding career with the city fire department, he said. A member of the department since 1951 and its chief for eight years, Ervin said Afro-Americans have gained a lot of ground in the profession over the past 38 years.

Out of 238 firefighters in the city department 76, or 32.8 percent, are Afro-American men, and two, or 1.7 percent are Afro-American women, Beatty said quoting figures from Sept. 30, 1988.

Ervin said he wouldn't know of the status of Davis' application to the fire department.

"The process of becoming a firefighter starts with personnel and the application," Ervin said. "They (personnel) accept the application and schedule the applicant for a battery of tests, such as general aptitude, agility and psychological."

When, and if, an applicant successfully completes the testing process, he or she is placed on a log, with other applicants, by the city personnel staff to be considered for employment by Ervin as vacancies become available. Fortunately for Ervin, but not so good for those who file applications with the fire department, there's not much turnover in the fire department, said Ervin.

"We don't have major turnover in fire services, it's only about one or two percent," Ervin said. "Once people come in they generally stay until they retire, or a few decide to move on."

Out of the eight Afro-American firefighters who came on the job with Ervin in 1951, five retired after 30 years of service, he said.

Even after an applicant has passed the necessary tests and been included on the fire department log, it's the best people who get the jobs, Ervin said.

"We have a number of people who apply for jobs here, but just because they're in line doesn't mean they get the job," Ervin said. "We look at the person with the best qualifications. Just because you go through the process there's no guarantee that you can be hired. I think I've been pretty darned discreet in interviewing people and looking at their qualifications and I've made some good decisions."

Ervin said the city fire department has made a lot of opportunities available to Afro-Americans.

"This department has been outstanding as far as providing opportunities for blacks--getting them involved in fire services," said Ervin. "I've had

a very rewarding and enjoyable career as a firefighter and coming up through the ranks as an administrator. I've worked hard to make those same opportunities available to other minorities."

Davis and McCummings hoped their exploits would prompt city officials to reconsider their applications for employment.

While Ervin applauds the young men's bravery, he said they had been amply rewarded by the city when the Board of Aldermen's Public Safety Committee presented the three with commendations.

"I was there at their ceremony and I complimented them because I know what could have happened had they not been there," Ervin said. "I think they were amply rewarded for their efforts."

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