

Herman investigation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - A lawyer from Maine will investigate allegations that Labor Secretary Alexis Herman engaged in influence-peddling and solicitation of \$250,000 in illegal campaign contributions, a federal appeals court announced today.

Ralph I. Lancaster Jr., a private attorney practicing in Maine and Massachusetts, was appointed by the court to probe accusations that Herman as a White House aide had a deal to receive a 10 percent kickback for aiding clients of a firm co-owned by a close friend.

After announcing the appointment of Lancaster, the court disclosed that Herman went to court May 18 seeking to avoid a criminal investigation of the allegations by an independent counsel.

The court denied Herman's motion for an order declining appointment of a prosecutor in the case. The labor secretary argued

that a preliminary investigation by Attorney General Janet Reno failed to support a determination that there were reasonable grounds to proceed.

The court found that Reno's application is "Not facially deficient, and her determination is not reviewable. ... Consequently, we are bound by" the provisions of federal law on the appointment of independent counsels such as Lancaster.

Lancaster is a partner in the Portland, Maine, firm of Pierce Atwood, practicing in both civil and criminal areas of the law.

Lancaster, a graduate of Harvard Law School, was appointed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987-1988 as a special master to handle a civil case involving the states of New Jersey and Nevada.

Reno asked the special panel of three appeals court judges on May 11 to appoint an independent counsel to investigate Herman.

Winston-Salem Native plants feet firmly into Texas soil

LaTasha Wilson, the daughter of Lafayette A. and Delories H. Wilson, has been an active volunteer since her undergraduate years at the University of North Carolina Greensboro and Appalachian State University. Her earliest experience was with Walk America. She is the campus activities advisor for the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the Metropolitan Volunteer Program at the University of Houston.

"It doesn't matter how busy she is, LaTasha will always stop what she's doing to make time for you and to make you feel like you are important," said Lisa Nicholson (95BFA), campus activities advisor who works with Wilson. "And she always has a smile on her face."

Outside of the office, she chairs the Houston Graduate Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta's National Service Project. The National Service Project is Stork's Nest, which is an educational and redistribution service center which helps women with prenatal and postnatal counseling. Wilson feels a special affinity with this program since it was started in the same year she was born - 1972. The program helps

low-income women usually



Wilson

referred by the government agencies. The Lambda Zeta Chapter currently hosts three nests: two in Houston and one in Anahuac.

Wilson volunteers "to give back to the community and to try to educate myself about the community issues that involve certain people who have a different perspective from mine."

Brother of King assassin says funeral will be held today

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASHVILLE, Tennessee - A funeral for James Earl Ray, the confessed assassin of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., will be held this morning, his brother said.

Jerry Ray said Monday the funeral will be at the Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville.

James Earl Ray, 70, died April 23 of liver failure caused by chronic hepatitis. He was serving a 99-year sentence for killing King in Memphis in

1968.

Though he pleaded guilty to killing King and avoided the death penalty, Ray almost immediately recanted and spent nearly three decades trying to gain a trial.

Jerry Ray said his brother's ashes will be at the funeral. They will eventually be flown to Ireland, where his ancestors were from.

Ray has said he hopes King's relatives, who supported James Earl Ray's efforts for a trial, will attend the funeral.

Woman plans walk to Africa

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AMHERST, Mass. - For Ingrid Askew, it will take one year and thousands of miles to walk through some of history's darkest moments.

Askew is part of a group that plans to set out Saturday to walk to Africa in an effort to retrace the trans-Atlantic slave trade that furnished America and Europe with slaves for 360 years.

The 100 participants in the Interfaith Pilgrimage of the Middle Passage will cover 7,000 miles - but, according to Askew, the trek will be grueling because of the sights she'll see, not the distance she'll walk.

"We're going to be going to slave auction blocks, sites of lynchings and slave-ship ports," Askew said from her home in Amherst. "Prayer has to be brought in because of the egre-

gious history we're going to be looking at."

The group will walk 15 miles a day and sail across the Atlantic to dramatize one of the most painful episodes of the world's past, said Askew, a stage director and black activist.

"It was never written in our history books in school how people were forced into horrendous slave ships, how people were forced away from their families and often died in the ships' holds," she said. "It's such an evil and ugly thing."

"We were just taught that slaves were brought from Africa, they picked sugar cane and cotton and helped build the country," Askew said. "And they were happy and sang songs."

The trip is scheduled to begin Saturday in Leverett and then wind down the East Coast, through cities such as Boston,

Washington, Charlotte and New Orleans.

During the group's stop in Boston June 7 to 9, their planned visits include Columbus Park in the North End, where slaves were sold into bondage, and Copp's Hill burial ground, where many free blacks were laid to rest.

The group will then sail to the Caribbean Islands, Brazil, and finally Senegal. Once in Africa, the pilgrims will walk down the west coast, where the slave trade prospered, to Angola.

They plan to be transported to their last stop, Cape Town, either by bus or boat, in May 1999, Askew said. Not all will walk the entire trip; some will join part along the way.

Askew said participants will rely on the kindness of strangers

and plan to sleep in such places as the homes of locals or at gymnasium floors. The trip's advisers include Harvard professor and author Cornel West and U.S. Rep. John Conyers, D-Michigan.

The walk was largely organized by Sister Clare Carter, 47, a white Buddhist nun who lives in Leverett and hatched the plan for the trip while on a similar walk in 1993 in Sri Lanka.

"I felt there has to be a way we can express our real heart and humanity, to change, atone, and to heal," Carter said.

The Middle Passage was part of the triangular slave route on which Europeans transported millions of Africans to the Americas for sale. Most were delivered to the Caribbean and Brazil, but America received about 6 percent of the slaves

Frank Montero, racial pioneer, dies at 89

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Frank C. Montero, a former associate executive director of the National Urban League, has died.

He was 89 and died on May 8 at an Oberlin, Ohio, nursing home.

During his tenure with the league, Montero directed a foundation that brought African students to the United States and ran a program for the United States Mission to the United Nations to acclimate Africans and other third-world delegates to American society.

He also served as vice president of a company that promoted integrated real-estate developments and went on to become vice president of the Tishman real estate company.

As a student at Howard University he majored in economics and studied under Ralph Bunche.

A long-time resident of the Riverdale section of the Bronx, Montero in 1960 became a foot-

note to John F. Kennedy's presidential victory. The State Department had turned down a request from a foundation headed by Montero for a \$100,000 grant to bring poor African students to the United States, and a Kennedy family foundation instead provided the money.

As campaign coordinator for Mayor Robert Wagner's 1961 reelection run, Montero won an appointment to the city's human rights commission and a job as special assistant to Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, the American delegate to the United Nations.

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