



Associated Press photo by Karen Tam

Becky Livas, of Virginia Beach, Va., a grand niece of Sarah L. "Sadie" Delany, spends a moment with her coffin before the start of the funeral service for Delany at the St. Augustine's Chapel on the St. Augustine College campus in Raleigh. Delany, a daughter of a slave who became a best-selling author at age 104, was buried Monday near her sister Bessie, her collaborator and lifelong companion. She was 109.

Author Sadie Delany remembered as pioneer

By MARTHA WAGGONER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

RALEIGH, N.C. — Sadie Delany, a slave's daughter who overcame challenges of race, gender and age and became a best-selling author at age 104, came home Monday to be buried near her sister and writing partner.

About 275 people filled a small stone chapel Monday to celebrate the life of Sarah L. "Sadie" Delany. She and her sister, Dr. Annie Elizabeth "Bessie" Delany, were centenarian authors who wrote "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years" with journalist Amy Hill Hearsh.

The 1993 book, which chronicled what life was like for blacks before the Civil Rights Movement, became a top seller, inspired a Broadway play and has been used as a college text.

Ms. Delany, 109, died last week at her home in Mount Vernon, N.Y., a New York City suburb.

Ms. Delany's great-grand niece told mourners Monday that like so many strangers, she came to know a side of her relative by reading the book. Until then, Brandi Delany said, she thought Aunt Sadie was just a retired home economics teacher, a "sweet aunt who acted far younger than her age."

Instead, the book showed that her Aunt Sadie was a pioneer, far ahead of her time.

"I'm happy to know that Aunt Sadie has gone to be reunited with her father, mother and nine brothers and sisters," Brandi Delany said.

Nephew Henry B. Delany V of Detroit said Ms. Delany was generous in what counted: "Time, love and kindness. She gave a lot of those."

"Having Our Say" relates the sisters' observations of a century of black American history as they lived it, first as young girls in the South, later as career women in New York's Harlem.

There were matter-of-fact references to the degradation the sisters witnessed: the post-slavery years, lynchings, "Jim Crow" segregation laws. Bessie was nearly lynched once, as a young woman, after a run-in with a white person at a railroad station.

There were also triumphs — their pride in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and their success in the working world when most women stayed home.

"I never let prejudice stop me from what I wanted to do in this life," Sadie Delany once said.

The sisters, who described themselves as "best friends from day one," and their eight brothers and sisters grew up on the campus of St. Augustine's College, where Monday's funeral took place.

Their father, freed from slavery as a child, became a vice principal of the school. All 10 of his children went on to attend college.

The sisters, neither of whom ever married, moved to New York after they graduated from St. Augustine's. Sadie Delany earned a master's degree in education from Columbia University and became the first black domestic-science teacher in New York City's public schools. Bessie Delany became a dentist.

After their first success as authors, the women followed with "The Delany Sisters' Book of Everyday Wisdom." Then after her sister's death, Sadie Delany wrote a third book: "On My Own at 107: Reflections on Life Without Bessie."

At the burial, the Rev. Thomas Logan Jr. said he had asked someone to show him where on campus Ms. Delany was born.

He said he thought it was appropriate "that we would take soil from the land where her house was built" and place it on her casket, which he did as he chanted "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Chronicle, Post win awards

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Chronicle and The Charlotte Post newspapers, members of Consolidated Media Group, picked up several awards from the N.C. Press Association in the category for weekly newspapers during last Friday's awards celebration.

Chronicle reporter T. Kevin Walker won second place in the "Literacy Feature" category.

Chronicle managing editor Jeri Young shared second place honors with Post managing editor John Minter for "Feature Writing."

The Post also won first place honors in "Appearance and Design" while and "Sports News Reporting."

The Post also came in second place for "News Photography."

The Chronicle was won more than 100 awards during its 25 year history.



Walker



Young

Plush home central to minister's case

By LISA HOLEWA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LARGO, Fla. — Weeks after buying an expensive Florida home with the Rev. Henry Lyons, Bernice Edwards spent her days being shuttled to jewelry shops and department stores, a taxi driver told jurors.

Meanwhile, a friend of Edwards testified that Lyons' alleged mistress was living in Milwaukee without a bank account and worrying she'd be kicked out of her modest home for not paying taxes.

The portrait of Edwards' dual lives emerged Monday in the racketeering trial against her and Lyons, president of the Nashville, Tenn.-based National Baptist Convention USA.

The pair is accused of swindling more than \$4 million from corporations seeking to do business with the powerful black church group, using the money to finance their own lavish lifestyles.

Josephine Hicks, a Milwaukee diner owner, said she loaned Edwards \$3,000 for taxes she owed on her home.

"She told me she was in a bad situation at that time, around Christmas time," Hicks testified about the woman she knew as Bree Jones.

Hicks also cashed checks for Edwards because she did not have a bank account of her own.

Eventually, Hicks opened a bank account under the name J & H Associates so she would not



Photo by The Associated Press/St. Petersburg Times

Willie Coleman, a pastor from Greensboro, testifies in the racketeering trial against Henry Lyons last week. Coleman, whose church burned down June 2, 1996, testified that his Rising Star Baptist Church received \$10,000 just last week, two years after Lyons wrote the ADL saying he had given the church \$35,000.

have to cash the checks though her business account, she testified.

Prosecutors say more than \$1.6 million was funneled through that account. Hicks said she was unaware of that, but was informed by the bank when a deposit exceeding \$200,000 was made to the account.

"I asked, 'Is it legal? Where did it come from?' My social security number is on that account and I don't want to be involved with the

IRS," she told jurors.

Hicks believed the money was coming from Edwards' job as public relations director for the convention, she said.

Taxi cab driver Bud Kline, who met Edwards shortly before she and Lyons closed on a home, testified he drove her to department and jewelry stores for shopping.

She always paid, he said, with large amounts of cash she kept in her purse.

Lyons also is charged with grand theft, accused of stealing about \$250,000 from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith intended to rebuild burned black churches in the South.

He faces another trial this spring on 54 federal charges of bank fraud, wire fraud, extortion and money laundering.

Lyons' lawyers have said his failed business deals are not criminal matters.

Town on 'pins and needles' waiting for trial

By TERRI LANGFORD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JASPER, Texas — Drive east on Texas 190, across the Neches River, and it's not hard to feel lost here, deep among the towering East Texas pines.

Cellular phones don't work well. Radio stations from Louisiana to the east and Houston to the southwest battle for dominance over faint, flickering frequencies.

On a typical night, Jasper's handful of restaurants shut down by 10 p.m. The only activity until dawn comes at the 24-hour Wal-Mart and the glowing courthouse clock tower, with its hourly chime.

"My wife thought if we weren't at the end of the world, you could see it from here," says Tom Hilton, a timber buyer who moved here years ago. "But you couldn't get her to leave Jasper for nothing."

This sleepy town of 8,000 burst into national prominence last summer with the horrific dragging death of a black man, followed by the arrests of three white men.

Seven months later, the tragedy lingers.

Today, lawyers begin their second week of trying to find 12 people to judge 24-year-old John William King, the first suspect to go to trial.

All the while, outside the historic Jasper County Courthouse, residents continue trying to move on with their lives.

"You really hesitate to say I'm from Jasper, at first, because everybody all over the world knows what Jasper is," says Hilton, shaking his head.

To many, Jasper is this: 49-year-old James Byrd Jr., his right arm and head ripped from his torso. His knees, buttocks and elbows ground past skin and bone. His body parts and personal belongings — even his dentures — flung along a Jasper County road.

The details of how Byrd was dragged by his ankles for 2 1/2 miles horrified the nation, especially the locals.

"This whole thing is just a shock," says Hilton, among the 55 percent of Jasper residents who are white. "That's basically the consensus most people feel."

Rarely a month has gone by without reporters from around the world coming to Jasper to take the emotional temperature of its people.

Many shake their heads, their lips pinched in a tense smile, when asked for the hundredth time what they think and what they feel.

"If you ask the masses of the whites, yes, they want to see this pass over," says Bobby Hudson, a retired Air Force sergeant who moved here from Indianapolis with his wife in 1989. "But for the most part, those people who are grounded and rooted in Jasper know and believe that Jasper is going to make it."

Jasper, the so-called "Jewel of the Forest," has a cozy, addictive charm about it. Folks here are close, and children are raised to say "Sir" or "Ma'am" when addressing adults.

There are 40-some churches to attend, fishing to be done at nearby Lake Sam Rayburn, duck and deer

hunting, Kiwanis and Lions Club projects, the Chamber of Commerce meetings and even the annual rodeo.

Many residents work in the lumber industry, at a smattering of small state prisons or at local hospitals, banks, stores and schools.

Although the town is mostly white, skin color is not an obstacle. The mayor is black, as are a hospital administrator and many business owners.

Still, life isn't all harmonious,

says Hudson, minister of the Goodwill Baptist Church.

"Do you have racism? Yes. But you know what? That doesn't bother me," says Hudson, 65, who is white. "You deal with racism the same way you deal with any kind of problem. You mind your own business, do what you're supposed to do and give the rest of it to God. He's our protection."

"In other words, treat others the way you want to be treated," he insists.

Testimony in King's trial is

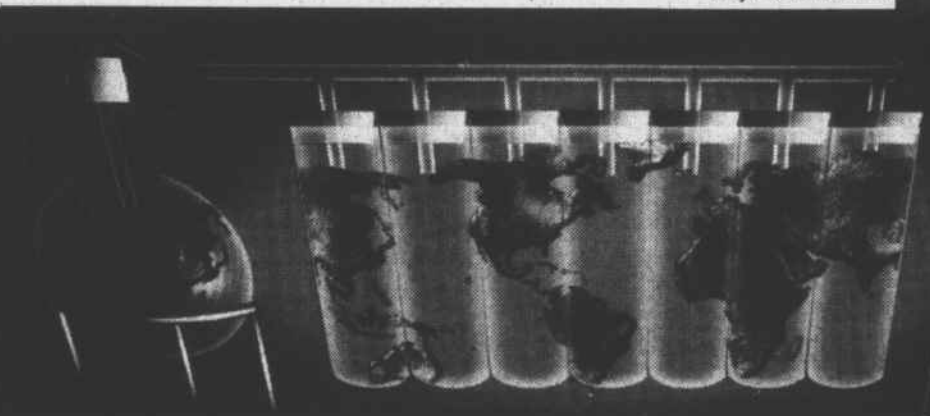
expected to begin Feb. 16. If convicted of capital murder, he could be sentenced to life in prison or lethal injection.


Trials for the other two defendants — Shawn Allen Berry and Lawrence Russell Brewer — will follow.

In the meantime, Jasper will hold its collective breath and wait for the day when life can return to normal.

"The longer it takes to get over," says Hudson, "the longer we're going to be on pins and needles."

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