

King found guilty in Texas murder

By TERRI LANGFORD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JASPER, Texas - A white supremacist was convicted of capital murder Tuesday for chaining a black man to a pickup truck and dragging him to his death in one of the nation's grisliest hate crimes since the civil rights battles.

Jurors deliberated less than 2 1/2 hours before returning their verdict against John William

King, who now faces either life in prison or execution. The panel of 11 whites and one black will decide his punishment after a separate phase of testimony.

Courtroom spectators applauded the verdict until State District Judge Joe Bob Golden admonished them.

"We win, and yet we still lose because we don't have him back," the victim's sister, Mary Verrette, said outside court.

King, a 24-year-old laborer,

was the first of three white men to be tried in the June 7 slaying of James Byrd Jr. The 49-year-old man's body was torn in two - a head and right arm severed from his torso - when he was pulled nearly three miles while tied by his ankles with a 24 1/2-foot logging chain.

The murder thrust Jasper into a national spotlight as members of the Ku Klux Klan and New Black Panthers descended on the timber town of 8,000 peo-

ple about 100 miles northeast of Houston.

In closing arguments, prosecutor Pat Hardy outlined the evidence against King, likening Byrd's attackers to "three robed riders coming straight out of hell."

"After they dragged that poor man and tore his body to pieces, they dropped it right in front a church and a cemetery, to show their defiance to God, to show their defiance of Christianity

and everything most people in this county stand for."

Prosecutors argued Byrd was conscious, suffering horribly as he vainly tried to save himself during a part of the way.

To make King eligible for the death penalty, prosecutors had to show Byrd's murder happened in conjunction with another crime, and argue the abduction of Byrd amounted to kidnapping.

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THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25, 1999

CIAA fans say tourney still has spark

BY DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

The CIAA Tournament is in town for a week of slam dunks, no-look passes and 3-point bombs.

While some fans talk about the excitement that will be generated by moving the nation's oldest basketball tournament to Raleigh next year, most fans are living for the moment.

"I always call up people and tell them to come," said Winston-Salem resident Beth Hopkins. "I've never had a friend to come and be disappointed. They always say 'Why haven't we been doing this before.'"

Hopkins has been a tournament regular since her college days at Wake Forest University in the early '70s. Though she has enjoyed a few ACC tournaments over the years, she says ACC action doesn't compare to the action in the CIAA.

"These games are more fun - there's more camaraderie," she said. "The fans seem to back their teams whether they're up or down. Here, the noise never stops. It's always been a part of my life. The CIAA and I grew up together."

Hopkins has made sure her son David has been apart of the atmosphere as well.

The third grader at Downtown Elementary School says he loves the action of the men's and women's games but his loyalties lie with one school.

"Virginia Union because I like their colors ... and my grandma and grandpa went their," David said proudly.

The nine-year-old also has the winning formula for the defending tournament champion men's team.

"I think they've got to get the ball down the court faster, use the time they have to score wisely and rebound their missed shots," he said.

Hopkins is a Panther's fan as well, but because she and her husband have lived in the Twin City for the past 15 years, her heart also bleeds red and white for a local CIAA team.

"I always pull for Winston-Salem State University too," she said. "We're going to follow them all the way."

Forty five-year-old Eddie Jenkins, a first-time attendee, is

See Spark on A11

52 years and counting

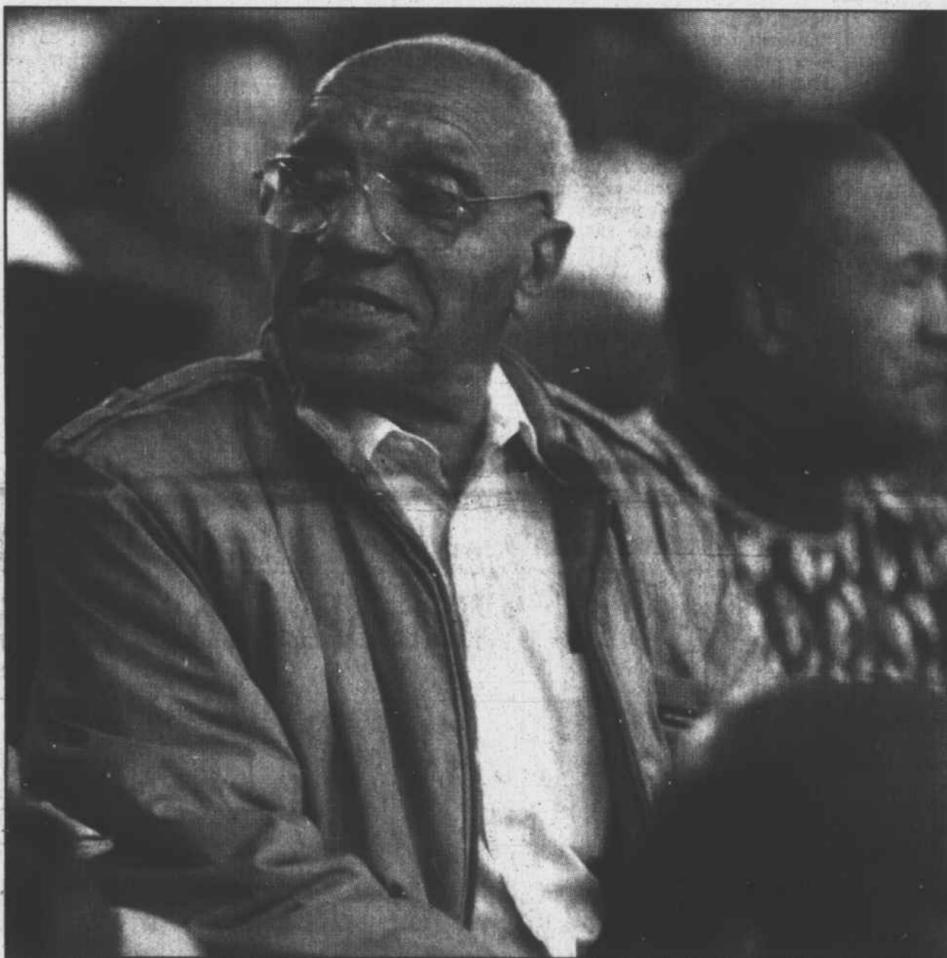


Photo by Bruce Chapman

For more than 60 years, Cupid Kellum has been involved in the CIAA, first as a player and now as a 30-year veteran of the tournament. Kellum's the first to admit he's more effective as a spectator. "I was a bench warmer. Coach (Harold) Taylor gave me a set of knee pads so that I wouldn't hurt myself if I fell off the bench because I rode the bench so long."

Tournament a fact of life for Kellum

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem's Cupid Kellum has a lot to say about the CIAA Basketball Tournament.

That's because Kellum has seen a lot of tournaments.

When Kellum made his way to the Coliseum Annex for this year's tournament, marked the 52nd consecutive year that he's been around for the annual festi-

ties.

Kellum's first encounter with the tournament came in 1948 when he traveled to U-Line Arena in Washington, D.C. to witness the games. He hasn't missed one since.

"Over the years, I've watched a lot of people come and go," Kellum said. "I know, a lot of people who have been coming to the tournament for a long time,

but I don't know of anyone who has been here as many consecutive years as I have."

During the early years, Kellum, a Winston-Salem State University graduate, would take a week off his job as an elementary school teacher to make the trek to the tournament. His wife would accompany him and the week would be a winter get-away for

See Kellum on A11

A new school for East Winston?

Black board members leery of term "Southeast"

By T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Financial investment in inner-city schools has been several years late and millions of dollars short.

But during the first years of the new millennium that may change.

The board of education overwhelmingly approved a 10-year plan for the city-county school system Tuesday night. The plan includes dozens of school renovations and construction projects and will likely lead to a bond referendum in the next few years to cover its more than \$200 million price tag.

Although the plan includes everything from \$500,000 roofing jobs, to \$45,000 playground upgrades, many East Winston residents are keeping a close eye on the five new schools that are proposed.

A new \$26 million high school and a new \$7 million elementary school are included in the plan for the Southeastern part of the city. The two schools are as close as East Winston will get as far as new school construction.

Although the "Southeast" includes a vast area that extends from a portion of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to Waughtown Street and the hinterlands of the county, school board member Victor Johnson said the

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Black Democrats talk issues with Republicans

During closed meeting, coup leaders discuss alliances with GOP

By DENNIS PATTERSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH - Black dissidents who broke from the House Democratic caucus on the Legislature's opening day met with activists last Friday to discuss possible alliances with Republicans on issues important to minorities.

"This meeting was not about leaving the Democratic Party or joining the Republican Party," said the Rev. William Barber of Goldsboro. "Party affiliation alone will not solve our concerns."

"The real question is since we have as a minority the

See Issues on A11

West dedicates homes for Vets

T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

From a gigantic cake covered with dozens of miniature American flags, to the high school color guard that stood at attention as the Pledge of Allegiance was read and a string section who gracefully performed "The Star Spangled Banner" - patriotism was the running theme of a ceremony last week to celebrate the opening of Vives Cottages, a transitional housing complex for homeless veterans located at the corner of Green and Watkins streets.

The cottages - hailed as the first of their kind in the state - will provide homes for the veterans as they receive educational training, health care or while they work toward self

-sufficiency.

Experiment In Self-Reliance - a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing transitional housing and services to local residents - pitched the idea for the cottages to Veterans Affairs officials and will supervise the program.

The organization's executive director, Twana Wellman, was joined by Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Togo West Jr., several elected officials and many members of the public last Thursday at the Glade Street YWCA to honor not only the Vives Cottages project, but also the thousands of men and women who have fallen on hard times after serving their country in the armed forces.

"This was a massive undertak-

ing," said Timothy May, the director of the VA Medical Center in Salisbury. "When the call came, we needed them to be our defenders; now, we need to come to them in their time of need."

Wellman - who took over the ED position at ESR less than four months ago - told the audience that the cottages are just one of many transitional housing efforts the organization is involved with. ESR also operates transitional housing units on Burton and Spring streets, but the cottages are the first specifically designed for vets.

"I never dreamed that so many people would come out," a smiling Wellman said to a capacity crowd.

See West on A10



Photo by T. Kevin Walker

Togo West greets city workers who helped to renovate Vives Cottages.