

Court considers Reno probe of Starr

By PETE YOST
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Neither prosecutor Kenneth Starr nor the Justice Department encouraged a federal court Monday to decide whether Attorney General Janet Reno can investigate the way Starr conducted the Monica Lewinsky investigation.

In court papers, the independent counsel said he was refraining from addressing the underlying issue - whether the attorney general "acted improperly" in moving toward an investigation of his office. Instead, Starr argued that the conservative group that sought the involvement of a panel of three appeals court judges has no right to ask the judges to intercede.

The Justice Department argued that the law authorizes it to probe Starr's work, and said the panel of judges, who appointed Starr, doesn't have jurisdiction to decide the

question.

The judges directed Reno and Starr to submit written arguments after receiving a request from Landmark Legal Foundation of Herndon, Va., which wanted the court to block the Justice investigation.

Starr and the Justice Department have been involved in a dispute over who should investigate the prosecutor's handling of the Lewinsky investigation.

Among the issues to be investigated are contacts Starr and his prosecutors had with lawyers for Paula Jones in her sexual harassment lawsuit against President Clinton. Also under scrutiny would be prosecutors' conduct at a Jan. 16, 1998, confrontation with Lewinsky, when they discussed a possible immunity deal for her without her lawyer present. Justice Department guidelines require the lawyer's presence.

Starr said Landmark Legal Foundation "has no personal stake in the alleged dispute" and "no injury to Landmark is ... traceable to the attorney general's alleged actions."

In its court papers, the Justice Department stated that the panel of judges "lacks authority" to stop the attorney general from investigating Starr and the private group's application for a writ of prohibition against Reno should be dismissed. The department further argued that it seems clear the law authorizes Reno to police Starr's conduct because the law explicitly gives her power to fire him.

The legal foundation maintains only Congress can investigate Starr.

The group filed a request with the judges Feb. 11 citing the Ethics in Government Act, which says "the appropriate committees of the Congress shall have oversight

jurisdiction with respect to the official conduct of any independent counsel."

Nothing grants the judges "authority to prohibit the attorney general from inquiring into whether 'good cause' exists to remove" Starr, the Justice Department said in court papers filed by Solicitor General Seth Waxman.

The department stated that the only legal provision cited by the private group referring to the judges' authority relates to another subject entirely - the scope of the prosecutor's jurisdiction.

Landmark President Mark Levin said the group's standing to bring the matter before the court was irrelevant because "this is a case where the special division" of judges "exercises its own supervisory powers to ensure the integrity of the investigative process."

N.C. Town to Annex Black Areas

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRENTON, N.C. - Two weeks after the mayor inflamed racial tensions by saying blacks are unfit to govern themselves, the all-white town council agreed to annex three black neighborhoods - the first annexations in Trenton's 215-year history.

Black activists immediately announced they would drop a week-old boycott of the town's white-owned businesses after the three councilmen agreed Monday night to annex the areas and their roughly 100 residents.

Trenton is a farming center of 200 people on North Carolina's coastal plain. The town is about one-fourth black. The annexations will make the town about half black, and activists hope that will lead to the election of the town's first black council member.

"We just want to show people this board is not racially biased," Councilman Charles Jones said. "Let's put this ugly thing behind us and all go back to living normal lives where we all speak to each other and are friends."

Blacks had filed a federal lawsuit Jan. 12 alleging the town discriminated by refusing to annex the three areas, called Haiti, Monkton and Spicy-Quinn Lands.

But the issue didn't catch fire until two weeks ago, when Joffree Leggett, Trenton's white mayor of 16 years, told The Kinston Free Press that blacks don't belong in town government.

"They are not leaders," he said. "A black man would rather work for a white person."

Leggett, 81, resigned last week under pressure from the council. Most residents of the three

neighborhoods have signed a petition in favor of becoming part of the town. After the council's decision, many said the town never would have acted without pressure from the NAACP.

"They weren't going to do nothing," said Johnson Willis, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit. "They never wanted to give us nothing. I had to sue them for everything."

Jones, the councilman, said the board could not consider annexing the three areas until early this year, when the neighborhoods were finally connected to the town sewer service.

The annexation process is expected to take about a year.

"This was meant to happen, and I'm glad it happened," said Sharon Ingram, who lives in one of the neighborhoods. "It should've happened a long time ago."

NAACP calls for day of non-violence

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE - NAACP President Kweisi Mfume announced last Friday that his organization would celebrate a "National Day of Non-Violence" on April 4.

Programs are planned for several cities, including Dallas, Memphis, Tenn., and Oakland, Calif.

"We want to put forward an agenda today," he said. "We're tired of going to teenage funerals. We're tired of people thinking that Baltimore can't do better."

Mfume spoke at a student gathering at Walbrook High, a high school with a predominantly black student population. The

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is based in Baltimore.

"Isn't it ironic that 90 years ago, when the NAACP was founded, we were running from the men in the white hoods - and now, 90 years later, we're running from the boys in the 'hood'?" Mfume said.

Then, referring to recent shooting massacres by white high school students in Oregon and Arkansas, he said violence "is not a black problem, it is an American problem."

Rev. Jamal Bryant, national director of the NAACP's Youth and College Division, said the date

was chosen to coincide with both Easter Sunday and the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination.

No specific events for the day were mentioned, but Mfume told students, "We deliberately expect all of you to do conflict resolution April 4. If you see an argument, try to resolve it."

In a statement released late Friday, Bryant said, "On this day, it is our hope and our dream that no young person is shot, no woman is hit, no youngster killed and no hate crimes committed. We want the youth of this nation to say, 'Enough is enough. It is time to stop the violence.'"

Achievers hold program

Special to THE CHRONICLE

The Pfafftown Chapter of National Women of Achievement, Inc. met at the home of the group's president, Jeannette T. Lewis, on March 6 at 11:30 a.m. The Status of Women guest speaker, Sandra Wilder, was introduced to the achievers by Lewis. Valeria Dove gave an inspiring meditation message. After Valeria Harris gave the minutes, and Lucille Gwynn gave the financial report, the guest speaker focused her remarks on The Status of Women in financial planning and healthcare. Wilder started out by sharing some research on why women must build bigger nest egg for retirement than men. If women want to live comfortably after their jobs end, they need to save more than men. The reason is that women are likely to live longer than men by up to seven years, so therefore, women are likely to have longer retirements. Women make less money in the course of their careers. Social Security alone can not finance those golden years. So the statistical fact remains that women live longer and have longer retirement. Things that can offset this situation are pensions in the form of annuities and life insurance. Wilder shared other investments such as CD vs. stock market, mutual funds, bonds and IRAs. She also talked about the benefits of owning long term care insurance. Long term care is the single biggest threat to whatever wealth an older person has. Her presentation was really an eye-opener to give all achievers something to think seriously about so that one can live in the style that they



Sandra Wilder talks with Jeannette Lewis, president to the Pfafftown Chapter of National Women of Achievement.

have become accustomed to. One last thought that really hit home to all was when Wilder said, "Remember this, people 'don't plan to fail, people fail to plan.'"

She encouraged group members to develop programs that customized and meet their needs and plans that interest them. After the speaker's committee reports by Ann Moye and Emma Norman on programs and youth activities.

Members present were: Achievers Polly G. Bailey, Linda Bowman-Hopson, Valeria Dove,

Lucille Gwynn, Valeria S. Harris, Jeannette T. Lewis, Ann Moye, Emma Norman and Leola F. Sadler. That night at the 8pm youth leaders took the youth achievers to see the play "The Contract" at the Artistic Studio where Janice Price Hinton is the owner. This was truly an experience for the youth achievers. Those attending were Vernetta and Charnette Tetterton, Sherita Valentine, Adrienne Hopson, Demetria Dove and her sister Alveria Dove. The adult achievers were: Valeria Dove, Jeannette T. Lewis, Ann Moye, and Emma Norman.

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