

# Civil rights lawsuit against the Nation of Islam thrown out

By JEAN MCMILLAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A lawsuit accusing the Nation of Islam of discrimination for barring women from a public speech by leader Louis Farrakhan has been dismissed.

Judge Regina Quinlan ruled that the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of religion took priority over anti-discrimination laws.

"Freedom of religion and freedom of religious expression, which traditionally will exempt a religion from certain discrimination laws, is applicable here," Quinlan said Monday.

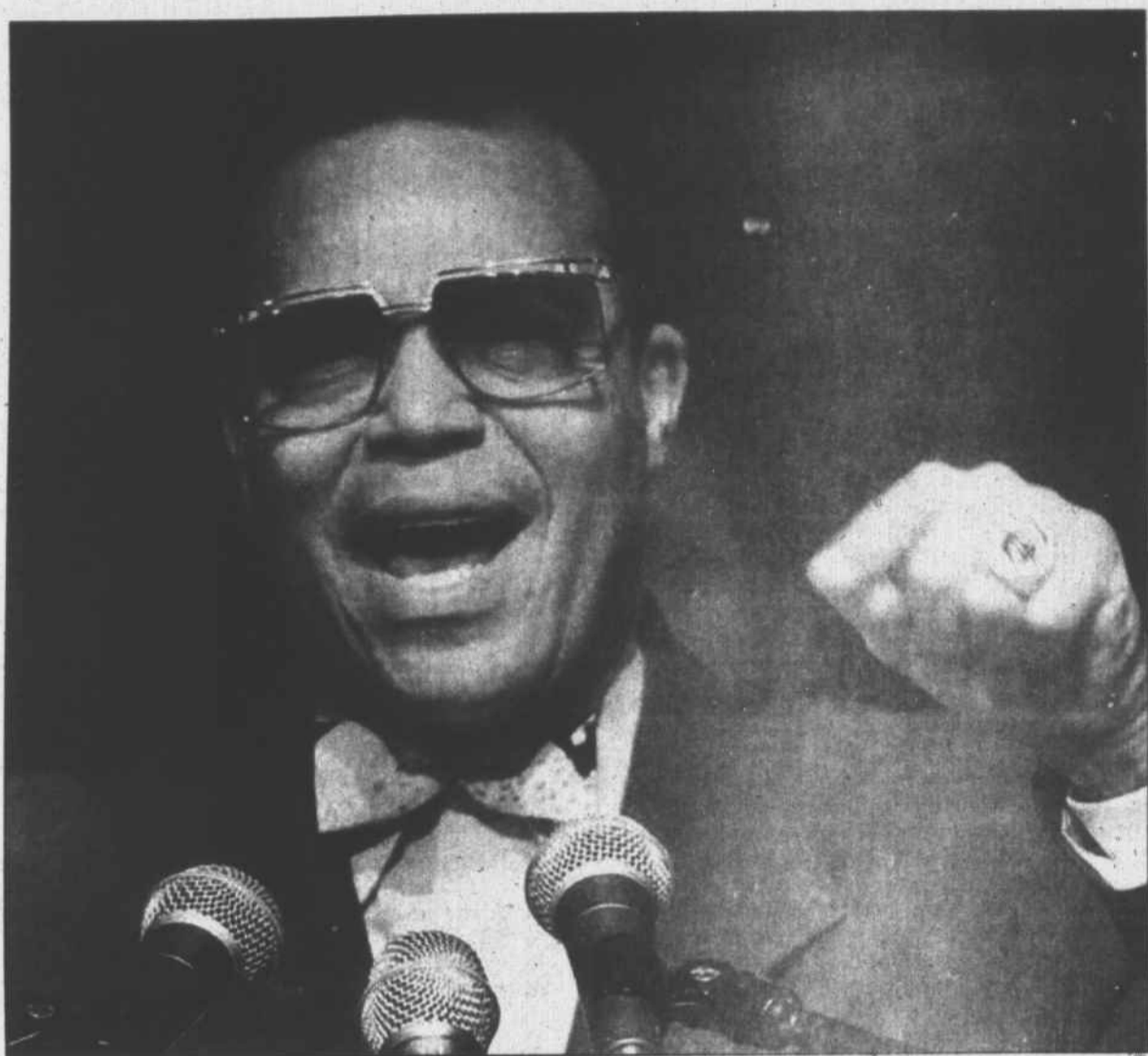
Marceline Donaldson, the Cambridge woman who filed the suit, claiming her civil rights were violated, said she was not ready to give up.

"It's unfortunate that you take a case to the court and the court errs. It's got my adrenaline going a little bit and we'll be back," she said.

She sought unspecified damages from Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam, and Minister Don Muhammad, head of the Nation of Islam mosque in Boston. John Rosenberg, her lawyer, said they were leaning toward appealing the ruling.

Donaldson, who ran an antiques store at the time, closed early to attend the event at Boston's city-owned Strand Theater on March 10, 1994, only to be turned away at the door.

Muhammad said he was pleased with the decision. And



Farrakhan

he said the men-only speech on black-on-black violence had produced positive results.

"I feel vindicated," Muham-

mad said. "The purpose for the meeting is felt in the streets."

Rosenberg said the case was never about the content of the

message being preached, only that the event was in a public building and should have been open to women.

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# St. Peter's World Outreach Center to sponsor Book Review Club

Special to THE CHRONICLE

On Aug. 13 at 6:30 p.m. the women's department of St. Peter's World Outreach Center will hold its quarterly Book Review Club. Light refreshments will be served followed by a dis-

ussion of Bishop T.D. Jake's book "The Lady, Her Lover, and Her Lord."

St. Peter's own Sister Joyce Hash will lead the discussion.

Copies of the chosen text will be made available for those

who do not have a copy. The St. Peter's Bookstore also will be open for anyone who wants to buy a copy of this dynamic best seller.

For more information on this event, call the church office at 650-0200.

Since its inception, the Book Review Club has attracted women from as far away as Charlotte and Raleigh.

Dr. James C. Hash Sr. is the pastor of St. Peter's World Outreach Center, 3683 Old Lexington Road, Winston-Salem.

# Prosecutors fight Lyons' sentence reduction

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LARGO, Fla. — State prosecutors say they do not believe the Rev. Henry Lyons is repentant and does not deserve a reduction of his 51/2-year prison term for racketeering and grand theft.

Lyons' attorneys filed a petition last month in Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Court asking a judge to shrink his sentence because the St. Petersburg minister is truly repentant and has learned a lesson from his misdeeds.

He was convicted of swindling \$4 million from companies wanting to do business with members of the Nashville, Tenn.-based National Baptist Convention USA, which he headed. Lyons also was found guilty of stealing nearly \$250,000 intended to help rebuild burned churches.

"Prison life has certainly humbled him," defense attorney Jay Hebert said. "When I saw him (earlier this year), I clearly recognized a vastly changed man."

Prosecutors aren't buying it. Last week, they filed with the court an excerpt from Lyons' 1991 apology to charges of bank

fraud. "Often history is the best predictor of the future," Assistant State Attorney Bob Lewis said in court papers released Thursday. "Henry Lyons has been 'repentant' before."

In 1991, before Lyons became president of the National Baptist Convention USA, he faced a federal investigation of charges he obtained an \$85,000 bank loan by forging certificates of deposit used as collateral.

Lyons entered a pretrial intervention program that he completed successfully, avoiding trial, a possible prison sentence and any criminal record.

"It was a bad case of misjudgment or bad judgment on my part," he wrote to the court while trying to get into the program. "I have suffered much because of committing this wrong."

"I am truly sorry for making the terrible mistake. It haunts me daily, just the fact that I am outside of the law is enough to cause me a great sorrow. I have ask(ed) my God to forgive me, and He has. I have ask(ed) the bank and the state of Florida to forgive me, and I trust that they will. I

have ask(ed) my wife to forgive me, and she has.

"I am not proud of the fact that I have been in any kind of trouble with the law."

The words, prosecutors say, echo this year's apologies in state and federal court as Lyons faced sentencing on fraud and racketeering convictions regarding the convention.

"One should not be surprised to see such an attempt to utilize this 'repentance' again," Lewis said in court papers. "And, once again, his focus is on mistakes bad judgments and other excuses rather than his own greed, avarice, ambition and willingness to do or say anything to obtain his desires."

A hearing on Lyons' request for a lesser sentence is scheduled for Aug. 18.



Lyons

## Rev. Thigpen to speak at Second Calvary Baptist

Special to THE CHRONICLE

The Rev. Sandra Thigpen will be the guest minister for Women's Day at the 11 a.m. service at Second Calvary Baptist Church on Aug. 15.

She is the senior assistant chaplain at Forsyth Jail and Prison Ministry. She is an associate minister at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, where her pastor is Dr. Douglas Summers.

There also will be a Men's Day service at 4 p.m. The evening minister will be Alvin Stowe, associate minister at the church.

The Rev. Donald Stowe Sr. is the pastor of Second Calvary Baptist, 1751 New Walkertown Road.

Everyone is invited.



Rev. Sandra Thigpen

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