

News at a Glance

Dems question conservative judge

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal appellate nominee Janice Rogers Brown last week defended her work as a conservative California jurist and said the personal opinions expressed in some of her speeches would stay separate from her role on the bench.

Brown, a California Supreme Court justice, has been nominated for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, a court that is seen by many as a training ground for the U.S. Supreme Court.



Brown

But her conservative positions worry Democrats, who at a Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing criticized what they called her "right-wing" statements in speeches and judicial decisions.

A 54-year-old black woman from the South, Brown supports limits on abortion rights and corporate liability and opposes affirmative action.

She has been quoted as calling affirmative action programs "entitlement based on group representation" and similar to Jim Crow laws. She also was quoted as saying, "Where government moves in, community retreats, civil society disintegrates, and our ability to control our own destiny atrophies."

Republicans attacked Brown's critics. Being black brings her opposition, said Senate Judiciary Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah.

"She is a conservative African-American woman, and for some that alone disqualifies her nomination to the D.C. circuit," he said.

S.C. Army National Guard promotes first black female to command sergeant major

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Gail M. Williams of Lugoff has become the S.C. Army National Guard's first black woman command sergeant major, a spokesman said last week.

Maj. Gen. Stanhope Spears, the adjutant general of South Carolina, pinned chevrons on Williams' collars at a ceremony marking the event, said Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Brooks.

Command sergeant major is the highest rank an enlisted soldier can reach. Williams becomes only one of a half-dozen Guard soldiers in the state who have attained the rank, Brooks said.

Williams entered the S.C. Guard in 1976. In 1995, she became the first woman in the state Guard to be promoted to the rank of first sergeant.

Williams will join the 218th Leadership Brigade at Fort Jackson, which is a regional school for the professional development of non-commissioned officers, Brooks said.

In her civilian career, Williams is the floor supervisor in the radiology department at Moncrief Army Hospital at Fort Jackson.

Sports talk show hosts return to air after comments called racist

BOSTON (AP) — Two popular sports radio talk show hosts have returned to the air after a two-week suspension and apologized for comparing students at a school busing program for inner-city children to an escaped zoo gorilla, but denied that racism motivated their comments.

"Do you honestly think if I made a racist connection in my mind about an escaped zoo animal and a school program that I would be stupid enough to say it, and commit professional suicide?" said John Dennis, co-host of the "Dennis & Callahan" show on WEEI-AM.

The controversy began after an on-air exchange between Dennis and co-host Gerry Callahan on Sept. 29, a day after the gorilla, Little Joe, escaped from Boston's Franklin Park Zoo and injured a toddler and a teenager.

After Callahan observed the gorilla was captured near a bus stop, Dennis said, "Yeah, yeah. He was a Metco gorilla."

"Heading out to Lexington," Callahan added. "Yeah, exactly," Dennis replied.

Metco is a voluntary program that buses inner-city children to suburban schools.

A coalition of 18 community organizations, led by the Anti-Defamation League and Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, held a news conference at WEEI headquarters last week to discuss a proposal it submitted to the station to prevent a repeat of similar behavior.

The proposal calls for the station to adopt guidelines to prevent similar incidents and to provide diversity training to employees.

Johnson family objects to higher disability check for Jessica Lynch

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — The father of former POW Spec. Shoshana Johnson has accused the Army of unfair treatment after a medical board offered Shoshana Johnson a smaller disability payment than fellow POW Pfc. Jessica Lynch.

Claude Johnson, who lives in El Paso, said the financial support Lynch is getting should be provided equally to all soldiers who are injured in the line of duty.

"She is not getting what she deserves," he said of his daughter.

Family members confirmed that Lynch, snatched from her Iraqi captors on April 1 in a special forces rescue, is receiving an 80 percent disability. Shoshana Johnson, released on April 13 with four other American POWs, has been offered 30 percent, Claude Johnson said.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who consulted the Johnson family, said race was playing a part in the Army's decision. Lynch is white; Shoshana Johnson is black.

"There's a long history of blacks not receiving fair and adequate recognition in the military for services rendered," said Jackson, who was in Dallas on Friday.

Army spokesman Maj. Steve Stover said Shoshana Johnson's payment, which Jackson said is about \$600 a month, can be appealed. Stover declined to say how much the payment would be worth.

Stover said the two cases are different and race is not an issue.



Johnson



Meter ticking on cabbies who bypass blacks in 'Chocolate City'

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON — The secret is out: Actor Danny Glover exposed it in New York. A top White House official suffered the indignity. And even the mayor-to-be of Washington, D.C., was not exempt from it.

It, as they all can attest, is having taxicab drivers routinely pass up black customers in favor of white ones.

"I've stood outside and counted cabs sometimes. One night I counted, and, literally, 15 cabs passed me by," recalled Patrick Johnson, 23, an office assistant at Howard University. "I've had to jump in front of cabs. I've had problems catching them during the

day. But late at night, you aren't even given the option of telling them where you're going."

Johnson isn't the only African-American sharing that experience, according to a study made public earlier this month.

"The District is plagued by blatant and widespread race discrimination by taxicab companies and their drivers," stated a 15-page report by the D.C.-based Equal Rights Cen-



Patrick

ter, a nonprofit organization that seeks enforcement of civil rights laws. "It is clear that despite the egregious nature of this problem, the District of Columbia's sporadic efforts over the years to address it have been ineffective and wholly inadequate."

District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams has asked his taxi commission, which regulates cabs, to review its policies in light of the problems.

"We take it seriously because all of us have been affected by this," Mayor Williams said. "I've had the same experiences here as well as in other cities. Stereotyping isn't right. Whether it's stereotyping by race or by red-lining certain areas, it is repugnant to

all of us."

Washington has approximately 6,800 licensed cab drivers, most of whom are self-employed. Last year, 119 complaints were lodged charging drivers with passing up customers.

In order to bring formal charges against an offending driver in the District, a citizen must file a complaint with the Taxicab Commission within 30 days of the discriminatory act. The commission must then contact the driver, who has 10 days to file a response with the commission. At that point, the commission can resolve the complaint or refer the case for a hearing with the intent of reaching a resolution within three months.

See Cabbies on A4

Coach honored amid NAACP protest

BY TIM KORTE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — Former Washington coach Jim Owens was honored at halftime of Saturday's game against USC, one day after NAACP leaders held a news conference to protest his treatment of black players.

The school unveiled a statue of Owens, who now lives in Bigfork, Mont., and installed it on a plaza outside Husky Stadium. During an unveiling ceremony on the field, he acknowledged the controversy with an apology.

"To my players, I thank them and apologize for any hurt they may feel. I hope today we can begin to heal the wounds of the past," Owens said, drawing cheers from across the sold-out stadium.

Owens coached Washington from 1957-74, posting a 99-82-6 record, and served as athletics director from 1960-69. He led the school to its first conference title in 24 years in 1959, along with two Rose Bowl victories.

The Huskies beat Wisconsin 44-8 in the 1960 Rose Bowl and one year later beat Minnesota 17-7.

The 1969 Huskies, though, were dogged by the turmoil of the civil rights era.

Four black players were suspended for refusing to pledge loyalty to Owens, and all of the team's black players boycotted the next game. UCLA beat the Huskies 57-14, the worst loss of Owens' career at the time.

"That was a painful time, especially for some of the black athletes we coached," Owens told reporters Friday at his own news conference, called to rebut the NAACP allegations.

"Some of the decisions I made during that time were decisions I felt would be the best for the team. It was never my intention to single out the black ath-

letes in any way," he said.

Fans cheered when Owens pulled back a black cloak to reveal the statue, which portrays him kneeling. The Husky marching band spelled out "Jim Owens" across the field as a backdrop to the ceremony.

The 77-year-old Owens was-



Jim Owens

See Owens on A10

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The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636