

# News at a Glance

## Barry hints at possible return to politics

WASHINGTON (AP) - Former Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr., said Saturday he may run for a seat on the District of Columbia Council.

Barry, 67, attended two funerals Saturday - one for a 14-year-old girl shot after apparently witnessing a killing, and the other for James Richardson, 17, who was gunned down inside Ballou High School.

At Richardson's funeral, the crowd broke into loud applause and cheers when current Mayor Anthony A. Williams mentioned his presence in the church. After the services, several mourners stopped Barry and urged him to run for the Ward 8 council seat. He said with comments like that, he has to at least consider the idea.

"I gotta think about it. I thought I retired," Barry said. "We need better schools, better police, streets cleaned, jobs for people out there," he said of Ward 8, in the district's southeast quadrant, which is one of the poorest parts of the city. Barry said he has lived there since 1992, and remains extremely popular. At a community meeting at Ballou on Tuesday, he was met with repeated applause.

Barry turns 68 next month. He won an at-large seat on the first elected D.C. Council in 1975, and three years later ousted Walter Washington, to begin the first of three consecutive terms as mayor.

In 1990, FBI agents videotaped him smoking crack cocaine in a downtown hotel. After serving time in jail, Barry won a council seat in 1992, then a fourth term as mayor in 1994. He has diabetes and anemia, and survived prostate cancer.

The Ward 8 seat is currently held by Sandy Allen, who is in her second term and up for re-election this year.



Barry

## Students find noose dangling in courtyard

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) - Students at the University of South Florida found a rope fashioned into a noose dangling from a tree beside a dormitory, and officials are trying to determine who put it there.

The noose was discovered on Jan. 30, in a courtyard beside the 500-student Magnolia Apartments, a popular gathering spot for students. Police are looking for more evidence before deciding whether to call it a hate crime.

"We have nothing but a rope in a tree right now," said USF police spokesman Mike Klingebiel. "We want to know what someone was thinking when they did this. Depending on what is found, the university might have the right to take action."

There are more than 4,000 black students at USF, and some said they have no doubt about the intended message. More than 35,000 students are enrolled at the school.

"When somebody sees a noose in this part of the country, for a black person, it reminds them of hangings and lynchings," said Emmanuel Cofie, 20, a junior from Tallahassee. "It reminds blacks of that past."

## Nurse who excelled during Crimean War named greatest black Briton

LONDON (AP) - A nurse who comforted dying soldiers during the Crimean War topped the voting as the greatest black Briton, a British Web site said Monday.



Seacole

The work of Mary Seacole (1805-1881) has long been overshadowed by the contribution of her contemporary Florence Nightingale.

But she led the poll by the black heritage Web site "Every Generation," designed to celebrate the contribution of black Britons. Some 100,000 responded to the online vote between Oct. 1 and Jan. 1.

"The popularity and success of the campaign highlights the fact that black history in Britain is intertwined with British history," said "Every Generation" founder Patrick Vernon.

"As a black Jamaican woman in the 19th century, Mary Seacole stood up against the discrimination and prejudices she encountered.

"Against all odds Mary had an unshakable belief in the power of nursing to make a difference."

Seacole traveled to the Crimea on her own after the government rejected her offer of help.

She opened her British Hotel in 1855, where soldiers dubbed her "Mother Seacole," and she was later awarded a Crimean medal for her work.

## U.S. denies visa to Cuban minister for black history visit to Mobile, Ala.

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) - A Baptist minister from Cuba who was expected to speak in Mobile in connection with Black History Month said he was denied a travel visa by the U.S. State Department.

The Rev. Raul Suarez, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana, has canceled his planned visit.

Suarez has received visas to visit the United States several times over the past decade, most recently in 1999, he said.

Suarez was invited to Alabama by the Society Mobile-La Habana, a Mobile-based sister cities group. The visit, set between Feb. 14-20, was to have included speeches to local civic groups and sermons at area churches.

Suarez, who serves as director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center in Havana, also was scheduled to walk a portion of the Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail and to tour Montgomery sites of significance in the Civil Rights Movement.

Jay Higginbotham, chairman of Society Mobile's board of directors, said he was told that the visa application was denied because Suarez is a deputy on Cuba's National Assembly, or parliament.

State Department officials declined to comment on Suarez's application, citing confidentiality rules.



Suarez

# Black, brown juveniles are much more likely to face death penalty

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY  
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Although black and brown juveniles represent 21 percent of the 16- to 17-year-olds in America, they represent more than triple that proportion (66 percent) of all death row inmates sentenced as juveniles.

"Why is this?" David Elliott, spokesman for the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP), asks rhetorically. "It's because the death penalty preys upon the most vulnerable in our society."

The question of whether 16- and 17-year-olds should receive the death penalty is receiving increased scrutiny now that the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear a Missouri case - Simmons v. Roper - challenging the pending execution of a man who was 17 at the time of his crime.

If the decision is overturned later this year, it could spare the lives of 34 African-Americans (45 percent); 24 whites (32 percent); 14 Latinos (19 percent); and two Asians (2 percent) currently on death row for crimes committed when they were juveniles, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, based in Washington, D.C.

The number of 16- and 17-year-old juveniles of color in the United States totals 2.6 million, less than half of the 5.5 million whites in same age category. Yet, the percentage of juveniles of color on death row stands at 66



percent while the percentage of white juveniles is less than half of that - 32 percent. Whites represent 43.4 percent of the 16- and 17-year-old population in the United States.

"You already start off having a racial disparity with the people on death row (generally of all ages) being 55 percent people of color," said David Elliott, spokesman for the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. "Then, when you look at the marginalized groups - the mentally retarded, juveniles - you find increased evidence of racial bias."

Across the country, anti-death penalty organizations have been energized by the Supreme Court's decision to hear an appeal of a Missouri Supreme Court ruling. The defendant, Christopher Simmons, now 27, was 17 when he murdered a woman who recognized him when he and a 15-year-old companion burglarized her house.

The Missouri Supreme Court ruled 4-3 to overturn his death sentence because of his age, noting that the executions of juveniles have become so rare that they constitute cruel and unusual punishment, a violation of the 8th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"Individuals under the age of

18 cannot vote, cannot serve in the military without their parents' permission, cannot purchase liquor, and, in the state of Louisiana, they cannot witness an execution unless they are the one being put to death," said William F. Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International USA. "Society recognizes the diminished accountability of those under the age of 18 in (every) aspect of civil life but this one."

Society traditionally does not kill the young because the general belief is that they may not know the difference between right and wrong. In 1988, the Supreme Court ruled it illegal to execute anyone under the age of 16. In

See Juveniles on A4

# Officer who slammed teen off the hook

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - After two trials that ended in hung juries, prosecutors dropped brutality charges Friday against a former police officer who was videotaped slamming a handcuffed teenager onto a patrol car.



Jackson

Prosecutors said they did not believe they could get a unanimous verdict in a third trial for former Inglewood Officer Jeremy Morse.

Superior Court Judge William Hollingsworth Jr. agreed.

"I'm convinced that the chances of reaching a unanimous decision either way is virtually nil. The case is dismissed," Hollingsworth said.

Last week, a jury deadlocked 6-6. In July, jurors in the first trial deadlocked 7-5 in favor of conviction.

Morse, 26, who is white, was seen on the tape slamming a black teen, Donovan Jackson, onto the trunk of a police car and punching him in the face at a gas station in 2002.

The videotape was shot by a bystander. Although race was never mentioned in the trials, the image of a white officer roughing up a black youth touched off angry protests in Inglewood.

Morse was later fired. It was not immediately known whether he would seek reinstatement.

Morse's attorney, John Barnett, said the key to the case was testimony from vari-

ous law enforcement officials that the use of force was justified.

"All of those people spoke with one voice and said the actions were appropriate," Barnett said. "My client is relieved, as am I, that there won't be further prosecution."

The confrontation occurred after Jackson's father was pulled over by Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies for driving a car with expired tags.

Jackson's family said the teenager, then 16, may have responded slowly to officers'

orders because he has a learning disability.

Morse's attorney argued that his client had to make a quick decision about how much force was needed to subdue a suspect who had already fought with other officers.

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