

News at a Glance

Tucker's libel lawsuit dismissed

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - The Pennsylvania Supreme Court last Thursday dismissed a libel lawsuit by a critic of violent rap lyrics who said two newspapers had mischaracterized her dispute with the estate of slain rapper Tupac Shakur and others.

C. DeLores Tucker, who led a national campaign against rap music with violent lyrics in the 1990s, had sued over lyrics in which Shakur rhymed her name with an obscenity. Her 1997 lawsuit alleged, among other things, that her husband, William Tucker, had suffered loss of "consortium."

The Philadelphia Daily News and The Legal Intelligencer, a daily newspaper covering legal affairs in Philadelphia, were among the news organizations that reported on the lawsuit and interpreted loss of consortium to mean harm to the Tuckers' sex life. Tucker said the claim had nothing to do with sex, but with "advice, society, companionship, i.e., defendants' effect upon the 'family union.'"

Last Thursday's ruling said the Tuckers can plead their case again only if they assert that the newspapers had been told unequivocally that the loss of consortium claim was not about sex.

In 1991, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider Tucker's libel case against Newsweek and Time. The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had said she was a public figure and had to prove that reporters wrote the stories with actual malice, and there was no proof of that. The original lawsuit against the estate of Shakur, who was shot to death in Las Vegas in 1996, was also dismissed.

King becomes Mississippi's first black chief judge of Court of Appeals

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) - Leslie D. King of Greenville on Friday became the first African-American chief judge of the Mississippi Court of Appeals.

King, 55, a former member of the Mississippi House of Representatives, was appointed by Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice James W. Smith Jr. King will fill a seat vacated by retiring Judge Roger H. McMillin Jr.

King's term will run through Dec. 31, 2006. While King said that his appointment shows that Mississippi has changed for the better, he said he was offered the position because of the contributions he can make to the state's judiciary system.

Smith agreed, saying King's 15 years of experience as a former legislator and his nine years on the Court of Appeals are valuable assets to the judicial system.

The chief judge of the Court of Appeals appoints two presiding judges.

The Court of Appeals hears appeals assigned by the Supreme Court. It was created to relieve a backlog of cases before the Supreme Court.

James Brown's legal troubles continue to delay statue unveiling in hometown

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) - City officials have delayed the unveiling of a statue honoring James Brown, planning to keep it under wraps until the singer resolves his legal troubles.

Officials originally had scheduled the unveiling for May 7 to coincide with the Godfather of Soul's 71st birthday, which is Monday, and the downtown music festival that bore his name until recently.

The once-dubbed James Brown Music Festival reverted to its original name, the Garden City Music Festival, in February because of the public backlash after his Jan. 28 arrest for allegedly hitting his wife, Tomi Rae Brown. Brown has denied the allegations.

That backlash now has prompted officials to postpone the statue unveiling.

"We need to let Mr. Brown settle those issues in his private life before we move forward with a very public recognition of his professional life," Mayor Bob Young said Friday.

Young also cited production delays. The \$40,000 statue still is in its clay model stage and waiting to be cast in bronze, a process that will take at least six weeks.

Workers at black-owned Coca-Cola plant in Philadelphia settle strike

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - About 450 striking employees of the Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. began returning to work last Thursday, following the approval of a new four-year contract.

The members of Teamsters Local 830 approved the deal by a 264-152 vote, union President Joe Brock said.

Workers had walked out 10 days earlier over wages and benefits, and voted down two earlier Coca-Cola proposals. Union officials had also claimed that management was unfair to employees who complained about work conditions or were hurt on the job.

Under the terms of the new contract, wages and benefits will not be reduced, though Brock said he did not have immediate access to the specifics of the agreement. The new contract also includes a faster grievance process, he said.

The plant's chief financial officer, Francis X. McGorry, said the strike was unnecessary.

"The company entered into negotiations seeking a fair result for everyone. In the end, we achieved our goal," McGorry said. "Getting there should not have been as difficult as it turned out to be."

The Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Co., located in Northeast Philadelphia, is the country's third-largest black-owned business and fourth-largest distributor of Coca-Cola products, with annual sales of \$400 million, according to the company's Web site.

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Cummings: African-Americans are ready to end Republican reign

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON - Black voters will have an opportunity in November to play a major role in ending the Republican stranglehold on every branch of the federal government, Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Elijah Cummings said.

"Most of our constituents quite accurately understand that one-party Republican rule in Washington is not going to effectively address the concerns that are central to their everyday lives," said the Baltimore Democrat. "There is no check nor balance in Washington today - and that must change."

He explained, "This year's House and Senate elections are at least as important in restoring our country to what I would term a more balanced course as is the presidential race that is receiving most of the journalistic attention these days."

Cummings made his comments in a speech last week at the National Press Club.

"This is a goal well within our power to achieve," he said. "Bill Clinton won the 1996 presidential race with 84 percent of the black vote. Four years later, Al Gore received an even larger percentage of African-American votes and won the popular vote for president by 500,000 votes....If the demographic trends and voting patterns remain the same as in the 2000 election, the presumptive Democratic nominee will



Elijah Cummings speaks at WSSU in February.

win by at least 3 million votes."

Currently, the House of Representatives is composed of 228 Republicans, 205 Democrats, with one vacancy. In the Senate, there are 51 Republicans, 48 Democrats and one independent. This means Democrats must gain at least 12 members in the House and two in the Senate in order to win

control.

In either chamber a Democratic win could mean significant political gains for black people. A majority Democratic House could mean first-time chairmanships for two veteran CBC members and at least 12 black chairs of subcommittees. Currently there are no black chairs. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) is

in line to chair the House Ways and Means Committee, which deals with issues such as tax breaks, unemployment compensation, Social Security, Medicare, pension benefits, international trade agreements and economic development incentives.

John Conyers (D-Mich.) is

See Cummings on A10

Feds and Cincinnati at odds over police policies

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CINCINNATI - The Justice Department's insistence that police further document use of force by officers would unnecessarily burden the police and divert them from fighting crime, Mayor Charlie Luken said in a letter to the government.

The letter calls on Attorney General John Ashcroft to help resolve the issue, which the mayor said could otherwise lead to a court fight and detract from an agreement Cincinnati reached with Ashcroft in 2002 to reform police operations.

The overall agreement resulted from a Justice Department investigation that Luken requested after a white police officer fatally shot a fleeing, unarmed black man wanted on charges in 2001. The shooting prompted three nights of rioting.

The disagreement involves "hard hands" incidents in which police use physical pressure to force a person against an object or onto the ground, or inflict pain in order to force a suspect to comply with a police order, Luken wrote.

He said the Justice Department wants a police supervisor to investigate these incidents and tape-record the statements of suspects, officers and witnesses.

"If the police are burdened by reporting processes that add no value and take officers and supervisors off of the streets, the police contribution

to the fight against violent crime is severely hampered," Luken wrote to Ashcroft last week, in a letter City Hall released on Friday. "I am requesting that you become involved in this issue and assist us in reaching a resolution."

Cincinnati requires a supervisor's investigation and

tape-recorded statements in all cases in which an officer actually strikes a suspect, Luken wrote.

But the city proposes that for the lesser "hard hands" incidents, it would suffice to have a police supervisor visit the scene to investigate, take photographs to document

See Police on A4



Luken

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Sunday, May 16 at 3:00 pm
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SPECIAL EVENTS
MUSIC LOVER'S LUNCHEON
Friday, May 14, 12:00 pm Piedmont Club.
Guest Speaker:
Joseph Pecoraro, resident guitarist at the North Carolina School of the Arts
Reservations required - 724-7077;
\$12 per person
KID'S CLUB
Saturday, May 15, 6:00 pm
Sunday, May 16, 2:00 pm
Green Room of the Stevens Center

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Saturday, May 15, 1:30 pm
FREE and open to the public!
Get a behind the scenes glimpse at your Symphony as they fine tune for the evening's Saturday Night's, Live! concert. Free Krispy Kreme doughnuts & coffee.
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