

News at a Glance

Justice Stevens criticizes death penalty

CHICAGO (AP) — Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens issued an unusually stinging criticism of capital punishment Saturday evening, telling lawyers that he was disturbed by "serious flaws."



Stevens

Stevens stopped short of calling for an end to the death penalty, but he said there are many problems in the way it is used.

Recent exonerations of death row inmates through scientific evidence are significant, he told the American Bar Association, "not only because of its relevance to the debate about the wisdom of continuing to administer capital punishment, but also because it indicates that there must be serious flaws in our administration of criminal justice."

Other Supreme Court justices, including Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, have also spoken out about concerns that defendants in murder cases are not adequately represented at trial.

But Stevens, 85, made a much harsher and sweeping condemnation.

He said the jury selection process and the fact that many trial judges are elected also work against accused murderers. He also said that jurors might be improperly swayed by victim-impact statements.

Stevens, named to the high court by President Ford in 1975, is one of the most liberal justices.

Two episodes added to Bobby Brown's TV show

NEW YORK (AP) — Two episodes have been added to Bravo's summer reality series "Being Bobby Brown," which follows the lives of the R&B singer, wife Whitney Houston, and three of his children.

"The first eight episodes of 'Being Bobby Brown' have kept Bravo viewers buzzing," Bravo President Lauren Zalaznick said in a statement Friday. "We hope two new episodes will satisfy viewers' appetites for more Bobby and Whitney."

Brown, a former member of New Edition, married Houston in 1992. He took off with singles such as "Don't Be Cruel" and "My Prerogative," but became known more for his drug and alcohol troubles.

"Being Bobby Brown" airs on Thursday nights. The new episode on Aug. 18 will take an inside look into the couple's homes in Georgia and New Jersey. The Aug. 25 finale will feature clips from the series and extra footage of Brown, the network said Friday.

Democrats focus on Latino partnerships

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Democrats took their fight for Hispanic votes to the president's home state Saturday, vowing to increase their party's appeal among the nation's fastest-growing minority group by giving Hispanics more resources and leadership positions.

"There will soon be a Hispanic governor in the state of Texas," Howard Dean, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, told the more than 400 party leaders attending the third Hispanic Leadership Summit. "There are people sitting in this room who will run for governor."

A strong focus of the weekend summit has been turning back the Republican Party's advances among Hispanic voters in recent years.

The summit was designed to collect feedback from the party's Hispanic supporters and help shape a new marketing campaign this fall. Democratic organizers hope to map out a key message that reflects historically Democratic values such as social justice and equal opportunity, as well as issues that need greater publicity, such as family and patriotism.

Democratic elected officials often spoke in Spanish and English during their speeches Saturday. Many were from Texas, where the GOP is firmly in control but where Hispanics are expected to be the majority in coming decades.

Issues such as public education, health care, voting rights and immigration protection should continue to be party priorities, they said. The challenge will be relating that platform to the lives of an increasingly diverse Latino population, said U.S. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez of San Antonio.



Dean

Motown star advances in race for Detroit City Council

DETROIT (AP) — Martha Reeves says the Motown Sound was all about love during the 1960s, when she was the lead singer of Martha and the Vandellas and belting out hits such as "Dancing in the Street" and "Heat Wave."

Reeves, 64, felt the love last week when Detroit voters nominated her for the City Council. The top-18 vote-getters earned slots on November's ballot, and she finished ninth with 27,313 votes. Nine City Council members will be elected in the fall.

"People love me everywhere. On an unofficial level, I'm an ambassador and a civil servant for Detroit. Now I'm going for the official title," Reeves said, waving her arms and jangling her gold charm bracelets.

Reeves still travels and performs and has her own record label and production company. She said she plans to go into the studio later this week to record a gospel CD.

Reeves said her top priority is improving police protection for the city's neighborhoods. She said thugs have prevented her from fixing up some of the 18 old buildings she has acquired since 1999.

To spruce up the struggling city's downtown and boost tourism, she is proposing a shopping mall, a nightclub devoted to Motown's legendary sound, and a landscape dotted with tributes to the record label's biggest stars.

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Missing blacks get little attention

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — When 24-year-old Tamika Huston of Spartanburg, S.C., did not return home on June 2 last year, her mother, Gabriella Simehehe, her friends and other family members began relying on every resource to find her.



Tamika Huston

Hoping to get quick, widespread coverage on the 4-foot-11-inch, 125-pound aspiring singer, they called in a missing person's report to the Spartanburg, S.C., Police Department, and they reached out to the local news media, missing persons agencies, and to the national news stations. It seemed, however, the national airwaves were already crowded as day after day the stories of missing white women took precedent over people of color.

"In reference to Natalee Holloway and the others, I mean, I'm going through the same thing they're going through. They've gotten the attention that they deserve to get, and I wish we could receive the same attention they've been getting," said Simehehe. "I guess they just pick a formula that the public would like to see. I'm angry behind this because every per-



Zuma Press

An all-out effort was made to find runaway bride Jennifer Wilbanks.

son should be treated equal." The sagas of Holloway, the American student who vanished on the Caribbean island of Aruba; Atlanta's Jennifer Wilbanks, the "runaway bride," who returned home safely from New Mexico after faking an abduction; and Fresno, Calif.'s Laci Peterson, whose husband, Scott, has been convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of her

and their unborn son, are a few among those that Simehehe watched being aired day after day while her daughter and others were not mentioned.

The stories that have been aired are quite diverse, but the victims all have one thing in common. They are all white, young and pretty. That mold only compounded the pain for Huston's aunt, Rebekah

Howard, a public relations expert in Florida.

Howard recalled the morning that the news of a Salt Lake City, Utah, case of missing jogger Lori Hacking hit the airwaves July 19 last year.

"Literally within hours after her not returning from her morning jog, it was all over the news," Howard said. "I was so frustrated because

See Missing on A9

DNA evidence frees man after 19 years

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — A man who spent 19 years behind bars for a rape he didn't commit was released from prison Monday after new tests of DNA evidence cleared him.

Friends and family broke into applause when a county judge dismissed charges against Thomas A. Doswell. About 30 minutes later, Doswell walked out of the county jail a free man — expressing thanks, not bitterness.

"I'm thankful to be home," he told The Associated Press from his mother's house. "I'm thankful justice has been served. The court system is not perfect, but it works."

Doswell, 46, was convicted in the 1986 rape of a 48-year-old woman at a hospital

in Pittsburgh. When he was convicted, he was 25 and the father of two young children.

He was sentenced to 13 to 26 years in prison and was denied parole four times because he refused to accept responsibility for the crime.

Prosecutors originally opposed DNA testing for Doswell, but a judge ordered it. When the tests came back last month showing that semen taken from the victim was not from Doswell, prosecutors filed motions to vacate his sentence and release him.

"These tests confirmed what Mr. Doswell has been saying from the moment he was charged, that he was innocent and that this was a misidentification brought about by police officers who may have engaged in misconduct," said Colin Starger of the Innocence Project at the

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York.

The victim and another witness had picked out Doswell's photo from a group of eight shown to them by police.

At the time, Pittsburgh

See Doswell on A11



Doswell

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