

News at a Glance

School might be named for Wilson

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A school board member wants to rename a performing arts magnet school after August Wilson, the Pittsburgh-born Pulitzer Prize- and Tony-winning playwright who died earlier this month.

Pittsburgh Public Schools Board member Alex Matthews wants to rename the Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts.

"I think it would be a great homage to pay him," Matthews told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

But some say renaming a public school is a bad idea because Wilson deserves a bigger honor — and because Wilson had a bad experience in the city's schools.

Wilson dropped out of Pittsburgh public schools at age 15 after a teacher accused him of plagiarizing a paper on Napoleon. He finished his own education at a city library and went on to write his famous 10-play cycle based on the life of blacks in America, nine of them set in the city's predominantly black Hill District.

Mark Clayton Southers, who established the August Wilson Reading Roundtable in the city to expose black actors to Wilson's plays, dislikes the idea of renaming the school because of Wilson's experience in city schools.

"I think Mr. Wilson is a heavyweight, and he needs heavyweight treatment," Southers said, who would prefer that a larger, more public institution be named for Wilson, like the African-American Cultural Center planned for downtown Pittsburgh.

Wilson died Oct. 2 of liver cancer in Seattle.



Wilson

Use of race in school admissions upheld

SEATTLE (AP) — A federal appeals court last Thursday upheld the Seattle school district's use of race as a tie-breaking factor in high-school admissions.

"We conclude that the district has a compelling interest in securing the educational and social benefits of racial — and ethnic — diversity," the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said in a 7-4 ruling. "We also conclude the district's plan is narrowly tailored to meet the district's compelling interests."

In Seattle, students list which high schools they would prefer to attend. When a high school has more applicants than classroom seats, the district uses a series of tie-breakers to decide who gets in. Race was the district's second-most-important tie-breaker, after whether a student has a sibling at the school.

A parents group sued in 2000 over the practice, and two years later school officials dropped race as a consideration while the case made its way through the courts.

A 9th Circuit panel sided with the parents last year in a 2-1 ruling. But that decision was overturned last Thursday by the full court.

Kathleen Brose, president of the parents group, said she will appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

District spokeswoman Patti Spencer said she did not know whether the 46,000-student school system, which is about 40 percent white, would restore race as a tie-breaker before the high court weighs in.

Aretha throws party for Katrina refugees

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. (AP) — Aretha Franklin threw a party Friday for dozens of people displaced by Hurricane Katrina, sharing soul food and memories of New Orleans with refugees at a hotel in suburban Detroit.

About 40 people from the Gulf Coast are making their home at a hotel in Southfield. Franklin, who lives in nearby Bloomfield Hills, said she wanted to do her part to help by hosting the event.

"It's the right thing to do," said Franklin, who was planning another dinner at the hotel for Saturday night. "Hopefully some of the other performers in town will follow suit."

Before dinner, the music legend talked with some of the refugees, posed for snapshots, and sang a song titled "Jesus Is Waiting" to help welcome them.

The Queen of Soul said her first visit to New Orleans was in 1962. She fondly remembered watching Mardi Gras celebrations, shopping and eating many good meals there in the years that followed.

Murders of four black girls recalled by Rice during her hometown visit

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — A ceremony Saturday marking a seminal event in the U.S. civil rights movement — a church bombing that killed four black girls — drew native daughter Condoleezza Rice, a friend of one of the victims.

In a park across the street from the 16th Street Baptist Church, where the murders took place in 1956, the secretary of state said that the act of terror — coming less than three weeks after Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech — was meant to "shatter our dreams. It was meant to say we couldn't rise up."

Even though the four girls were denied a chance to grow up, "in their deaths they represent the very tragedy to triumph that we are celebrating because we were not denied," said Rice, the highest-ranking black official in the U.S. government.

Bronze plaques featuring likenesses of the four girls, including Rice's friend Denise McNair, were unveiled. Among the estimated 200 people who attended the ceremony were city officials and family members of the girls as well as British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, who is accompanying Rice on her two-day homecoming tour.

The Alabama church murders sparked outrage throughout the United States and around the world and provided a catalyst for passage of a comprehensive civil rights bill in 1964 and a voting rights bill a year later.



Straw



AP Photo by Matthew S. Guay

Ted Simpson, left, helps Fred Stephens with his swing at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, Md.

UMES tees-up to start nation's first golf degree program at HBCU

BY KRISTEN WYATT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PRINCESS ANNE, Md. — A manicured golf course was right across the street from the house where Christina Cooper spent her childhood.

But growing up black in Baltimore, Cooper never thought of golf as a game for her — until her college announced plans to offer the nation's first golf management degree at a historically black school and opened up for-credit lessons and a driving range on campus.

"I kind of always wanted to play, but I never did. It was expensive, kind of a club," said Cooper, a 22-year-old biology major who took a break practicing putting recently in her class, Golf Instruction 101. "When I think of golf, I think of rich people and country clubs. So that's cool that they're teaching us this."

The Golf Academy at the University of Maryland, Eastern

Shore is still in its infancy. Started last year, the only course is a one-credit elective, and school officials say their dreams of building a golf course on campus and offering a bachelor's degree in golf management are years away.

But school President Thelma B. Thompson has ambitious goals: to be the nation's first historically black college with a PGA-endorsed degree in golf management and to open up the game to students who didn't learn it growing up.

"Golf is a growing sport for minorities and women right now, and we want to focus on the future," said Thompson, who said she got the idea when she visited the Princess Anne campus in 2002 as a prospective president and its lush landscaping reminded her of a golf course.

Three semesters ago, the UMES Golf Academy set up an office in a racquetball court in the school gym and started asking the 3,800 students through e-mails



Thompson

and fliers if they wanted to learn golf.

Leading the academy is Marshall Cropper, a UMES alumnus who played pro football in the 1960s before retiring and running golf tournaments full time. He acknowledges that students who see the "Golf Academy" sign in his window are sometimes skeptical.

"We have been raised to play football and basketball. We have

come to see football and basketball as a means to get an education. We were not raised to play golf," Cropper said.

"Golf starts with grandfathers and daddies who play golf and pass it on to their children. And on the minority side, we have a lot of single moms that don't have the time to play golf. But that's changing."

Cropper said a growing black middle class, more high-school golf teams and prominent minority golfers such as Tiger Woods have increased interest in golf among young black people. Cropper hopes to start the degree program and resurrect a school golf team — UMES hasn't fielded one since 1961.

But more than that, he says, he wants black college students to learn the game even if they have no interest in a golf-related career.

The game of golf, school officials say, is a business networking tool. Knowing how to play could

See Golf on A10

Texas millionaire seeks Haitian presidency

BY STEVE QUINN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Dumarsais Simeus remembers running through the fields barefoot as his parents, illiterate peasant farmers, worked the land in Haiti to feed him and his 11 siblings.

He left his native home at 21 and went on to build the largest black-owned business

in Texas. He became a multi-millionaire, wealthy enough to bring his brothers and sisters to the United States, fund their college educations and enjoy affluence that for years appeared out of reach.

Now, he wants to return to Haiti as president — an ambition that has landed him in a volatile political and legal fight to keep his name on the Nov. 20 ballot and himself out of jail.

"This is not about Dumas Simeus," he said from his hotel room in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. "This is about getting the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere out of poverty, giving people hope and taking away their misery."

In the country of about 8 million people, more than half of Haiti's adults can't read and the minimum wage is about \$1.70 a day. Haiti's lawless-



Photo by Thony Bellizard/AP/Getty Images

Haitian-American businessman Dumarsais Simeus, candidate for the Haitian presidency, speaks to reporters.

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