

News at a glance

L.A. to pay B.I.G. family legal costs

LOS ANGELES (AP) - A federal judge has ordered the city to pay \$1.1 million in legal costs to the family of slain rapper Notorious B.I.G. as sanctions for intentionally withholding evidence during the family's civil lawsuit trial.



Wallace

U.S. District Judge Florence-Marie Cooper's ruling Friday didn't give the family the \$2 million originally sought, but she left open the possibility of an additional \$300,000.

"It's pretty clear from the ruling that the judge understands this is a significant and difficult case," said Perry Sanders, an attorney for the rapper's family.

Christopher Wallace, or Notorious B.I.G., was shot and killed March 9, 1997, after a party at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. The killing has not been solved.

Cooper declared a mistrial last summer in the family's civil lawsuit after finding that a police detective hid statements linking the killing to former LAPD Officers David Mack and Rafael Perez. She also ordered the city to pay the slain rapper's family's legal costs.

The plaintiffs had been trying to show that Mack, a convicted bank robber, orchestrated Wallace's killing with the help of a college friend on behalf of Death Row Records chief Marion "Suge" Knight. All three have denied involvement.

Attorneys for the family received an anonymous tip from a former officer that a department informant had tied Perez and Mack to the killing. Detective Steven Katz claimed he had overlooked a transcript of the remarks in his desk.

But Cooper ruled that Katz and perhaps others concealed the information, which could have bolstered the family's contention that Mack was involved in the killing. A retrial is set to begin later this year.

Jackson: I never threatened minister

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The Rev. Jesse Jackson denied on the witness stand last Thursday that he threatened or encouraged violence against a conservative black minister who claimed he was roughed up during a 2001 confrontation with Jackson and his son.

The Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson, founder and president of the Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny, sued Jackson, alleging assault and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The lawsuit also named Jackson's son Jonathan Jackson, who was accused of battery and false imprisonment.

Peterson, 56, is a frequent guest on conservative talk shows and has organized protests against Jackson in recent years. He testified last Thursday that he felt threatened and believed his life was in danger during a December 2001 meeting involving Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and representatives of Toyota.

During the December meeting in the Los Angeles suburb of Torrance, Peterson asked a Toyota representative whether black Republicans would have to go through the coalition to participate in the automaker's program. Peterson said after he made his comments the crowd became agitated.

Jackson testified that he urged the crowd to be calm, adding that he recalled Peterson's comments were more accusatory than simply a question. When asked if he ever threatened Peterson, Jackson replied, "Absolutely not."

Hampton University business students not allowed to have dreads, cornrows

HAMPTON, Va. (AP) - Afros are OK, but cornrows and flowing dreadlocks are not for business administration students at Hampton University.

The hair code is part of a strict academic and dress doctrine for combined business administration students at the private, historically black university. The program allows students to receive a bachelor's degree and a master's in business administration in five years.

In addition to the hair rules, students must maintain a B average after their sophomore year, heed a conservative dress code, complete two internships and meet regularly with business leaders.

"We don't have problems with Afros," business Dean Sid Credle said Friday. "A nicely tapered Afro - that's fine."

Credle said the dress, grooming and behavior rules are intended to prepare students for the starched business world.

B.B. King plans one more world tour

LOS ANGELES (AP) - While other 80-year-olds might dust off their rockers, blues dynamo B.B. King will be rocking and rolling when he launches what he says will be his final world tour later this year.

King will begin an international "Farewell Tour" in March, part of a domestic tour that will start Feb. 16 in Chicago, King's publicist, Jerry Digney, said in a news release recently.

King said he will continue to make U.S. concert appearances after the tour.

"I hardly remember I'm 80 unless I have to run up a hill or stairs," the singer and guitarist said. "As long as people buy my records and come to my concerts, I don't see anything else I'd like to do."

King has toured every year for 60 years, Digney said last Thursday.

The musician celebrated his 80th birthday in September and released an album, "B.B. King & Friends - 80," featuring Eric Clapton, Elton John, Sheryl Crow and other musicians.

A \$10 million B.B. King museum is slated to open later this year in the Grammy winner's native Mississippi.

"I think the clock is ticking, yes," King said. "In fact, I know it is. Frank Sinatra sang about the September of (his) years. I think I'm in the November of my years."

Gay rights group asks clergy for help

NBJC makes call to end homophobia

BY JONATHAN LANDRUM JR. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA - A national black gay rights group began a two-day summit Friday to brainstorm ways to get its message of tolerance across to church leaders, who are some of the most influential figures in black communities.

"Our dialogue is the possibility of being acknowledged, loved and accepted. It can happen," said Donna Payne, vice president



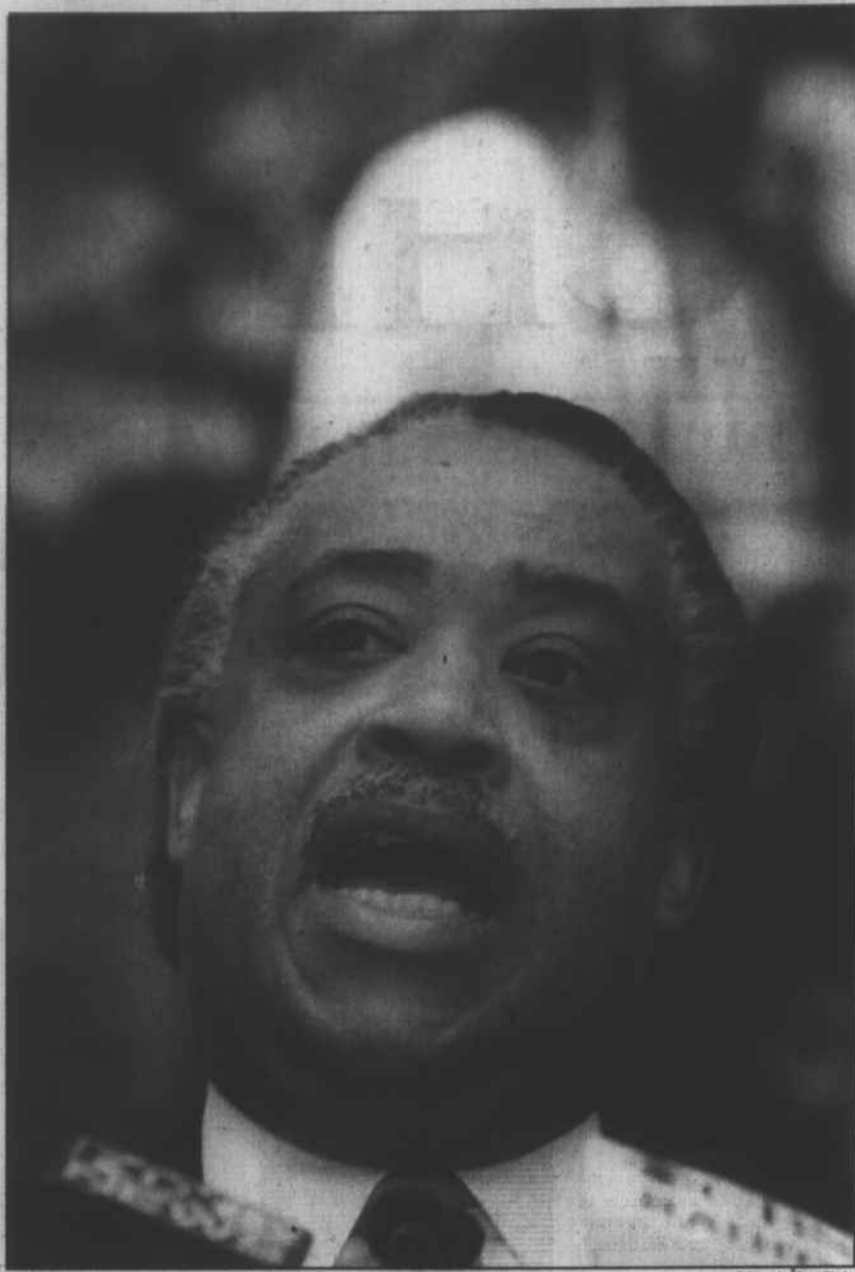
Payne

of the National Black Justice Coalition, composed of black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists.

"We're all in God's image. Why not?" added Dr. Sylvia Rhue, a coalition member who is helping form a committee that aims to build an alliance with black churches across the country.

The summit was headlined Friday by the Rev. Al Sharpton, a former Democratic presidential candidate from New York. Sharpton said black church leaders need to acknowledge that homophobia affects everyone's civil rights.

"You cannot talk about civil rights and limit who's included in the civil movement," Sharpton told about 150 people at the summit held at First Iconium Baptist Church near downtown Atlanta.



AP Photo by Gene Blythe

See NBJC on A11 The Rev. Al Sharpton speaks at the National Black Justice Coalition Summit in Atlanta, Friday, Jan. 20.

Tennessee's attorney general's opinion says state's Black Caucus broke no laws

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The Tennessee attorney general has found no indication that laws are being violated by the Legislature's Black Caucus or a group with ties to it.

Attorney General Paul G. Summers' opinion responded to questions raised by a white legislator on activities of the Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators and the Legislative Retreat and Training Seminar.

Rep. Johnny Shaw, D-Bolivar, chairman of the Black Caucus, and Rep. Lois DeBerry, D-Memphis, who chairs the Legislative Retreat, were pleased with the opinion.

"It was pretty much in our favor," said Shaw.

DeBerry said the opinion

gave Rep. Stacy Campfield, the Knoxville Republican who raised the questions, a valuable lesson in laws dealing with discrimination. Campfield had sought to join the Black Caucus last year but said he was rejected because of his race.

Campfield wasn't satisfied with Summers' opinion.

"I'm wondering why they didn't give more answers," he said. "This is another reason we need an elected attorney general - so we can get a neutral opinion."

Tennessee's attorney general is appointed by the state Supreme Court, though Republicans have been touting proposals to turn it into a popularly elected position.

Campfield wrote a four-page letter to Summers in November, posing 16 lengthy questions

dealing with issues such as Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act, which forbids discrimination by organizations that receive federal funding.

Summers found no indication using state funds to support the caucus violated the federal act.

On whether the Legislative Retreat can properly receive funding from the state, Summers answered "maybe." The opinion cites a law declaring that state funds may be appropriated to organizations that promote the interests of the state under some circumstances. The opinion said more information is needed "to make a definitive pronouncement."

Summers declined to respond to six questions involving Internal Revenue Service matters because he said he has

no jurisdiction over federal tax matters.

Campfield helped raise questions about the finances of the caucus after he wasn't allowed to join and sparked a heated response by comparing the bylaws of the caucus to those for the Ku Klux Klan.

Both the caucus and the Legislative Retreat appeared to have gaps in book-keeping and records of payments made to state lawmakers in a review of financial documents.

"I don't think Stacy Campfield was ever serious about joining the Black Caucus," Shaw said. "That leaves me to believe that Stacy Campfield is, exactly what we always thought he was. I'm just going to leave it at that, period."



DeBerry



Summers

New Name. New Location. Same People.

Mike Carico
336.231.8917

Lisa Clayton
336.831.1050

Ruth Hudspeth
336.831.1055

Dario Romo
336.231.8918

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Ann Tucker
336.831.1054

Corporate Location
791 Jonestown Road, Suite 110
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27103
336.760.4911 Office • 336.760.4915 Fax
www.granitemortgageinc.com

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