

News at a glance

D.C.'s black population declines

WASHINGTON (AP) — The District of Columbia's black population continues to decline, a trend that might soon change the capital's longtime majority-black status.

In 2000, blacks made up 60 percent of Washington's population. But by 2006 that figure was 55 percent, according to data released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

During that time, the number of non-Hispanic black residents in the city declined 6 percent to 322,000. Non-Hispanic white residents increased 14 percent to about 184,000. The number of Asians increased to 18,000 — a 20 percent gain.

The demographics shift means Washington likely will cease to be majority-black by 2020, said Robert E. Lang, director of the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech.

Some experts say the changes likely are attributed to gentrification and diminishing affordable housing.

"What you see are the whites moving into the city because they are able to afford the pricey housing in all these areas that are gentrifying and becoming much more middle and upper-middle class," said William H. Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution.



Lang

Freedom Riders marker, park planned

ANNISTON, Ala. (AP) — A permanent marker on the Alabama Highway 202 site of the infamous Freedom Riders bus-burning 46 years ago could be installed soon.

The Greyhound bus burned on Mother's Day in 1961 when a white mob attacked seven Freedom Riders during their trip across Alabama to test desegregation of buses and terminals.

The planned memorial near Anniston is almost in Bernard Emerson's front yard. He witnessed the bus attack.

Emerson said that as far as he knows, he and his wife are the only people in the neighborhood with a historical link to the event.

Members of the Theta Tau Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity unveiled a sign near the bus-burning site.

The sign was removed after the unveiling ceremony. Officials explained that it will be permanently installed once the site is transferred to Calhoun County by the state Department of Transportation.

Besides the sign, a park dedicated to the history of the civil rights movement here and throughout the state is planned, state Rep. Barbara Boyd said.

Civil rights attorney's home to be converted into legal center

ROANOKE, Va. (AP) — The boyhood home of civil rights attorney Oliver Hill is being restored and converted to a center that will provide free legal services to the community.

The Oliver Hill Foundation purchased the two-story, 2,500-square-foot house last month for about \$96,000. The city of Roanoke covered \$48,000 of the costs. More funding is needed to improve the property, which was built in 1890 and has fallen into disrepair.

"It's been a long time coming, and I think it's going to be something that's good for Roanoke," said Clarence Dunnville, a Richmond lawyer and Roanoke native who is director of the Hill Foundation.

Hill was born in Richmond in 1907 and moved to Roanoke with his mother and stepfather when he was 6. They lived with another family, the Pentecosts. Later, Hill's parents moved to Hot Springs to work at The Homestead resort, while Hill stayed with the Pentecosts on Gilmer Avenue.

Hill has credited the influence of the household matriarch, Lelia Pentecost, with instilling him with dignity and self-esteem and the belief that black people deserve the same fair treatment as whites.

Hill, who lives in Richmond and turned 100 this month, attacked segregation in Virginia and ultimately became an architect of the Brown v. Board of Education case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that racially separate schools could never truly be equal.

Lee wants more black sports writers

ATLANTA (AP) — Spike Lee always has been an avid sports fan. Growing up in New York, he eagerly flipped past the front pages each morning, searching out the elegant musings of Red Smith or another abrasive rant from Dick Young.

But Lee wondered why a bunch of white guys were charged with shaping the viewpoints of people such as himself, an impressionable black kid eager for a balanced debate on such burning issues as: Who was the better player, Mickey Mantle or Willie Mays?

Mantle was white, Mays black. "I would read stuff from people telling me Mickey Mantle was better than Willie Mays," Lee remembered. "I was like, 'Whoa, wait a minute. Noooo way.'"

A study released last summer at the request of the Associated Press Sports Editors found dismal figures for the industry. Blacks held only 6.2 percent of the sports writing jobs. Out of more than 300 newspapers surveyed, just five had a black sports editor. By contrast, nine out of 10 sports editors were white males, as were 84 percent of sports columnists, according to Richard Lapchick, who runs the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida. Lee hopes the new sports journalism program at Morehouse will make a difference. It won't happen overnight, of course, with the initial goal of getting students into the job pipeline through internships, then growing the curriculum into a minor within four years.

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Tearful Oprah speaks at Howard

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON — Superstar talk show host Oprah Winfrey, after weeping before a crowd of more than 30,000 at the 139th Howard University Commencement, said the key to success is to "know who you are" and to cleave to your integrity.

"Everyone has a calling. There is a reason why you are here. I know this for sure. And that reason is greater than any degree. It's greater than any paycheck. And it's greater than anything that anybody tells you that you're supposed to do. Your real job is to find out what the reason is and get about the business of doing it," she told the graduates who often responded with shouts of "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!"

She continued, "Your calling isn't something somebody can tell you about. It is what you feel. It's a part of your life force. It is the thing that you're supposed to do."

Though inspired and hopeful, many of the more than 1.4 million 2007 graduates across the U. S. will find themselves



Photo courtesy of NNPA

Oprah Winfrey is presented with an honorary degree.

literally lost, unable to get the for and confused by advice impressive job they'd hoped from people in every corner of

their lives. Using a string of testimonials from her personal career, Winfrey told the audience at the historically black university, known as "the Mecca" of Black education, to never allow the words of others to stop them from reaching their goals.

Her father forbade her to quit the TV anchor job at WJZ-TV13 in Baltimore in the late 1970s. But, she disliked the job and her bosses repeatedly criticized her. When they finally took her off the anchor desk and placed her on a talk show "just to run out my contract... That was the beginning..." she said to cheers and loud applause. "The Oprah Winfrey Show"

See Winfrey on A13

Little Rock 9: family, love needed

BY PEGGY HARRIS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LITTLE ROCK — Fifty years after nine black teenagers advanced the civil rights movement with the integration of Little Rock Central High School, the same principles apply in efforts to attain social justice, members of the Little Rock Nine said Saturday.

A good education, family support, love, determination, and a belief in oneself are the essentials that got them through those years of threats, jeers, and physical harassment from white segregationists.



LaNier

Little Rock Nine members attending an NAACP education summit told an audience at the school.

Elizabeth Eckford, who alone braved a jeering crowd on her first attempt to enter the school, urged young people to stand up to others who make cruel and ignorant remarks. And she reminded her mostly black audience members to treat themselves with respect.

"Whether you spell it g-g-a-h or g-g-e-r, when you use that word, you give other people permission to use it. Please do not hate yourself," Eckford said.

Eckford, Jefferson Thomas, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Gloria

See Nine on A14

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