

# News at a glance

## Fannie Lee Chaney laid to rest

**MERIDIAN, Miss. (AP)** — Fannie Lee Chaney was hailed as the “grandmother” of the Mississippi civil rights movement during her funeral Saturday.

Mother to James Earl Chaney, one of three civil-rights workers killed in the 1964 “Mississippi Burning” case, the 84-year-old was instrumental in the recent conviction of Ku-Klux Klan leader Edgar Ray Killen and worked throughout her life to push for social change.

“We are here where we are today because she allowed God to use her,” the Rev. William Brown said in his eulogy. “She paid the ultimate price when James died, and in that moment, we all became her sons.”

Community, state and national leaders attended the funeral, paying tribute to a woman many called “Momma Chaney.”

“Mrs. Chaney lived a life of selfless service to others,” former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark said.

Chaney was thrust to the forefront of the civil-rights movement when her son, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman were killed while helping to register black voters during what was called Freedom Summer.

The men were stopped for speeding, jailed briefly and then released. Afterward they were ambushed by a group of Klansmen. Weeks later their bodies were found buried in an earthen dam. The men had been beaten and shot.

When Killen was brought up on charges in 2005, Chaney testified at his trial.



James Chaney

## Internship program to bring diversity to Wall Street firms

**(From NNPA Wire)** — A ground-breaking new program is designed to place outstanding African-American students in intern positions at some of the nation’s premier financial services firms this summer and beyond, according to an announcement from the NAACP.

The NAACP and The Money Management Institute has announced the Gateway to Leadership program, which officially launched on Monday. It aims to prepare students, who are largely from historically Black colleges and universities for leadership roles in the financial services industry and their communities, the release states.

“Without a diverse employee pool that includes minority executives and managers, and absent sincere outreach efforts and adoption of best practices that cut across racial lines in the new global environment, corporations will never be as profitable as they may hope,” says NAACP Interim President & CEO Dennis C. Hayes, in a statement.

Securities Industry Association’s 2005 Report on Diversity, Strategy, Development and Demographics, reports that only 2 percent of the retail brokers and 3 percent of the sales force in securities firms are African-American. And a mere three African Americans hold top positions in Fortune 100 companies today, the NAACP reports.

## Justice Department to investigate use of force by Austin police

**AUSTIN (AP)** — Federal authorities will review the Austin Police Department’s use of force policies, city officials announced last Friday, three years after a civil rights group accused the department of using excessive force against minorities.

Justice Department investigators could begin their review in the next 30 to 60 days and likely will take at least a year to complete it, City Manager Toby Hammett Futrell said in a statement.

The investigation stems from a complaint filed in 2004 by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that outlined numerous alleged civil rights abuses by officers.

The complaint followed an Austin American-Statesman investigation that found between 1998 and 2003, police

were twice as likely to use force against blacks as against whites, and 25 percent more likely to use force against Hispanics than against whites. During that period, police used deadly force against 11 people. All but one were minorities.

Futrell said the department has made several changes to address the NAACP’s concerns, including installing video cameras in patrol cars and doubling the number of certified mental health officers to more than 300.

“The Austin Police Department has always been open to oversight and scrutiny and fully understands that trust is the cornerstone of building a solid community policing program,” Futrell said in the statement.

## ODU loses racial discrimination appeal

**NORFOLK, Va. (AP)** — A circuit court judge upheld a state hearing officer’s finding that Old Dominion University racially discriminated against a white campus police officer it fired.

Brett Birkmeyer was fired by the primarily black ODU police department in March 2005 after his superiors alleged that he was not properly checking buildings during monitoring rounds.

Birkmeyer filed a grievance against the school, alleging that the monitoring of his conduct occurred only after he had complained that the department had been discriminating against him.

In August 2006, a state Department of Employment Dispute Resolution hearing officer ordered the university to reinstate Birkmeyer and pay his attorney fees.

ODU appealed administratively and then to Norfolk Circuit Court. A May 25 ruling by Judge Everett Martin Jr. upheld the decision. Birkmeyer wants to be reinstated at ODU so he can clear his record and pursue a police job elsewhere, his lawyer Raymond Hogge Jr. said.

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# Miss Black USA crowned in Africa

BY NOLUTHANDO CROCKETT-NTONGA  
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

**BANJUL, THE GAMBIA, WEST AFRICA (NNPA)** — To the non discerning eye, it looks like just another beauty pageant — beautiful young women wearing sashes proclaiming states from Miss Black Alaska to Miss Black U.S. Virgin Island to Miss Black Tennessee, who won the crown — 36 women in all.

But the glitz, glamour and every hair in place means much more than outer beauty.

“This has never been a frivolous program,” says Karen Arrington, the pageant’s founder. “It is a vehicle to provide opportunity for African-American women. This year we are bridging the gap and connecting with our ancestral home, Africa with the theme ‘A Royal Journey Back to Our Roots.’”

The Miss Black USA Scholarship pageant is celebrating its 20th year and held the competition for the first time outside of the U.S., in The Gambia, West Africa, culminating with the finals last Friday

evening.

The Gambia gained worldwide attention when the late author Alex Haley, traced his ancestor Kunte Kinte to a Gambian village in the landmark book and later television series “Roots.”

For the Miss Black USA contestants, holding the pageant in Africa represents the opportunity of a lifetime.

Each contestant has been partnered with a Gambian girl in a pen pal relationship. The Gambian girls greeted and accompanied them on a tour of Kunte Kinte’s village. “We have bonded forever,” says Cleantha Samuel, Miss Black U.S. Virgin Island, a crowd favorite who was the second runner up for the coveted crown. “I have agreed to sponsor my pen pal and I will

See Pageant on A13



Photo by Kristen Abell  
Kalilah Allen-Harris, Miss Black USA 2007, is crowned by the previous queen, Celi Marie Dean.

## Parren Mitchell remembered

Former Congressman

was a founder of the CBC

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY  
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

**WASHINGTON** — Parren J. Mitchell, one of the 13 founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus, was remembered this week for his passion for Black inclusion and justice, a quality that some civil rights leaders say must be salvaged as African-Americans lose economic and civil rights ground.



Mitchell

“He taught me and so many others who were a part of that generation right behind him that it was important to speak truth to power and not to be afraid to do that and at the end of the day if we’re only left with our principles, that’s all we would really need,” says former NAACP President and CEO Kweisi Mfume, who was a young thug in the streets of Baltimore when Mitchell broke him into politics. Mfume succeeded him in Congress after he stepped down in 1987.

Mitchell, whose memory was honored at a Mass of Resurrection at the Saint James Episcopal Church in Baltimore on Tuesday, died May 28 of pneumonia. He was 85.

See Mitchell on A11

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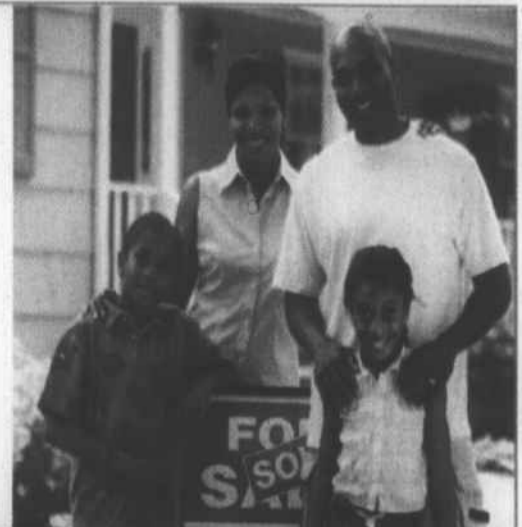


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