

News at a Glance

NYPD union to sue over sobriety tests

NEW YORK (AP) — A police union is going to federal court to challenge a New York Police Department policy to administer breath tests for alcohol to officers who kill or wound someone in the line of duty.

Patrolmen's Benevolent Association President Patrick Lynch said last Thursday that the 24,000-member union would challenge the new sobriety tests on constitutional grounds, arguing they violate protections against unreasonable searches.

"There is no reason or justification to subject an officer who legally fires a weapon ... to the humiliation and psychological trauma of a mandatory Breathalyzer test," Lynch said in a statement.

In response, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said he was standing by a policy which, according to written order, is meant "to ensure the highest levels of integrity at the scene of firearms discharges."

Kelly announced in June that he would adopt the breath-test measure based on police recommendations to study its undercover operations, amid community outrage over the police shooting of Sean Bell.

Bell, 23, was killed and two of his friends were seriously wounded in a 50-bullet barrage after his bachelor party at a topless bar in November 2006. Some of the undercover officers had been allowed by the department to consume up to two drinks at the bar to preserve their cover.

University names building for its first black professor

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Teaching history was Arvarh E. Strickland's passion. Making history — particularly at the University of Missouri-Columbia — became his reality. Last week, school administrators and state education leaders celebrated the accomplishments of MU's first African-American professor by naming an academic building in his honor.



Willie Pearl Strickland, and Arvarh Strickland.

The former General Classroom Building is now Arvarh E. Strickland Hall — the first building on campus named for an African American. Humbled by the occasion, Strickland said the recognition is the result of pursuing his life-long passion — teaching students.

"As far as I was concerned, I was doing what I was here to do — that was to teach and add to our historical knowledge and understanding," he said. "I was simply trying to get historical knowledge to my students."

Strickland arrived at MU in 1969 as a full-tenured professor of history in the College of Arts and

Science. In addition to teaching, he helped create the Black Studies Program, for which he twice served as interim director. He also served as associate vice president of academic affairs and as a special assistant to the chancellor. After 26 years, Strickland retired in '95 and was honored with an endowed professorship.

Thomas: Yale law degree 'worth 15 cents'

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas figures his Yale law degree is worth 15 cents, blaming the school's affirmative action policies in the 1970s for his difficulties finding a job.

A new autobiography shows how the second black justice on the Supreme Court came to oppose affirmative action after his law school experience. He was one of about 10 blacks in a class of 160 at Yale who had arrived after the unrest of the 1960s culminated in a Black Panther Party trial in New Haven that nearly caused a large-scale riot.

Thomas says he initially considered his admission to Yale a dream, but soon felt he was at Yale because of his race. He says he loaded up on tough courses to prove he was not inferior to his white classmates, but says the effort was futile.

Some of his black classmates say Thomas needs to get over his grudge, and note that Yale opened the door to extraordinary opportunities.

William Coleman III said his roommate at Yale — Bill Clinton — appointed him general counsel to the U.S. Army after Clinton became president. That was one of several top jobs Coleman won over the years.

"I can only say my degree from Yale Law School has been a great boon," said Coleman, now an attorney in Philadelphia. "Had he not gone to a school like Yale, he would not be sitting on the Supreme Court."

Thomas says he stores his Yale Law degree in his basement with a 15-cent sticker from a cigar package on the frame.

Son of Indian immigrants elected governor of Louisiana

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Republican Congressman Bobby Jindal, the 36-year-old son of Indian immigrants, won the Louisiana governor's race Saturday, carrying more than half the vote against 11 opponents to become the state's first nonwhite governor since Reconstruction.

He congratulated his opponents, thanked his wife, and paid homage to his parents, who stood nearby.

"My mom and dad came to this country in pursuit of the American dream. And guess what happened. They found the American Dream to be alive and well right here in Louisiana," Jindal said.

Jindal pledged to fight corruption and rid the state of those "feeding at the public trough," revisiting a campaign theme.

With about 92 percent of the vote in, Jindal had 625,036 votes or 53 percent — more than enough to win outright and avoid a Nov. 17 runoff.

Black men pledge to fight violence

Philadelphia is one of the deadliest cities in the United States

BY MARYCLAIRE DALE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — Thousands of black men turned out Sunday to support a volunteer effort aimed at reducing violence in crime-plagued Philadelphia, lining up for several blocks to register.

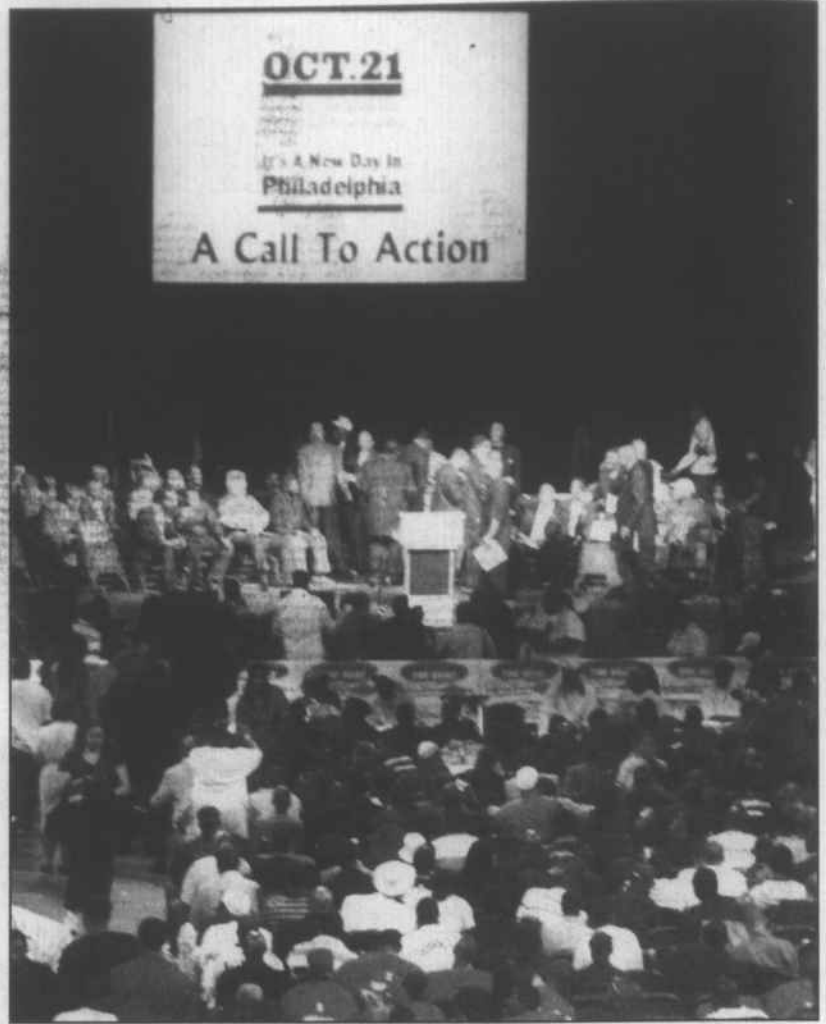
Philadelphia has a reputation as one of America's deadliest cities, with more than 320 murders this year.

The United States' sixth-largest city has nearly 1.5 million residents, 44 percent of them black. More than 80 percent of the murders involve handguns, and most involve young black males.

Volunteers who join street patrols as part of the "Call to Action: 10,000 Men, It's a New Day" campaign will not carry weapons or make arrests but instead will be trained in conflict resolution, organizers said.

"Nobody else is going to magically come into this community and

See Philadelphia on A12



Thousands of black men turned out Sunday to register for a volunteer effort aimed at reducing violence in their community.

Obama wants voting chief fired for comments

Tanner tells groups minorities often die before achieving old age

BY NEDRA PICKLER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON —

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said Friday the head of the Justice Department's voting rights office should be fired for saying minorities often die before they reach old age.

A department spokesman said the Oct. 5 remarks by John Tanner had been "grossly misconstrued."

During a panel discussion on minority voters before the National Latino Congress in Los Angeles, Tanner addressed state laws that require photo identification for voting, and remarked that elderly voters disproportionately don't have the proper IDs.

"That's a shame, you know creating problems for elderly persons just is not good under any circumstance," Tanner said, according to video posted on YouTube. "Of course, that also ties into the racial aspect because our society is such that minorities don't become elderly the way white people do. They die first."

"There are inequities in health care. There are a variety of inequities in this country, and so anything that disproportionately impacts the elderly has the opposite impact on minorities. Just the math is such as that," Tanner said.

Tanner turned down a request for an interview last Friday to explain his remarks.

In a letter to the Justice Department sent Friday, Obama called Tanner's remarks a disgrace and asked Acting Attorney General Peter D. Keisler to dismiss him.

"Such comments are patently erroneous, offensive and dangerous, and they are especially troubling coming from the federal official charged with protecting voting rights in this country," wrote Obama, whose father was a black Kenyan. Although trailing far behind Sen. Hillary Clinton, Obama still is considered to have the best chance for success of any black candidate ever to seek the presidency.

Justice Department spokesman Erik Ablin said Tanner has worked for the department's voting section since 1976, the last two years as its chief. Tanner's tenure also includes a stint in the White House counsel's office during President Bill Clinton's administration.

"Mr. Tanner is an attorney



Obama

who works to protect civil rights on a daily basis," Ablin said, adding that the official has won numerous awards from African-American groups. "Nothing in his comments deviated from his firm commitment to enforce the law, and it is unfortunate that they have been so grossly misconstrued."

Ablin said the Justice Department "continues to have full confidence" in Tanner, effectively rejecting

Obama's demand that the voting chief be dismissed.

It is documented that black Americans, particularly males, have shorter life expectancies than whites. But many blacks do live to become elderly.

A black person born in 2004 had an average life expectancy of 73.1 years, about five years less than for whites, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

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