

# News at a Glance

## Barbecue baron Bessinger changes Confederate flags at some restaurants

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Outspoken barbecue baron Maurice Bessinger, at about half of his dozen restaurants, has replaced the better-known Confederate battle flag, with its red background, blue cross and white stars, with the less recognized and perhaps less controversial first flag of the Confederacy — a banner with two red stripes, a white stripe and a blue square with a circle of white stars.

The new flag, which resembles the U.S. flag, better honors his ancestors who fought for the South in the Civil War, Bessinger said. The Confederate battle flag will remain at the other restaurants, he said.

A state NAACP leader suggests Bessinger has changed flags because he is losing customers, but a Confederate group said it is just as likely people's opinions of Bessinger were set back in 2000, when he first raised the more famous Confederate battle flag over his restaurants to protest the state Legislature's decision to take that flag down from atop the Statehouse dome.

The change in flags hasn't changed the mind of Lonnie Randolph, president of the state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

## Cheney jokes about 'Cousin Obama'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Dick Cheney said Friday he hasn't reached out to "Cousin Barack" Obama since reports that the two share a distant relative.

In an interview for CNBC's "Kudlow & Company," Cheney was asked whether he and Obama, a Democratic presidential candidate, have discussed their ancestral link.

"Cousin Barack?" Cheney said. "No, we haven't — haven't had the opportunity to talk about it."

Lynne Cheney, the vice president's wife, told MSNBC last week she uncovered the long-ago ties between the two while researching her ancestry for her latest book, "Blue Skies, No Fences."

The vice president said he was unsure about bringing it up with the Illinois senator.

"Well, I didn't know whether that would help him or hurt him, so I thought I'd probably stay away from him," he said.

Obama is a descendant of Maren Duvall, said Ginny Justice, a spokeswoman for Lynne Cheney. The French Huguenot's son married the granddaughter of a Richard Cheney, who arrived in Maryland in the late 1650's from England. The vice president's full name is Richard B. Cheney.



Cheney

## Seven black Gulf oil rig workers settle discrimination claim

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (AP) — Seven black workers who said they were threatened by the display of hangman's nooses in a racist environment on an offshore oil rig will share in a \$290,000 settlement of a discrimination lawsuit, federal officials announced last Thursday.

The settlement announced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission resolved a suit filed against Tulsa, Oklahoma-based Helmerich & Payne International Drilling Co. for racial harassment on a rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

Besides nooses, EEOC officials said the workers were subjected to racial slurs.

Helmerich Vice President and General Counsel Steve Mackey said the settlement arose from an incident in 2002 on one offshore rig. He said the company "fully investigated this soon after it was first reported." He said it was never determined whether the alleged harassment came from H&P employees or workers from other companies on the rig.

The settlement requires the company to prevent any racial harassment or retaliation, conduct anti-discrimination training and post a notice about the settlement.

The company also must redistribute to the work force its policies prohibiting racial harassment, and report certain complaints of harassment or retaliation to the EEOC for monitoring.

## Controversial Nobel winner announces his retirement

GARDEN CITY, N.Y. (AP) — James D. Watson, the co-discoverer of DNA who set off a furor last week with comments questioning the intelligence of blacks, announced his retirement Thursday from the prestigious lab where he has worked for more than 40 years.

"Closer now to 80 than 79, the passing on of my remaining vestiges of leadership is more than overdue," said Watson, who won a Nobel Prize in 1962 for co-discovering the double-helix structure of DNA.

"The circumstances in which this transfer is occurring, however, are not those which I could ever have anticipated or desired."

Watson, who stepped down from his post as chancellor of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, was in London earlier this month to promote a new book when he was quoted in the Sunday Times Magazine of London as saying that he's "inherently gloomy about the prospect of Africa" because "all our social policies are based on the fact that their intelligence is the same as ours — whereas all the testing says not really."

Watson added that while he hopes everyone is equal, "people who have to deal with black employees find this is not true." He also said people should not be discriminated against on the basis of color, because "there are many people of color who are very talented."

The Cold Spring Harbor lab, founded on the north shore of Long Island in 1890, has been home to seven Nobel Prize-winning scientists. Its board of directors suspended Watson after his remarks were made public last week.

Chairman Eduardo Mestre said the board respected Watson's decision to retire.



Watson

# Black lawyers rare at Supreme Court

BY MARK SHERMAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Coming soon to the U.S. Supreme Court: a rare appearance by a black lawyer.

More than a year has passed since a black lawyer in private practice stood at the lectern in the elegant courtroom and spoke the traditional opening line.

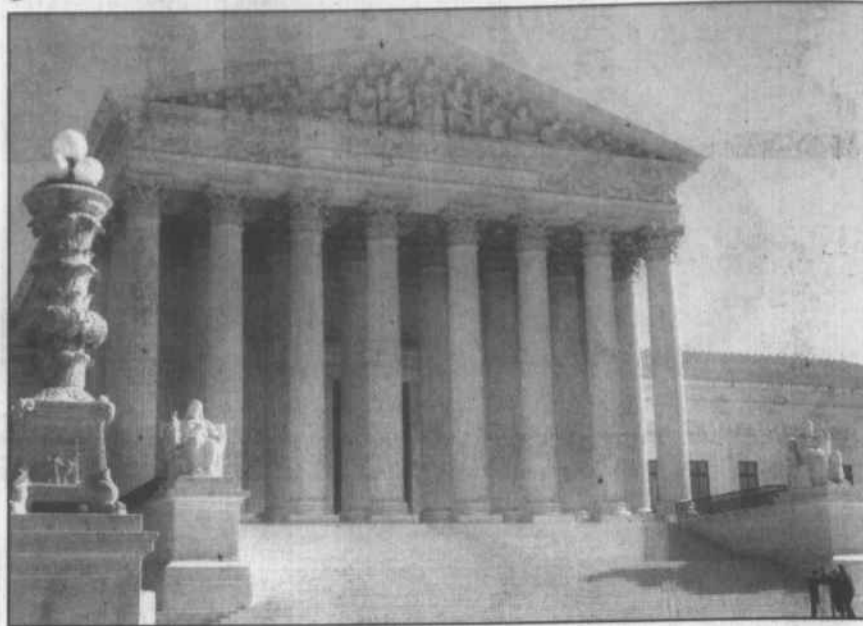


Days

"Mr. Chief Justice and may it please the court."

Drew Days III, solicitor general in former President Bill Clinton's administration, planned on Monday to argue a case on behalf of a shuttered brokerage firm that is seeking to recover \$4.5 million in losses. Days, who splits his time between the Morrison & Foerster firm and Yale Law School, is one of the few black lawyers who regularly represent clients at the high court.

"Not many lawyers of color end up in the Supreme Court and most of those who do are in the area of civil rights litigation," said Robert Harris, who argued once before the court in his career as a lawyer for Pacific Gas and Electric Co.



"We don't have as many of those cases as we used to so clearly that opportunity is not there for many African-American lawyers," said Harris, who is black.

Although the Supreme Court does not keep racial breakdowns of lawyers who argue before the justices, records indicate that the first black to appear before the justices was J. Alexander Chiles in 1910.

Long before he became a judge, Thurgood Marshall regularly argued civil rights cases at the Supreme Court in the 1940s and 1950s. Marshall

was a rarity in those years of segregation, a black lawyer in an otherwise white world.

Under President Lyndon Johnson, Marshall was the first black to be solicitor general, the Justice Department's top Supreme Court lawyer. Since then, two other black men — Days and Wade McCree — have held that job.

Two black men, Marshall and Clarence Thomas, have been Supreme Court justices.

Several factors account for the dearth of minorities at the court: continuing problems in recruiting and retaining blacks and other minorities at the top

law firms; the rise of a small group of lawyers who focus on Supreme Court cases; the decline in civil rights cases that make it to the high court; and the court's dwindling caseload.

"It breaks my heart. It's the minority pipeline, the dwindling caseload, all of these things," Days told The Associated Press.

Days said he, too, has trouble attracting black lawyers to his firm.

Two recent studies point up the trends. Of 46 Washington law offices with

See Lawyers on A13

# Hispanics, blacks unite for immigration effort

BY ROXANA HEGEMAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WICHITA, Kan. — Hispanics and black leaders joined forces Friday to try to block anti-immigration efforts expected to be mounted in the Kansas Legislature next year.

In a joint meeting, the Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission and the Kansas African American Affairs Commission agreed to come up with a comprehensive plan to defeat anti-immigration action in the state.

"We are going to be on the defensive," said Rep. Delia Garcia, D-Wichita.

Immigration was one of several minority issues where the two state government advisory boards found some common ground. The groups also agreed to work together on health care reform in Kansas and an economic development plan to revise the state procurement processes and give minority business owners a greater share of government contracts.

"We are all in the same boat," said Steve Cisneros, KHLAAC executive director. "We are not competing for jobs — we are competing for who is going to get their unemployment check first."

The group listened to state agency officials and legislators during a daylong meeting. Repeatedly the issue of immigration crept into most of their comments, even if only briefly.

One of the backers of that immigration legislation, Rep. Brenda Landwehr, R-Wichita, told the joint meeting immigration issues were very high on her agenda since tough anti-immigration measures in neighboring states like Colorado, Oklahoma and Missouri would send illegal immigrants into Kansas.

Landwehr said she is looking at fashioning a Kansas statute similar to that of Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act in Oklahoma, slated to go into effect today, Nov. 1, has been hailed as one of the toughest among the states on illegal immigration. It will block undocumented workers from getting jobs by imposing tighter screening procedures on employers and make it more difficult for illegal immigrants to obtain public benefits.

Not everyone agreed with the idea.

"It is the question of oppression," said KHLAAC member Robert Vinton.

But, after Landwehr left,



Garcia

Cisneros praised her in front of the board for speaking to the two minority groups on the immigration issue, saying they could work with her on areas they could agree upon, including the need for all workers to be paid fair wages.

Cisneros also noted Landwehr is not interested in repealing the in-state tuition given to immigrants regardless of immigration status, but

one of the items she wanted included in the proposed measure is a provision penalizing Kansas landlords who rent to illegal immigrants.

Among other concerns shared by Kansas blacks and Hispanics is the disproportionate number of minorities, particularly black and Hispanic juveniles, in the criminal justice system.



## AMY GRANT

WITH

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