

News at a Glance

Rice stops motorcade to tour Brazilian town of Salvador

SALVADOR, Brazil (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stopped her typically fast-moving motorcade on Friday to stroll the streets of Salvador, a Brazilian town known historically for its slave trade.

It was a rare move for Rice, who is busy trying to re-ignite Middle East peace talks and disarm the North Koreans. On Sunday, one day after she was to return from Latin America, Rice planned to travel to Moscow to persuade the Russians to back U.S. missile radars in Europe.

Instead of blowing through Brazil after meeting with political officials, as would normally be the case, Rice insisted on taking a side trip to the country's Bahia region, where slaves were once brought from West Africa.

During her visit, Rice signed an agreement with Brazil to promote education on racial equality.

In Salvador's historic Pelourinho town square, she visited a church built by slaves in the 18th century. She clapped along to a song by church members that told of a day when blacks have "no opponents" and women have equal rights.

Later, after touring a museum of Afro-Brazilian culture, Rice told reporters that she had been struck by the parallels with the slave struggle in the United States. Like in America, slaves relied on their church for hope, she said.



Rice

'Great Debater' Wells remembered

HOUSTON (AP) — Henrietta Bell Wells, the only woman on the 1930 Wiley College team that took part in the nation's first interracial collegiate debate, was remembered Sunday as a deeply spiritual person whose presence moved others to be quiet and listen. Wells died Feb. 27 in Baytown. She was 95.

Wells was the last surviving member of the team portrayed in last year's movie, "The Great Debaters." The movie, starring Denzel Washington, focused on Melvin Tolson's success leading an underdog debate team at a small, southern, historically black college in the mid-1930s. Founded in 1873, Wiley is in east Texas, about 40 miles from Shreveport, La.

About 100 friends, spanning nearly a century in age, gathered for the service at St. James Episcopal Church, where Wells was an active member for 40 years. Her husband, Wallace, died in 1987. They had no children.

In an interview with the Houston Chronicle last year, Wells said the boys "didn't seem to mind" her status as the lone girl and freshman on the squad. She also noted that because Tolson had the team so well prepared for competition, its members were never intimidated. Wells debated for only a year but was a member of the team that broke the color barrier in 1930 at a competition in Chicago.

Congresswoman seeks justice review of torture case

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A Houston congresswoman has asked the U.S. Department of Justice to review the torture of a black woman by seven white people to determine whether federal hate crimes should be pursued.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee, also said two defendants who were sentenced last Thursday on state charges should not have the option of parole.

"I have asked the Justice Department to review the circumstances and determine whether there is a viable case under federal law," Lee told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Friday from her Washington, D.C., office.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia had announced in September that it would not pursue civil rights violations in the case.

Lee noted that Logan County prosecutors have gotten one conviction on a state hate crimes charge.

Authorities say 21-year-old Megan Williams of Charleston was held captive for several days last summer at Frankie Brewster's trailer in Big Creek. In addition to beatings and assaults, authorities said Williams was forced to eat animal feces and was stabbed. She was rescued by sheriff's deputies on Sept. 8 after they received an anonymous tip.

Karen Burton, 46, was the only defendant charged with a state hate crime. She was sentenced last Thursday in Logan County Circuit Court to 10 years for violating Williams' civil rights. She also received separate two-to-10-year sentences for assault charges.

State has first black female chief justice

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Justice Peggy Quince, who attended segregated schools in her native Virginia, will be the first black woman to lead the Florida Supreme Court or any branch of state government.

Quince, 60, also will be the second African-American and third woman to serve as chief justice when she begins her two-year term July 1. Her six colleagues Friday unanimously elected Quince to succeed Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis, who will remain on the court.

The chief justice also oversees the entire state court system. Quince did not immediately respond to an interview request made through the high court's public information office. But she issued a statement thanking her colleagues and saying she looks forward to serving the people in her new capacity.

Quince is only the third black of either gender to serve on the high court. She was jointly appointed on Dec. 8, 1998 by outgoing Gov. Lawton Chiles and incoming Gov. Jeb Bush. Chiles died in office just four days later with less than a month left in his term.

She graduated from Howard University in 1970 and earned a law degree from the Catholic University of America in 1975.

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Photo by Kimberly F. Mitchell/Detroit Free Press/MCT

Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick is back in the national headlines over recent comments.

Detroit mayor criticized for exhuming buried racial slur

BY COREY WILLIAMS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick stood before hundreds of people last summer and triumphantly proclaimed: "Die, N-word, and we don't want to see you 'round here no more."

But although Kilpatrick and other black leaders symbolically buried the racial slur in a mock funeral last July, he uttered it in his State of the City address last week, which was carried live on local television and radio stations.

Facing possible perjury charges from testimony



Cox

during a whistle-blowers' trial and criticism over sexually explicit text messages he sent to his former top aide, a defiant Kilpatrick lashed out at the media and opponents. He said he and his family have been subjected to racial slurs, as well as threats over the past month.

"In the past 30 days, I've been called a nigger more than anytime in my entire life," said Kilpatrick, 37. "In the past three days, I've received more death threats than I have in my entire administration."

Kilpatrick's use of the slur drew a sharp response

See Kilpatrick on A15

Paterson prepares for unexpected role as governor

BY VALERIE BAUMAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBANY, New York — Former lieutenant governor David Paterson, who is legally blind, was sworn in Monday as New York state's 55th governor.

Just a week after the world learned of Gov. Eliot Spitzer's involvement in a prostitution ring, Paterson will become the state's first black governor and America's first legally blind chief executive to serve more than a few days.

It's not exactly take two of Spitzer's promised "Day One," but for many New Yorkers it will be a welcome fresh start after a week of having details of Spitzer's sordid activities seep gradually into the open.

Spitzer in his 2006 campaign had promised New York that everything would change from his first day in office. That ended last week when he announced he would resign after he was accused of spending tens of thousands of dollars on prostitutes — including a tryst with a 22-year-old call girl in Washington the night before Valentine's Day.

On Sunday, Paterson was catching up on budget details and preparing — and memorizing — his inauguration speech. Paterson officially took over before a joint session of the Legislature in the Assembly chamber. He spent much of last week meeting with Democrat and Republican leaders in preparation for his unexpected transition.

The new governor was Spitzer's lieutenant for just 14 months. Paterson has been a Democratic state senator since 1985, representing parts of Harlem and Manhattan's Upper West Side.

He graduated from Columbia University and Hofstra School of Law. His father, Basil, a former state senator representing Harlem and later New York's first black secretary of state,

was part of a political fraternity that included fellow Democrats U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel, former New York City Mayor David Dinkins — the city's first black mayor —

and former Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton.

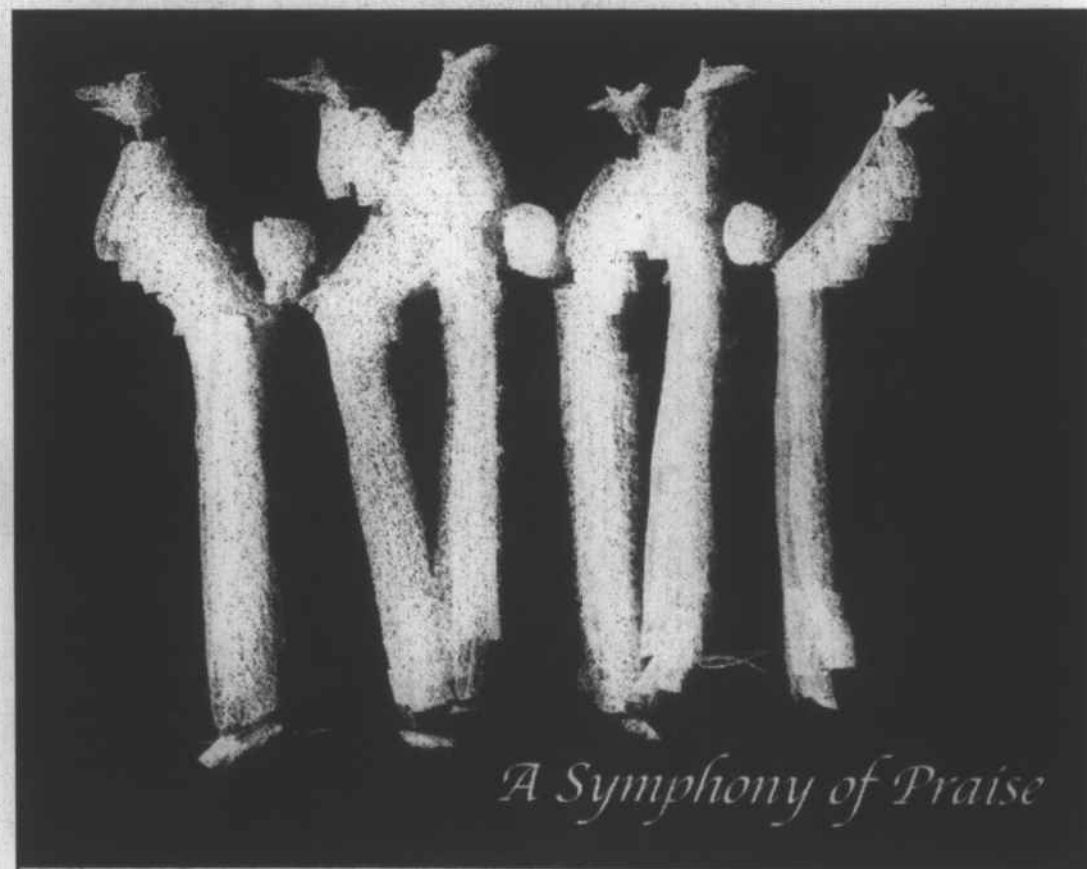
"It's very daunting," Paterson said Friday. "I definitely feel anxiety ... but in the end, we have a job to do. And we're here to do that job." Federal prosecutors must still decide whether to pursue charges against Spitzer.



Lee



Paterson



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