

Now at a glance

Paul Quinn fighting for survival

DALLAS (AP) — The president of Paul Quinn College says it's too early to write off the oldest historically-black college in Texas.

Michael J. Sorrell said last Friday he is confident the Dallas liberal arts college's leadership will win an appeal of a decision to strip Paul Quinn's accreditation. Colleges can't award diplomas without accreditation in Texas.

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools told the school of its decision Thursday. The commission said the decision was based on lack of funding, planning, assessment and student learning outcomes.

Paul Quinn was put on probation by the commission two years ago. The commission said there was progress, but not enough. Paul Quinn enrolls about 440 students.



Sorrell

Army honors Buffalo Soldier with a street re-naming

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. (AP) — Army officials have presented a special honor at Fort Leavenworth for a former Buffalo Soldier.

A street in a new housing area on the post's west side has been named for the late Chief Warrant Officer Harry Hollowell. His widow was on hand for the recent dedication.

Hollowell spent nearly 30 years in service at Fort Leavenworth. He enlisted in 1936 as a private in the 10th Cavalry and served in World War II in the China-Burma-India region.

Hollowell attended Army music school and graduated as a band leader in 1942. He retired from the Army in 1964, then spent 22 years as music director at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks.

Attorney general wants review of crack vs. cocaine sentences

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Eric Holder sought support last week for erasing the gap in prison sentences for crack and powder cocaine crimes, a disparity that hits black defendants the hardest.

The effort to change federal sentencing laws for cocaine has broad support but may still unravel amid disagreements about how equal the sentences should be, and whether the whole sentencing system needs to be changed.



Justice Stephen Breyer

"One thing is very clear: We must review our federal cocaine sentencing policy," Holder said at a legal discussion sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus.

Under current law, it takes 100 times more powdered cocaine than crack cocaine to trigger the same harsh, mandatory minimum sentences.

"This administration firmly believes that the disparity in crack and powdered cocaine sentences is unwarranted," Holder said. "It must be eliminated."

The law was passed in the 1980s during the spread of crack in American cities, which officials blamed for a rise in violence. Yet in the years since, worries about crack have declined.

The most recent government figures show that 82 percent of crack offenders are African-American, while just 9 percent of them are white.

In remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus event, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, who helped craft the sentencing guidelines that now are the subject of so much criticism and debate, urged Congress to focus first on the laws creating mandatory minimums for certain crimes.

"My goodness, those mandatory minimums drive (sentencing) guidelines in 100 different ways," Breyer said.

The justice acknowledged that curtailing mandatory minimums is not politically popular, or easy. "It's very, very hard to explain to people," he said.

MLK's papers to be basis of civil rights course

ATLANTA (AP) — The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vast personal collection of papers will be used for the first time to teach a college course on civil rights this fall.

Morehouse College in Atlanta said last week it will use the library of about 10,000 documents, books and other papers that have been housed at the school since 2006.

The course called "Martin Luther King Jr. and the Modern Freedom Struggle" will be taught by Clayborne Carson, who was named executive director of the collection in January.

King graduated from historically black Morehouse with a degree in sociology in 1948.

Morehouse owns the collection, which was bought from the King estate for \$32 million in June 2006.



Martin Luther King Jr.

'Do The Right Thing' still asks burning questions 20 years later

BY JESSE WASHINGTON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Twenty years later, the trash can is still crashing through America's window.

At the climax of Spike Lee's 1989 drama "Do The Right Thing," the eternal battle between love and hate teeters on a razor's edge. The young black man Radio Raheem has been choked to death by white police officers after a fight with a Brooklyn pizzeria owner. A seething crowd gathers in front of the shop.

Lee's character, Mookie, a black pizza deliveryman, stands between the crowd and the shop. He's shoulder-to-shoulder with Sal, the shop's Italian owner. They exchange looks of confusion, betrayal and regret.

The crowd stares at Mookie. He's on the wrong side. Mookie moves over to his brothers, rubs his face, wrestling with the weight of the moment. Then he decides.

"Hate!" screams Mookie as he hurls the metal can through the pizzeria's plate glass window. The dam bursts. The mob destroys the shop in a frenzy that was both inevitable and completely avoidable.

Much has changed since "Do The Right Thing" announced Lee's special gifts to the world. The police choke hold that killed Radio Raheem — a fictionalization of the real death of Michael Stewart in New York City — has long been outlawed. Life on the ravaged Brooklyn block where Lee filmed the movie has improved. Ronald Reagan has given way to Barack Obama.

But for every measure of undeniable progress, "Do The Right Thing" also points to the divides that remain.



PRNewsFoto

Director Spike Lee wrote, directed and starred in the classic film.

In May, a black New York City undercover cop who was running after a suspect with his gun drawn was shot to death by a white officer. Boarded-up buildings, broken windows and jobless young men still populate that Brooklyn block. And Lee, who wrote, produced and directed the film, insists the racial disconnect at its heart still exists.

"White people still ask me

why Mookie threw the can through the window," Lee said in an interview. "Twenty years later, they're still asking me that."

"No black person ever, in 20 years, no person of color has ever asked me why."

That question is what made "Do The Right Thing" so explosive. Some writers speculated, erroneously, that it would incite riots.

"People were fearful of the backlash," said Rosie Perez, who played Mookie's Puerto Rican girlfriend, Tina. "A lot of things happening in real life. People were afraid when the truth, although a little exaggerated, was put up on the screen for everyone to see."

Meanwhile, Lee got rave reviews from many influential critics. Roger Ebert cried after watching it at the Cannes Film Festival, where it lost to "Sex, Lies and Videotape."

Audiences definitely were not prepared.

Most serious films about race, like "In the Heat of the Night," "To Kill A Mockingbird" and "The Defiant Ones," ended with understanding or even brotherhood. And for every ambitious movie like "Watermelon Man" or "Black Like Me," there were a half-dozen violent, sexy ghetto, shoot-em-ups — "blaxploitation" flicks.

Lee had something new to say.

"In just three feature films," critic Gene Siskel wrote then, "Spike Lee has given us more genuine and varied images of black people than in the last 20 years of American movies put together."

Today, Ebert says, "Do The Right Thing" should have won the Oscar for best picture.

"It was so honest about the way people really feel," he said via e-mail. "No hypocrisy. It generated grief and left us with a central question of American society."

The best picture of 1989, according to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: "Driving Miss Daisy," about the friendship

See Lee on A10

'Jena 6' case ends with plea

BY MARY FOSTER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JENA, La. (AP) — The Jena Six case, which once prompted a massive civil rights demonstration and drew international attention, saw the final chapter played out quietly.

Five neatly dressed young men answered "Yes Sir," on Friday, as state District Judge Tom Yeager asked them if they accepted the terms of a deal that included pleading no contest to misdemeanor, simple battery.

The charges against the five — Carwin Jones, Jesse Ray Beard, Robert Bailey Jr., Bryant Purvis and Theo Shaw — had previously been reduced from attempted murder to aggravated second-degree battery after they were accused of beating and kicking schoolmate Justin Barker.

Civil rights leaders railed against the harshness of the original charge, saying it was because the defendants were black and Barker was white.

The severity of the original charges brought widespread criticism and eventually led more than 20,000 people to converge in September 2007 on the tiny town of Jena for a major civil rights march. Some \$275,000 was raised to hire a large defense team for the six, said Beard's attorney, David Utter.

Racial tensions at Jena High School reportedly grew in the months before the attack. Several months prior to the attack, nooses were hung in a tree on the campus, sparking outrage in the black community which viewed them as racist symbols of lynchings. Residents said there were fights, but nothing too serious until December 2006 when Barker was attacked.

"Everybody pointed a finger at Jena during this, but this happens to African-American males across the country," Utter said. "These young men were lucky that people cared

and donated money so they could afford good attorneys. That made the difference."

The plea deal gave the defendants seven days probation, a \$500 fine and court costs. Mychal Bell, the sixth defendant, had previously pleaded guilty to a second-degree battery charge and received an 18-month sentence.

"I just thank God that it's all over," said John Jenkins, Jones' father. "It's been a long, painful journey for everyone on both sides of this thing."

Barker and his family and friends sat without expression through the hearing. Barker's attorney said he has graduated and is now working in the oil fields. The family did not comment.

As part of the deal, one of the attorneys read a statement from the defendants in which they said they knew of nothing Barker had done to provoke the attack.

"To be clear, not one of us heard Justin use any slur or say anything that justified Mychal Bell attacking Justin nor did any of us see Justin do anything that would cause Mychal to react," the statement said.

The statement also expressed sympathy for Barker and his family, and acknowledged the past two-and-a-half



Bell

See Jena on A10

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