

New shopping center opens

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ties. "I hope it makes it wake up," he said.

And, the N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Co. leases part of a 5,000 square foot outbuilding.

Other businesses expected to open soon are a Fashion View clothing store, Latifa's Fashions women clothing store, Iman Beauty Supply, LaPorsha's Hair Studio and a

Shazada Music outlet.

The future of the Shazada outlet is clouded by the seizure of Shazada stores by federal marshals in the wake of owner Jack Campus Gordon's guilty plea to money laundering charges.

The new center replaces one that had been at the intersection for nearly 30 years. It was developed by attorneys

Dale Fussell and Rodney Purser.

NationsBank and Wachovia Bank provided financing. The center provides services and jobs for the area.

"I helped build this building," said Leslie Wilson, who lives on Cummings Ave. "Now I work at the store. It is very convenient. A lot of employees live in this area."

James Jordan died quickly, examiner says

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LUMBERTON - Confusion over two mislabeled bullets interrupted the trial Monday of the man accused of killing basketball star Michael Jordan's father.

The snafu was discovered as District Attorney Johnson Britt was questioning the pathologist who performed an autopsy on the body of James R. Jordan.

Britt showed Dr. Joel Sexton a small plastic bag containing a bullet and asked him if he could identify it.

"No, I can't," the witness responded. Sexton said the bullet he took from Jordan's body was a .38 caliber and the bullet Britt showed him was a .32-caliber.

Britt immediately requested a 15-minute recess, which Judge Gregory Weeks granted. Out of the jury's hearing, court officials determined the .32-caliber and the .38-caliber bullets had been placed in the wrong envelopes before being returned by a defense ballistics expert.

Weeks said Britt can explain the bullet mix-up to jurors but will have to do so by calling witnesses who can testify about what happened.

The mix-up came to light on day four of testimony in the trial of Daniel Andre Green, who is charged with murder, armed robbery and conspiracy

to commit armed robbery. Green has changed his name to Lord D.A.A.S. U'allah since his arrest but is still called Green in court.

The body of James Jordan, 57, was found in a South Carolina swamp Aug. 3, 1993. Prosecutors believe he was shot July 23 in Robeson County.

Later in the day, the trial recessed early because Britt did not have the proper witnesses in order as he tried to show the teeth in the body matched the elder Jordan's.

Weeks said Britt had to call Lawrence Seitlin - Jordan's dentist to the stand first to establish dental X-rays were Jordan's. Seitlin was scheduled to testify Tuesday.

"This is a critical area in the case, we have to go by the book," Weeks said.

Britt said a forensic dentist from Chapel Hill also was scheduled to testify.

Earlier Monday, Sexton testified that Jordan had been dead at least one week and possibly as much as five weeks before his body was found.

The .32-caliber bullet is yet to be entered as evidence in Green's trial. It was taken from the body of Clewis Demery, a convenience store clerk who Green and Larry Martin Demery are accused of robbing shortly before the

Jordan murder.

Larry Demery pleaded guilty to murder, robbery and conspiracy charges last April in the Jordan case, and agreed to testify against Green, his longtime friend.

Sexton testified that it took no more than two minutes for Jordan to die after he was shot while napping in his car along a Robeson County road.

Death could have come in less than one minute after the bullet pierced Jordan's aorta, the main blood vessel in the chest, according to Sexton, who is from Newberry, S.C. Sexton also showed jurors four photographs of James Jordan's body before the autopsy: one taken after Sexton opened the body bag, another after the body was undressed, a closer view of the upper body and an even closer view of the upper right chest, where the gunshot wound entered.

Both Britt and Sexton donned rubber gloves to examine clothing that Sexton identified as that taken off the body before the autopsy. The items included black undershorts and socks, a shirt and pants.

They were allowed to leave the courtroom to wash their hands before the trial continued.

Green could face the death penalty if convicted.

Ala. blacks lose court challenge over election of judges

By Phillip Rawls
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - A lawsuit designed to increase the number of black judges in Alabama has been scuttled by the U.S. Supreme Court, which will let the state keep its at-large system of electing judges.

The Supreme Court, without comment Monday, left intact lower court rulings that said Alabama's at-large system does not violate the federal Voting Rights Act. Blacks hold 11 of Alabama's 225 trial court judgeships, or 5 percent in a state that is 25 percent black.

State Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the lead defendant in the case, said the decision reflects a philosophical change in the courts since the Southern Christian Leadership Conference filed suit in 1988.

"Conventional wisdom had it a few years ago the ruling would go the other way and they'd be carving out districts in counties for circuit judges and district judges. District lines would have been driven by race. It would have vulcanized justice and it would not have been good for public policy," the Republican attorney general said.

The outcome was no surprise to SCLC President Joseph Lowery. A similar case from Florida ended up the same way last year.

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In Alabama, circuit judges - who handle all types of cases -

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- Rev. Joseph Lowery
SCLC president

are elected at-large from 40 judicial circuits that cover one or more counties. District judges, who handle family court and juvenile court cases, are elected in countywide elections.

Led by the SCLC, a group of black voters filed a class-action lawsuit challenging the system for electing circuit judges in 10 circuits and district judges in four counties.

There are 69 circuit judges in those 10 circuits - 64 white and five black. There are 21 district judges in the four contested counties - 20 white and one black.

The lawsuit contended that:

- Predominantly black counties were often grouped with white-majority counties into judicial circuits to dilute black voting strength through at-large elections.

- Black voting strength in single-county judicial circuits, including Alabama's five largest counties, was diluted by having judges run county-wide.

The percentage of black judges in the state mirrors the percentage of black lawyers, but SCLC said racially polarized voting deters black lawyers from running for judgeships.

"Until racial politics are in our past, the choices of black voters are unlikely to win," said Richard Cohen, a Southern Poverty Law Center attorney who handled the case

for the SCLC.

Sessions said it would have been difficult to draw districts like those used for legislators. He cited a lack of lawyers in some districts and potential problems with judges siding with constituents.

Sessions said the decision could help his challenge of a lawsuit settlement reached by his predecessor, Democrat Jimmy Evans, to appoint at least five blacks to the state appeals courts. An appeal seeking to overturn the settlement is pending with the 11th Circuit.

The challenge to circuit court elections involved judicial circuits in Bibb, Dallas, Hale, Perry, Wilcox, Chambers, Macon, Randolph, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Calhoun, Cleburne, Jefferson, Mobile, Montgomery, Henry, Houston, Madison and Russell counties.

The district-court challenge centered on elections in Jefferson, Mobile, Montgomery and Russell counties.

The Supreme Court's action removes an obstacle that had been blocking elections to fill new judgeships the legislature had created for the judicial circuit covering Henry and Houston counties, the Bessemer division of Jefferson County and Montgomery and Tuscaloosa counties.

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