

Former Rep. gets longer sentence

By Elaine Hegwood Bowen
THE CHICAGO CRUSADER

While nearing the end of his jail sentence for sexual misconduct, former U.S. Rep. Mel Reynolds has received more jail time for bank and campaign fraud.

When Reynolds initially faced sexual misconduct charges for allegedly having sex with a teenage campaign worker, many suggested that he was at times very uncooperative in the courtroom. But last month, Reynolds pleaded for leniency before being sen-

tenced to another six-and-a-half years in federal prison. He admitted he made mistakes and did not follow the law pertaining to his campaign. But ultimately Reynolds was pleading for time to make amends to his family.

Reynolds' wife, Marisol, and their two children are reportedly living on public aid in Boston.

In a related matter, Marisol Reynolds, who at first stood by her husband but then charged him with abuse, was also charged and convicted of campaign fraud. She is expected to

be sentenced in that case. She has also filed for divorce from the former congressman. The current case against Reynolds was decided on April 15, when he was found guilty of 16 counts of fraud — illegally raising campaign cash and defrauding banks of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Reynolds is due to complete his sentence on sexual misconduct in early 1998 and the new sentence will begin at that time.

Reynolds' attorney William Hooks said his client is being unfairly targeted by prosecutors. He claimed that instead of

focusing on "real" criminals the U.S. Attorney's Office is bent on further punishing Reynolds, who grew up poor, became a Rhodes scholar and eventually a promising force in Washington. U.S. District Judge Charles Norgle, who sentenced Reynolds, said the former politician is also guilty of numerous obstruction of justice violations.

Reynolds has lied to the court and concealed and/or destroyed evidence, Norgle charged.

Even though Reynolds might be sorry for his action, the judge reportedly thinks he has not shown enough remorse and is only now attempting to avoid more jail time.

Staff incomplete at W. Charlotte

Former principal unbowed about his actions at school

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Wallace in the Safe Schools program.

In an interview, Simmons said he told Supt. Eric Smith that he no longer wants to be a principal, even if an assignment were available.

"I would have been set up, without the support from the superintendent," Simmons said. "I will be accused of being unfair to whites. I would be open to that kind of attack."

Simmons said if he had it all to do over again, he would do the same things. "Maybe that was my mission there," he said. "Maybe that's what God wanted me to do."

Smith appointed Cline, a principal at a middle school in Newport News, Va., where Smith was superintendent before coming to Charlotte last year.

Simmons said he was disappointed in his treatment by Smith and said he still has not had a chance to tell the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board his

account. Simmons met with the Black Political Caucus last month to give an account of the circumstances which led to his removal.

"I would love to meet with the school board," he said. "The act like they don't want to meet with me."

Simmons said white teachers began complaining when he began hiring more black teachers and making other changes to insure that black children were more successful.

He nearly double the percentage of black teachers from just 10 percent when he took over in March 1996 to 23 percent last year and had hired enough black teachers to raise the percentage to 35 percent for the 1997-98 school year. The leadership team of department heads would have been racially balanced, Simmons said, compared to just two black co-chairs out of 14 department heads when he arrived.

"I had already replaced the 44 teachers who wanted to leave,"

Simmons said.

He was also criticized for reducing the number of suspensions of black students. White teachers began spreading rumors that he was having racially-exclusive meetings with students and teachers.

"I had a fireside chat with black boys doing Black History Month," Simmons said. "The teachers selected those kids who were not doing well academically. I had about 300 kids and about 98 percent of them were black."

"We had a very open and candid discussion," Simmons said. "White teachers accused me of being racist."

He was also criticized when black teachers came to him to talk about their concerns, Simmons said.

"They wanted to meet with me off campus," he said. "I told them we could meet on campus. They wanted more black staff members."

"The white teachers said that was racist. Everything was exaggerated. To me that reeks of racism I have never seen before."

Simmons said his removal was a strategy of white teachers early in the school year and the mass transfer was part of the plan.



Simmons

Keep Medicare plan, CBC urges

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

The Congressional Black Caucus has sent a letter to President Clinton urging him to stand firm against a Senate provision designed to impose co-payments on individuals receiving Medicare home health care.

U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) initiated the letter and gathered signatures from all 38 members of the CBC, including Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), chair of the CBC and Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), the ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The letter was sent to the White House as the House and Senate Medicare conferees debated the Senate provision. "We cannot raise revenue on the backs of seniors," said Lewis. "Forcing senior citizens to pay co-payments will hurt those who can least afford it."

According to a recent report by the Kaiser Medicare Policy Project, low-income seniors, minority women and those living alone have the greatest home care needs. "We must preserve affordable health care for senior citizens. We must be fair. We must not burden our most vulnerable populations

with additional costs," said Lewis.

The Senate-passed bill includes the provision that would require Medicare beneficiaries to pay \$5 for each home care visit they receive, up to the amount of the hospital deductible — \$760 in 1997, and an estimated \$960 by 2002. The provision is expected to raise \$4.9 billion over five years but opponents believe the co-payments are an inappropriate way to reach the budget savings required by the budget resolution.

Improve relations, schools

By Paul Shepard
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — National Urban League President Hugh B. Price appealed Sunday for improved race relations and a rejection of the status quo in urban schools.

"We must purge our souls of racism, anti-Semitism and immigrant and Asian bashing if we are to become the most successful democracy in the history of mankind," Price said in prepared remarks opening the Urban League's annual convention Sunday evening.

Price said the Urban League has joined with several other advocacy groups for an initiative called National Voices for an Inclusive 21st Century, which held a symposium in June and is planning other events to improve the dialogue between racial and ethnic groups. Partners in the initiative include the National Council of La Raza, the Anti-Defamation League and the National Congress of American Indians and Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics. Addressing his comments to President Clinton, who addressed the convention Monday, Price said "collectively,

the groups in National Voices are wired to almost everyone around the country that you'd want to engage in a conversation about race."

"Mr. President, we're here to help. Use us," Price said.

But Clinton was planning to discuss aspects of his urban agenda, such as empowerment zones and cleanup of brownfields, that are "helping America's cities participate fully in the great economic strength we're experiencing," said White House spokesman Barry Toiv.

On education, Price said state takeovers of urban school districts and the growth of charter schools represent forces of "revolutionary change" seeking to improve schools.

"As consumers of public education, we can no longer accept the status quo in urban schools," Price said. "Too many of our kids are served too miserably to allow it to continue." The convention, which ended Wednesday, attracted 5,000 visitors. In addition to Clinton, speakers included Vice President Al Gore, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt and Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater.

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