

Catch up for week

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 Wednesday or Thursday to roll into town. Even vendors who line the practice facility at Charlotte Bobcats Arena take their time when it comes to setting up.

Sharpton wants DNA test

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"It was probably the most shocking thing in my life," Sharpton said at a news conference Sunday, the day the Daily News reported the link.

Professional genealogists, who work for Ancestry.com, found that Sharpton's great-grandfather Coleman Sharpton was a slave owned by Julia Thurmond, whose grandfather was Strom Thurmond's great-great-grandfather. Coleman Sharpton was later freed.

"Based on the paper trail, it seems pretty evident that the connection is there," said Mike Ward, a genealogist with Ancestry.com, who called the link "amazing."

The revelations surfaced after Ancestry.com contacted a Daily News reporter who agreed to have his own family tree done. The intrigued reporter then asked Sharpton if he wanted to participate. Sharpton said he told the paper, "Go for it."

The genealogists, who were not paid by the newspaper, uncovered the ancestral ties using a variety of documents that included census, marriage and death records.

Strom Thurmond, of South Carolina, was once considered an icon of racial segregation. During his 1948 bid for president he promised to preserve segregation, and in 1957 he filibustered for more than 24 hours against a civil rights bill.

But Thurmond was seen as softening his stance later in his long life. He died in 2003, at 100. One of the longest-serving senators in history, he was originally a Democrat but became a Republican in 1964.

His children have confirmed that he fathered a biracial daughter. Essie Mae Washington-Williams' mother was a housekeeper in the home of Thurmond's parents.

Sharpton said he met Thurmond only once, in 1991, when he visited Washington, D.C., with the late James Brown, who knew Thurmond. Sharpton said the meeting was "awkward."

"I was not happy to meet him because what he had done all his life," Sharpton said.

Sharpton said he hadn't attempted to contact the Thurmond family.

Edwards said coming early gives him a chance to get away from work and the family gets a chance to take in many of the sites around the Queen City.

On Tuesday, Edwards said he and his wife hit the mall, making a stop at Macy's and later Discovery Place.

"Things are kind of expensive (at the arena), so we eat before we come," he said.

But one of the most important things that Edwards said he gets to do in the early days of the tournament is hang out with his friends and have another

homecoming. Local promoter and guy about town Michael Kitchen said he noticed last year that things didn't get started until later in the week. So, for the first two days of the tournament this year he rested.

"I know I'm going to be in the streets later on in the week," he said.

So, what are the advantages to coming into town early? There's less traffic, no fighting for prime parking spots and by the time your late friends arrive on Wednesday and Thursday, you already know your way



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