Funeral director admits bilking clients

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Top stories of 1986



AERO file photo by P.A. Greene A triumphant Kweisi Mfume, flanked by his five sons, raises his hand in victory election night 1986.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Each year, AFRO staffers submit a list of what they consider the top 10 stories of the year—with the concentration of local items—and the results are collated. Here is this year's listing, although the ranking in importance is not a consideration in the order of the stores.

1. Parren Mitchell retires after a successful run as U.S. Congressman. He joins with gubernatorial hopeful Stephen Sachs. as a Lieutenant Governor candidate. The team lost. Parren has officially retired from politics and Sachs has taken a position. with a prestigious law firm.

2. Kweisi Mfume wins the 7th District Congressional seat vacated by Parren Mitchell. After a bitter primary fight in which he triumphed over a host of aspirants, the general election showdown between Democrat Mfume and Republican St. George Crosse led to charges of mudslinging and dirty politics.

3. Provident Hospital after almost a two-year ordeal, finally was merged with Lutheran to form the Liberty Medical Center. The filing of Chapter 11 bankruptcy led to the demise of the major black medical institution in the city.

4. Len Bias, top basketball player at the University of Maryland, died from an overdose of cocaine. His tragic death brought a new sense of awareness of the dangers of so-called recreational drugs, and led to stringent new rules on both the College Park institution, and athletics generally.

5. Bob Wade is named coach of the University of Maryland basketball team, following the resignation of Lefty Dreisell, who many say was forced out by the fallout over the Len Bias case. Wade, for many years was the ultra successful coach of the Baltimore Dunbar High School team. He became the first black coach in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

6. William Donald Schaefer became governor-elect of Maryland, thus clearing the way for Clarence DuBurns to automatically become the first black mayor of Baltimore City. The city charter mandates the succession of the President of the City Council to the mayoralty in such events.

7. Squeegee Kids was the name given to them by the AFRO to describe the youngsters who were trying to earn pocket money by washing the windshields of cars stopped for the lights at sometimes busy intersections. Some motorists felt intimidated, so much so, that the City Council stepped in to outlaw the practice, and set aside special areas for the kids. One youngster was killed as he attempted to continue the practice.

8. The National NAACP conducted a search for suitable headquarters nationwide, and settled on Baltimore as the site of their national headquarters. The building was officially opened for business in 1986, making Baltimore the center of NAACP activities which is disseminated around the world from its Mt. Hope Drive location.

9. The movie "The Color Purple" opens to wide controversy, becoming the focus of many seminars, discussion groups and angry letters. The movie made stars of Ophrah Winfrey and Whoopi Goldberg, but failed to win a single Academy Award despite a plethora of nominations.

10. After years of discussion, Cable TV finally came to Baltimore City, where test homes in East Baltimore were hooked up during the summer. While little is visible these days, the hook ups are ongoing, and it is expected that within two years, the entire city will be wired.

FBI nabs Charles Butler, home for holiday season

By P. A. Tatum **AFRO Staff Writer**

A tip he was home for the holidays lead to the post dawn arrest of Charles Butler, 51, a Baltimore entrepreneur, who disappeared 19 months ago after a high speed car chase with federal agents who sought his arrest on narcotics violations.

Baltimore FBI Spokesman Charles Manning said Butler was unarmed and did not resist arrest at his prior residence in the 3600 block of Forest Hill Road at 7:15 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 30.

The only other person at the house during the time of the arrest was Butler's wife, Manning

Butler is charged with distribu-

By Manotti L. Jenkins

AFRO Staff Writer

A local mortician, a member of

the state's licensing board for

morticians, admitted to violating

standards which he himself par-

ticipated in setting, as a member

of that board, by fraudulently

billing estates of deceased nurs-

operator of the New Kenneth Law

Funeral Chapel in Northwest

Baltimore Circuit Court, this

week to stealing more than \$5,500

by billing these estates for

funeral services he never

unlawfully billed the Medicaid

Kenneth H. Law, owner and

admitted, in

ing home patients.

Baltimore,

performed.

Additionally,

Ila Butler, 36, the wife of Charles Butler, turned herself into the U.S. Marshal's office in Baltimore Wednesday morning. The FBI had issued a warrant for Mrs. Butler's arrest charging her with harboring a fugitive.

Mrs. Butler, of the 3600 block of Forest Hill Road, turned herself into authorities at 9 a.m. She went before a federal magistrate the same morning and was released on \$50,000 unsecured bond, said Andrew Manning, spokesman for the Baltimore office of the FBI.

tion of heroin, currency violations involving money laundering and Internal Revenue Service violations involving income tax evasion, Charles Henry of the Baltimore office of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), told the AFRO.

Henry said Butler "was considered one of the more significant heroin violators in the city of

bilking Medicaid clients

inflating the cost of funeral ser-

vices for four medical assistance

patients, alleges the state in its

Also, according to Gary E.

Bair, head of the Medicaid Fraud

Unit of the Maryland attorney

general's office, Law allegedly,

stole \$2,537 from the state

treasurer by falsely claiming that

he had paid the state income

taxes for one deceased person.

In one of these cases, state pro-

secutors allege that Law billed

the estate of 92-year-old George

F. Thomas nearly \$1,800 for a

casket and a burial suit he did not

that the funeral director inflated

In other cases, the state asserts

provide.

case against the mortician.

Baltimore." He had been sought by the FBI for the past 19 months.

Donna Wilson, of U.S. Magistrate Paul M. Rosenberg's office, said Butler had an initial appearance in federal court Tuesday morning.

He was detained pending a detention hearing, she said. The hearing has been scheduled for Jan. 5, 1987, at 3 p.m. Until then Funeral director admits

Butler will be held at the Baltimore City Jail.

Both Henry and Manning said authorities received information that Butler was home for the holidays.

Present at his arrest were FBI, Drug Enforcement and U.S. Customs agents and members of the Baltimore City Police Department.

Manning said Butler is alleged to have participated in a transaction involving four kilos of heroin on May 16, 1985. That was the day Butler escaped capture and former nightclub owner and businessman David Richeson was arrested.

Richeson was the founder and previous owner of Gatsby's on North Charles Street and The Ritz nightclub on Light Street which was converted from the old Playboy Club.

Manning said Richeson has since been convicted and sentenced to serve 30 years in federal prison. Also arrested in the case was Mamood Ul Hassan; of Nigeria. He now is serving a 15-year sentence in federal

According to AFRO files, Richeson was the former owner of Quazar Import/Export International, located at the World Trade Center. Butler was supposed to have been an officer of the company.

Tuesday Manning told the **AFRO Butler allegedly imported** heroin from Nigeria, through Quazar Nigeria Limited, a Nigerian company with offices in Baltimore.

Here are the events which apparently lead up to Richeson's ar-

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operator of the New Kenneth Law Continued on page 2 program for more than \$3,000 by Funeral Chapel in Northwest. E. North Ave. slated for renovation project

By P. A. Tatum AFRO Staff Writer

Thirteen dilapidated, vacant, city-owned, East North Avenue rowhouses in the next couple of years will be renovated into a complex called North Avenue Terraces, and the city is hoping an \$813,000 federal grant will help the project along.

Paul Shurick, a spokesman for the Baltimore Neighborhood Progress Administration, said the city has applied for an \$813,000 Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) from the U.S. Department of Housing.

The apartment complex in the 300 block of East North Avenue will be handled by private developers. The general partner of the North Avenue Terraces Limited Partnership is Stuart

sought in the developer's behalf. "We've applied (for the grant) on behalf of the developers . . . to make the project a little more af-

The developers have secured their financial package to begin work on the project but found they were "still short of money," he said.

fordable," he said.

Shurick said the total project will cost approximately \$4.5 million. "It breaks down to about \$4.20

of private money for every \$1 the federal government puts in, Shurick said.

During the past seven years, Baltimore has received more than 90 UDAG grants, he said. The proposal submitted to the federal government in late November was "strong," but

Shurick said the grant was other considerations will play a part in determining if the city is successful in receiving the

Kenneth Law, owner and

"The problem is, if it is a problem, is the difficulty in obtaining UDAG grants," Shurick said.

The federal government has curtailed funds available through the program, and competition for the funds is spread across the "Competition is tough for a

small amount of money," Shurick said. "We should know by mid-January when the announcements will be made."

The city-owned buildings are in the 300 block of East North Avenue across from the new headquarters of the Baltimore School System which was con-

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Lotto iackpot \$8 mil.

Since there was no Jackpot winner for the Lotto drawing of Saturday, December 27, 1986, the State Lottery has announced that the current week's Jackpot prize for the drawing of Saturday, January 3, 1987 will have an estimated annuity value of approximately \$8 million for a single

In the lotto drawing of Saturday, December 27, 1986, there were 439 second tier winners of \$1,139 each. These winners correctly matched five of the six winning numbers in that drawing.

Also, 18,026 Lotto players won \$35 each for correctly matching four of the six winning numbers. The winning numbers selected in Satur-01-04-13-15-28-32.

AFRO SURVEY: What was most significant occurrence in 1986?











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