FOUR PERSONS DIED, including the man being held in a shattered sixth-floor window of a 10-story, busy office building that was engulfed Friday by flames and smoke on Peachtree Street in Atlanta. The man who tried unsuccessfully to save his friend was rescued by firemen. Dozens were injured in the fire that Mayor Andrew Young called the worst during his eight years in office. UPI

HUD sues under new bias law

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Acting for the first time under new authority given it by last year's fair housing law, the Department of Housing and Urban Development filed a racial discrimination charge Thursday against a Little Rock, Ark., real estate agent and homeowner.

In the past, HUD generally could not take parties to court over charges of racial discrimination in the selling or renting of a home.

"This is a landmark in civil rights enforcement," Kemp said, because the alleged victim of the discrimination — Melvin White — "is the first American to have his government stand up for him in court under the new fair housing law."

White, in a complaint filed with HUD, charged that he was denied the opportunity to rent a house in Little Rock because he is black.

Named as defendants in the complaint are Natalee Schay, a real estate agent, and B. Jeffrey Pence, owner of the house.

According to White, upon his arrival at the house, he was informed by Schay that the house had been rented — despite the fact that others were told the house was available and the house was not actualy rented until nearly five weeks after White's visit.

SEVERAL THOUSAND 7-Eleven stores and NAACP branches will work together this fall and early next year to help "get out the count" throughout the black community. The campaign was the basis for a recent meeting at the U.S. Census Bureau by officials of each organization. (L to R) Henry Stanley, vice president, public affairs, Southland Corporation; John Johnson, director of voter education, NAACP; Steve LeRoy, vice president, 7-Eleven Chesapeake Region and Roland Moore, associate director, Bureau of the Census.

Bush says equality must be the goal

By Helen Thomas

WASHINGTON — President Bush, borrowing a line from Martin Luther King, Jr., called on Americans Friday to rededicate themselves to a society that judges people " not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

The challenge won warm applause from civil rights activists and government officals gathered to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Bush also told the White House ceremony he would seek another five-year authorization for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, an agency that was the focus of controversy in the Reagan administration.

* * *

The ceremony was attended by Martin Luther King, III, son of the slain civil rights leader, and others long associated with the movement — the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rosa Parks, James Farmer, the Rev. Joseph Lowery and many others.

Attorney General Dick Thornburg, who enforces civil rights laws, was present, as were Housing Secretary Jack Kemp and Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan, the only black in the Bush Cabinet.

Speaking in the East Room before going to Maine for the Fourth of July holiday, Bush said, "It is appropriate today that we rededicate ourselves to that most American of dreams: a society in which individuals are judged 'not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.' "

The line is from King's "I Have A Dream" speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 when the civil rights movement ws building power toward passage of the landmark 1964 law.

"We gather here today not only to commemorate an anniversary but to celebrate a movement and to rededicate our efforts to the unfinished work of that movement," Bush said, pledging "vigilant and aggressive enforcement of all civil rights laws."

"The law cannot tolerate any discrimination and my administration will not tolerate abuse of that principle," he said.

The audience also responded warmly when Bush said, "The hard lesson of the passing years is that it has not been enough to wage a war against the old forms of bigotry and equality."

Saying he continues to support affirmative action and minority outreach programs, Bush added: "We must move beyond the protection of rights to the creation of opportunity. Creating opportunities for all Americans will require both public and private leadership. And it is time to move forward on a broader front."

"We will be satisfied with nothing less than equality of opportunity for all Americans and the removal of final barriers to self reliance," he said.

Bush reminded the assembly of civil rights mileposts — when Parks refused to go to the back of the bus in Montgomery, Ala.; when James Meredith registered at the University of Mississippi; and when King proclaimed "A dream that was due every American."

"Twenty-five years later, these mileposts are unimportant symbols of how far we have come as a nation — and reminders of how far we still must go," Bush said.

He recalled that "debate raged" over civil rights in 1964 as "good people struggled with the issues."

As a political candidate in 1964, Bush opposed the civil rights law, but House Speaker Thomas Foley, D-Wash., told reporters after the White House commemoration, "I'm not going to worry about past attitudes. We should look to the future."

Earlier, Bush told a news conference that he would not seek legislation to reverse two Supreme Court recent civil rights decisions, one against minority contract set-aside programs, the other refusing to extend a reconstruction-era civil rights law to cover on-the-job racial harassment.

On that point, Foley said, "My gut reaction is that we do need legislation. I do think the law needs strengthening."

Jackson agreed and said, that while ceremonies are fine, "We really need to get to work."

Clark, Atlanta U. complete merger

ATLANTA (UPI) — Two of the country's oldest historically black institutions, Clark College and Atlanta University, have merged to become Clark Atlanta University.

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies marked the end of a process that began more than a year ago when the boards of trustees of the two schools voted to consolidate.

"The significant history in this consolidation is what (the institutions) bring to the table at this critical point in the life and times of black America," said Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr., president of Clark Atlanta.

The merger is expected to give a financial boost to the old Atlanta University, a graduate school chartered in 1867, which has suffered severe financial problems in recent years.

Clark College, founded in 1869, is expected to benefit from more classroom space and greater research facilities.

In fact, university and federal officials broke ground last Monday on a new $36 million science and technology research center, funded primarily through the Department of Energy, to increase the number of blacks participating in the sciences.

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Court shuns Yonkers case

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The Supreme Court has refused to become involved in a case brought by a citizen's group fighting a desegregation plan for the city of Yonkers, N.Y.

The court refused to hear the case brought by the Save Yonkers Federation seeking review of a ruling by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Save Yonkers Federation, an organization representing civic and taxpayer groups, argued that a court-ordered desegregation plan exceeded the authority of U.S. District Judge Leonard Sand.

In earlier pleadings, the group argued the court order violated a host of constitutional rights by forcing federation members to associate with "low-class people and the crime and housing rot that nearly always accompany their presence."

The case arose from a federally mandated housing plan aimed at ending segregated housing in Yonkers through construction of public housing in predominantly white neighborhoods.

3 named at HHS

HHS Secretary Louis W. Sullivan, M.D., has announced three appointments.

They are Nancy C. Silvers, 38, of Silver Spring, Md., as senior special assistant to the secretary in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Stephanie Ann McCreary-Lynch of Arlington, Va., as a special assistant to the secretary, in the Department of Health and Human Services and Arnold R.Tompkins, 38, of Clinton, Md., as counselor to the under secretary.

EDGAR ROMNEY delivers his acceptance speech after being elected as executive vice president of the 215,000-member International Ladies' Garment Workers Union convention in Hollywood, Fla. Listening is ILGWU president Jay Mazur.

Friday Plus

THE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FOR THE BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

July 7, 1989

Kool and The Gang:
New group, new album