THIS WEEK IN BLACK AMERICA

The following news items are taken from black newspapers which are published in the United States. Many of these papers are members of the National Newspapers Publishers Association (NNPA).

FIGHTING CRIME IN HOUSING PROJECTS

LOS ANGELES MAYOR Tom Bradley has committed his city to a multi-million dollar effort to fight crime, drugs and violence in and around the city's housing projects, the LOS ANGELES SENTINEL reported.

Bradley has petitioned the L.A. Police Department to add 30 officers who will help the Housing Authority's 48-member police force in patrolling the projects.

GOODWIN JOINS BUSH TEAM

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES and universities (HBCU) now have a voice on Capital Hill. Robert K. Goodwin, formerly the program manager of legislative affairs for the Texas A and M. System, will head the education program to strengthen HBCU's by coordinating the initiatives of the federal government and private industry the OKLAHOMA EAGLE reports.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

THE CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY has passed a bill to provide college scholarships to high school seniors who participate in community service activities, the PRECINCT REPORTER says.

If approved by the Senate, some $2 million in scholarships will be available for students to attend any California college.

REJECTS MEETING WITH UNION

COLUMBUS CITY EMPLOYEES got a set-back last week when the City Council voted 9-1 to refuse to meet with union officials, THE COLUMBUS (Ga.) TIMES reported. The one vote of support came from Councilwoman Evelyn Turner.

Lew Peoples, AFSCME union leader, said his people have not given up the idea of trying to unionize city employees.

MISS BLACK AMERICA

INDIANAPOLIS — A Washington, D.C., television producer and professional model won the Miss Black America pageant, which took seven hours because of mechanical malfunctions and logistics problems on the stage.

Paula Gwynn, 22, was crowned about 1:30 a.m. Monday at the Walker Theatre in Indianapolis. She won $5,000 and two tickets to Europe. The 6-foot-2 model will attend conventions of national black organizations.

"Unfortunately, in the past I have not heard the name of the reigning queen of this thing every year," Gwynn said. "I really believe I'm well-spoken. I can articulate almost anything, be it good or bad, small or big."

Elaine Joyner, 28, of Columbia, N.C., was first runnerup, followed by Raquel Eatmon, 19, of Mansfield, Ohio, and Tiffany Williams, 20, of Abbeville, La.

The pageant, which began in 1968, is for single women ages 17 - 29 from the 50 U.S. cities with the highest black populations.

BROWN CASHING IN AT PRISON

South Carolina prison officials had described soul singer James Brown as a model inmate but not since they found $40,000 in certified checks and $600 in cash in his cell. Prisoners are not allowed to have more than $50 and investigators are trying to determine where the money came from.

In the meantime, Brown was moved Wednesday night from his regular cell at the State Park Correctional facility to the more secure Stevenson Correctional Center. Prison officials say the rule violation could negate some of the "good time" Brown has built up toward parole.

Brown is serving a six-year prison term that stems from his attempt to run down police officers last fall during a chase that criss-crossed the Georgia-South Carolina boarder.

NAACP PLANS WASHINGTON PROTEST

WASHINGTON — NAACP Executive Benjamin Hooks Thursday unveiled plans for a "silent march" on Washington next month to protest four recent Supreme Court decisions, which he said chip away at years of civil rights gains.

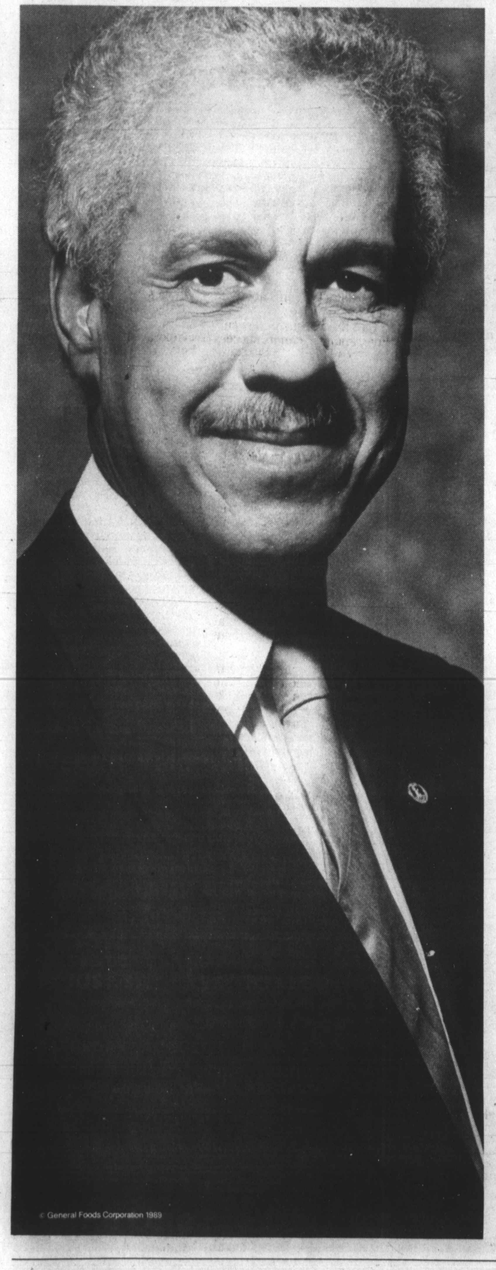
The Aug. 26 march, planned during the NAACP annual convention which ended last week in Detroit, is also an effort to convince Congress "that action must be taken before we create apartheid in America as we have seen in South Africa," said Hooks.

Hooks said the march is meant to tell the Supreme Court "we're not fooled or bewitched by the beauty of their illogical language, and that we know racism when we see it, whether it be masked or unmasked."

The protest — in which women are asked to wear white and men to wear black — patterned after the "Silent March" of July 28, 1917, when over 5,000 black men, women and children marched down New York City's Fifth Avenue in a quiet, peaceful protest against racism.

Hooks said he expects a relatively small crowd, but is willing to organize bigger demonstrations if Congress does not strengthen the nation's civil rights laws.

There's a pervasive fear that unless something happens on the legislative side, there'll be more rollbacks" in civil rights gains by the Supreme Court, he said.



Where Doug Learned To Lead

"There was a common bond," says Lt. Governor Lawrence Douglas Wilder of Virginia, speaking of his college experience. "We all knew who we were and where we needed to go, and what we needed to do to get there." Wilder, the nation's highest-ranking Black elected state official, attributes that world-beating attitude to the inspiring role models he found at Virginia Union University, one of America's Black colleges.

In an atmosphere of high intellectual quality, young Douglas Wilder discovered what he calls, "the high possibility of the individual." And following in a tradition that has produced outstanding scholars, professionals and public servants, he went on to a brillant career as an attorney, state senator and civic activist. Is it any wonder that, though they enroll only 20% of Black college students, Black colleges produce 40% of Black college graduates?

When you're considering colleges, doesn't it make sense to consider the ones that educated achievers like Lawrence Douglas Wilder? Attending one could lead to a great future.

America's Black Colleges Are You Smart Enough To Go?

This food for thought is brought to you by Maxwell House® Coffee, a supporter of America's historically Black colleges.

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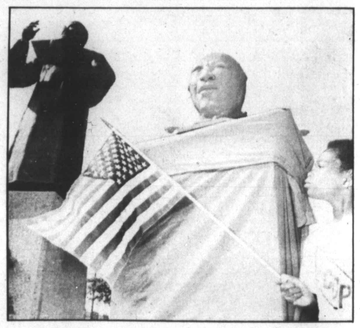

SAN ANTONIO — 12-year-old Stanley Anderson waves a flag at a press conference when the wax model (center) of MLK, Jr., was unveiled.

Off with the head

SAN ANTONIO—Critics of the city's statue of Martin Luther King, jr. had opted to lop off its head, but they decided after another head was unveiled with much fanfare Monday, they didn't like it much either.

The problem with the original head on the 8-foot-tall bronze statue erected in 1981 on San Antonio's East Side was that some residents had complained for years that it did not closely resemble the slain civil rights leader.

"The jaws were puffed up. The nose was too pointed. The back of the head was too narrow, and his forehead was not broad enough," said the Rev. R.A. Callies, pastor of the neighborhood's First Gethsemane Baptist Church and a leader in the two-year hunt for a new head.

"We want a statue that looks like the late Dr. King," Callies said, "not just another monument to his memory."

Since replacing the statue would cost too much, supporters decided to cut off the head, melt it down and replace it with a new head for about $6,000. Several local artists contributed to creating a new version.

But the new head did not fare much better than the old one when a wax model was unveiled Monday at the statue's base.

I knew Martin Luther King, Jr. when he was in knee pants," said civil rights activist George H. Clark of San Antonio. "It's better than the other one, but it's not good enough."

JAMAICA — Grace Jones is flanked by her attorneys, Paul Ashley (L) and Tom Tavares Finson as she leaves the Half Way Tree Resident Magistrates Court. Her trial on cocaine possession charges was postponed until September 5.

CAPE TOWN, S.A. — Willie Mandela, wife of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela is surrounded by family prior to her visit with her husband on his 71st birthday.

Mandela 71st birthday 'nothing to celebrate'

PAARL, South Africa — African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela marked his 71st birthday Tuesday at his prison farm residence with the largest gathering of his family since he was sentenced to life imprisonment 25 years ago.

Mandela's wife, Winnie, and more than a dozen other family members arrived at Mandela's suburban-style residence on Victory Verster Prison in the wine-growing region of Paarl north of Cape Town at mid-morning for a meeting expected to last several hours.

"I must stress this is not a celebration," Mrs. Mandela told reporters outside the prison compound after unloading a garland of flowers from her car. "We are delighted to be together as a family but we would rather have met at home — outside the prison."

Despite a secret meeting two weeks ago between Mandela and President Pieter W. Botha that fueled speculation about Mandela's release, Mrs. Mandela said she doubted this would be her husband's last birthday behind bars.

"Nothing politically has happened to convince me to make me optimistic that he will be released soon. The political climate has not changed," she said, holding a large card with the words "Happy Birthday Nelson Mandela."

Mrs. Mandela and family arrived in five cars and were shuttled into the prison compound aboard a white van and taken directly to Mandela's private house where he has lived since his transfer to Victor Verster in December after recovering from tuberculosis.

Man-made oasis holding the Sahara desert at bay

Like a giant brown wave, the Sahara Desert is on the move in Africa. It is being driven southward, at a rate of four miles a year, by a relentless, bone-dry wind.

One by one, villages in Niger, Mali, Chad and Sudan have turned into ghost towns as farmers move south to find wetter land.

Few believe that the desert's march can be halted. Meanwhile, experts agree that the massive loss of trees occurring in many southern hemisphere countries contributes heavily to the worsening air quality and the rising temperature perceived here in the United States.

But the Sahara's effects have been held in check for 15 years in a remote Niger valley.

The villagers of the Majjia Valley are part of one of the few truly successful efforts to prevent arid farmland from becoming wasteland.

Majjia Valley near the Sahara Desert where villagers are working to reclaim the land for farming.

"The real enemy of the farmers is the wind," says Joseph Kessler, Director in Niger for CARE, the international relief and development organization.

"During the dry season the wind blows out of the Sahara and sucks water out of the soil. During the rainy season, powerful winds come from the opposite direction and damage the crops."

In 1974, some people decided to fight the desert rather than move as their neighbors had done. They planted more than 250 miles of windbreaks, made up of double rows of trees. The nurturing process is slow and painstaking.

First the villagers plant the fragile tree seedlings amid their sorghum and corn crops. As the crops grow, they protect the seedlings from the deadly wind.

Though 30 percent of them die, the surviving trees have a remarkable effect on the environment.

Once they mature, they physically block the wind so that moisture stays in the soil rather than evaporating. This protection has helped raise crop yields in the valley 20 percent.

The trees actually trap air over the fields and raise its humidity. The humid air, in turn, slows the sun's ability to dry soil.

Can the Majjia Valley survive, and if so can its success be repeated throughout Africa? The answer is both yes and no.

CARE believes the Majjia Valley will thrive, but its success cannot be duplicated everywhere. Underground water in the Majjia Valley is close enough to the surface for tree roots to reach it. That's not the case in every valley.

If it does not provide a formula, at least the Majjia Valley offers somelessons on what it takes to defeat a desert.

Many of the benefits enjoyed today were unforeseen by the original planners. "When we started, we didn't really envision the transformation that the valley would undergo after 15 years," Kessler says.

"There are so many trees now, the farmers are selling the wood and the pesticide and using the money to make other improvements in the villages.

"Plus the wells are in good shape because, rather than evaporating, water is being held in the ground.

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SOMALIA:

Group reports 450 killed

By Todd Shields

NAIROBI, Kenya — A human rights group said Friday security forces in Somalia arrested about 2,000 people after last week's religious disturbances and executed more than 300, including 46 people taken to a beach and summarily shot.

New York-based Africa-Watch, in a report based on interviews with residents of the Somali capital of Mogadishu, said 90 civilians and 20 soldiers died in fighting outside the city's mosques last Friday.

Random automatic weapons fire from armored personnel carriers into crowded residential buildings later that day, along with arrests and executions in following days, brought the death toll to 450 with more than 1,000 people wounded, the independent group said in the report written at its London office and released in Nairobi.

The army mounted house - to - house searches two days after the religious disturbances, whose cause remains obscure, and seized hundreds of civilians, the report said. Most arrested that night were taken to prisons and detention camps but 46 were taken to the Jezira beach south of the capital and executed, it said.

Somali government offices in Mogadishu and the Somali Embassy in Nairobi were closed Friday and officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the reports of summary executions were "credible."

"We have raised our concerns with the government of Somalia," Boucher said, adding that he did not know how many executions occurred.

Residents of Mogadishu reached by telephone reported the capital to be calm but tense Friday, with security forces prominent in the streets.

"They aren't taking any chances," said a resident. "Neither are we—we're all staying home."

A nighttime curfew imposed after last week's clashes remained in effect, as did a State Department advisory recommending that U.S. citizens avoid non-essential travel to the East African nation.

Mogadishu residents reported sporadic nighttime gunfire over the past week, but said the situation appeared calm during the day.

The number of reported mass round-ups and shootings has decreased in recent days, said the residents. All sources contacted in Mogadishu and abroad requested anonymity for fear of reprisals in Mogadishu by the one-party authoritarian government of Mohammed Siad Barre.

The crisis follows months of mounting trouble for Barre, who took power in a 1969 coup.

Since early last year his government has been embroiled in a civil war in the country's north, where government jets are reported to have indiscriminately bombed cities being contested by the rebel Somali National Movement.

The fighting sent more than 400,000 refugees to neighboring Ethiopia.

Moi in Maputo

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi arrived in the Mozambican capital of Maputo Friday on a two-day official visit to hold talks with President Joaquim Chissano on their efforts to end the country's 13-year civil war.

Moi's arrival follows one of the bloodiest attacks by the right-wing Renamo guerrillas fighting Chissano's socialist government, with at least 83 people killed and 200 wounded during a 90-minute raid Tuesday morning on the village of Sanguane.

The state - run Mozambican news agency AIM reported some 200 Renamo "bandits" attacked a traditional ceremony attended by about 1,000 people and massacred men, women and children before ruling Frelimo party forces were alerted to the incident.

The unprecedented meeting was scheduled for Wednesday in Nairobi under Kenyan mediation, but AIM reported the talks did not take place because the Renamo delegation failed to arrive.

A second Renamo attack on Wednesday occurred at the town of Ressano Garcia just 3 miles inside the Mozambican border with South Africa but there were conflicting reports on the extent of casualties and damage.

State-run South African radio quoted witnesses saying "dozens" of people were killed when Renamo forces launched a small arms and mortar attack on Mozambican security troops that sent more than 500 Mozambicans fleeing into South Africa.

The Mozambican news agency, quoting railway sources, said at least one person, a railway worker, was killed in the attack.

Moi, traveling with three Kenyan Cabinet ministers, was greeted by Chissano and senior members of the government on his arrival in Maputo.