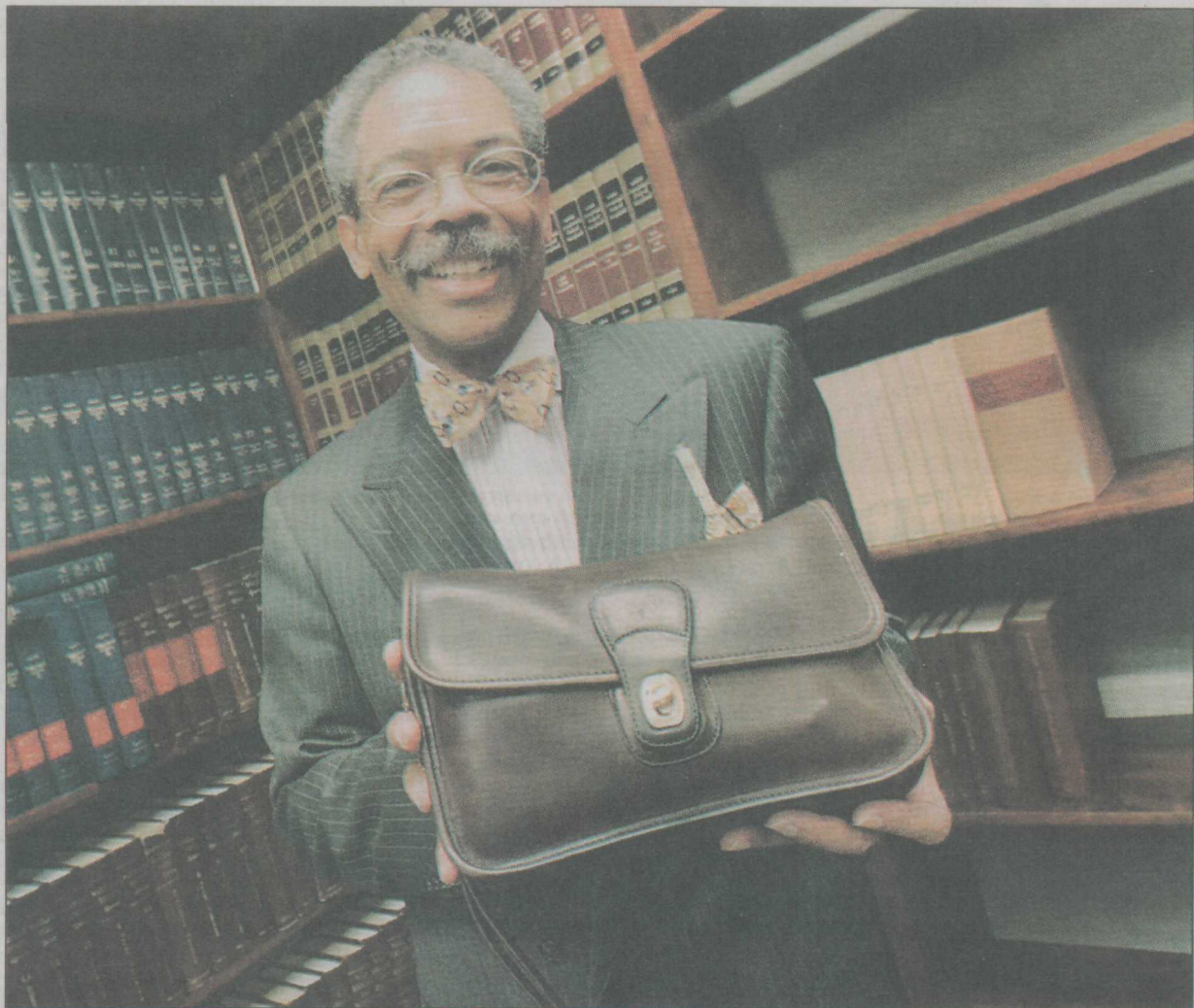


TODAY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2004



JED KIRSCHBAUM: SUN STAFF

"You'll not see me without my purse," says Robert M. Bell, chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals.

HE WEARS IT WELL

More and more men are bagging the stereotype and carrying purses.

By TANIKA WHITE
SUN STAFF

Some call it the man bag. Others call it a murse. As proof that he was on fashion's cutting edge, Jerry Seinfeld tried to call it a "European carry-all," but in the end, he had to admit the truth.

It's a purse.

A man purse.

Whatever you call it, if a man carries one, he's bound to raise an eyebrow or two.

That's why, for so long, it's taken a brave, brave man to proudly walk around with a trendy tote on his shoulder, a fashionable clutch in his hand, or a slick leather satchel strapped across his body.

Robert M. Bell, chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, carries



These field bags by Jack Spade are examples of what men are carrying.

several different ones — a Coach bag, a Bruno Magli — and has for more than 20 years. And none of this "man bag" business for him. His Honor just calls them purses.

"I've been carrying the thing so long, it's a part of me," Bell says. "You'll not see me without my purse."

And lately, more and more men are joining the ranks — decrying the widespread notion that carrying a handbag makes a man less of a man.

These fashion-forward men say there's no reason they should be forced to carry their belongings in overstuffed pants or coat pockets. It's just easier to toss your cell phone, PDA, wallet and keys into a handy bag, throw it over your shoulder and go, they say. And it looks better, too.

"My friends laugh at me, but I'm sorry, I don't want my cell phone and my Blackberry in my jeans. It looks crazy," says [See Purse, 80]

