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# Valdosta Project Change

July 2000

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# Suspended deputy back on duty

## Family violence case yet to go before grand jury

By Victoria English  
vickie.english@thomnews.com

VALDOSTA — A deputy arrested in May for aggravated battery in a domestic violence

incident has returned to active duty.

A Lowndes County grand jury has not reviewed the case involving deputy John E. Dixon Sr., but Sheriff Ashley Paulk has allowed him to return to work. Paulk had suspended Dixon without pay after he surrendered to authorities.

"He's a good officer," Paulk said. "He just did something stupid."

Valdosta Police Detective Paula Johns obtained a warrant for Dixon's arrest after investigating a family violence incident that occurred May 26 at the Dixon residence.

"Dixon was returned to work because he was not charged as a family violence crime, therefore he did not have to be removed from duty," Paulk said.

But the warrant charges Dixon with "Felony: Aggravated

Battery Family Violence."

"The warrant is pending as it was written," said Assistant District Attorney Laura Anderson, who expects the case will go before the grand jury in August or September.

The warrant states Dixon "did knowingly, willfully and unlawfully commit the offense of aggravated battery when accused maliciously caused bodily harm by seriously disfiguring

her body when he broke her nose and a facial bone with his fist leaving both her eyes bruised, her left eye black, her right eye swollen and having to be admitted into the hospital. Said accused is the present spouse of said victim."

Dixon has been out on bond since his arrest. As a special condition of bond, signed by

Please see DUTY, page 2A

Continued from page 1A

## Duty

Chief Magistrate Judge George Hart, Dixon is to "stay away, absolutely, directly or indirectly and telephone, from the person, home and job of (the victim)."

Paulk said Dixon's wife was back living with him and the sheriff's office has required him to get counseling.

Dixon's bond may be revoked upon breaking of that condition, according to court records. There is no document attached to the warrant revoking the condition of Dixon's bond.

In an interview prior to the July 18 primary, Paulk listed as one his goals for the next four years: "More investigators assigned to child abuse, child molestation and battered spouses. This type crime is on the increase and needs to be curbed."

An arrest photo of the deputy was not available Tuesday, according to Dep. Ken Ridley, because the department's system was down.

To contact reporter Victoria English, call 244-3400 ext. 237.

Wednesday, July 26, 2000



# Georgia Power faces discrimination lawsuit

## Plaintiffs claim managers knew about noose

ATLANTA (AP) — Three Georgia Power Co. employees claim in a lawsuit that the utility discriminates against blacks in pay and promotions and is indifferent to a racially hostile workplace.

In at least one case, company managers knew about a hangman's noose conspicuously displayed in a Georgia Power office hallway, said the suit filed Thursday in Superior Court.

The lawsuit, the latest in a series of high-profile racial discrimination suits against major corporations in Georgia, seeks class action status to represent all of the utility's black employees.

In anticipation of the lawsuit, Georgia Power President David Ratcliffe addressed all 8,000-plus employees statewide via closed-circuit television from the company's downtown Atlanta headquarters Thursday. He said the company "maintains a strong policy of zero tolerance for racially or intolerant behavior."

Ratcliffe announced the appointment of a Diversity Action Council, co-chaired by a black board member, and promised to "move expeditiously to address these concerns."

"I take these concerns seri-

ously," Ratcliffe said. Both sides in the legal action expressed a willingness to discuss settlement.

The suit claimed that Georgia Power management did nothing about the hangman's noose in a heavily traveled area at the utility's operating headquarters in Cornelia between 1997 and September 1999.

A similar allegation was made in a racial discrimination suit filed in May against Lockheed Martin Corp.

"Although a hangman's noose has long been one of the most chilling representations of racial harassment, two Georgia Power vice presidents and several managers who were aware of it and had even viewed the noose took no action to remove it," the lawsuit says.

In an interview Thursday, Ratcliffe said the company during the past two weeks had found two hangman's nooses at operations centers in Cornelia and Dalton, both in north Georgia, that had "apparently been there for some time." They were taken down, he said.

"Clearly this is embarrassing and represents a very insensitive action by our employ-

ees," he said. Ratcliffe vowed to be "very firm" with any employees who were involved, but said he wants to gather the facts before taking action.

The 29-page lawsuit names

Georgia Power Co. and its parent, Southern Co., as defendants. It was filed by the same law firm that represents Coca-Cola employees

in a racial discrimination lawsuit.

Other recent discrimination lawsuits have named Home Depot and Waffle House, both Georgia companies. The companies have all denied discriminating against employees and Coca-Cola has reached a tentative settlement of one of two pending lawsuits.

The three plaintiffs are Cornelius Cooper, a 28-year company veteran now working as a lineman in Atlanta; Michael Edwards, a 13-year veteran who is a lineman; and Sarah Jean Harris, a 21-year veteran who is a senior region support representative in the engineering and operations department.

Georgia Power said that as of Thursday, 1,793 of its 8,632 employees were black, as were 15 of 272 foremen, 97 of 1,030 manager-supervisors and three of 21 executives.

**"Clearly this is embarrassing and represents a very insensitive action by our employees."**

David Ratcliffe  
president, Georgia Power



# THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

, 2000

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## Project Change launches fund drive

### Local leaders want to start a race relations center

By Brian Lawson  
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — When Dr. Jerry Hardee gazes into the future, he sees children learning the complete history of this community, economically disadvantaged residents finding their voices

and people of all colors discovering common ground and changing attitudes.

The vision would include a locally-supported race relations center, with resources sufficient to establish a community presence. Hardee wants a place where any-



Jerry Hardee

one would feel comfortable coming in, and it would reflect the various ethnic and racial groups represented in this community.

Realizing that vision is the task now before Hardee, a retired college administrator, who serves as chairman of the board for Valdosta Project Change, an anti-racism initiative sponsored by Levi Strauss and Co.

"We want to create an environment to talk about social and economic justice," Hardee said. "Valdosta is a relatively small Southern town with a number of

issues hidden behind tradition. But sometimes the real issues are hidden behind words and tradition to foster a sense of separateness."

Valdosta Project Change has been supported by the Levi Strauss Foundation for several years, but with the local plant closing in 1999, corporate support will end after a \$60,000 payment next year. Its work has included first-time home buyer education programs, a program dedicated to assisting parents to help their children with school

work and co-sponsoring race relations forums.

That work is expected to continue and be broadened through the center, Hardee said.

While he deeply appreciates the support Levi's has given over the years, Hardee sees the company's gradual withdrawal as an opportunity for a new direction.

"It is time for other foundations, businesses and individuals to step up to the plate," Hardee said. "Levi's stepped out in faith

See CHANGE on Page 3A.

The Valdosta Daily Times

## Community

Continued from Page 1A

### Change: 'Sustainability initiative' launched

at a time when their business could have been impacted nationally. Their support has been visionary.

"Now, we want to do more than we've been doing."

Hardee said Project Change has launched a "sustainability initiative," which involves a fund-raising campaign to raise \$100,000 in 2000 and \$150,000 per year over the next five years.

"You get what you pay for," Hardee said. "If you are concerned about Valdosta, this is the time to be proactive. We are not in the business of tearing down Valdosta, we are concerned about trying to improve Valdosta. We can't continue to expect support from outside the community."

Hardee said issues of economic inequality and racism will be addressed, even if fund-raising prospects are challenged.

"We don't want to be con-

trolled by contributors who would restrict what we do," Hardee said. "I would not want to be in any way controlled by gifts. Improving education means educational equity, improving economic conditions means economic equity. We intend to build strong leadership.

"I think there are enough people around who believe in equality and fairness and will support us."

The planned race relations center will become part of a network of similar institutions in other states, like at Fiske University in Nashville, Tenn., and Tulane University in New Orleans. He said the centers are affiliated with, but independent of, the schools.

"My fervent hope is that this community will live up to its reputation," Hardee said.

To contact reporter Brian Lawson, please call 244-3400, ext. 255.

#### Dr. Jerry Hardee

- Native of Brunswick.
- Chairman of the Board Valdosta Project Change.
- Served for 13 years as Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs and Multicultural Affairs at Valdosta State University.
- Earned Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration from Northern Illinois University in 1975.

"We have to create a forum for dialogue. People learn so much when they have a chance to talk."



Neely Young

## Fly Flag of Unity

I'm proud of the Confederate battle flag. But am I proud of the Georgia state flag that carries this emblem of the Confederate States of America? No, I'm not. I'm a white, native Georgian whose descendants settled this state and fought proudly in the War Between the States, but our flag should be changed.

Let me explain.

My great-great-great-grandfather Robert Young surveyed and later built, with the help of others (including several slaves), the Peachtree Trail. This was a road that ran from Hall County to Fort Peachtree. Robert's son Gustin was a little boy who drove the supply wagon while the trail was being built. Another boy, the son of slaves, helped him.

Fort Peachtree is now Atlanta, and the Peachtree Trail became Peachtree Street, even though the original Trail is now close to West Paces Ferry Road.



Gustin grew up to be Augustin Young, who later owned Stone Mountain. In 1832, he moved to Young's Station, south of Cedartown, Ga. Augustin purchased his property after the Cherokee Indians were moved out of Georgia on the infamous Trail of Tears.

Augustin owned slaves. He had three sons, including my great-grandfather James Young. James and his two brothers fought in

the Civil War. After the conflict, two of the brothers moved to Midland, Texas. James stayed and picked up the pieces from the devastation wrought by Yankee troops who had moved through the area, chasing the remnants of the Confederate army after the Battle of Atlanta. James Young lived through the tough times of Reconstruction and died a prosperous man with seven children.

My great-grandfather Gilbert was the brother of Gen. James Longstreet, Gen. Robert E. Lee's right arm. Lee called him his "Old War Horse." After the war, Longstreet joined in an effort to put the conflict in the past, and tried to move the South forward. A close friend (and West Point classmate) of General Grant, Longstreet was named to a federal post after Grant became president. Later he served as a foreign ambassador.

Because of his friendship with Grant, Confederate loyalists who maintained allegiance to the "Lost Cause" vilified Longstreet as a traitor. For many years after Appomattox, they stoked the fires of war. They claimed Longstreet was responsible for the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg. They accused him of holding troops back during a critical period of that battle. Historians have shown the charge to be untrue. Most recently, Longstreet was vindicated by the book *The Killer Angels* and movie *Gettysburg*.

I'm still proud of my ancestors. They were good, hard-working folks, and they were part and parcel of their times. James Young didn't own slaves, nor did Gen. Longstreet or Gen. Lee. They were military men. Lee, in fact, spoke out against slavery long before the war started.

These men served in the Confederate Army because the South was their home. After the war, they helped build the Georgia and the America that we all know and love. I'm proud that I own a Confederate battle flag along with Gen.

Longstreet's scarf, which my father handed down to me.

The Legislature did not adopt the current flag in 1956 out of a sense of pride in Georgia's heritage. It was created as a racist statement, in defiance of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education*, which killed the separate but equal school policy in America. By adopting the new flag, the Legislature effectively pledged that Georgia would not integrate its schools.

Understandably, African-Americans today believe that our state flag is still a symbol of defiance. To them, a flag bearing the Confederate battle emblem represents a state government that still thinks of blacks as servants, not equals.

It's no contradiction to love your state's history and honor your ancestors who fought in the Civil War, yet at the same time strongly disapprove of a state action gone wrong. It's time for our Legislature to create a flag that represents equality for all Georgians.

*'To blacks, a flag bearing the Confederate battle emblem represents a state government that still thinks of them as servants, not equals.'*



# Migrant farm workers lose health care program

Wednesday, July 12, 2000

By T.S. Rose  
tod.rose@thomnews.com

VALDOSTA — The plight of area migrant farm workers has become even more pressing due to the recent discontinuation of the Migrant Health Services program in Lowndes and surrounding counties.

As of July 7, the farm workers health program was discontinued temporarily because of lack of funding and health officials are searching for ways to find more money.

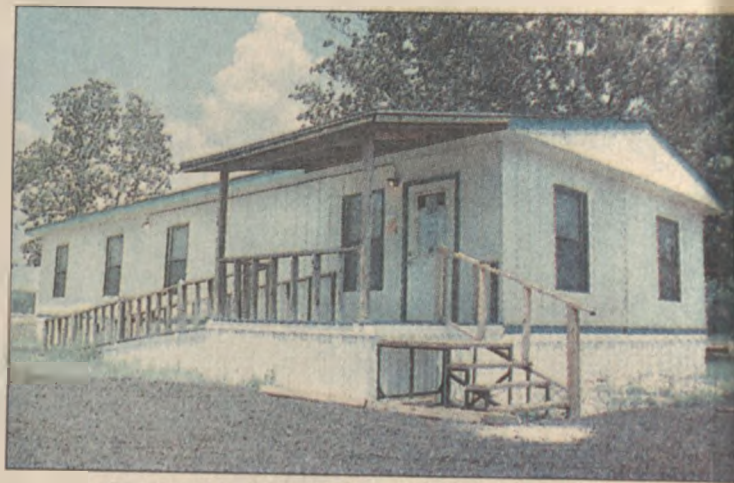
"Now the workers have nowhere to go, other than the emergency room, and they can't afford medical care," said Julissa Clapp, counselor and translator for the Echols County Health Department. "Without the program, there are a lot of workers that are sick and have nowhere to be treated."

She said about 3,000 workers will be without adequate health care because of the loss of the program.

She said she is very hurt the program has been shut down, saying the migrant workers are the people who "put food on our tables."

The families are now trying to find alternatives, but their options are few.

Kaylynn Velasquez said her husband suffers from a tumor



Mike Tanner/The Valdosta Daily Times

**CLINIC CLOSES:** A portable health clinic, located on the property of Zellwin Produce in Echols County, has been closed due to lack of funding, according to a sign posted in the window.

and his health now hangs in the balance.

"Fredy has a tumor that he was getting treatment for through the program," Velasquez said. "We can't afford to go to the hospital because we can't afford it ... a lot of people really need that program."

She said that due to her husband's condition, they have been forced to seek medical attention at SGMC, but she is worried about the accumulating medical bills. She said Dr. Roberto Rubio in Adel was very helpful and treated her hus-

band several times free of charge. However, she is concerned because there are so few doctors like him, she said.

"I hope that some money comes available soon because my husband's condition could get much worse," Velasquez said.

The migrant health program served several South Georgia counties, including Lowndes, Echols, Brooks, and Cook. The program was also shut down in

Continued from page 1A

## Health

Adel and Tifton, leaving Allentown as the only operating program in South Georgia.

In March, the Statenville clinic closed. This further fueled the problem for migrant workers because they had no transportation in order to get to the next closest clinic, Southern Physicians Care, Inc., located on Madison Highway. A mobile clinic was moved from Adel to Ortega — where a large population of migrant workers lived — in order to alleviate some of the transportation problems, but was never opened because of a lack of funding.

Other problems affecting migrant workers were the limited hours of operation of the clinics and the availability of translators to assist doctors in treating them. In most cases, the hours available to workers conflicted with their working hours and they would sometimes be dismissed by their

crew leaders for missing work.

Ralph Romero, minister to the Airport Church of Christ Hispanic Mission, said his church helped the workers with transportation.

"We knew that some of the workers needed medical attention, so we would use our vans to transport them," said Romero. "Now that the migrant health program is gone, the only place they can go is to South Georgia Medical Center."

He said his church continues to provide transportation for some workers, but they have to be treated as indigent workers. Based on his research, he said there are 150,000 migrant workers in South Georgia and many of them are sick and in need of medical attention that they may not receive.

To contact reporter T.S. Rose, please call 244-3400, ext. 245.

Please see HEALTH, page 2A

AVISO!!!

Debido a un recorte de presupuesto esta clinica estara temporalmente cerrada. Si tiene alguna emergencia va ya al

South Georgia Hospital

GRACIAS

Mike Tanner/The Valdosta Daily Times

**LACK OF FUNDS:** A sign written in Spanish advises migrant farmers that the portable health clinic located on the property of Zellwin Produce is temporarily closed due to lack of funding and persons should go to South Georgia Medical Center.



*Growing With Our Community*

**THEIR OPINION**

**Harlem kids in mainstream**

Real-estate developer Dan Rose builds and manages skyscrapers as chairman of Manhattan-based Rose Associates. But his passion is at ground level. Through the Harlem Educational Activities Fund, Rose invites poor, minority kids to look above their difficult circumstances and enter the American mainstream.



**Deroy Murdock**  
Columnist

"We're not interested in excuses," Rose says in his Madison Avenue office as two sculpted dragons wrestle on his coffee table.

"Environment is not destiny. All children can learn."

In 1989, he created HEAF to offer Harlem's boys and girls — from kindergarten through college — the skills and virtues to excel. HEAF's \$1.5 million annual budget is 99 percent privately funded. A \$10,000 New York State grant is its only public subsidy.

From modest offices near 125th Street, HEAF provides tutoring, mentoring and college preparation programs for some 800 young people annually.

Most are ethnic minorities below the poverty line, many from single-parent homes. No matter. Rose's team challenges them even further.

Their most dramatic success must be the complete turn-around of Harlem's P.S. 76. Only 9 percent of third graders at this public elementary school read at grade level in 1991. That's when HEAF began to implement after-school reading programs, renovate the school library, purchase computers and open a parent center where moms

*In 1989, he created HEAF to offer Harlem's boys and girls — from kindergarten through college — the skills and virtues to excel.*

and dads could learn how to help their kids study. By 1998, 75 percent of third graders read proficiently while 91 percent were at grade level in math. P.S. 76 is the only Harlem elementary to be removed from a New York State "warning list" of failed schools. At the junior high level, HEAF uses chess, of all things, as a "stepping stone to disciplined and orderly thinking," Rose explains. Maurice Ashley — America's first and only black international chess grand master — teaches what he calls "intellectual karate" to about 250 boys and girls annually. He also coaches the Dark Knights, the chess team from Harlem's Mott Hall Middle School.

The Dark Knights beat players from all across America to win the 1999 U.S. Chess Federation championship. Since 1993, the team repeatedly has scored first-place victories, defeating better-financed suburban teams. HEAF also established the Harlem Chess Center last September with jazz artist Wynton Marsalis among its supporters. It serves 80 students after school and on Saturdays. As Rose asks: "If chess today, why not biochemistry or astrophysics tomorrow?"

HEAF does much more than encourage kids with their studies. Denise Woods, a Julliard acting professor, helps HEAF's students move beyond Ebonics to speak standard English with confidence. Its Summer Quest program

teaches entrepreneurial skills to 80 students who visit Gotham eateries, then conceive and budget their own restaurants. Twenty-five others earn scholarships to attend summer camps in Maine.

Through HEAF's "High Expectations" program, students receive guidance in applying to New York's selective public schools such as Bronx Science and Stuyvesant High. From there, they get help with their SATs, college applications and campus visits. Despite a tough upbringing, Sean Scott became HEAF's first college graduate. After finishing Yale in 1998, he will enter his third year at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Eleven HEAF alumni graduated college this spring. This fall, 23 youngsters will enter such colleges as Carnegie-Mellon and Haverford. In a city where at least 30 percent of high school kids never graduate, not one student in HEAF's program ever has left high school with anything other than a diploma.

"HEAF managed to take me out of the street life," says one current college student. "Had it not been for HEAF, I would have been in jail or in a coffin. Now I'm an economics and sociology major."

Dan Rose's work and his students' triumphs are stunning. Thankfully, he is not alone. Successful Americans traditionally have assisted the disadvantaged, and such aid is invaluable today. Their contribution to civil society — versus yet another calamitous government program — offers hope to poor people willing to help themselves.

Like those they support, these philanthropic entrepreneurs deserve attention and encouragement. Let a thousand Roses bloom.

*New York commentator Deroy Murdock is a columnist with the Scripps Howard News Service and a senior fellow with the Atlas Economic Research Foundation in Fairfax, Va.*



Friday, July 14, 2000

8A The Valdosta Daily Times

*Growing With Our Community*

## Weed and Seed kicks off a new project to involve youths

VALDOSTA — The Youths Beautification and Garden Project of Weed and Seed will kick off at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the corner of South Toombs and Hines Street (Dukes Bay).

In the project, area youths will be working with Frank Jenner, the city Arborist, Jeremiah Lawton, and other volunteers who will help supervise the youths.

They will be involved in about 15 hours of cleanup activity including assisting those who live in the Weed and Seed area, are 62 years of age or older, or disabled, and/or need assistance around their homes.

All Restoration and Revitalization committee members are

urged to participate in this activity. Parents of the youths are also encouraged to be present, since this project involves underage youths.

The youths involved in the program will earn some money for school, develop an appreciation of the elderly, learn about the world of work, develop good self-esteem, learn how to budget money and their time, and other positive learning experiences.

If you, or someone you know needs some temporary help, please call Jeremiah Lawton at 293-3158 for youth assistance with small projects at your home

— Staff Reports



## STATE & REGION

# Chase ends in taped beating

### Video shows police punching, kicking suspect after chase

LAWRENCEVILLE (AP) — The Lawrenceville police officers who were videotaped punching and kicking a drunken-driving suspect will remain on duty while the tapes are reviewed, Police Chief Randy Johnson said Thursday.

Johnson said the officers told him that Marshall Dwight Studdard resisted arrest and lay on his arm so he couldn't be handcuffed after leading police on a chase through three counties in rush-hour traffic Wednesday.

**“I'm not jumping on either side. Did they use too much force? I don't know.”**

**Randy Johnson**  
Police Chief



Associated Press

**POLICE CHASE:** Lawrenceville police arrest a drunken-driving suspect, Marshall Dwight Studdard, after he led police on a chase through three counties in rush-hour traffic on Wednesday as shown in this frame grab from FOX5 Atlanta, WAGA-TV video. Police are reviewing the arrest after videotapes showed officers punching and kicking the man as he lay on the ground. Studdard is charged with driving under the influence, attempting to flee and elude police, reckless driving and having an open container of alcohol in his truck.

Johnson said cameras don't always show every angle, and he said force sometimes "does look worse than it is."

Studdard is obscured on the tapes by an officer standing over him, making it difficult to see whether the suspect did anything to provoke the officers' blows.

Johnson said Studdard was not injured and did not require medical attention.

Smith said police were

called to Studdard's home three times Tuesday and Wednesday to investigate complaints that he was fighting with his fiancée and neighbors. Studdard was gone each time officers arrived.

Officers finally spotted Studdard Wednesday afternoon and chased him when he fled.

The 20-minute chase down Georgia 316 and Interstate 85 took police through Gwinnett,

DeKalb and Fulton counties. Police said Studdard was drinking a beer as he drove.

The chase ended when Studdard's truck hit another car, overheated and stalled, Smith said.

Studdard was charged with driving under the influence, attempting to flee and elude police, reckless driving and having an open container of alcohol. He was being held at the Gwinnett County Jail.

Officers are allowed to use force if it is needed, he said.

"I'm not jumping on either side," Johnson said. "Did they use too much force? I don't know."

Atlanta television stations filmed the arrest from helicopters.

The tapes showed officers with guns drawn pulling Studdard, 34, from his truck.

Two officers were filmed kicking and punching Studdard repeatedly as he lay on the ground.

"We're getting a lot of phone calls about that," said Lawrenceville police Lt. Jeff Smith. He said the department would review the tapes "to make sure that the force that was used was necessary and within policy."



# Philadelphia police under fire for beating

## Suspect beaten and kicked by 12 officers

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Less than three weeks before the start of the Republican National Convention, the mayor and the police department came under fire Thursday over the videotaped beating of a black man by a group of officers.

The U.S. Justice Department opened an investigation into whether Thomas Jones' civil rights were violated, and black leaders decried the beating as police brutality.

A dozen officers — black and white — surrounded Jones, 30, as he was beaten and kicked on the street in the middle of the day Wednesday, moments after a stolen car chase and a shootout in which he and a policeman were wounded. The beating was recorded from a TV news helicopter and broadcast around the country.



Associated Press

**SUSPECT BEAT:** Hahnemann University Hospital CEO Michael Haiter talks to reporters about Philadelphia police officer Michael Livewell Thursday outside the Philadelphia hospital. Livewell, 24, who was shot in the hand while trying to arrest carjacking suspect Thomas Jones, was listed in good condition Thursday.

"It seemed like there was a madness there to reduce this man to the level of some animal," said the Rev. Robert Shine, vice president of the Black Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity. But Shine and others also said the beating did not appear to be racially motivated.

The mayor, who is black, cautioned against jumping to conclusions.

"As inflammatory as this tape might be, we have to keep in mind that the police were in the process of apprehending a criminal suspect who had resisted a number of attempts to arrest him and who had shot a police officer," Mayor John F. Street said.

Police Commissioner John Timoney rejected any comparison to the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles in 1991, noting that King was wanted for a traffic violation, was unarmed and offered no resistance to officers who clubbed him with batons. All four officers were white; two were eventually convicted of federal civil rights charges.

"There is a huge, huge difference," Timoney said.

The incident came after civic leaders had spent months sprucing up Philadelphia for its moment in the spotlight during the July 31-Aug. 3 GOP convention. Above a photo of the confrontation, Thursday's Page One headline of the Philadelphia Daily News declared: "Welcome America!"

"It could be very messy and unpleasant for all concerned," said University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato.

Speaking at a church in Orange, N.J., the Rev. Al Sharpton

said the incident "sends a terrible signal as the Republican convention begins in that city."

"I think that when you see the footage that has been seen around the country, no matter what the gentleman was guilty of or not, police do not have the right to turn into judge, jury and executioner," Sharpton said. In the 1960s and '70s, Philadelphia

**"It could be very messy and unpleasant for all concerned."**

Larry Sabato  
University of Virginia  
political scientist

was accused of having one of the most brutal police forces in the nation under Police Commissioner and later Mayor Frank Rizzo. More recently, the department reached a legal settlement calling for internal reforms, including creation of a corruption task force.

The beating "comes out of a history of violence and brutality in this department for over 30 years, and that's what Commissioner Timoney and the black clergy and the NAACP have been resisting for a long time," said J. Wyatt Mondesire, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP.

People who plan to protest at the convention are likely to seize on the case. "I think it helps frame the issues for the activists," said activist Chuck Munson, 35, of College Park, Md., who plans to be in Philadelphia during the convention.

In Washington, Attorney General Janet Reno said the U.S. attorney's office has opened an investigation. Police also launched two internal-affairs investigations, and WPVI-TV turned over a copy of its tape at the request of the district attorney's office.

Friday, July 14, 2000

4A The Valdosta Daily Times



## Growing With Our Community

# Richmond still struggles with question of race

## Skirmishes still being fought over war symbols

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A look at the larger-than-life likeness of Robert E. Lee on the James River floodwall wiped the smile off Terri Smith's face. "A lot of African-Americans' feelings were hurt when they voted to let that mural go up," the 31-year-old black woman said with a frown.

One hundred thirty-five years after the capital of the Confederacy fell, skirmishes are still being fought in Richmond over the meaning and symbols of the Civil War.

The picture of Lee is among dozens of images from Richmond's past on huge tapestries along a wall in a historical part of this city of 192,000 people, 58 percent of them black. The murals also contain images of black historical figures, including the leader of a slave revolt.

When Lee's portrait went up last year, some black leaders demanded its removal. The Sons of Confederate Veterans rushed to Lee's defense, as did white supremacist David Duke. The mural was defaced, then restored.

Three years earlier, there

was a furor over a statue erected of Richmond-born tennis star Arthur Ashe — the only black man ever to win Wimbledon — along Monument Avenue, a boulevard in a white neighborhood bristling with statues of Confederate Gens. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and J.E.B. Stuart and Jefferson Davis. Some white Southerners say they are simply saluting the valor with which their ancestors fought.

"We're just trying to honor our heritage," said Brag Bowling, a lieutenant commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. He said the NAACP is judging leaders from the 1860s by 21st century conventions, "and by those standards, nobody who lived before 1960 can measure up."

But some black leaders say they cannot separate out the fact that the heroes of the Confederacy fought in defense of a slave government.

"We have enough statues, school names, Confederate mu-



Associated Press

**CIVIL WAR SYMBOLS:** Terri Smith, of Chesterfield County, Va., stands Friday near a picture of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee that hangs on the floodwall along the James River near her husband's office in downtown Richmond, Va. "A lot of African-Americans' feelings were hurt when they voted to let that mural go up," said Smith. Official monuments and markers immortalize an old order.

seums, enough stuff for the Confederacy. What we are saying is don't be using our tax

dollars for our disrespect," said Salim Khalfani, executive director of the NAACP in Virginia.

Other states and communities have gone through similar things. South Carolina was convulsed for months by protests over the Confederate flag. And Texas recently removed two

plaques bearing Confederate symbols from the state Supreme Court building.

But in Richmond — with its many Civil War statues, monuments, markers, museums and street names — the issue smolders constantly.

"Our particular legacy causes us some real problems — additional difficulties that other communities do not have," said Mayor Timothy Kaine, who is white. "In a lot of ways, the Civil War has been an albatross around our neck."

The problem, some say, is the way many white Southerners romanticize the "Lost Cause," turning it into something out of "Gone With the Wind."

**“People don't want to talk about the cargo holds of slave ships where Africans were forced to sit cramped in small cubicles for up to three months at a time.”**

**L. Douglas Wilder**  
college lecturer



Monday, July 24, 2000

The Valdosta Daily Times 5A

*Growing With Our Community*

## Brawl highlights racial divisions in Brunswick

### Police harassment blamed for violence outburst

BRUNSWICK (AP) — A post-July Fourth brawl that ended in injury and arson has exposed signs of long-simmering resentment between blacks and police in this coastal community.

It also has highlighted a split between young blacks and Brunswick's old-guard black leadership, particularly the NAACP.

A mob of about 500 people burned two police cars, fired shots and threw rocks and bottles at officers in the early hours of July 5. The violence began after a man was arrested for firing a gun into the air.

Six officers suffered minor

injuries during the brawl. At least 100 officers — some heavily armed — were called in before order was restored.

Kendra McCrae, a 28-year-old single mother and secretary who is black, watched the brawl. She said she does not condone the violence but said it was motivated partly by years of police harassment of the black community.

"They're caging us up," she said. "They treat us like animals." Brunswick Mayor Brad Brown, the City Council and the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People quickly condemned the violence by the predominantly black, young crowd.

Brown blamed the media for stirring up the community and has said Brunswick is "getting back to a normal scene."

But the mayor's choice of

words, criticizing the people involved as "all hoodlums, drug dealers, pimps for prostitutes" — further inflamed the issue. Brown has backed off his comments somewhat, but protesters have twice demanded his resignation.

At a rally July 17, preachers and citizens railed against what they called injustice and disrespect shown by police and the mayor in their reactions to the melee.

Venus Holmes, president of the local NAACP chapter, said she was outraged by the disturbance and said it put blacks in

Brunswick "in a bad spotlight." But her comments angered some blacks who claimed she was out of touch with the community.

"She shouldn't be down on us," McCrae said. "Our own people have got to quit talking negative about us."



July  
2000

## County jail inmate dies

### Sheriff's officials can't agree on details

By Victoria English  
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VALDOSTA — Sheriff's Department officials have given conflicting accounts about an inmate who suffered an apparent stroke at the county jail and died a week later at South Georgia Medical Center.

Authorities agree that Sonny Graham, 48, had been serving an 18-month sentence for violation of probation at the time he took ill July 13 and died Thursday.

But Sheriff Ashley Paulk and Jail Director Ken Cooper have offered varying accounts about Graham's medical condition, when he was hospitalized and who ordered him released from county custody while a patient at SGMC.

Cooper said Graham went out on the work crew the morning of July 13, but instead of mowing as the crew normally does, inmates were sent to the new county animal shelter to sand sheet rock. Graham returned with other inmates to

the jail at the end of the day and appeared fine, Cooper said.

The next morning when inmates were awakened, Graham was responsive, but appeared to be suffering from "classic symptoms of a stroke, weakness and slurred speech," Cooper said.

On Monday, Cooper offered two versions of what happened next. He initially said Graham was stabilized and observed for "a day or so" before being taken to SGMC on recommendation of the jail's physician, Dr. D. Padhiar. Cooper later said Graham

was transferred to SGMC "between 7-8 Friday morning."

Alfred Graham, a nephew of Sonny Graham, said he was also an inmate in the county jail when his uncle became ill. His account offers a marked contrast to Cooper's recollection of events.

Alfred Graham said his uncle returned from the work detail Thursday and ate supper that evening. Shortly after he finished eating, Alfred Graham

said his uncle "fainted" and struck his head as he fell. Graham said it took 30 to 45 minutes for jail personnel to assist his uncle.

Sonny Graham was taken to the jail's medical unit, his nephew said, and about an hour later an unidentified jail corporal came back and told Alfred Graham his uncle "had suffered a massive stroke."

Cooper and Paulk also offered contradictions concerning Graham's medical history. Paulk said Monday that Graham "had a long history of hypertension," in addition to drug and alcohol abuse.

Cooper said Graham had been medically cleared for placement on the work crew and did not have a history of hypertension. Cooper added that Graham had a history of drug and alcohol abuse, which affected his blood pressure. But he was not on blood pressure medication and his blood pressure had been normal, according to Cooper.

With the exception of the medical unit, none of the inmate housing areas are air conditioned, Cooper said.

When Graham was admitted to SGMC he was a Lowndes County Jail prisoner, but he was released from custody at 10 a.m. July 17, a few days before his death, according to jail records. The booking form includes a notation — "medical reasons!" — signed by jail Lt. C.T. Vinson.

Graham only had a week to 10 days left to serve on his sentence due to gain time he had earned at the jail, Cooper said.

But there are conflicting accounts on who gave the order to release Graham.

Cooper said jail personnel notified State Probation Officer Steve Ulm of Graham's condition and admission to the hospital. Cooper added that Ulm "released the state's hold" at that point, allowing the stricken Graham freed from jail custody.

Paulk said Graham was released through the probation

office, not the sheriff's department, but that claim was disputed by Ulm.

Paulk said the probation office has complete control over the release of inmates serving time for probation violations. When asked if it is customary to release inmates from custody if they are hospitalized, Paulk said, "sometimes when they become a liability to them, they do it."

Ulm flatly disagreed with Paulk's explanation. He said the probation office has no control over the release date of an inmate.

"That is entirely up to the county," Ulm said.

Graham's probation had been partially revoked to serve 18 months in the county jail and he was under the jail's care and control, according to Ulm. He said jail personnel contacted him to see if his office had any objection to Graham being released early. Ulm said he had no objection and faxed a message to that effect.

County officials would not say who was responsible for Graham's medical bills after he was formally released from custody. But a recent shooting of an unarmed man by the Valdosta Police Department resulted in the city being liable for the victim's medical bills because the VPD said he was in their custody while being treated at SGMC.

Jail authorities were directed by County Attorney Jim Elliott not to release further information pertaining to Graham's medical condition. Elliott said it is confidential and cannot be disclosed.

The exact cause of Graham's death has not been confirmed. No autopsy was conducted, according to County Coroner Charles Exum. If an inmate has been in the hospital and under doctor's care for at least a day or more, an autopsy is not required, Exum said.

To contact reporter Victoria English, please call 244-3400, ext. 237.

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## Inmate



SONNY GRAHAM  
DIED THURSDAY AT SGMC

Please see INMATE, page 2A