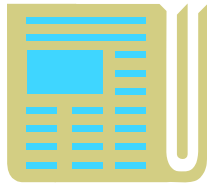




**Henry County Branch of the NAACP  
Newsletter  
December, 2007  
Website: [www.hc-naacp.org](http://www.hc-naacp.org)**



**A Visit with the Lt. Governor**

On a drought-laden but sunny afternoon on November 7, 2007 President Daniel Edwards and Vice President Thomas Hester kept an appointment to meet with Georgia Lt. Governor Casey Cagle.

Lt. Governor Cagle, while courteous and congenial, was able to project the values digested through years of struggle and accomplishment.

The Lt. Governor was asked about his approach to Georgia's need for a viable hate crimes law as well as his approach to the formation of a concrete charter school system in Henry County.

Cautiously Cagle delved into the current low key creation of a universally supported hate crimes bill that could be introduced during the coming general assembly session. This "re-engineered" approach would attract the support of a wide segment of citizens across the state. Stay tuned to quickly evolving developments in this area.

The malaise that is the Henry County Charter School Movement was described. Cagle quickly pointed out that the innovative, parent-driven programs found at the Kip Academy in College Park and the East Lake Academy prove that steadfast community engagement and collaborative implementation would win the day.

The almost one hour flew by as a man of the people engaged the issues put forth with cautious candor and optimism.

### **Whirlpool Corporation Locates in Henry County**

The Whirlpool Corporation, manufacturer of such products as Jenn-Air, Hoover, Maytag, and other household appliances, is locating a major distribution center to Henry County. Scheduled to be completed in 2009, with construction beginning in 2008, this 1.5 million square feet facility will be located at the intersection of Highway 42 and Kings Mill Road adjacent to Midland Industrial Park.

Investing roughly \$60 million dollars in constructing this facility, Whirlpool has reinforced the national conception that the metropolitan Atlanta remains a major distribution and transportation hub for the southeast.

More information about the Whirlpool project can be found at <http://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/stories/2007/10/29/story7.html> .

### **Hate Crime Legislation Revisited**

On the heels of the meeting with Lt. Governor Casey Cagle (see the article above), President Edwards, State Conference Edward DuBose, State Senator Vincent Fort and other NAACP and community leaders met on Capitol Hill during the week of November 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss the impending re-introduction of a reformulated Georgia Hate Crimes Bill.

A predecessor Hate Crimes Bill had been introduced by Senator Fort in the 2006 legislative session, but failed to meet legal muster. The new approach contemplated is to include a broader spectrum of state wide stakeholders to undergird the crying need for this long overdue legislation in Georgia.

Stay tuned!

### **Henry County Board of Education Superintendent Search**

In a response to an email submitted to Ray Hudalla by the Henry County NAACP regarding the methodology for public disclosure regarding the nationwide search for a successor to Dr. Jack Parish, the current Superintendent of Schools, he replied, "*The entire public will be able to see all information submitted through the application process on these candidates. I also believe that anyone can request information about the entire pool of candidates through the open records request process. Even though we will probably release statistics on the entire pool of candidates at that time as well.*"

*"The Henry County Board of Education will be searching for the best qualified candidate to continue the goal of this school system to "Ensure Success for all Students" and to keep this system continuing towards becoming one of the best school systems in the nation."*

*“Everything we do is as transparent and unbiased as we can possibly make it. We encourage and embrace public comment and input in all decisions that we make, including the hiring of a new Superintendent. However this is the responsibility of and will be a decision that is made solely by the five members of the Board of Education.”*

The selection of the Superintendent of Schools is not only a Board of Education responsibility, but a citizen’s right to be able to view a majority of the finalist’s selections and offer input to the desired criteria.

Once the Open Records Request process is firmly clarified, the Henry County Branch of the NAACP intends to obtain as much data as possible in an effort to offer input to the establishment of a truly transparent process in this and future administrative searches.

Transparency requires enhanced accountability and information dissemination!



**Genarlow Wilson Freed**

(Excerpted from MSNBC)

Georgia’s Supreme Court on Friday, October 26, 2007, ordered the release of a young man who has been imprisoned for more than two years for having consensual oral sex with another teenager.

The court ruled 4-3 that Genarlow Wilson’s 10-year sentence was cruel and unusual punishment.

Wilson, 21, was convicted of aggravated child molestation following a 2003 New Year’s Eve party at a Douglas County hotel room where he was videotaped having oral sex with a 15-year-old girl. He was 17 at the time.

Wilson was acquitted of raping another 17-year-old girl at the party.

The 1995 law Wilson violated was changed in 2006 to make oral sex between teens close in age a misdemeanor, similar to the law regarding teen sexual intercourse. But the state Supreme Court later upheld a lower court’s ruling which said that the 2006 law could not be applied retroactively.

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears wrote in the majority opinion that the changes in the law “represent a seismic shift in the legislature’s view of the gravity of oral sex between two willing teenage participants.”

Sears wrote that the severe punishment makes “no measurable contribution to acceptable goals of punishment” and that Wilson’s crime did not rise to the “level of adults who prey on children.”

The state Supreme Court had turned down Wilson's appeal of his conviction and sentence, but the justices agreed to hear the state's appeal of a Monroe County judge's decision to reduce Wilson's sentence to 12 months and free him. That judge had called the 10-year sentence a "grave miscarriage of justice."

Georgia State Attorney General Thurbert Baker indicated that he would accept the ruling of the Supreme Court in this matter.

Dissenting justices wrote that the state Legislature expressly stated that the 2006 change in the law was not intended to affect any crime prior to that date.

They said Wilson's sentence could not be cruel and unusual because the state Legislature decided that Wilson could not benefit from subsequent laws reducing the severity of the crime from a felony to a misdemeanor.

They called the decision an "unprecedented disregard for the General Assembly's constitutional authority."

A spokeswoman for Wilson's lawyer said his legal team received no advance notice of the decision.



### **Who Am I?**

I was born in Columbus, Georgia and was one of ten children. My father was known as "Big Chief Ox" and my mother was a Creek Indian. I stowed away on a ship bound for Scotland to escape racial discrimination (I later witnessed my father's narrow escape from lynching as a child). While in the UK I worked as a boxer and in a music hall. Living in Paris, I joined the French Foreign Legion upon the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914. Wounded in the 1916 battles around Verdun, and already awarded the Croix de Guerre, I transferred to the Lafayette Flying Corps in the French Aéronautique Militaire.

I was assigned to 93 Spad Squadron on August 17, 1917, where I flew some twenty missions and was thought to have shot down two enemy aircraft. With the entry of the USA into the war, the US Army Air Service convened a medical board in August 1917 for the purpose of recruiting Americans serving in the Lafayette Flying Corps. Although I passed the medical examination, I was not accepted into American service because Blacks were barred from flying in US service at that time. I was discharged from the French air force after a fight with an officer while off duty and was transferred back to the French infantry in January 1918, where I served until the Armistice.

Following the end of the war, I remained in Paris working in nightclubs and eventually owned my own club. I married the daughter of a French countess but the marriage soon

ended in divorce, with my taking custody of my two daughters. My work in nightclubs brought me many famous friends, among them Josephine Baker, Louis Armstrong, and Langston Hughes. At the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, I (who spoke fluent German), agreed to a French request to spy on German agents frequenting my club in Paris. After the German invasion of France in 1940, I took my daughters and fled south, out of Paris. In Orleans I joined a group of soldiers defending the city and was wounded.

I fled to Spain and in July 1940 I returned to America. I spent some time in a hospital in New York for my spinal injury, but I would never fully recover. When seeking work in the United States, I found that the fame in France had become discrimination in New York. I worked as a perfume salesman, a security guard, and as interpreter for Louis Armstrong, but my back injury grew worse. For a time I attempted to regain my nightclub in Paris, but my property had been destroyed during the Nazi occupation, and I settled for a financial settlement from the French government which allowed me to purchase an apartment in Harlem.

In the 1950s, my daughters had married. I found myself alone in my Harlem apartment which was decorated with pictures of the famous people I had known, and with a framed case containing my 15 French war medals. My final job was as an elevator operator at the Rockefeller Center, where my fame as the "Black Swallow of Death" was unknown.

In 1954, the French government invited me to Paris to participate in rekindling the everlasting flame at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe and in 1959 I was made a chevalier (knight) of the Legion of Honor. Even so, the last years of my life were spent in relative obscurity and poverty in New York City where I died of stomach cancer on October 12, 1961.

I was buried with honors by French War Officers in the French War Veteran's section of the Flushing Cemetery in New York. In 1972, my exploits as a pilot were put in print with the book "The Black Swallow of Death". On August 23, 1994, thirty-three years after my death, and seventy-seven years to the day after my rejection for U.S. military service in 1917, I was posthumously commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

In 2006, the movie *Flyboys* loosely portrayed me and my comrades from the Lafayette Flying Corps. The film features digital dogfights, and Abdul Salis portrays Eugene Skinner, the character based on my flying exploits.

#### *Who Am I?*

Last monthly guests: The Port Chicago 50 and Freddie Meeks, last known surviving sailor of the cataclysmic explosion - (pardoned by President Clinton on December 23, 1999).