

Goldberg gets show



LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actress-comedian Whoopi Goldberg is going to produce and star in her own late-night talk show.

"The Whoopi Goldberg Show" will regularly feature one guest per 30-minute installment and will be distributed internationally by Genesis Entertainment. The syndicated show will premiere next fall.

Goldberg's production company, Whoop Inc., will begin making the show next summer.

"I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to pursue yet another lifelong dream, which is to talk to the most important and interesting people in the world today," Goldberg said in a statement issued Sunday.

She has starred in such films as *Ghost*, for which she won an Oscar for best supporting actress.

Helms treated for cancer

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Sen. Jesse Helms said Monday he is being treated for prostate cancer. His doctor said he is expected to recover.

The 69-year-old North Carolina Republican known for his staunch conservatism said he is undergoing ra-

diation treatment but has experienced no side-effects and continues working in Washington.

"It seems to me that my activity in the Senate for the past several weeks is indicative that my Senate work has not been inhibited in the slightest," Helms said in a letter released by his Raleigh office.

Prostate cancer can be cured if detected early enough.

Dr. Robert C.J. Krasner, in another letter Helms' office released, said early prostate cancer was detected in the senator in June and radiation therapy was begun. Krasner said the senator is expected to make a "complete and uneventful" recovery.

Helms, elected last year to a fourth term, announced in July that he had been diagnosed with Paget's Disease, a bone disorder that causes weakened and deformed bones. He said doctors blamed his limp on the disease and prescribed pills to fight it.

UPI wins concessions

NEW YORK (AP) — United Press International won court permission Monday to stop paying severance to laid-off employees and to continue pay cuts it says it needs to stay in business.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Francis Conrad also granted

the company's request to use stringers or contract employees in place of the staffers it is laying off.

The judge, however, refused to take away the right of senior employees to bump more junior workers from their jobs, as UPI had asked.

Under the contract, employees who had worked from one to 19 years received one week's pay per year when they were laid off. Employees who worked for 20 or more years received two weeks pay per year up to a maximum of 52 weeks pay.

Kevin Keane, president of the Wire Service Guild, said, "The decision is bad news for UPI's employees who are forced to bear additional burdens and for UPI's clients who will receive a diminished, less professional news report."

Conrad gave the news service permission to stop paying severance and to use stringers until Nov. 29, the date the company said it would have to close if the concessions were not approved. He said the emergency measures were pending further court action, which could include a UPI request to make them permanent.

The judge also continued the 20 percent pay cut, to about \$568 a week for top-level employees, until Nov. 29. The Guild, which represents UPI employees, had agreed to the wage cut previously but opposed the new measures.

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BCCI figure benefited from delay

NEW YORK (AP) — The government waited about three months before moving to freeze the assets of Ghailth Pharaon at a time when the BCCI-linked millionaire was selling off pieces of his U.S. empire.

"The delays here are astonishing," said Jack Blum, a Washington investigator and one of the first to uncover Bank of Credit and Commerce International's questionable links in the United States in the late 1980s.

Blum and two other BCCI investigators, who both spoke on condition of anonymity, say the delay shows how the government is mishandling the probe of BCCI, seized by international regulators July 5 and implicated in widespread fraud.

The Justice Department already has been strongly criticized for not moving sooner on the rogue bank.

Other investigators said it was unfair to criticize the Federal Reserve Board and Justice Department for waiting to freeze Pharaon's assets. They say both agencies are attempting to prosecute an enormously complex case.

Virgil Mattingly, general counsel for the Federal Reserve, said in an interview, "There was no undue delay here."

The Federal Reserve and Justice Department said last week they were seeking a \$37 million civil fine against Pharaon because he acted as BCCI's secret front man in the 1985 acquisition of a California bank. That lawsuit also sought to freeze the Saudi's U.S. assets, estimat-

ed at least \$226 million in 1990.

Pharaon, a Harvard-educated businessman, is accused in a separate administrative case with acting as a front man for BCCI's clandestine acquisition of National Bank of Georgia.

Pharaon is one of the most prominent Saudi investors in this country. He was among the first Arabs to buy a U.S. bank, the Bank of Commonwealth in Detroit in 1975. He sold the bank about 1-year later.

In court papers, Thomas C. Baxter of the New York Federal Reserve said Pharaon sold his 80 percent interest in a small New York debt trading firm for \$1 million in June shortly after the Fed tried to subpoena him.

In July, Pharaon's Georgia holding company, InterRedec Inc., arranged the sale of American Southern Insurance Corp. for \$33 million.

"Pharaon has every incentive to move those assets in the United States offshore to prevent their seizure or attachment," the Fed lawsuit said.

Regulators said Pharaon could be in a financial squeeze because of pressure by BCCI's court-appointed receivers and shareholders on him to repay his loans from the bank, estimated at \$288 million.

Mattingly said the Federal Reserve didn't move on Pharaon sooner because it was unclear whether the Justice Department would bring a criminal case against him. The criminal case would take precedence over a lawsuit.

An aide to Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who has been an outspoken critic of the government over its BCCI investigation, said he didn't think the Federal Reserve was at fault in this instance.

Within the last year, Pharaon has been steadily selling his U.S. holdings. In August 1990, Pharaon and a partner sold their interest in a large Dallas office complex, the Plaza of the Americas Inc.

Though exact terms weren't revealed, the deal exceeded \$100 million, said Tony Landrum, senior vice president of the Prime Group, which manages the downtown Dallas property.

Other deals included sale of his stake in International Systems Inc., an Alabama manufacturer of precast concrete buildings, for an undisclosed price. Sale of Pharaon's stake in a cable television firm in Montgomery, Ala., is under way.

"It sure looks like he's liquidating in a hurry and trying to get the money out," said Blum. "His performance in that regard shouldn't be something of an enormous surprise. He's probably strapped for cash."

The chairman of InterRedec, Pharaon's main U.S. investment company, disagreed the company was selling off assets.

"The only thing we're selling now is American Southern (Insurance Corp.)," InterRedec chairman Dooley Culbertson said in a statement. "The discussions (for the American Southern sale) go back as far as October 1989. All of this began before any of the BCCI things that are going on now. Everything we have is for sale at the price. We have no direction, no instruction, and no program to liquidate."

Pharaon's whereabouts could not be determined and calls placed to his New York attorney, Richard Lawler, were not returned.

InterRedec has investments in more than 20 companies nationwide, ranging from insurance companies in New York to a 718-room hotel near Disney World in Florida to numerous property management companies, documents obtained by The Associated Press show.

InterRedec and its subsidiaries reported total assets of \$225.97 million last year and earned \$9.85 million profit, a 34 percent gain from the previous year, a copy of the privately held company's financial statements shows.



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