

Apology Offered for Racial Slur

Black leaders call for lawmaker's resignation

(AP)—State Sen. Alex Deccio, R-Yakima, apologized on the Senate floor in Olympia Monday for using a racial slur in an argument with another legislator.

"I realize this has been very hurtful to members of the African-American community and for that I am truly sorry," said Deccio, 81. "I feel if the Rev. Martin Luther King were here today, he would accept my apology, so I'm asking you to do the same."

Some black leaders said they would accept Deccio's apology only if he resigned his Senate seat.

"This individual is not deserving of being a representative of the people," said Carl Mack, president of the Seattle chapter of the NAACP. He traveled to the state Capitol on Monday to demand Deccio's resignation.

Deccio used the slur on Thursday, during a heated argument with Rep. Tom Campbell, R-Roy, about health insurance reforms in a meeting with several legislators, staff members and insurance industry representatives.

He called Campbell a "nigger in the woodpile." Both men are white.

The phrase is used to convey a similar meaning to the term "snake in the grass." The Oxford English Dictionary defines the expression as "a concealed motive or unknown factor affecting a situation in an adverse way."

Deccio said he instantly realized his mistake and apologized in the



Sen. Alex Deccio, R-Yakima



Seattle NAACP President Carl Mack

meeting. On Friday, he apologized in person to Sen. Rosa Franklin, D-Tacoma, the only black state senator.

On Monday, Franklin tearfully accepted his apology on the Senate floor.

The slur Deccio used "sears like a branding iron," she said. Talking about how her ancestors had come to America as slaves, her voice broke and she wiped away tears with trembling hands.

But, she said, she forgives Deccio.

"I accept Sen. Deccio's apology and will work for healing," Franklin said. "We need to come together."

Deccio crossed the Senate floor and hugged Franklin after her speech.

Other prominent black leaders, including King County Executive

Ron Sims and former Yakima Mayor Henry Beauchamp, have also publicly supported Deccio.

Mack dismissed their support as politically motivated.

"We will not sell our soul for 30 pieces of silver," Mack said. "Regardless of whether we stand alone, we will stand for what is right."

Alton McDonald, a black leader of the National Action Network's Tacoma branch, confronted Deccio after his apology on the Senate floor and pressed him to resign.

"Sir, I am not going to do that," Deccio said. He defended his record, saying he has sponsored and supported many bills in his 30-year career in the Legislature that help poor and minority citizens.

"I have more things to do," Deccio said. "This should be put behind us."



Deadly Ricin Found in Senate Building

A Capitol Police officer stands outside closed entrance to the Dirksen Senate Office building on Capitol Hill Tuesday. A suspicious white powder, apparently delivered through the mail system, was found in the Senate majority leader's office. Officials said several preliminary tests were positive for ricin, a deadly poison. As many as 50 Capitol employees were quarantined and decontaminated, but no harmful effects were reported. (AP photo)

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Soul on Bikes

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It's a slice of underground American and African-American history you won't find in any history book. The East Bay Dragons Motorcycle Club has gunned its Harleys through the meanest streets of Oakland, Calif., since the 1950s.

Before Rosa Parks took her historic bus ride, before Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Huey P. Newton and the Black Panthers stood bravely for equal rights, the

East Bay Dragons club risked life and limb during the days when it was a revolutionary act for a black man to ride a Harley chopper.

Tobie Gene Livingston and his colorful cast of comrades are an all-black, all-Harley, all-chopper group of motorcyclists who have found more than their fair share of violence and redemption on the battlegrounds of urban America. They have encountered street scuffles, rival clubs, ethnic stereotypes, police misconduct and racial tensions.

Their story is available in bookstores or through Classic Motorbooks, 800-826-6600 or on www.motorbooks.com.

Obituaries

Long Time Resident Remembered

Gladys Young

A memorial service was held Jan. 23 for Gladys Young, a longtime Portland resident, former business owner and Gospel singer who died at the age of 66.

She was born in Langston, Okla. to Jake and Arnesia Johnson on Jan. 26, 1937. She was saved at an early age when she was baptized at Mt. Bethel Baptist Church in Langston. During her teenage years, she was a part of a Gospel quartet that gave her many opportunities to sing at various churches. Following graduation from Langston High School, Gladys traveled to Portland to visit an aunt. While visiting she fell in love with Portland and it was here that she met her husband William "Bill" Young who preceded her in death in 1993. To this union were born two sons, Victor and Clifford.

She attended cosmetology school and even taught some classes at the school after graduating. Her love of fashionable clothes and original hairstyles never faltered. She loved wearing original gowns designed by her sister, Betty. She eventually opened her own hair salon - "Right In Right Out Beauty Salon" which she operated for over 15 years.

She worked with the Foster Grandparents program at Applegate School and the Grace Collins Memorial Day Care. In recent years, she worked as Customer Services Representative at the Interstate Fred Meyer Store where she was friendly face with a kind word when you came into the store.

Gladys have many interests and loved all kinds music but she always kept her Gospel music and singing in the forefront. She loved the Lord and cheerfully performed in many church programs, on cable television and on Christian Radio stations. She produced a Gospel CD in 2001. She was known as the "Songbird of the Northwest."

She was past Worthy Matron of Eastern Stars where she continued to be an active member. She was also affiliated with the Oregon Association of Colored Women's Club, A. Phillip Randolph Institute and the Cosmetology Union. She also assisted in many political campaigns.

Gladys was as active member of the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church under the Leadership of Dr. Johnny Pack IV. She once served as President of the Pastor's Aide. She was a member of Ushers Min-

istry #3, served as Chairperson of the 15th Church Anniversary and was also an active member of the Frances Circle Prayer Ministry.

Survivors include her two sons; three sisters, Arnaeder Johnson and Patricia Avingson both of Tulsa, Okla. and Betty Johnson of El-Reno, Okla.; a cousin Rev. Howard Johnson of Roseburg and a host of nephews, nieces and friends.

Great-grandmother Dies at 89

Estella Penn

A funeral was held last Wednesday in Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes for Estella Penn, who died Jan. 24 at age 89.

Estella Jones was born April 9, 1914, in Bessemer, Ala. A home-

maker, she moved in 1966 to Portland. In 1935, she married Leamond F.; he died in 1966.

Survivors include her sons, Leamond and Larry; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

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