

# Rights Battle Leads to Gay Marriages

Massachusetts is first state to grant licenses

(AP)—Same-sex couples began exchanging marriage vows in Massachusetts on Monday, marking the first time a state has granted gays and lesbians the right to marry and making the United States one of at least five countries where homosexuals can legally wed.

Tanya McCloskey, 52, and Marcia Kadish, 56, of Malden went at a breakneck pace to fill out paperwork, get a waiver from the three-day waiting period, then return to city hall - where they got their marriage license and exchanged vows.

At 9:15 a.m., Cambridge City Clerk Margaret Drury told the couple: "I now pronounce you married under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

It was among the first - if not the first - same-sex wedding taking place throughout the state on Monday, the day that same-sex couples could wed under a court order.

In Boston, David Wilson and Robert Compton became the first of the seven couples who sued the state to be married. At the Arlington Street Church, Wilson and Compton exchanged vows under a rainbow flag and to the strains of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus singing "Marry Us." An excerpt from



Gina (left) and Heidi Norton Smith celebrate with their two sons, Avery, 7 (left), and Quinn, 4, at city hall in Northampton, Mass., after receiving a marriage license Monday. The couple were plaintiffs in a Massachusetts lawsuit that led to a state supreme court decision allowing same-sex marriages. (AP photo)

the landmark Supreme Judicial Court decision that legalized gay marriage was read as an invocation at the Unitarian Universalist church.

They were pronounced "part-

ners for life" at the end of the ceremony.

There were scattered protests amid a largely festive atmosphere.

About 15 protesters, most from Topeka, Kan.-based Westboro

Baptist Church, stood near Cambridge City Hall carrying signs with anti-gay slogans Sunday night. The group, led by the Rev. Fred Phelps Sr., travels around the country protesting homosexuality.

But Ray McNulty, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Family Institute, one of the leading organizers of opposition to same-sex marriage, criticized some of the protesters, saying there was no need for hateful speech.

"What's going on down there is legal, and as far as I'm concerned, give those people their happiness for the day," McNulty said.

Massachusetts was thrust into the center of a nationwide debate on gay marriage when the state's Supreme Judicial Court ruled 4-3 in November that gays and lesbians had a right under the state constitution to wed.

The court's ruling touched off a frenzy of gay marriages in a few cities across the country earlier this year, including Multnomah County in Portland. Even though courts ordered a halt to the wedding march, opponents pushed for a federal constitutional ban on gay marriage, which President Bush has endorsed.

In Massachusetts, married couples are entitled to hundreds of rights under state law. But federal rights are not available to gay married couples because federal law defines marriage as between a man and a woman.

The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Canada's three most populous provinces are among the only places in the world where gays can marry.

## Hate Crimes Probed at Goodyear Plant

(AP)—An investigation is under way at a Goodyear tire plant in Tennessee after officials there received reports about threatening notes and a noose being left in areas where black employees work.

Obion County Sheriff Jerry Vastbinder said the incidents at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Union City, Tenn., are being investigated as a hate crime. FBI spokesman George Bolts said the agency had been alerted and was reviewing the evidence.

One incident involved the discovery of a note scrawled on the bottom of a desk drawer that used a racial epithet and threatened blacks. In another case, someone clogged up a toilet in a bathroom cleaned by an American American janitor and scrawled racial epithets on the walls ordering him to clean up the mess.

Akron, Ohio-based Goodyear issued a statement Friday saying it is cooperating with the law enforcement agencies investigating the incidents.

"The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. is deeply committed to maintaining a harassment-free environment for its employees," the statement said.

## Landmark Brown Decision Altered Lives

Plaintiffs recall desegregation 50 years later

(AP)—Linda Brown had no idea she was making history in the fall of 1950 when her father, the Rev. Oliver Brown, took her by the hand and marched her to an all-white school near her home.

Several other black parents in Topeka also tried to enroll their children in all-white schools that fall. Their requests were denied, laying the groundwork for a legal case that would overturn segregated education nationwide 50 years ago this week.

In the years since, Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education has been a blessing and a burden for the Brown family: A blessing because the family helped change history; a burden at times because



Linda Brown Smith stands in front of the Sumner School in Topeka, Kan., in this May 8, 1964 file photo. (AP Photo)

of media attention it brought.

Linda Brown, now Linda Brown Thompson, has mostly shied away from reporters, although she has spoken at several events in recent months in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the ruling.

She and other family members have stressed that their story is just one of many in the struggle for racial equality.

Linda grew up in a racially mixed neighborhood, where the children played with white, Hispanic and

black youngsters, said her mother, Leola Montgomery, who remarried after her husband's death.

When Linda began attending a segregated school 20 blocks away, the children were confused because the all-white school was only five blocks away.

"She was always sad every year when it was time for school that she had to go one way and her playmates the other way," Montgomery recalled. "It was just silly to think they couldn't go to school together."

Now 83, Montgomery said her late husband was reluctant at first when a former high school classmate and local civil rights attorney asked him to become one of 13 plaintiffs in a desegregation case.

But the attorney, Charles Scott, persisted. "He said for the good of all children as well as your own you need to get into this," Montgomery recalled.

## Powell Concedes Scandal Hurts U.S.

Policy may have opened door to prisoner abuse

(AP)—Secretary of State Colin Powell conceded Monday the Iraq prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq has had a "terrible impact" on America's international image and said President Bush is committed to correcting the problem.



Secretary of State Colin Powell listens to a question in Arabic Sunday during a press conference at the World Economic Forum in Southern Shuneh on the Dead Sea in Jordan.

Powell said in a commencement address at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. that the furor over American abuse of Iraqi prisoners was a recurring theme at an international economic conference he attended in Jordan over the weekend.

He said told the foreign leaders: "Watch America. Watch how we deal with this. Watch how America will do the right thing."

He said the Defense Department will launch "multiple investigations to get the facts." Above

all, Powell said, President Bush is "determined to find out where accountability and responsibility lie."

Powell said there were high-level discussions within the Bush administration last fall about information from the International Committee of the Red Cross alleging inmate abuse at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

His comments came as the scandal shifted to the question of whether the administration erected a legal foundation that opened the door for the mistreatment.

Regarding Red Cross complaints last fall of abuse at Abu Ghraib, "we knew that the ICRC had concerns, and in accordance with the matter in which the ICRC does its work, it presented those concerns directly to the command in Baghdad."

Powell added, "All of the reports we received from ICRC having to do with the situation in Guantanamo, the situation in Afghanistan or the situation in Iraq was the subject of discussion within the administration, at our principals' committee meetings" and at National Security Council meetings.

"We were aware of them," he said.

Congressional critics suggested the administration may have unwisely imported to Iraq techniques for prisoner interrogation used in the war on al-Qaida.

In early 2002, the White House announced that Taliban and al-Qaida detainees would not be afforded prisoner-of-war status, but that the United States would apply the Geneva Conventions to the war in Afghanistan.

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## R&B Artist Shot Dead

(AP)—John Whitehead, a prominent R&B artist best known for the 1979 hit song "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now," was shot dead in Philadelphia.

Whitehead, 55, and another man were working on a vehicle when they were shot by two gunmen, police said. The assailants fled.

Whitehead was shot in the neck and collapsed. Ohmed Johnson, who was shot in the buttocks, survived the May 11 shooting.

Police said the gunmen fired a series of bullets; a young neighborhood girl said she heard about a dozen shots. Authorities had no immediate motive or suspects. "Why did they do this to my

dad?" Dawn Whitehead, 33, asked at the scene. "I just talked to him yesterday. ... He was a fun person. Who would want to kill him?"

Gene McFadden, who was Whitehead's partner in the singing group McFadden and Whitehead, went to the scene in the city's West Oak Lane neighborhood and stood there trembling, WPVI-TV reported.

The two men formed a group called the Epsilons in their youth and were discovered by Otis Redding, touring with the legendary performer in the 1960s, according to their Web site.

"Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" went to No. 1 on the R&B chart and reached No. 13 on the pop chart.

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