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Rice Makes History Again

(AP) — America's first black woman secretary of state took the ceremonial oath of office Friday surrounded by family and friends, some who had traveled from her native Alabama, as well as the president, first lady and a Supreme Court justice.

Right after she thanked President Bush and the first lady, Laura Bush, Rice thanked her family and friends.

"They represent generations of Rices and Rays who believed that a

day like this might somehow be possible," she said.

Rice, 50, was born in the segregated South. Her resume is filled with firsts, including being the youngest provost of Stanford University. She has been Bush's White House national security adviser for four years.

"Condi has an abiding belief in the power of democracy to secure justice and liberty and the inclusion of men and women of all races and religions in the courses that

free nations chart for themselves," Bush said.

Rice pledged to use diplomacy to widen the community of democracy. "You have given us our mission, and we are ready to serve our great country and the cause of freedom for which it stands," she said.

Both Bush and Rice paid tribute in their remarks to Colin Powell, who was secretary of state in Bush's first term and the first African-American to hold the post.



President Bush smiles at new Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during swearing-in ceremonies at the State Department. (AP photo)

Black Caucus Presents Agenda to Bush

Bush asked by group to close racial disparities

(AP) — Its relationship with the White House strained over the last four years, the all-Democratic group of black congressional members used its long-awaited meeting with President Bush to ask him to adopt its agenda for

closing racial disparities.

The 43-member Congressional Black Caucus presented Bush with its eight-page agenda during a private meeting last week. Rep. Mel Watt, D-N.C., the new chairman of the group, said Bush agreed to read the agenda and take it under advisement but didn't offer much response to it.

The agenda asks for more spending on education for poor and minority students, health

care for all Americans, promotion of affirmative action, aid to impoverished African and Caribbean nations, and a guarantee that Social Security benefits continue to be paid, among other requests.

Some members told the president they were concerned that a prominent Republican lawmaker had suggested adjusting benefits based on gender and race to take into account differing average

livespans. Bush did not respond directly, said Rep. Charlie Rangel, D-N.Y., but told the lawmakers he plans to give more details of his plan in the State of the Union address.

Eleanor Holmes-Norton, the District of Columbia's nonvoting delegate to Congress, said Bush said he would meet again with the caucus. "But he said that last time," she said.

Bush has met three times with

the black caucus since taking office four years ago. The first meeting came shortly after his inauguration, when the president said it would "be the beginning of, hopefully, a lot of meetings."

But the next one didn't come until three years later when members of the caucus showed up at the White House to pressure the administration to preserve President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's rule in Haiti.

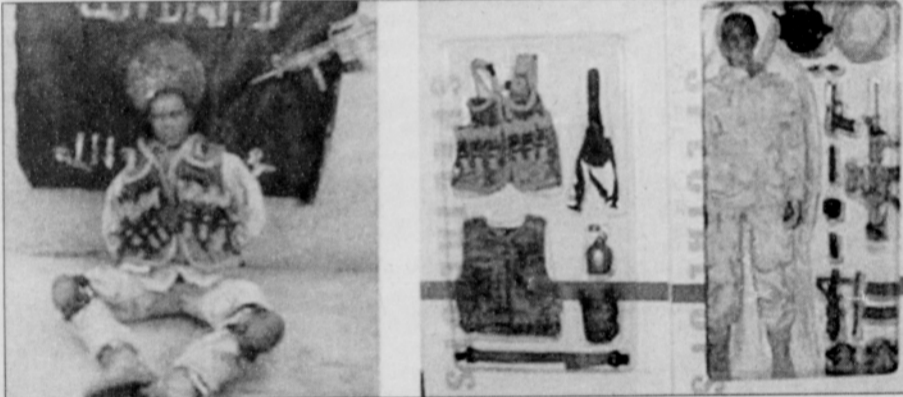
Kidnapped Soldier Picture on Web May Be Fake

(AP) — A Web site posted a photograph of what it claimed was a kidnapped U.S. soldier, but doubts were quickly raised about its authenticity and the U.S. military said no soldiers were missing.

An American toy manufacturer said the figure in the photo resembled one of its military action figures, originally produced for sale at U.S. bases in Kuwait.

The statement appeared on a Web site where militants' statements are often posted and was in the name of a group that has claimed previous kidnappings, the Mujahedeen Brigades.

The Arabic text, however, contained several misspellings and repetitions.



An image (left) posted on an Iraqi militant Web site Tuesday and an image of a toy action figure named "Cody." The Web site claimed it was a kidnapped U.S. soldier, but doubts were quickly raised about its authenticity. (AP photo)

Staff Sgt. Nick Minecci, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, said "no units have reported anyone missing."

The photo in the posting showed a figure dressed in desert fatigues, wearing a vest and knee pads and with a gun pointed to its head. All the items are similar to ones that come in a box with the action figure, named "Cody."

The figure appeared stiff and expressionless. The statement said he was named "John Adam."

"It is our doll ... To me, it looks definitely like it is," said a spokesman for the toy company. If proven a fake, Tuesday's posting would not be the first hoax associated with kidnappings in Iraq.

Support Drops for Free Speech

(AP) — The way many high school students see it, government censorship of newspapers may not be a bad thing, and flag burning is hardly protected free speech.

It turns out the First Amendment is a second-rate issue to many of those nearing their own adult independence, according to a University of Connecticut study of high school attitudes released Monday.

The original amendment to the Constitution is the cornerstone of the way of life in the United States, promising citizens the freedoms of religion, speech, press and assembly.

Yet, when told of the exact text of the First Amendment, more than one in three high school students said it goes "too far" in the rights it guar-

antees. Only half of the students said newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of stories.

"These results are not only disturbing; they are dangerous," said Hodding Carter III, president of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which sponsored the \$1 million study. "Ignorance about the basics of this free society is a danger to our nation's future."

The results reflected indifference, with almost three in four students saying they took the First Amendment for granted or didn't know how they felt about it. It was also clear that many students do not understand what is protected by the bedrock of the Bill of Rights.

Lawmaker Resigns in Scandal

(AP) — State Rep. Dan Doyle resigned from the Legislature on Monday, one week after state officials began investigating whether he diverted campaign money to personal use and falsified his campaign finance report.

The Salem Republican had been the champion of the fiscally conservative, no-new-taxes wing of the House GOP caucus. Up until last week, he had been the powerful co-chairman of the Legislature's bud-

get-writing committee. But Doyle, a 47-year-old lawyer who had served in the Legislature since 2001, stepped down from that post last Wednesday amid the probe into his campaign spending during the November election.

On Friday, state election officials asked Attorney General Hardy Myers to decide if a criminal probe is warranted in view of the allegations.

Correction: IFCC Agenda on Feb. 16

Allocating taxpayer monies to support the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in north Portland will be considered by the Portland City Council at City Hall on Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 9:30 a.m. The time for the budget session was listed incorrectly in our issue last week. Another meeting to discuss the future of the IFCC with Mayor Tom Potter has been scheduled the night before on Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 5:15 p.m. in the City Hall Rose Room. Area residents are encouraged to attend both meetings to show support for the multicultural center.

Sharing stories and experiences with your family helps to bring the meaning of Black History home. Pass it on every day.

Take some time to delve into the treasures in your midst.

Get leave to your FAMILY.

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