

HONORING PASTOR RODNEY H. TRAVIS

**HON. JAMES M. TALENT**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 1999*

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the honor and pleasure of recognizing Pastor Rodney H. Travis of the First Baptist Church in Ellisville, Missouri. Pastor Travis will open today's session of the United States House of Representatives with the invocation. Pastor Travis is a generous and eloquent man, and he offers a moving invocation.

Pastor Travis is an outstanding member of the St. Louis community. Pastor Travis and his wife Karen Sue and their children Shawn Renae and Tiffany Hope have been in Missouri since 1982, serving at the First Baptist Church in Jackson, Missouri before coming to Ellisville in 1995. Over the last four years, he has diligently served his congregation and the community.

Pastor Travis has served God in many ways since receiving his Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979 and later his Doctor of Ministry from Vanderbilt University in 1979. He has served as Trustee of Missouri Baptist College and has held numerous positions with the Missouri Baptist Convention, including serving as President from 1991-1992. He has volunteered as chaplain in Tennessee prison system and as a Police Department Chaplain. His words have served as inspiration to thousands through the Sunday School lessons he wrote for the Baptist publication *World and Way* and for the Baptist Sunday School Board "Listening in Prayer." He also has been named to the International Mission Board Trustee and will serve in this capacity until 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be able to introduce Pastor Travis to the United States House of Representatives, and I am moved that he has accepted this honor and will share with us his blessing.

IN SUPPORT OF THE MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 1999*

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today is April 15th, tax day. It's a good day to take a thoughtful look at our tax policy.

Yes, we must reduce our tax burden, bring more fairness to our tax law, and simplify the tax code. But today we must also be very wary of gimmicks, schemes, and risky proposals.

I am particularly concerned about proposals like the flat tax that would eliminate the mortgage interest deduction.

This tax policy has greatly improved the quality of life for millions of middle class families across our nation. It has enabled countless families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties to raise their children in stable, secure neighborhoods. Home ownership is on the increase across America, and with this increase comes better schools, less crime, and more civic participation.

Owning a home contributes enormously to the financial security of our families. Nothing symbolizes the American dream more than owning a home. For this reason, I am the proud cosponsor of a Congressional resolution expressing strong support for the protection of the home mortgage interest tax deduction. On tax day, let's commit ourselves to making the ideal of home ownership a reality for all Americans.

EXPOSING RACISM

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 1999*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES ARRESTS IN INDIANA CHURCH BURNINGS

(By Rex W. Huppke)

INDIANAPOLIS (AP).—A man charged with seven Indiana church fires may be responsible for up to 50 such arsons across the Midwest and South, including Mississippi.

Probable cause affidavits accompanying the formal charges brought against Jay Scott Ballinger paint a picture of a 36-year-old who burned churches at random while traveling with his girlfriend, an exotic dancer.

The U.S. Department of Justice announced Tuesday that Ballinger had been arrested and charged with setting seven Indiana church fires dating back to 1994. The Yorktown man was being held in federal custody in Indianapolis while a multi-agency investigation continues.

Charged with one count each of arson are Angela Wood, 24, of Atlanta, Ga., and Donald A. Puckett, 37, of Lebanon, Ind. Wood is in federal custody in Macon, Ga., and Puckett is being held in Indianapolis.

Wood has admitted to serving as a lookout during some of the other fires Ballinger allegedly set, according to the affidavit, and both Wood and Puckett are believed to have helped Ballinger burn down the Concord Church of Christ in Lebanon, Ind., in 1994.

U.S. Attorney Judith A. Stewart would not give information on a motive for the arsons. She said that because the charges are part of a federal criminal complaint she couldn't comment on the investigation until formal charges were brought before a grand jury.

All three arrested are white and most of the church burnings in Indiana have involved rural churches with predominately white congregations.

"When someone sets fire to a house of worship, they are not just setting fire to a building, but to an entire community," said Bill Lann Lee, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's civil rights division.

The arrests stemmed from the work of the National Church Arson Task Force, established in 1996 after a series of fires at black churches in the South.

An affidavit from a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent says that searches of Ballinger's central Indiana residence turned up a gasoline container and satanic books and writings. Also found were credit card statements showing purchases made in Indiana and other states on or about the dates of church fires in those areas.

The affidavit says Ballinger admitted to setting "a total of approximately thirty to

fifty" church fires in Indiana and other states.

Jerry Singer, a special agent with the ATF, said the fires involve 11 states, including Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Mississippi, Georgia and Alabama, all of which were mentioned in the affidavits. Singer would not identify the other four states involved.

He said that in his 21 years with the ATF, this is the largest serial arson case he's seen.

The affidavit details the events that led to Ballinger's arrest: On Feb. 6, 1999, a church in Brookville, Ohio, was burned. Three days later, a detective from the Ball State University Police Department in Muncie overheard an emergency radio call for medical assistance at the Ballinger residence in Yorktown, a few miles west of Muncie.

The officer recognized the last name from a previous church arson investigation. He went to Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie and interviewed Ballinger's father, who said his son was badly burned when he came home early in the morning on Feb. 7.

The officer notified federal investigators of the incident at the hospital. During interviews with law enforcement officials Feb. 19-21, Ballinger admitted to the various arsons.

Ballinger had at least one prior offense—a 1993 arrest on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. According to court records, he was arrested near Daleville for allowing two teen-agers to consume alcohol in his car.

A warrant was issued for his arrest in Delaware County in 1994 after he failed to show up at a court hearing on those charges.

One of the affidavits in the church arson case said that Puckett admitted that he, Ballinger and Wood set fire to the Concord Church of Christ in Lebanon, Ind., in January 1994.

According to the affidavit, Ballinger and Wood met at Puckett's home, mixed several flammable liquids together then left to find a church to burn.

They picked the Concord Church of Christ at random. Wood allegedly wrote satanic symbols on the porch, Puckett sprayed the flammable mixture and Ballinger lit the fire. The church was destroyed.

JURY AWARDS \$720,000 TO COUPLE IN CROSS-BURNING CASE

CHICAGO (AP).—A federal jury has awarded \$720,000 in damages to a black couple whose suburban home was targeted by a white neighbor with a cross-burning.

After a one-day hearing, jurors deliberated about an hour Monday before deciding in favor of Andre Bailey and Sharon Henderson of Blue Island, who are married, and who filed the lawsuit against Thomas Budlove Jr.

Budlove has failed to respond to the lawsuit or appear in court, prompting a judge to rule last year that his conduct amounted to a tacit admission to the cross burning.

The incident occurred less than a year after Bailey and Henderson moved into the rented bungalow in the predominantly white neighborhood in September 1995. The couple alleged Budlove regularly shouted racial slurs at them from his property. Their tires were slashed, windows were broken, their dog wounded by gunfire and leaves burned on their front porch.

On June 13, 1996, Bailey said that as he stepped from his house to start his car, he was confronted by a 6-foot cross burning in the yard.

Lawyers for the couple and their two children sought at least \$300,000 in damages from Budlove. Attorneys for the family told the jury they doubted Budlove has that amount of money. But they urged the jury to send a message that hate crimes won't be tolerated.

## TRIAL BEGINS IN RACIST PLOT CASE

LITTLE ROCK, AR (AP).—Prosecutors opened their case against two white supremacists charged with murder by calling a former associate who said one suspect linked Jews and blacks to insects and animals.

Chevie Kehoe, 26, of Colville, Wash., and Danny Lee, 26, of Yukon, Okla., are also charged with racketeering and conspiracy.

Kehoe and Lee are accused of using a campaign of violence to set up a whites-only nation in the Pacific Northwest and could get the death penalty if convicted.

John Shults, a convict who says he has left the white supremacy movement, testified Monday that he joined Kehoe in the Northwest.

"We would make such comments as 'The Jews are nothing but maggots. The Jews should be exterminated.' . . . Black people were the beasts of the field, how they were meant to be lower than the white man, how we used them for caretaking," Shults said.

Members of the mostly black jury were expressionless. Shults also said Kehoe spoke of executing judges to spark a revolt.

The crimes associated with the alleged plot include a 1996 bombing at City Hall in Spokane, Wash.; shootouts with Ohio police; the slayings of two people in Idaho; and the drownings of a white Arkansas family of three.

U.S. Attorney Dan Stripling told jurors that Kehoe's beliefs were based on those of Robert Mathews, the founder of the Aryan Nations white supremacist group. Mathews was killed in 1984 when his hideout caught fire during a shootout with federal agents in Washington state.

The prosecutor said Kehoe and Lee robbed the Arkansas family in 1996 and killed them by taping plastic bags over their heads, weighing them down with rocks and throwing them into a bayou.

Later, the defendants told Kehoe's parents that the family was on "a liquid diet," Stripling said.

The judge has issued a gag order in the case, but Lee's mother, Lea Graham, said her son is innocent and no racist.

NATIONAL REPORT DESCRIBES 12 ORGANIZATIONS IN WISCONSIN AS HATE GROUPS (By the Associated Press)

Twelve Wisconsin organizations are being described as hate groups in a quarterly journal published by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The "Intelligence Report" listed six groups described as neo-Nazi. They are the Euro-American Alliance in Milwaukee; the New Order in Milwaukee; the Knights of Freedom in Sullivan; and World Church of the Creator in Milwaukee, New Berlin and Franklin.

Also listed were two Ku Klux Klan groups, the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Mercer and Imperial Klans of America, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Adams.

Two skinhead groups listed were the Hammerskin Nation in Hartland and Oi! Boys in Kenosha.

One Christian Identity church, the Wisconsin Church of Israel in Appleton, was named. Christian Identity describes "a religion that is fundamentally racist and anti-Semitic," the report said.

Also included was one black separatist group, a Nation of Islam affiliate in Milwaukee. Black separatists are organizations "whose ideologies include tenets of racially-based hatred," the report said.

Wisconsin had 10 hate groups listed by the journal in 1997, said Joseph Roy Sr., intelligence project director for the law center in Montgomery, Ala.

The law center listed 537 hate groups and group chapters nationwide engaging in racist

behavior in 1998 up from 474 the previous year.

Officials of nine of the Wisconsin groups listed could not be reached for comment.

Donald V. Clerkin, 60, of Greendale, chairman of the Euro-American Alliance, called the organization a "white nationalist" group concerned with, among other things, the threat immigration poses to "Western culture, European culture in North America."

"I consider it a badge of honor," he said of the listing. In Mercer, Michael McQueeney, 43, calls himself the national grand dragon for the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan—Not the American Knights cited in the report.

He disputed the hate-group label. "I dislike a lot of blacks, Jews and homosexuals because of what they're doing in this country, but there's a lot of good Jews out there, and there's a lot of good black people out there," he said.

At Muhammad Mosque No. 3 in Milwaukee, part of the Nation of Islam, minister William Muhammad, 40, called it "totally false and slanderous" to call his denomination a hate group.

"The Nation of Islam teaches love—love of God, love of justice and love of self," Muhammad said. "Our goal and purpose is the upliftment of our people—the moral, spiritual, social and economic development and cultivation of our people."

IN HONOR OF LET'S CELEBRATE, INC., FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING HUNGER AND POVERTY IN HUDSON COUNTY

**HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 1999*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Let's Celebrate, Inc., for its hard work and dedication to battling poverty in Hudson County.

For more than 17 years, Let's Celebrate, Inc., has been instrumental in assisting individuals "move from hunger to wholeness." By implementing a continuum of care through counseling, job training, emergency food assistance, adult basic education, and housing assistance, Let's Celebrate has become a vital force in stamping out poverty in my district.

With more than 40 staff members, 750 volunteers, and 27 service and meal sites throughout the area, this impressive organization is responsible for aiding and encouraging countless families to move from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Through innovative programs such as JobPower and Celebrate Catering, Let's Celebrate provides invaluable, hands-on training designed to help clients gain experience, develop job skills, and learn to adapt to a work environment. These efforts are so successful that Let's Celebrate secures jobs for 85 percent of its trainees.

In addition, Let's Celebrate supplies emergency food assistance programs through the Emergency Food Network and The Square Meal Community Center. These soup kitchens and pantries serve more than 125,000 meals per year to our neediest citizens—600 of which are distributed through the Senior Services program. They also help distribute clothing, offer counseling, and provide referrals.

Let's Celebrate's efforts exemplify leadership and dedication to eliminating poverty in

Hudson County. For these tremendous contributions to New Jersey, I am very happy to honor Let's Celebrate for its achievements on its 17th Anniversary. I salute and congratulate Let's Celebrate on these extraordinary accomplishments.

IN HONOR OF NORMANDY HIGH SCHOOL'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Normandy High School for its 30 years of excellence in educating the students of Parma, Ohio.

Normandy High School first opened its doors in the fall of 1968 and welcomed 1700 sophomore- and junior-year high school students. The architectural design of the school was unique and considered state-of-the-art when built 30 years ago. The first commencement exercise was in June 1970, with 525 young men and women receiving diplomas. Since this first commencement ceremony, 13,400 students have graduated. Normandy's current enrollment is 1,128 students and the staff consists of 87 faculty and 58 support people.

Normandy High School subscribes to rigorous academic standards and offers an extensive curriculum. There are accelerated course offerings in all academic areas. A full range of vocational education programs are also available. Normandy students' score on the standardized SAT and ACT tests are consistently above the State and National averages. The school's Renaissance Program demonstrates the commitment to academic excellence, continuous improvement and citizenship which contributes to the high caliber of graduates from the school. Normandy High School is indeed an outstanding asset to the Parma community.

Normandy not only has a fine academic program, but its athletic department is also well renowned. In addition to numerous victories in state playoffs, invitationals and tournaments, Normandy's athletes have accomplished the following LEL Championships: Baseball 1979, 1982 Softball 1976, 1977, 1983 Football 1981, 1982, 1983, John Thomas San Francisco 49er's Super Bowl Champs, Girls Basketball 1976–77, Cross Country 1984, 1989, 1998, 1973 All American Track & Field Curt Tesar, Golf 1988, 1990, 1992, 1998 Chris Wollman & Bernie Jablonski State Champs, Wrestling 1981, 1985, 1987 Volleyball 1976, 1978, 1982, 1988, 1995, 1998, Hockey Baron Cup Champs 1976, 1998, 1999.

Providing excellent educational opportunities for all children is one of the most important goals in our society. I am encouraged by the involvement of the students, teachers, administrators, parents, local businesses and community organizations who are celebrating the 30th anniversary of Normandy High School and working toward continued success and involvement in our schools.

I am confident that Normandy will continue to produce exceptional students who will greatly contribute to the future of the Parma community.