



FAYETTE COUNTY NEWS

What The People Don't Know Will Hurt Them

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Fayette County salutes Dr. King

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The Fayette County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Fayette County Board of Education teamed up for the 14th annual Martin Luther King Jr. birthday commemoration program held Monday, the official holiday, at the F.A. Sams Auditorium in Fayetteville.

A parade through town kicked off the celebration, with this year's theme "Making the Dream Count."

Fayette County Schools Superintendent Dr. John DeCotis offered a welcome to begin the program, when he told the spirited audience "this celebration comes at the right time," pointing out the seemingly unconquerable economic challenges impeding the country, as King also faced during his tumultuous journey to acquire freedom and equal rights for all mankind.

"This service gives us a time to reflect," said DeCotis. "As we deal with

the issues of our time, we should reflect on how Dr. King accomplished seemingly insurmountable challenges."

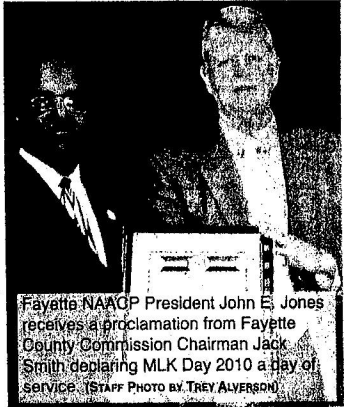
Fayette County Commission Chairman Jack Smith echoed such sentiments when he presented a proclamation to Fayette County NAACP President John E. Jones for the chapter's long-time public service efforts. Smith said the proclamation declared MLK Day 2010 as a day of service in Fayette County.

The county proclamation acknowledged that even in King's death, the late civil rights leader continues to aspire improvement of human rights.

"We're focusing on the mantra to make it a day on, not a day off," said Smith.

Jones accepted the honor, before commending local public officials, school personnel, law enforcement and others for joining in the festivities. He especially recognized the many students on hand, who were the focus of this year's event.

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Fayette NAACP President John E. Jones receives a proclamation from Fayette County Commission Chairman Jack Smith declaring MLK Day 2010 a day of service. STAFF PHOTO BY TREV ALVERSON

Fayette resident wins case against HP

Fayette County Georgia native and retired Fayette County High School teacher Larry Graves was recently awarded a jury verdict against Hewlett-Packard Corp. in connection with a fire at his small office suite on the old courthouse square in Fayetteville.

Graves, through the use of expert testimony, was able to establish that the HP 5200 scanner was defective and ignited a fire on Feb. 16, 2006 on a work station maintained by Graves' tenant.

The jury rejected the testimony of HP engineers that the scanner model in question was rigorously tested before entering the market place and could not have been the cause of the fire.

The scanner model in question (reportedly manufactured in Singapore) is no longer in production.

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2A VERDICT

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Hewlett-Packard denied liability and denied that the 5200 caused the fire.

Experts for HP admitted at trial, however, that the 5200 power supply had been diagnosed with defects and that there had been previous claims but that neither was there a recall nor a notification to end users either directly or through the HP or Consumer Products Safety Council websites.

Experts for plaintiff contended that the cause of the fire was the printed circuit wiring board within the power supply.

The contentions of the parties were filed with the Court in the Consolidated Pre Trial order which is attached along with the Jury Verdict and Court Judgment.

All pleadings in the case may be found at www.lexisnexis.com under case number 2008EV004116D.

The unique historical nature of the building was also an issue at trial.

The office is one of several joint buildings built around the old courthouse square in Fayetteville sometime around the very late 1800's or early 1900's at a time when building codes did

not exist.

The later advent of modern building codes and local Fayetteville historical preservation requirements created issues for the jury as to the cost of repair and actual damage.

No one was hurt in the blaze, which was promptly extinguished by the Fayetteville Fire Department.

A fire department spokesman testified that the Courthouse fire station mobilized immediately and contained and extinguished the fire, leaving adjacent offices with minimized smoke damage.

"I'm just glad it's over," said Graves at the conclusion of the trial nearly four years after the blaze.

"The time delay and expense has been a big deal to me and my family, and I appreciate the judge and the jury listening to my side of the story."

The trial was conducted in Fulton County State Court and lasted four days. Graves was represented by Fayetteville attorney John Mrosek.