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national

Nearly \$1 million given to fired profs

United Press International
NEW YORK — The Big Apple has paid 10 professors accused of being communist sympathizers in the era of Joe McCarthy, the Wisconsin Republican who conducted communist witch-hunts nearly 30 years ago, nearly \$1 million because they were dismissed from university jobs after being caught in a "web of suspicion."

The awards Wednesday marked the end of years of litigation between the city and those dismissed and, in the eyes of Comptroller Harrison Golden, gave New York a chance to right a wrong.

The payments totalling \$935,098 were divided among the survivors through individual annuity funds. Lump sum payments were to be given to the

estates of three professors now dead.

Oscar Shaftel, 69, received his payment more than 29 years after he was fired from his post in 1952 as assistant professor of English at Queens College.

Shaftel said his dismissal occurred because he refused to answer government questions about his political affiliations during the Red Scare set off by the McCarthy accusations.

But despite his dismissal, Shaftel said: "I never lost my honor."

Shaftel, and Bernard Riess, 75, were two of seven teachers still alive to see the checks.

In all, Golden said, 10 professors — two women and eight men — were caught in the McCarthy era's tide of suspicion and the Feinberg law, which

allowed the city to bar belonging to a subversive group units were expelled from holding a job.

The law was declared unconstitutional in 1967.

Shaftel, of Long Island City, Queens, was questioned by the Senate judiciary subcommittee.

Remembering that time, his wife was pregnant with their third child, Shaftel could not afford to go to work.

Nevertheless, he was not able to answer the committee's questions and when he was fired from New York he was dismissed from the city.

Using the name Oscar Shaftel became a "black" until he could again teach a job.

Riess, who said he was put on a danger list in 1939, said he was dismissed because he was the president of the Teachers Union.

Low-interest home mortgage tested in Supreme Court

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Home buyers, real-estate agents and lenders — all squirming under unrelentingly high interest rates — are eyeing a Supreme Court case that could either condone or cut off a source of low-interest home mortgages.

During more than an hour of arguments Wednesday, the justices indicated they are split on the question of whether federal savings and loan associations — even in states with consumer-oriented mortgage laws — can hike the interest rate on an existing loan when a home is sold.

The issue arose in California, but will affect a dozen states with laws that prohibit lending institutions from automatically raising interest rates on assumable mortgages. It also will set an example for the nation.

William Rehnquist staunchly came to the defense of California's right to enforce its own property laws, free from federal interference. Under his position,

a California homeowner could invoke state law and continue to assume low-interest mortgages.

But Justice Thurgood Marshall stood up for the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's authority to pass a nationwide rule allowing federal savings and loan associations to enforce "due on sale" clauses when mortgaged property is sold.

The board, which oversees federally insured lending institutions, contends it has a right to protect the associations' financial stability.

Its "due on sale" rule, passed in 1976, permits a federal lending institution to call for full repayment of a mortgage when a piece of property is sold. In that way, the savings and loan can issue a new loan, at a higher interest rate, and avoid being stuck with a low-interest mortgage.

Stephen Shapiro, a government attorney representing the board, said savings and loans are

in the midst of an economic slump not seen since the days of the Great Depression.

The chief reason is the travel industry's competitive rates in a time of soaring transportation costs.

But Robert Boehmer, attorney for three California home buyers who are defending the right to assume low-interest mortgages, related his own tale to the justices.

"In California," Boehmer said, "the only way to get a cheaper mortgage is to refinance with a federal lending institution. With interest at 17 or 18 percent, the family could not buy a house and even a wealthy family have trouble buying."

The case has caught the attention of half the states in the country. The National Association of Realtors and various lending groups on it by July.

Faulty pacemakers recalled

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration has announced the recall of heart pacemakers that it said may fail suddenly, endangering the lives of cardiac patients.

Involved is the "Ventricular Inhibited Pulse Generator VVI, Model 100" under brand names "Valleylab" and "Synthemed." The agency said Wednesday the

implanted devices have a 10-year life expectancy with a unique "reserve cell" for backup power.

But it said the manufacturer, Synthemed Corp. of Boulder, Colo., which is conducting the recall, reported that the "units may be subject to unpredictable failure."

The units involved were distributed in Colorado, Washing-

ton state, New York, Oregon, Vermont, Texas, California, Missouri, Japan and Australia.

The FDA said 108 units were subject to the recall, but were no longer in use. It said remain implanted in American patients and 22 in Japanese patients. In addition, it said units have been removed from U.S. patients.

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