



## Sitting pretty

Sheryl Sutphen, a junior environmental design major sits next to a chair by Rennie Mackintosh. "Furniture by Ar-

chitects" opened Thursday at the Langford Architecture Center Gallery. The exhibit is open until December 1.

Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

## Dukakis: Voters giving underdogs a second look

Michael Dukakis asserted Thursday that voters by the millions are giving his underdog campaign "a very strong second look" in the waning days of the race for the White House.

George Bush said Democrats were "grossly unfair" to say his advertising is tinted with racism.

"You're looking at a man who was out front for civil rights and I will be again," the vice president said in a network television interview. He defended running mate Dan Quayle on the same score and said any political wounds would heal quickly after the election.

Dukakis combined an attack on the Reagan-Bush administration's record on drugs with ritual declarations that the political tide was turning in his favor. "His administration has cut deals with foreign drug runners. I'm going to cut aid to their nations," said the Democratic nominee.

Democrats were expressing confidence they would control both houses of the new Congress, although Republicans said they had a chance of picking up a seat or two in the Senate.

A dozen gubernatorial contests dotted ballots being printed for next Tuesday's Election Day.

The public opinion polls in the White

House campaign continued to provide encouragement for Bush.

Dukakis was trying desperately to reverse poll deficits in several large Electoral College battlegrounds at once. He ventured unexpectedly into New Jersey, crooning a la Bruce Springsteen. "I was born to run and born to win." But Bush, Reagan, Quayle and Co. were pouring it on in Ohio, where private polls continued to show a solid Republican edge.

ABC said its survey of North Carolina — once Dukakis' strongest hope for a Southern success — gave the vice presi-

dent an 11-point edge. Dukakis held a four-point margin in a New York survey.

Bush and Dukakis were spending millions on campaign-closing television and radio commercials, and both the Democratic and Republican parties previewed a spate of advertisements designed to maximize party support.

Dukakis had an ad featuring one of the most memorable television moments of the campaign, with Democratic vice presidential candidate Lloyd Bentsen turning to Quayle during their debate and saying, "Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy."

## Texas inmate executed 13 years after crime

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — More than 13 years after a San Antonio nurse was abducted and died of wounds suffered in a stabbing attack that is considered one of the most brutal in the city's history, the man convicted of her slaying was put to death early Thursday.

Donald Gene Franklin, 37, had no final words after being strapped to the Texas death chamber gurney and before the lethal drugs began flowing into his arms.

He stared continuously at the ceiling, coughed several times and then died at 12:30 a.m. CST, six minutes after his execution began.

Franklin, convicted of the July 1975 death of Mary Margaret "Peggy" Moran, had three trials, five execution dates and at least two U.S. Supreme Court re-

views, including one review that virtually halted all Texas executions for nearly a year.

His hopes for yet another reprieve were dashed late Wednesday when the Supreme Court voted 7-2 to refuse to grant him a stay.

The same court earlier this year voted 6-3 against Franklin in his challenge to the constitutionality of the Texas death penalty statute.

"It's been a long time coming," said Bill Zapalac, an assistant attorney general who has argued the state's case against Franklin for three years. "It's gone through every possible stage."

The case, he said, may be the most thoroughly argued death penalty case in Texas since the state resumed executions in 1982.

## Study finds sharp rise in Hispanic poverty rate

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's economic recovery of the past five years has shorched Hispanic, according to a private study released Thursday that shows poverty among Latinos has risen at a faster rate than for either Anglos or blacks.

The study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found particularly sharp increases in the number of married Hispanic families and children living in poverty over the past decade, while it tracked a decline in the income of Latino workers from 1978 to 1987.

Robert Greenstein, the center's director, said, "The current economic recovery appears to be benefiting Hispanics much less than other groups. Hispanics are the only racial or ethnic group whose poverty rate remains at or close to recession levels (of the early 1980s)."

The center, a non-partisan, non-profit research organization that studies gov-

ernment spending, programs and public policy issues affecting low and moderate-income Americans, based its findings on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Labor Department. It used 1978 as a comparison year with 1987 because national economic conditions were nearly the same in both years.

The percentage of Hispanics living in poverty grew from 21.6 percent in 1978 to 28.2 percent in 1987, the study said, while the poverty rate for Anglos grew from 8.7 percent to 10.5 percent, and from 30.6 percent to 33.1 percent for blacks.

During the nine-year period, however, the income of the typical Hispanic family fell nearly \$1,600, compared with an increase of \$276 for a white family and a decline of \$854 for a black family, the study said.

As a result of declines in Hispanic earnings, the study said the median in-

come for Hispanics equaled 62.9 percent of median family income for Anglos last year, the lowest percentage on record, the study said.

Two in five Hispanic children were living in poverty last year, or 39.6 percent, up from a rate of 27.2 percent in 1978, the study said.

The Census Bureau's official poverty level was \$9,056 for a family of three in 1987.

Hurt hardest by the increase in poverty and the earnings decline have been Hispanic married families, the study said. Their poverty rate grew by more than half, with fewer than one in eight families below the poverty level in 1978 compared with nearly one in five in poverty last year.

"It's just an affirmation of what minorities have known throughout this administration," said Elvira Valenzuela Crocker, executive vice president of the

## Schools vote to become part of University system

LAREDO (AP) — Directors of the University System of South Texas voted unanimously Thursday to make the system's schools in Laredo, Corpus Christi and Kingsville part of the Texas A&M University System.

Schools that make up the South Texas system are Laredo State, Corpus Christi State and Kingsville-based Texas A&I University.

"Now it's up to the Texas A&M University System board to say whether they are interested in our becoming a part of that system," said B. Alan Sugg, chancellor of the South Texas system and president of Corpus Christi State University.

The USST board also voted Thursday in support of establishing a law school at Kingsville. It was not decided, however, whether it favors starting a new law

school or moving the unaccredited Reynaldo G. Garza Law School from Edinburg.

A&M's regents will vote whether they want to take over the three USST schools on Nov. 21, said A&M System Chancellor Perry Adkisson.

Adkisson said he thought the A&M regents would vote for the merger.

"I think our board probably would be receptive to the wishes of South Texas," Adkisson said.

It then would be up to the state Legislature to decide whether to join the two systems.

Adkisson said A&M would like a greater presence in South Texas and in urban areas, such as Laredo and Corpus Christi. If approved, a merger could begin as early as next September, he added.

College Station-based A&M operates Texas A&M, Tarleton State University at Stephenville, Prairie View A&M and Texas A&M University at Galveston.

Sugg said A&M needed a vote of approval from the South Texas schools before deciding on the merger.

"From what Dr. Adkisson and the staff at the Texas A&M University System have indicated to us, we're pretty far along in terms of becoming a part of the Texas A&M System, even though it still would be up to that board and ultimately up to the Legislature," Sugg said.

According to a feasibility study the USST board approved Thursday, A&M would encourage and support development of more graduate and professional programs in South Texas.

"It's probably the most important thing that's happened in this part of the state of Texas, ever," Corpus Christi Mayor Betty Turner, said.

A lack of professional degree programs and graduate studies has kept South Texas behind the rest of the state economically, she said.

Among other conclusions, the study said Corpus Christi State University, now an upper-level school, should become a four-year university.

As part of A&M, the South Texas schools would have access to the Higher Education Assistance Fund and the Permanent University Fund.

The South Texas board would be dissolved with a merger, and presidents of the South Texas schools would report to the A&M regents, according to the feasibility report.

Texas A&I President Steven Altman and Laredo State President Leo Sayavedra also lauded the merger vote Thursday.

The merger proposal is among results of a resolution from the state Legislature last year ordering the Texas A&M and University of Texas systems to study higher education needs in South Texas.

As a result of that resolution, UT and Edinburg-based Pan American University also are discussing cooperative programs and a possible merger.

## Soviet's preferred presidential choice can't run for office

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviets have a clear favorite in next week's U.S. presidential election. Unfortunately for them, his name is Ronald Reagan, and the Constitution won't let him run again.

As George Bush and Michael Dukakis make their last campaign swings before Tuesday's election, Soviets are waxing nostalgic about the outgoing eight-year tenant in the White House who once called their country an "evil empire" and joked about bombing it into oblivion.

They are also looking ahead to a Bush victory, although without apparent relish.

"To be quite frank, I can't say I've personally been carried away by the statements of either Bush or Dukakis when they spoke of Soviet-American relations," Nikolai V. Shishlin, a spokesman for the Communist Party Central Committee, told a news briefing Thursday.

Reagan, once caricatured by the party daily Pravda as a missile-toting cowboy, now is portrayed as a reliable bargaining partner who sat down with President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and negotiated a nuclear missile treaty and instigated negotiations in Geneva for a 50 percent cut in strategic arms.

But such expressions of respect don't mean Soviet officials have fallen wholeheartedly for Reagan. Shishlin made a point of rejecting outright his most recent pronouncement that the diplomatic warming between Moscow and Washington was due to the Reagan administration policy of negotiating from a position of strength.

Kremlin watchers have been hard-put to find a preference in Soviet news accounts or official statements for either

the Republican vice president or the Democratic Massachusetts governor.

"We prefer the winner," Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady I. Gerasimov said Thursday when asked which candidate the Soviets wanted to see in the White House.

Gerasimov said the Soviets would like a prompt summit with the next president of the United States, whoever he may be.

Officials acknowledge their cautious non-partisanship is motivated by fears that showing a preference for one man could brand him the Kremlin's candidate and doom his chances for election.

"Rival candidates will allegedly take advantage of our kind words and try to discredit the opponent who 'merited the praise' of the Soviet press," wrote commentator Melor Sturua. "Does anyone seriously believe that the Soviet press can make or break U.S. presidents? That is, to put it mildly, nonsense."

Sturua's article, published in the weekly Moscow News, blasted Soviet media for overly cautious coverage of the U.S. race, and included this unusual endorsement: "Personally, I prefer Dukakis, but I think Bush will win."

In 1984, Tass condemned Reagan's decision to run for re-election, saying his claim to have made the world safer was "an obvious lie."

The Soviets have just had their own presidential elections.

With practically no warning, the Supreme Soviet, or parliament, elected Gorbachev president on Oct. 1, naming him to replace the retiring chief of state, Andrei A. Gromyko.

The vote was 1,500-0 in Gorbachev's favor, and the Communist Party chief never had to wear a funny hat or eat a blintz.

## 10-year-old shoots driver of school bus

PORT ARTHUR (AP) — A 10-year-old boy was taken into police custody Thursday after he allegedly shot his school bus driver in the head, authorities said.

The driver, Russell Jean Hampton, was listed in critical condition Thursday afternoon in the intensive care unit of St. Mary's Hospital.

Police said witnesses saw the student running from the bus before they discovered Hampton, 40, slumped over the steering wheel.

She had been shot in the base of the skull with a small-caliber handgun, police said.

The shooting occurred after Hampton had dropped off students at Dick Dowling Elementary School and was returning to the district's bus storage barn, police said.

"Apparently this boy had missed the bus earlier in the day and she had seen him riding his bicycle along the road on her way back," said Port Arthur police Lt. J.W. Fontenot.

"We don't know whether he was riding his bike to school or playing hooky."

The youth was taken into custody at his grandparents' house, near the site of the shooting.

Police speculated that Hampton had told the boy to get on the bus, with the intention of returning him to school and possibly reporting him for truancy.

Fontenot said the boy also may have been afraid school officials would discover the weapon he was carrying.

A .22-caliber handgun and the boy's bicycle were recovered from the bus, Fontenot said.

"At this point, all we can do is speculate what happened," Fontenot said, adding that the youth was being questioned in custody at the Jefferson County Detention Center in Beaumont.

Russell Coco, assistant superintendent of Port Arthur schools, said district officials did not yet know the name of the student implicated in the shooting.

The shooting victim's father, Russell DeJohn of Port Arthur, said he was shocked by the incident.

"She was a housewife and a mother and she never bothered anybody," DeJohn said.

Coco said the shooting has had no effect on operations at the elementary school, about five miles from the site where the Hampton's bus was found in a ditch.

and those without a college education, and Hispanics constitute the youngest ethnic group as well as the group with the lowest education levels, the study said.

Cutbacks in state and federal budget programs also have contributed to the increase in poor Hispanics, the study said. Only one in every 14 poor Hispanic families with children was raised from poverty with government assistance in 1987, compared to one in eight in 1979.

Greenstein said programs that would boost working Hispanics include raising the minimum wage and adjusting the earned income tax credit so that it increases based on the number of children.

He also supports programs to keep Hispanics in school, scholarships to help them afford college, and improvements in the welfare safety net, particularly policies that help the two-parent family.