

Monday, September 3, 1990

## Prison pop. exceeds limit; jail inmates may be freed

HOUSTON (AP) — Some prisoners awaiting trial on minor offenses could be released from the Harris County Jail as early as next week because officials failed to meet a deadline to reduce the inmate population.

The jail held 6,354 inmates Friday even though two federal judges in March had given that day as the deadline to reduce the population to 6,100.

Failing to meet the population cap means that federal court-appointed monitor J. Michael Keating Jr. could begin freeing prisoners according to a schedule set by U.S. District Judge James DeAnda and William Wayne Justice.

Keating, a Providence, R.I., attorney, said he would not order anyone released this weekend. He said he would be in Houston on Tuesday and would consult with the judges before releasing any prisoners.

The judges' order calls for "misdemeanor pre-trial detainees," such as those charged with speeding, running a red light, or writing a bad check, to be the first discharged when the prisoner count exceeds

6,100. Jail officials said there were 155 eligible inmates in Friday's count. They would be freed on personal recognizance bonds, which do not require money.

The next to be discharged would be those awaiting trial for third-degree felonies, such as official misconduct, auto theft or carrying a firearm in a business licensed to sell alcoholic beverages.

Only those deemed not a risk to the community and unlikely to flee, would be released. All still would be required to face their pending charges.

"What we have here is a situation where law has taken over logic," Harris County Commissioner Steve Radack said. "This whole scenario of imminent releases is very frustrating for law enforcement officers and everyone involved in the criminal justice system."

State and county officials continue to blame each other for the persistent crowding problems. Jail officials say the county is housing 1,200 to 1,400 inmates awaiting transfer to state prisons.

"Everyone views this as pointing fingers," Assistant Harris County Attorney Harold Streicher said. "We point fingers at the state, the state points fingers at us. But the truth of the matter is perfectly clear: They must remove their prisoners from our jail."

If the state had removed all its transfer-ready felons from the county on Friday, he estimated, the jail's total population would have been only about 4,809 inmates.

"If those people were all gone, we would be well within our capacity," Streicher said.

limbs knocked down power lines, primarily in the Greenspoint area, HL&P spokeswoman Geri Konigsberg said.

An apartment complex in the storm's path caught fire, damaging one unit, but no injuries were reported, authorities said.

Storms were reported in a swath from Houston and Trinity counties in the north to Chambers and Jefferson counties in the south.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Service in Seabrook clocked winds up to 70 mph as they hit Galveston Bay, while the National Weather Service earlier reported winds of 60 mph at Intercontinental Airport.

The Federal Aviation Administration said no air traffic was disrupted.

Planes trying to land at Hobby Field during the storm were forced into a holding pattern for about 30 minutes, spokesman Ralph Wales said.

## Carswell troops leave for Gulf

FORT WORTH (AP) — A midair refueling plane took off early Friday from Carswell Air Force Base to join other troops the base has deployed to Saudi Arabia.

A Carswell spokeswoman originally said two tankers took off. Later, the base said the second flight was cancelled, but did not say why.

Carswell spokeswoman Staff Sgt. Becky Robison would not disclose the number of troops deployed or their exact destination.

"What they're going to do is refueling aircraft that's over there in Saudi Arabia," Robison said. "They'll probably also be refueling British aircraft."

Another Carswell spokeswoman, Sgt. Jackie Marsh, said it was doubtful the second plane would leave Friday.

The troops being deployed are attached to the 7th Bombardment Wing at the base. There are about 5,000 active duty personnel on base, officials said.

As expected, the 4005th Army Medical Reserve unit from Houston was deployed on Friday to Fort Hood, said a military spokeswoman in Houston who declined to be identified.

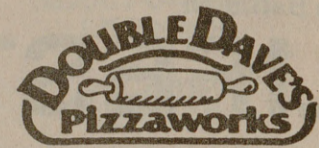
The unit, which includes physicians, nurses and other medical personnel, will fill positions at the Texas post that have been vacated as troops were moved to Saudi Arabia, the spokeswoman said. She would not reveal how many reserve troops were moved to Fort Hood.

The unit was notified Aug. 25 that they would be activated, according to a military spokesman in San Antonio.

The 4005th reserve unit is attached to the 807th Medical Brigade in Dallas, the San Antonio spokesman said.

The Air Force also called up about 228 reservists attached to the 68th Military Airlift Squadron at Kelly Air Force Base in Texas.

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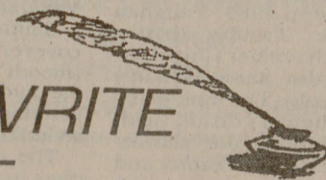
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## High winds rip through Houston area during sudden weekend thunderstorm

HOUSTON (AP) — A 17-year-old was struck by lightning and dozens of others narrowly escaped injury Friday when sudden thunderstorms packing winds up to 70 mph raked the area.

An unidentified 17-year-old student at Yates High School was in good condition at Ben Taub Hospital late Friday after he was struck by lightning when he stepped out of his car in southeast Houston, paramedics said.

The late afternoon cloudbursts ended the driest August on record with a bang. Half an inch of rain was reported downtown.

Forecasters called for a 40 percent chance of thunderstorms through Sunday.

Storms peppered a broad area of southeast Texas, knocking over 12-foot sailboats on blocks at Seabrook and turning Galveston Bay "white with whitecaps," in the words of Houston boat owner Ian Lisseter.

About 18,000 Houston Lighting & Power Co. customers were without electricity after winds and tree

limbs knocked down power lines, primarily in the Greenspoint area, HL&P spokeswoman Geri Konigsberg said.

An apartment complex in the storm's path caught fire, damaging one unit, but no injuries were reported, authorities said.

Storms were reported in a swath from Houston and Trinity counties in the north to Chambers and Jefferson counties in the south.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Service in Seabrook clocked winds up to 70 mph as they hit Galveston Bay, while the National Weather Service earlier reported winds of 60 mph at Intercontinental Airport.

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## RE-ELECT W.T. (TOM) McDONALD, JR.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- District Judge, 85th Judicial District, 1978-present.
- District Attorney of Brazos County, 1973-1977.
- County Attorney of Brazos County, 1968-1972.

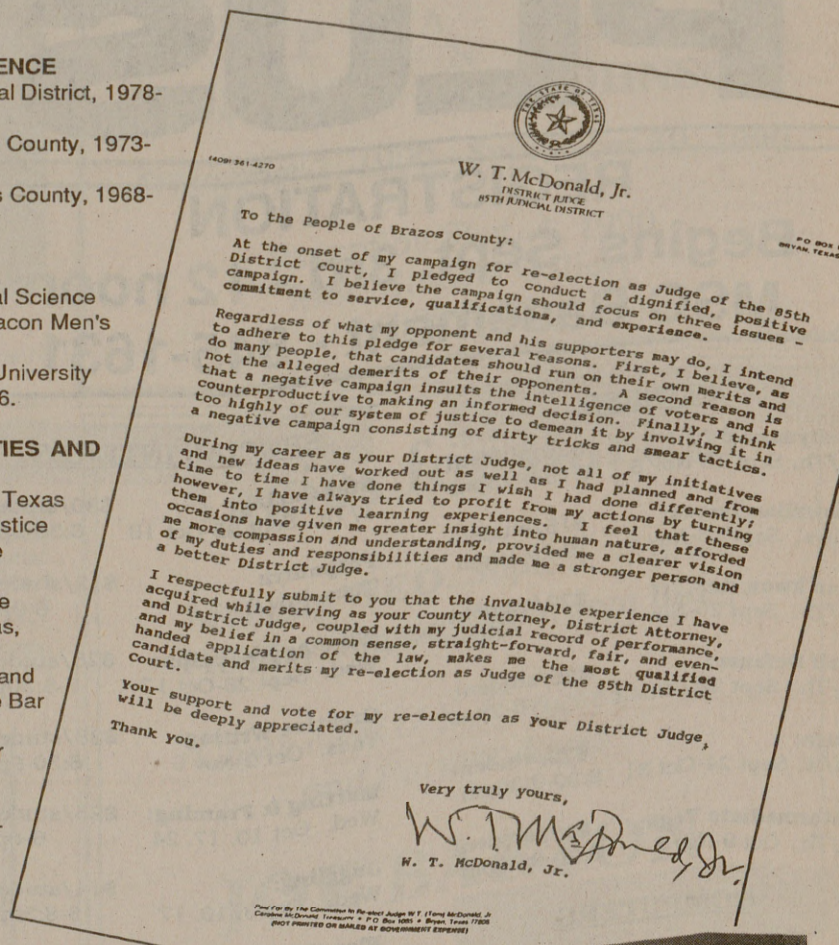
### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History, Randolph-Macon Men's College, 1962.
- Doctor of Jurisprudence, University of Texas Law School, 1966.

### PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RECOGNITION

- Judicial Advisory Council, Texas Department of Criminal Justice appointed by Chief Justice Thomas R. Phillips, 1990.
- Chairman, Criminal Justice Section, State Bar of Texas, 1990.
- Chairman, Crime Victims and Witness Committee, State Bar of Texas, 1990.
- Faculty, Texas College for New Judges.
- Silver Good Citizenship Award, Sons of the American Revolution, 1989.
- National Organization for Victim Assistance.
- Advisory/Editorial Committee, *Texans' War on Drugs Judge's Benchbook: A Resource for Drug Abuse Prevention*, published by Governor's Criminal Justice Division and the Texas Commission on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, 1988.
- Outstanding Jurist of the Year, Criminal Justice Section, State Bar of Texas, 1987.
- State Judicial Budget Board, appointed by Chief Justice Jack Pope, 1985-1987.
- Chairman, Legislative Committee, Judicial Section, State Bar of Texas, 1984-1985.
- Special Interim Committee on the Criminal Justice System of Texas, appointed by Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby, 1981.
- President, Brazos County Bar Association, 1975.

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Tom and his wife, Caroline, were married in 1965; they have two sons, Scott, age 15, and Don, age 12. The McDonalds are members of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The McDonald family has resided in Brazos County for over 70 years. Tom's father (class of '33) was a lawyer, legislator and judge. The Reed McDonald Building on the TAMU campus is named in memory of Tom's uncle.

Paid for by Committee to Re-Elect Judge W.T. (Tom) McDonald, Caroline McDonald, Treasurer, Box 1085 Bryan, TX 77805.