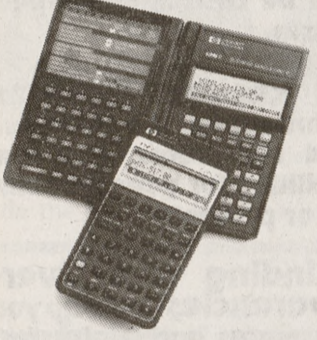


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THE BATTALION

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STATE

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THE BATTALION

Friday, September 3, 1993

Robbery takes life of last Vidor black

The Associated Press

BEAUMONT — William Simpson was the last black to move from all-white Vidor, saying he had enough of racist taunts, obscene gestures and threats of lynching.

Hours after returning to Beaumont, he was gunned down, an apparent victim of random street crime.

The 7-foot, 300-pound bearded man, described by friends as a taciturn gentle giant, was killed Wednesday night by suspected gang members who demanded money, authorities said.

"It's just a loss. There's no other way to put it," said Beaumont businesswoman LinMarie Garsee, who befriended Simpson and rented him a house after following his plight through the media. "Everybody is shocked. I mean, total shock."

A 19-year-old man was arrested Thursday for the slaying, police spokesman Butch Pachall said. Capital murder charges were pending.

The suspect and three accomplices still being sought by police were believed to have committed another robbery in the same area earlier Wednesday night. A victim in that crime and a woman who was with Simpson when he was slain both identified the same man, Pachall said.

151-year-old Texas newspaper to alter name in November

The Associated Press

GALVESTON — The oldest newspaper in Texas is changing its name.

Beginning Nov. 1, The Galveston Daily News will be known as The Galveston County Daily News, said Dolph Tillotson, editor and publisher of the newspaper.

"We are changing the name for a simple reason: The Galveston County Daily News is what we are," said Tillotson. "It is what we truly have been for some time. And it certainly is what we must be in the future."

The Galveston Daily News, with a daily circulation of 29,854, began publishing on April 11, 1842 and has had four name changes since, Tillotson said.

The first name was simply The Daily News.

"One of this newspaper's strongest traditions is a tradition of innovation," Tillotson said.

Tillotson said the name change was one of a number of improvements readers could expect in the next year.

Simpson, 37, was walking with Lydia Washington when the four men drove up and confronted them, police said. He tried to flee and was shot five or six times with a 9 mm pistol.

Simpson died a short time later at Baptist Hospital in Beaumont. Washington was shot in the leg and hospitalized in stable condition at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont.

Washington, reached by telephone at her hospital bedside, said she doubted the shoot-

"Mr. Simpson unfortunately is a victim of a lot of what we're seeing in Beaumont — random robberies."

"So far we don't have any indication that it had anything to do with the Vidor situation. We can't put the blame on Vidor," added Sam Bean, president of the NAACP Beaumont chapter.

Bean noted, however, that Simpson wouldn't have been in Beaumont at all if he had not been driven out of Vidor.

Simpson and another man, John DecQuir, were the first black residents of Vidor in at least 70 years when they moved in six months ago. They also were the last blacks to leave Vidor this week, citing fear after too many instances of harassment.

A federal judge last year ordered Vidor, about 85 miles east of Houston and home to 11,000 whites, to desegregate its 70-unit public housing complex. It was one of 170 public housing projects in 36 east Texas counties — some all-white and some all-black — that U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice said must be desegregated.

While no one has physically attacked him in Vidor, Simpson said in an interview Sunday with The Associated Press that the derisive yells, the threats and the oppressive fear had become too much to bear.

"So far we don't have any indication that it had anything to do with the Vidor situation. We can't put the blame on Vidor."

- Sam Bean, president of the NAACP Beaumont chapter

ing was related to Simpson's moving in and out of nearby Vidor. The assailants were black, she said.

"It was just three guys," she said. "They asked me for my wallet and I didn't have it. They just shot."

The FBI said that if asked, the agency would investigate whether the killing was racially motivated. Police civil rights groups said there was no reason for that.

"I don't think these people knew who they shot," police spokesman John O'Quinn said.

Cancer victim marries day before death

The Associated Press

DALLAS — On Sunday Erika Olivares Valdez realized one of her fondest dreams — to be married in a white dress. On Monday, Erika died.

Erika, 15, found strength after years of battling leukemia to marry 19-year-old Adamson High School senior Joaquin Valdez, a young man she had met last spring.

"We figured a lot of people would think we were crazy to let such a young girl get married, but she was a good girl," said her father, Israel Olivares. "We did everything we could to make her happy."

The frail girl danced with her father and her husband. She tossed her bouquet and posed for pictures with the many friends and relatives who attended the ceremony.

A funeral Mass for the Sunset High School freshman was held Thursday at Santuario Santa Maria de la Salud Catholic Church in Oak Cliff, the church in which she was wed.

Erika became sick with an ear infection at age 12. But when she continued to complain about other ailments, doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with her and repeatedly sent her home from the emergency room.

A blood test finally showed leukemia, which placed her in radiation and chemotherapy treatment for 2 1/2 years.

"She would dress up for her hospital visits as if she were going to a party," said Dora Nelly Oli-

vares, Erika's mother. "She always wanted to match her clothes. She never cried and rarely spoke of being afraid."

Last December, Erika was told that her treatment had been successful and that she had beaten the disease. She began to plan her "quinceanera," a Mexican tradition for celebrating a girl's 15th birthday. She marked the occasion with a Mass and small party.

Soon after the encouraging health reports, she began to feel ill again. Doctors told her she would need a bone marrow transplant which she got from her five-year-old sister, Fabiola, and greater quantities of chemotherapy and radiation.

A friend introduced her to Valdez last spring. "She started falling in love with him after he visited her every day for seven weeks," Mrs. Olivares said. "She said, 'Mom, this boy has no reason to like me. I look like a monster.' But the boy said he liked her for who she was. She was a very beautiful girl."

The morning after her wedding Erika woke her parents and said, "Today I am going to die."

"No," her father said. "Why do you say that?" "I am. I know I am," she said, as they summoned an ambulance.

At the hospital, surrounded by her brother, three sisters and husband, Erika sat up in her bed and said, "Thank you, everybody, for helping me. The angels are calling me."

She told her parents she heard a chorus. She spread out her arms to embrace her "Mami" and "Papi." And she kissed them goodbye.

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