

Despite drastic layoffs, NAACP employees agree to work unpaid

BALTIMORE (AP) — The NAACP is laying off most of its 100 employees because of a \$3.5 million deficit it blames on former executive director Benjamin Chavis, a board member said Tuesday.

Many of the staffers are planning to work without pay, so the nation's oldest civil rights group won't shut down, said the board member, Joseph Madison, a Washington radio personality.

Calls to the NAACP's national headquarters in Baltimore were not immediately returned.

NAACP board members have accused Chavis of running up the deficit. Chavis has said he inherited the debt from his predecessor, Benjamin Hooks. Hooks has denied that.

Chavis was ousted in August after it was disclosed that he had agreed, without the board's knowledge, to pay \$332,000 in NAACP money to settle sexual discrimination allegations brought by a former employee.

Board member Hazel Duker said she was not informed of any layoffs. A staffer at NAACP headquarters told her she got a call at home Sunday and learned she had been laid off.

"This is a very drastic move," Madison said. "This isn't a move anybody would take lightly."

The layoffs will affect at least 80 employees in

the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's national headquarters in Baltimore and seven regional offices throughout the country, Madison said.

The NAACP has regional offices in Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and St. Louis.

Several calls to Earl Shinhoster, the NAACP's interim administrator, weren't immediately returned. A receptionist in NAACP chairman William Gibson's South Carolina dental office said Gibson couldn't be reached for comment.

Calls to eight board members weren't returned. Board member Leroy Warren said he was told by a member of the executive committee late Saturday that the staff would be furloughed for a week.

"I don't think the money is coming in like it was," Warren said. "It's like anything. When you have money problems, you furlough."

Madison said an executive committee member told him that the committee made the decision during a telephone conference over the weekend.

The board recently ordered an audit of spending by its officers, including Chavis and Gibson, since 1989. Madison said a preliminary review of the NAACP's finances probably led to the layoffs.

Gay shooting represents minute portion of gay harassment cases

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Just blocks from the Castro district, the very center of San Francisco's gay community, Victor Rohana was pinned to a wall with a four-wheel-drive vehicle and shot in the chest, apparently because he was holding hands with his boyfriend.

Civil rights advocates said the shooting was an example of the growing ferocity of attacks on homosexuals.

"Whereas in 1992, somebody may have just yelled, 'Faggot,' now they're yelling, 'Faggot' and clubbing you or raping you," said Leslie Addison of Community United Against Violence.

Police developed a composite sketch of the suspects, young men in their late teens or early 20s, and Mayor Frank Jordan offered a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible.

"It is dismaying to think that in a city that is known for acceptance of individual freedom that this senseless act of violence still occurs," he said.

On Sunday, 24-year-old Victor Rohana and Steven Damron were walking to their car after dining in a neighborhood restaurant. Just after 10 p.m., two men in a white Suzuki Samurai drove by and yelled at them, Damron said.

Rohana said something to the men before turning to catch up with his friend, Damron recalled. The driver backed up about 100 feet to block their path, jumped the curb onto the sidewalk and

pinned Rohana against a wall.

Damron said the passenger stuck a pistol out a window and shot Rohana, who was in satisfactory condition Tuesday. The bullet pierced Rohana's lung, missing his heart by about an inch, Damron said.

"Maybe they just thought it was macho to shoot a gay guy," Damron said. "They made a judgment that being gay was bad and their way of expressing that was to shoot Victor."

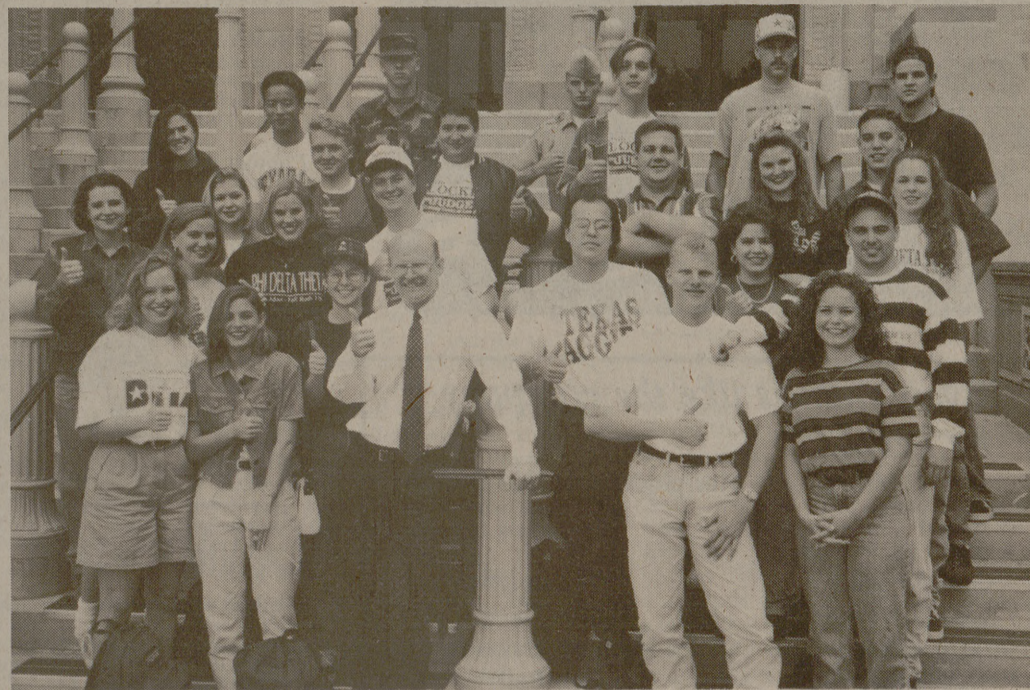
Officer Sandy Bargioni of the police Hate Crimes Unit spent Monday stuffing fliers and the drawing of the attacker into mailboxes near where the attack occurred.

Rohana wasn't the type to look for a fight, said a friend, Steven Underhill. "He's very quiet and shy, certainly one of the most sweet, kind individuals I've ever met," he said.

Last year there were 366 anti-gay attacks and incidents of harassment reported in San Francisco, said Lester Olmstead-Rose, executive director of Community United Against Violence. The group believes that only about 10 percent of harassment is actually reported to police.

"People come in from outside the city to attack people. A group of kids get in a car in Walnut Creek and decide to drive into the Castro to get some fags," Addison said. "It's not like someone's walking down the street and sees a gay person and gets upset."

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