

Page 5 • Monday, February 15, 1999

Houston-based company denies cholarships to honor students rs m

USTON (AP) — They were, hout a doubt, the best and ting out that ghtest high school seniors in the icational prograntry: straight-A students, Nas students abounal Merit Scholars, their class ease the odds dedictorians.

lly transmitted One student from every state in vever, some be ation and the District of Coweek would nbia, connected by a common tional" if sales ead: All applied for and won a ald, instead (),000-a-year college scholarship, doms to such lewable for four years, from rtions of Richa uston-based AdamsVision USA. ns workout was just one problem. amsVision now admits there is ulling any des money - never were money — never was.

Now the students, having comonents of condited their first semester at colbor hopes that e, are scrambling for financial ill someday besistance while their parents are d and appreciarching for answers and, in ent-informing ne cases, lawyers.

"How to pass Adams Vision founder Val nd the week ams insists he still is trying to tudy "The Alp ape up money to honor the

ble for footbal iolarships. cipients only "I'm very saddened that we're the point that we are, but at the b Huval is ne time I'm very hopeful that will get these scholarships rted and be able to continue our mmitment," Adams said. "This s a good thing we were trying to

> information uncovered out Adams and the scholarship terprise raises questions about ether it was a legitimate effort ward good students or a scam estrated by a man with a rap full of financial crimes.

him, I would be concerned if he were in any business where anyone was relying on his promises,' said John Boone, a prosecutor with the Harris County district attorney's office.

Boone described Adams as a habitual criminal, convicted of theft for writing bogus checks in 1980, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1993 and 1995. Adams remains on probation for a 1993 case.

"His schemes were fairly grandiose," Boone said. "The least

"This was a good thing we were trying to do ."

> - Val Addams AdamsVision founder

serious of scams he was doing he had some sort of a fake business, and he would use checks from the business basically just to live. well.

Boone said Adams may have had legitimate enterprises but that 'typically there would be no substance behind the business. It would just be a front.'

Adams acknowledges his criminal past but maintains the scholarship effort was on the level. He notes that the students were not asked to pay an application fee or 'Based on my contact with provide any money, something the

order

ing in sick.

we hope by the end of the week to be in busi-

U.S. District Judge Joe Kendall said Satur-day that the union did not do enough to en-

courage pilots to return to work after his court

left at the gate by the nation's second-largest air-

line because of the large number of pilots call-

More than half a million travelers have been

Despite the continued cancellations, most of

percent service as soon as Tuesday.

firm.

And he insists he invested \$300,000 for expenses such as salaries for the professional educators who selected the recipients.

"If I spent \$300,000 to shyster somebody, that's my response to that. I don't think anybody in their right mind would do that," he said. The scholarships, he said, were

the company's primary focus. In fall 1997, AdamsVision sent

applications for its "Scholar-Leadership Award" to every high school in the country. An attached letter promised the awards would be presented to the winners by the governor of their state at a musical event at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville.

Eligible students had to have at least a 3.0 grade-point average, a combined SAT score of 1160 or above and submit an essay and three letters of recommendation.

Jean Lockhart, a former teacher Adams hired as a consultant on the project, assembled 15 educators in December 1997 to select the win-

She said Adams assured her from the start that the scholarship money was in place. But Lockhart became suspicious after Adams, despite his contention, failed to pay her and the educators who selected the students.

On Jan. 8, 1998, letters were sent to 51 students announcing they had won, including Texas recipient Justin Burt of Uvalde, who

students and their parents con- now attends Notre Dame

But their elation turned to confusion a few months later when AdamsVision dispatched another letter saying funding for the scholarships was not yet complete.

The letter stated AdamsVision was negotiating with "two major corporations" regarding sponsorship of the awards presentation and that, although funding was incomplete, it remained "absolutely confident we will receive corporate sponsorship.

At that point, however, many students already had accepted early placement with universities. Additionally, some had lost out on other scholarships after winning one so large.

About a month before classes began, AdamsVision sent another round of letters to each winner's university, informing them that the scholarship would be paid in \$5,000 increments at the end of each semester.

Then came the final blow.

Last month, Adams sent a twoparagraph letter to each university stating simply that AdamsVision will not be financially capable of honoring the Scholar-Leadership Award at this time.'

Adams said he is continuing to try to get corporations to bankroll the scholarships and provided as proof correspondence with dozens of firms, including Sony, Ford, Time Warner and locally based Houston Industries, now called Reliant Energy.



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students who took other courses.

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providing that prior to January 1, 1994, you were registered at Texas A&M University and successfully completed either a fall/spring semester or summer term (I and II or 10 weeks) as a fulltime student in good standing (as defined in the University catalog). You must have a 2.0 cumulative GPR at Texas A&M University.

You must be in good standing with the University, including no registration or transcript blocks for past due fees, loans, parking tickets, returned checks, etc.

Graduate Student Requirements

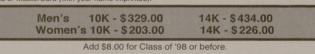
If you are a May 1999 degree candidate and you do not have an Aggie ring from a prior degree, you may place an order after you meet the following requirements

- Your degree is conferred and posted on the Texas A&M University Student Information Management System: and
- You are in good standing with the University, including no registration or transcript blocks for

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Procedure To Order A Ring:

- If you meet all of the above requirements and wish to receive your ring on April 15, 1999, you must visit the Ring Office no later than Wednesday, February 17, 1999 between the hours of 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. to complete the application for eligibility verificatio
- It is recommended that you do not wait until February 17 to apply for your ring audit. Should there be a problem with your academic record, or if you are blocked, you may not have sufficient time to resolve these matters before the order closes out on February 19.
- Return no later than February 19, 1999 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. 3:30 p.m. to check on the status of your audit and if qualified, pay in full by cash, check, money order, or your personal Discover, Visa or MasterCard (with your name imprinted).



The ring delivery date is April 15, 1999

Pilot union refuses to yield to judge's orders DALLAS (AP) — More than half of the Amern Airlines pilots participating in a sickout ve taken themselves off the sick list, but it is not enough to prevent 550 flights from beg canceled Sunday.

mother 231 flights, or about 10 percent, of JP But ? flights scheduled for the Presidents Day holly on Monday have already been canceled benot all of the pilots were immediately ble for flying

The mass return followed a judge's contempt ler Saturday against the pilots union and two ., F.A.C. Jits top officials. ics and Gyneam An American spokeswoman said "well un-1,000" of the 9,400 pilots were still shown

sick on Sunday, compared to the nearly 2,500

ursday and Friday, when one in four pilots

clared themselves unfit to fly. "We're just glad they are coming back and

ng of

ever.

cology tic Counseling

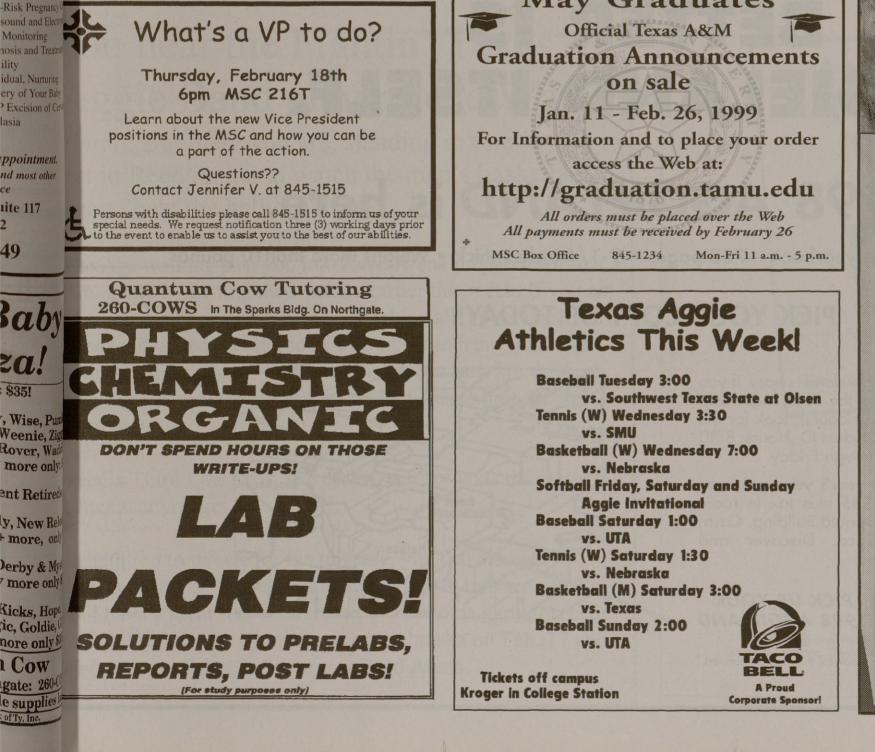
May Graduates

ness as usual here," added Sonja Whitemon, saying the airline could be offering close to 100 many passengers prepared for delays. At Miami International Airport, heart-shaped decorations adorned American's baggage According to American, about 40 pilots per counter wall Sunday, and musicians strolled hour have been taking themselves off of the through the terminal serenading passengers. sick list since a federal judge held the Allied Pi-But many travelers remained angr Kendall said he would decide Wednesday lots Association and two top board members in contempt and promised sizable fines against

how much to levy in fines, although he promised they would be substantial. He re-quired the union to place \$10 million with the court and for union president Rich LaVoy and vice president Brian Mayhew to remit a total of \$15,000.

the nation's airports were calmer Sunday with

"I'm the guy who gets to stick his chin out there. I'm trying to protect the careers of these ' said LaVoy, who told pilots in a hotline pilots, to continue to call crew scheduling to get off of the sick list



king of

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