

# Cisneros trial set to begin

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros, a one-time rising Democratic star whose luster was tarnished by an extramarital affair, heads into court this week to defend himself against conspiracy and obstruction charges.

Jury selection begins tomorrow, more than a year and a half after Cisneros was charged in an 18-count indictment that contends that while under consideration for a post in the Clinton Cabinet, he conspired with one-time paramour Linda Jones to conceal the scope of his more than \$250,000 in payments to her. He has pleaded innocent.

If convicted, Cisneros could be sentenced to up to five years in prison on each count.

Jones is the government's star witness, albeit one whose credibility will come under sustained attack from Cisneros' high-dollar legal team. Formerly known as Linda Medlar, she agreed to testify against her ex-lover in a bid to gain a reduction in the 3 1/2-year prison sentence she was given after running afoul of the same independent counsel prosecuting Cisneros.

Eighty-eight tape recordings that Jones secretly made of her phone conversations

with Cisneros as their relationship soured are at the heart of Independent Counsel David Barrett's case. Cisneros' lawyers labored mightily during a 13-day pretrial hearing in July to quash their use, saying many tapes bore signs of heavy editing.

"Tapes, as we all know, are very powerful evidence," Cisneros lawyer Brendan Sullivan said at the conclusion of the hearing. "Tapes that are altered are powerfully misleading."

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Cisneros' lawyer

U.S. District Judge Stanley Sporkin rejected the defense's argument. Of the 26 tapes that prosecutors want to play for jurors, Sporkin is allowing 22 in their entirety and portions of four others.

Cisneros "has presented no direct evidence that the voice on the tapes is not

his, nor that the statements attributed to him are inaccurate," Sporkin said of the tapes, recorded between April 1990 and December 1993.

Jones, 50, and Cisneros, 52, became romantically involved in 1987 while he was mayor. The 2 1/2-year affair, which attracted extensive news coverage, ended when Cisneros returned to his wife and three children.

While the recordings' admissibility at trial constituted a victory for Barrett's team, a former federal prosecutor cautioned that tapes can sometimes backfire on the prosecution.

"Any time a prosecutor gets evidence that's admissible, it's helpful," Washington lawyer Joseph DiGenova, himself a former independent counsel and one-time U.S. attorney, said. "Whether or not the jury reads it the same way as the prosecution, that's questionable."

Jones' recordings, some of which the government acknowledges were edited, capture conversations in which she and Cisneros discussed their financial dealings. They also reflect Cisneros' characterizations of his discussions about the money with the Clinton transition team and the FBI agents conducting his Cabinet background check.

# Jackson addresses Bush drug question

NEW YORK (AP) — Texas Gov. George W. Bush is "a rich man's son caught in a poor man's trap" on the subject of answering questions about whether he used illegal drugs in his younger days, Rev. Jesse Jackson said yesterday.



JACKSON

Speaking with reporters after giving a sermon at a Manhattan church, Jackson said the Republican presidential candidate and Texas governor had failed to show leadership on the drug issue in a state whose "No. 1 growth economy is jails, based upon drugs."

Jackson claimed that 80 percent of a Texas prison population of 140,000 are under drug sentences, while Bush himself refuses to say whether he did or did not use narcotics in his youth.

"I say, free George Bush. And also a

generation of youth trapped in the same trap, because above all we must not sacrifice equal protection under the law. And there is no category 'youthful indiscretion' on our books," Jackson said.

"The fact is that drug policy is the rich man's business," Jackson said, that being "a rich man's son caught in a poor man's trap," had forced him to modify his own strict position on the drug issue.

During his sermon at Manhattan's interdenominational Riverside Church, Jackson also mentioned in passing that Bush had not attended or sent a representative to the funeral of James Earl Ray, the black man who was dragged to his death behind a truck by two white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, last year.

Jackson criticized Bush for not attending the Byrd funeral and not supporting crime legislation.

# Pastor's death halts abuse probe

DALLAS (AP) — A retired Presbyterian pastor died while being investigated for sex abuse that allegedly happened years ago, halting his denomination's probe of the charges.

North Texas Presbyterian leaders may meet with the nine women who accused the Rev. Bill Pruitt, a longtime missionary and associate pastor of Highland Park Presbyterian Church.

And despite Pruitt's death, the women still may file a lawsuit if they decide the denomination has not addressed their accusations against Pruitt.

The women, who testified Pruitt molested them as girls in the 1960s and '70s, have been notified that church investigators are powerless to proceed after Pruitt died Aug. 12 at 88. Pruitt had denied allegations.

Some of the women told *The Dallas Morning News* they are disappointed and worry that the denomination might not be willing to re-examine its policies and safeguards in abuse cases without being sued.

"It feels like they're just dropping the ball," Pamela Pritchard, one of six original accusers who said last fall that Pruitt molested them in Africa, where their parents did mission work with him, said. "It feels to me like a cover-up, and the church is going to close up and cover it back up once again."

But the Rev. David Wasserman, administrator of the denomination's regional governing body, known as Grace Presbytery, said the church wants "to do what it can to care for its children and to take a look at procedures, practices, policies," he said. "Exactly how extensive the church will go, I can't say."

Several of the women said that they had been contacted about a possible meeting with church leaders this fall.

At least 11 women have accused Pruitt of abusing them as girls in the 1960s and '70s. Most say the abuse occurred in Africa but at least three allege that he molested them in the Highland Park area.

# Memorials honor storm victims

GALVESTON (AP) — When a monster hurricane hit Galveston island in 1900, residents were caught off guard as the tides surged and winds roared. With no time to flee or plan, about 8,000 people died.

As the 100-year anniversary of the nation's worst natural disaster approaches, residents have started planning well in advance to honor those who faced the Sept. 8, 1900, storm.

"It was such a defining moment in our history," Betty Massey, director of the Galveston Historical Foundation, said. "People want to connect themselves to the past, to learn more about the tragedy."

For 20 months, a committee of residents has been plotting a mas-

sive commemoration not only of the tragedy, but of the city's rebirth and rebuilding.

Massey said the group wants to show how islanders rallied together amid all the destruction.

One project, backed by the Galveston Commission for the Arts, is acquiring a sculpture of a man, woman and daughter to stand on the seawall.

"We felt the city needed a place where people could go to remember the survivors of the storm," Massey told *The Galveston County Daily News*. "The only one we have right now is a large rock. We wanted to create a place to remember them."

Also planned is a memorial service at Kermit Courville Stadium

and plaques for all built homes that withstood the storm.

The Galveston County Historical Museum plans a disaster storm memorabilia.

Museum director Alice said any time the storm gets publicity, the museum sees a flood of donations.

The museum already received one of its more impressive donations, a governmental award to a man who saved more than 100 lives on the island.

Of course, some of the items are slightly odd.

One woman contacted the museum to donate a pair of pants that she said her mother was wearing during the storm.

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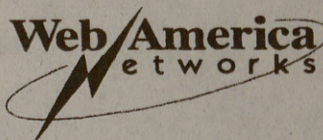
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