



# Survivors recall tragic 1921 Tulsa Race Riot

Jim Hickey

OAK BLUFFS, Mass. — Over the years, Martha's Vineyard has largely served as an early vacation spot for African Americans, as well as a forum for public discussion among some of the most influential black scholars and leaders in the nation.

Such was the case last week during an event titled, "A Gathering of Elders: Sheroes, Heroes and Survivors," a wide-ranging conversation on topics ranging from Hurricane Katrina to the 1921 Tulsa, Okla., Race Riot.

Charles J. Ogletree Jr. — a seasonal island resident and a professor at Harvard Law School who founded the school's Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice — led the panel discussion, which included three survivors of the 1921 riots, all over the age of 90.

Ogletree is the lead counsel in lawsuits against the city of Tulsa demanding that victims of the riots and their families be compensated. The

plaintiffs are not seeking reparations per se, but rather the establishment of educational and health care resources for current residents of the area most severely affected by the riot.

Even though the riot killed between 40 and several hundred people — estimates vary — most of whom were black, left over 10,000 people homeless and destroyed 1,200 homes by fire, the tragedy had been practically forgotten about until this decade.

In 2006, the federal district and appellate courts dismissed the suit, citing a statute of limitations. In April 2007, Ogletree appealed to the U.S. Congress to pass a bill extending the statute of limitations for the case. Congress has yet to do so.

Ogletree said it was important for African Americans to remember the Tulsa Race Riot, not only to commemorate those who suffered and lost their lives, but also as a warning that such a tragedy must never happen again.

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Joined by Harvard Law School's Charles J. Ogletree Jr. (left), 104-year-old Otis Clark — a survivor of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot — threw out the ceremonial first pitch before the Boston Red Sox' Aug. 31 game against the Baltimore Orioles at Fenway Park. Clark and other survivors took part in a panel discussion on Martha's Vineyard last week. (Phoebe Sexton / Boston Red Sox photo)

# Rate setting factors take center stage in auto insurance plan

Dan Devine

Calling it the next step in an "ongoing and evolving process," state Insurance Commissioner Nonnie S. Burnes last week released draft regulations to govern managed competition in the Massachusetts automobile insurance market.

The proposed rules, part of the

most drastic changes to the state's system in the last 30 years, set a framework for transitioning to a system where insurers set their own rates. Previously, the commissioner determined the rate that all insurance companies must charge.

The regulations provide for a one-year transition period from April 1, 2008, when the change goes into

effect, through March 31, 2009. Burnes retains broad authority to strike down rates she deems unfairly excessive or discriminatory.

"This is an ongoing and evolving process that we are going to keep track of, because we expect that the market will continue to be competitive and we're going to be regulating it with that objective," Burnes said in

an interview.

The regulations identify a driver's experience and driving record as the primary factors that insurers must consider in setting premium rates, and prohibit insurers from considering certain socioeconomic factors in setting rates and choosing whether to cover drivers.

"I have repeatedly expressed my extreme skepticism about socioeconomic factors and my belief that prohibiting their use is good public policy and beneficial for consumers," Burnes said in a statement announcing the regulations.

But consumer advocates argue that the plan still leaves the door open for insurers to use discrimina-

tory practices that could hurt some drivers — particularly those with low incomes and who live in urban areas.

In a joint statement, the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MassPIRG) and the Center for Insurance Research (CIR) expressed concern that some drivers will be made unnecessarily vulnerable.

"While MassPIRG and the Center for Insurance Research are pleased that the Commissioner has banned some unfair rating and underwriting factors, [she] has opened the door to the use of a slew of other unfair factors that have nothing to do with a consumer's driving record," the

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The Boston Neighborhood Basketball League (BNBL) recently held its 38th annual championship games at the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center. The winners of the boys' 15 and under division were Team Shelburne from the Shelburne Community Center in Roxbury. The players: Jordan Rodger, Marvin Mungo, Tyreek Allen, Benjamin Patrick, E.J. Rodgers,

Marshall Kennedy, Donald Bland, Marcus Mitchell, Reggie Edge, Stephon Braithwaite, Stanley Green and Amani Gill. The head coach is Darryl Bishop, and the assistant coach is Lee Gill. Joining the team are "Coach" Willie Maye and BNBL Program Manager Woodley Auguste. (Photo courtesy of Boston Centers for Youth & Families)

# Hub teacher breaking language barriers

Michelle Sedaca

EAST LONDON, South Africa — Speaking rapidly in Spanish, Glenda Colón emphasized the importance of a balanced diet.

"To be healthy, you should drink milk and eat lots of fruits and vegetables each day," said the 26-year-old fourth-grade Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) teacher.

The class stared back blankly. Colón repeated the sentence. This time, though, she enunciated her words in a slower cadence, pointing to a colorful image of fruits and vegetables.

"Does anyone understand what I just said?" she asked in English.

Several people nodded their heads and offered their interpreta-

tion. Although they didn't fluently translate the piece, they got the gist.

Perhaps more important, Colón's "students" — a group of about 25 South African teachers filling a classroom at A.W. Barnes Primary School, an under-resourced elementary school in East London, South Africa — got a taste for what it feels like to be students that don't understand the language in which they are being taught.

The educators gathered at A.W. Barnes to learn basic strategies for teaching English learners that speak primarily isiXhosa and Afrikaans. Colón, who for the past three years has taught at the Orchard Garden Pilot School in Roxbury, led a two-

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