



New York Police Detectives Marc Cooper (left), Gescard Isnora (center) and Michael Oliver talk to media at a news conference, Friday, April 25, 2008, in New York. The three detectives were acquitted of all charges last Friday in the 50-shot killing of unarmed groom-to-be Sean Bell on his wedding day in November 2006, a case that put the New York Police Department at the center of another dispute involving allegations of excessive firepower. (AP photo/Dima Gavrysh)

# NYPD officers cleared in Bell death, Sharpton blasts judge

Tom Hays

NEW YORK — The police officers wept in joy and choked up with emotion after hearing that they had been acquitted in the 50-shot killing of an unarmed man on his wedding day. For them, it was a rush of relief after 17 agonizing months of facing the burden of criminal prosecution and the prospect of a long stint in prison. But their worries are far from over. The Justice Department is still considering whether to bring a federal case against the officers, and a

civil lawsuit still looms. And civil rights leaders have no intention of letting interest in the case fizzle. The Rev. Al Sharpton last Saturday blasted the judge who ruled in the Sean Bell case and said a jury should have been empaneled. "If people are on the public payroll, doing their public duty, they should be required to face a public jury," Sharpton said to cheers and applause at his National Action Network headquarters. Relatives of the man killed and two men wounded in the 2006 shooting sat in rows behind him. Sharpton said the victims were wrongly portrayed as dishonest.

"These three families have had to endure and have had to abide through the most, in my judgment, scandalous denigration of victims that I've seen in my lifetime," he said. Sharpton last Friday said he planned to organize "economic withdrawal" and "civil disobedience" that could involve going to jail, marching on Wall Street, and at police headquarters. "We strategically know how to stop the city so people stand still and realize that you do not have the right to shoot down unarmed, innocent civilians," Sharpton told a crowd at NYPD, continued to page 11

# Miles from home

For Somali-born Charlestown track star, running is a way of life

Daniela Caride

Omar Aden has been on the run for quite some time. It started in Somalia, when he was 6 months old and his family was escaping a civil war that killed an estimated 1 million people. Many of his family members were among the dead. After leaving his homeland, Omar lived in a refugee camp in Kenya until he found shelter in Ethiopia, where he stayed until immigrating to the United States. Now a tall, skinny, spirited 17-year-old enjoying life here with his reunited family, Omar doesn't have

to run from conflicts anymore. Instead, he runs to win, and, most important, toward something he never had in Somalia — a future. Just three years after his first official race, the Charlestown High School junior was named an All-American in track and field, and now ranks as the fourth-best high school miler in America. "Track is mental," he says. "You use your mind a lot." When Omar arrived at Charlestown High three years ago, track coach Kristyn Hughes saw his potential. But as a freshman, Omar trained and competed with little

enthusiasm. "I was not all that excited. I thought it was really hard," he says, his English now nearly flawless. On the track, everything was new to Omar. "He had never been a part of anything like that, running-wise," Hughes says. "Right away he excelled in the city meets, but there was nobody pushing his time up, so he did not qualify for the [state meets]." **A friendly push** During his first year in the U.S., Omar ran by himself for two hours every weekday. But that wasn't enough to win every meet. Things started to change when Omar made some new friends. In the spring of 2006, Ahmed Ali en- Omar, continued to page 12

# City to boost biz deals for minorities, women

Jin-ah Kim

With little fanfare, Mayor Thomas M. Menino recently took a small step forward in his attempt to increase city business with minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBEs).

The mayor in late March proposed an ordinance that would require city departments to aggressively pursue bids from underrepresented businesses to perform certain city work. The measure seeks to address the "continuing negative impact" of conditions identified in a 2003 independent study, which concluded that MWBEs have not been able "to equitably participate in the receipt of city contracts under \$25,000," specifically within the areas of architectural and engineering professional services.

"Nondiscrimination alone ... is not sufficient to maximize economic opportunity for all residents of Boston," Menino wrote to city councilors in a March 31 letter. "The need exists for purposeful steps to be taken to ensure that both minority- and women-owned businesses

are utilized by the city to a more substantial and equitable extent."

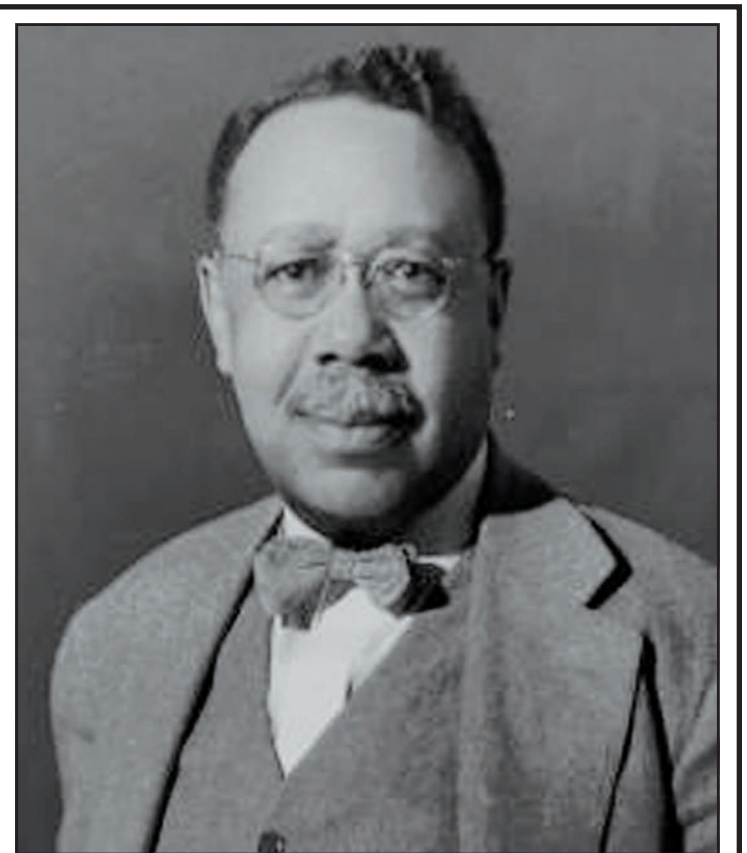
Menino's measure, however, stops far short of reinstating the city's minority set-aside program. The mayor, anxious about potential court challenges, ended that program five years ago.

At the time, Menino said the 25-year-old Minority and Women Business Enterprise Program was unlikely to withstand a court challenge because the city could not prove that minority- and women-owned businesses were at a disadvantage in the Boston business market and needed the aid such preferential treatment

*"We kept our programs from '89 to 2003. No one appreciates that anymore."*

— Brooke Woodson

provided. Until it was discontinued in 2003, the MWBE Program required city departments to make best-faith efforts to contract a minimum of 15 percent of their business with certified minority business enterprises (MBEs) and 5 percent with certified women's business enterprises (WBEs). The program aimed to "promote economic opportunities for small minority- and women-owned businesses through outreach, *Business, continued to page 8*



Dr. William S. Hinton, the first African American professor at Harvard Medical School and an internationally renowned researcher on sexually transmitted diseases, was posthumously honored by Gov. Deval Patrick on Monday, as the Department of Public Health's State Laboratory Institute was renamed in Hinton's honor. For more, see our story on pg. 17. (Photo courtesy of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health)

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