

# Sports

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## New faces of the Grambling Tigers

GRAMBLING - This time last year, there were a lot of question marks surrounding the Grambling State football team entering the season as the Tigers learned a new offensive system under then first-year offensive coordinator James Spady. Those questions were immediately erased as the Tigers had a successful season on the gridiron as several players set career highs on the field en route to an appearance in the 2007 SWAC Championship Game.

As the 2008 season approaches, Spady and his offensive staff once again face a new set of questions as Grambling enters the season looking to replace several key playmakers that departed after the 2007 campaign.

Beginning his second season at the helm of the Tiger offense, Spady cited familiarity with his players as one of the biggest assets entering the season. "I have a different feel for our team

this year as last year I didn't know what a lot of the players were capable of," he said. "I have a real good feel of what we have returning and that makes it easier to work in the new players we brought in."

On the offensive side of the ball, the Tigers are currently in transition as practically every position is up for grabs entering the season due to the loss of key starters in 2007.

"Every position is available," he said. "You have to line the players up and give them an opportunity to showcase their talents early on. As we get further along in camp and players get familiar with the playbook and techniques, we'll begin to narrow it down to the players who can help us right away versus the ones who may not be able to."

Outside of the quarterback race, another key area of concern offensively is who'll emerge at wide receiver to replace

all-time Grambling State record holder Clyde Edwards. For the first time since 2002, the Tigers don't return a receiver who has caught more than 20 receptions in a season.

"When you lose a guy like Clyde you're going to be apprehensive about whether or not his skills can be replaced in the lineup," Spady said.

"The key is knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the guys who are returning as the skills Clyde possessed may need to be filled by two players to match that same amount of skill. Once you accomplish that, then you work on tailoring those players around your offense scheme."

Grambling will practices at 8 a.m. at the Robinson Stadium Support Facility Practice Field.

## Charles Barkley tips well, pays busboy's tuition to Temple University

By J.E. Skeets

Charles Barkley is giving his money away again. No, no, no, don't judge! This time, instead of feeding quarters into some slot machine or doubling-down on 14 at the blackjack table, Barkley's picked up the tuition for a busboy at a restaurant in Philly. From the Philadelphia Daily News:

"Sir Charles told [Christian] Abate he would like to help him with his tuition, and Abate wasn't sure how to respond. Barkley didn't give him much time, telling Abate that he had the length of Barkley's meal to decide. Abate wisely accepted.

"He's a nice kid," Barkley said of

Abate on Friday. "He was working with kids, I loved that he wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted to help him," Barkley told us by phone between stops on a flight to Reno where he was making a speech.

While the little-more-than-15% tip may seem particularly special, it's not so unusual for Sir Charles. In fact, the lovable goof has given at least \$3 million to schools and education in his home state of Alabama. He's a giver, not a golfer.

As SportsByBrooks so eloquently put it, Barkley is just like Robin Hood: "He tries to take from the rich, but since he's not very good



Charles Barkley

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## Education

### School trustees blast ouster decision as 'racist'

HOUSTON (AP) - Trustees of the historically black and financially troubled North Forest school district Saturday blasted the state's decision to disband the school board, calling the order racist and unwarranted.

School board president Tobie Ross Jr. said the current seven-member board is "the best" in the northeast Houston district in many years, and trustees say they planned to file a formal appeal.

The 8,000-student district has had a state-appointed financial conservator on site since March 2007, and an academic conservator joined him in November. The district is \$12 million in

debt, Texas Education Agency spokeswoman Debbie Ratcliffe said.

Seventy percent of the district's enrollment last year was black and 29 percent was Hispanic. All the trustees are black.

"I feel that this decision is biased, racist, political and disrespectful to this board and all stakeholders of this predominant black school district," Ross said at a news conference.

State education commissioner Robert Scott announced his decision to appoint a board of managers Thursday. The next day, new school accountability ratings showed that North

Forest maintained its overall "academically acceptable" rating and cuts it number of "unacceptable" schools from five to two.

Four campuses earned "recognized" ratings, the state's second-highest status, while the five others were "acceptable." Trustees questioned why the TEA would want to remove them when the district is improving academically.

Ratcliffe said the agency was pleased the ratings improved, but said the decision was "largely because of the financial status of the district and the governance issues in the district."

Ratcliffe denied the claims that the agency was discriminating against a minority district.

"Race didn't enter into our decision," Ratcliffe told the Houston Chronicle. "If anything, it would be racist if we didn't act based on the color of the students in the district. Our decision was based on their financial situation and the governance of the board, not on the race of the students."

The ouster of the seven elected trustees hinges on approval from the U.S. Department of Justice. Ratcliffe said the TEA expects approval from the federal government, and the agency has asked for a ruling by Oct. 10.

## After Dallas DA's death, 19 convictions are undone

DALLAS (AP) - As district attorney of Dallas for an unprecedented 36 years, Henry Wade was the embodiment of Texas justice.

A strapping 6-footer with a square jaw and a half-chewed cigar clamped between his teeth, The Chief, as he was known, prosecuted Jack Ruby. He was the Wade in Roe v. Wade. And he compiled a conviction rate so impressive that defense attorneys ruefully called themselves the 7 Percent Club.

But now, seven years after Wade's death, The Chief's legacy is taking a beating.

Nineteen convictions -- three for murder and the rest involving rape or burglary -- won by Wade and two successors who trained under him have been overturned after DNA evidence exonerated the defendants. About 250 more cases are under review.

No other county in America -- and almost no state, for that matter -- has freed more innocent people from prison in recent years than Dallas County, where Wade was DA from 1951 through 1986.

## Former politician wants indictment dismissed

DALLAS (AP) - A federal judge is being asked to drop a corruption indictment against former Dallas Mayor Pro-tem Don Hill, who says he's a victim of racism.

Dallas television station KTVT reports Hill's attorney Ray Jackson filed motions that claim Hill was selectively prosecuted because he's black and a Democrat.

Hill was among 16 people, 12 of them black, who were named in federal corruption indictments in September. They are accused in a bribery and extortion scheme within Dallas City Hall.

Jackson says the Justice Department failed to screen the grand jurors for racial bias.

Federal prosecutors are not commenting on the motions.

Current District Attorney Craig Watkins, who in 2006 became the first black elected chief prosecutor in any Texas county, said that more wrongly convicted people will go free.

"There was a cowboy kind of mentality and the reality is that kind of approach is archaic, racist, elitist and arrogant," said Watkins, who is 40 and never worked for Wade or met him.

But some of those who knew Wade say the truth is more complicated than Watkins' summation.

"My father was not a racist. He didn't have a racist bone in his body," said Kim Wade, a lawyer in his own right. "He was very competitive."

Moreover, former colleagues -- and even the Innocence Project of Texas, which is spearheading the DNA tests -- credit Wade with preserving the evidence in every case, a practice that allowed investigations to be reopened and inmates to be freed. (His critics say, of course, that he kept the evidence for possible use in further prosecutions, not to help defendants.)

The new DA and other Wade detractors say the cases won under Wade were riddled with shoddy investigations, evidence was ignored and defense lawyers were kept in the dark. They note that the promotion system under Wade rewarded prosecutors for high conviction rates.

In the case of James Lee Woodard -- released in April after 27 years in prison for a murder DNA showed he didn't commit -- Wade's office withheld from defense attorneys photographs of tire tracks at the crime scene that didn't match Woodard's car.

"Now in hindsight, we're finding lots of places where detectives in those cases, they kind of trimmed the

corners to just get the case done," said Michelle Moore, a Dallas County public defender and president of the Innocence Project of Texas. "Whether that's the fault of the detectives or the DA's, I don't know."

John Stickels, a University of Texas at Arlington criminology professor and a director of the Innocence Project of Texas, blames a culture of "win at all costs."

"When someone was arrested, it was assumed they were guilty," he said. "I think prosecutors and investigators basically ignored all evidence to the contrary and decided they were going to convict these guys."

A Democrat, Wade was first elected DA at age 35 after three years as an assistant DA, promising to "stem the rising tide of crime." Wade already had spent four years as an FBI agent, served in the Navy during World War II and did a stint as a local prosecutor in nearby Rockwall County, where he grew up on a farm, the son of a lawyer. Wade was one of 11 children; six of the boys went on to become lawyers.

He was elected 10 times in all. He and his cadre of assistant DAs -- all of them white men, early on -- consistently reported annual conviction rates above 90 percent. In his last 20 years as district attorney, his office won 165,000 convictions, the Dallas Morning News reported when he retired.

In the 1960s, Wade secured a murder conviction against Ruby, the Dallas nightclub owner who shot Lee Harvey Oswald after Oswald's arrest in the assassination of President Kennedy. Ruby's conviction was overturned on appeal, and he died before Wade could retry him.

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