

The Post and Courier

FOUNDED 1803  WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

March 5–8, 2005

INVESTIGATIVE SERIES

TARNISHED BADGES

How problem cops jump from department to department despite misconduct and criminal behavior

By Ron Menchaca and Glenn Smith

The Post and Courier · Charleston, South Carolina

Awards

- ◆ National Headliner Award for Investigative Reporting, Third Place, Press Club of Atlantic City, 2006
- ◆ Taylor/Tomlin Award for Investigative Journalism, University of South Carolina, 2006
- ◆ Judson Chapman Public Service Award, First Place, South Carolina Press Association, 2006
- ◆ Series of News Articles, First Place, South Carolina Press Association, 2006

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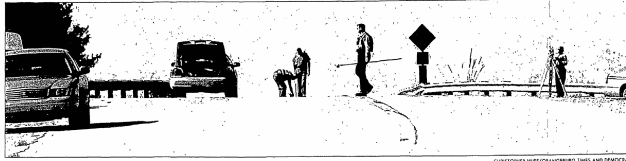
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PART ONE · Saturday, March 5, 2005



A Highway Patrol man investigates a fatal October 2002 collision. John D. Stramon, 41, of Borman, was killed when a Santee police officer driven by Santee Police Officer Brian Brown struck his minivan.

Officer faces charge in crash that killed man

BY RON MENCHACA AND GLEN SMITH
Of The Post and Courier Staff

Brian Brown infirm found himself on the wrong side of the law, until he was hired to enforce it. Since becoming a cop four years ago, Brown has been charged with killing a man, accused of assaulting a woman and even releasing a street animal in the middle of the night.

But Brown never got off this by looking over Brown's employment records at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy in Columbia. According to the academy, which regulates police training in the state, Brown, 34, is an officer in good standing with the Santee Police Department.



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His attorney illustrates just how little the state sometimes knows about the law enforcement careers of its men and women. It's apparent to mention: Brown first worked as a police officer in Summerville where he remained less than a year.

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Investigators suspect Summerville officer fabricated story of shooting

BY GLEN SMITH AND RON MENCHACA
Of The Post and Courier Staff

Summerville police officers are seen in video from an officer's camera May 20, 2002, the date on the present to cover of the scene of the shooting.

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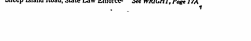
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How problem cops keep their badges in S.C.

BADGES From Page 17A

Despite indications that the officer involved in similar incidents while working in other areas departments.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT NEW
North Charleston police took a chance on Edward Frazier in 1992 after he was pressured to resign from the Darkester County Sheriff's Office over unexplained reasons.

Like this a year later, Frazier shot and killed a close friend and fellow officer in a drive-by light over a bag of corn chips at a store.

After his arrest, stories emerged about just recklessness on the job. Frazier was charged with the officer's homicide and took the officer's name plates while they were wearing them. He also fired his pistol on one occasion during his time in the police station.

North Charleston police didn't notify the academy of Frazier's past. He was assigned to the academy about the fatal shooting. A form by the department indicated nearly two years after the shooting, state-of-the-art Frazier, who was a victim of manslaughter, had been suspended without pay for chronic tardiness.

Consider the case of Randall Price, who continued to lead work as a top over though he had been fired from his three police jobs.

The McCormick County Sheriff's Office named Price in 1991 for an incident in which he shot a man. Wagoner police dumped him a year later for manslaughter.

The following year, the Alkon County Sheriff's Office fired him after he was arrested on a criminal offense without charge.

After Price completed a court program that wiped the charges from his record, the Burnetown Police Department hired him. The department notified the state that it had checked the officer's references and named he was a "very



Charleston dockworker Richard Brown says State Park Authority police officer Patrick O'Neal placed a gun to his neck and later sprayed him in the eyes with pepper spray while he was being taken to jail.

good and dedicated officer," said the academy of Price. Wagoner, who continued to lead the two departments willing to hire him despite a questionable criminal history.

He was fired from one department, and two others, where he once worked, told the state they would not rehire him. He was arrested repeatedly while working for Martin County, but enforcement was not pursued.

Nations efforts to push such state's list of officers who have been stripped of their badges have been slow to develop, with only South Carolina, in part because of its large number of police officers.

State officials say they would like to participate eventually, but right now, they can't even get information on their own.

Local police agencies on the academy's records to determine if officers they hire have had problems at other departments.

But those same agencies are often reluctant to tell the academy about their own transgressions, because of a concern that it will become a public record.

State departments don't have the whole system falls. Some departments don't have the same thing happens all over the country, forcing the police agencies to small-town, non-officer departments.

States have varying abilities to deal with the problem. Most, including South Carolina, have the authority to take away a police officer's certification, but enforcement varies widely.

O'Neal was arrested for assault and sexual battery in June 2000 after a Mount Pleasant bar where he worked had been raided. O'Neal was never given a job, but had a problem out on Folly Beach, the chief said.

O'Neal received a written report, but there was no record to file the state of the incident or the charges.

The charges were erased from his criminal record after O'Neal completed a court program for first-time offenders. O'Neal says he acted in self-defense.

In July 2003, O'Neal landed in trouble again after police said he allowed a friend to get his citizenship panel from a car during a home party.

He fired was arrested after firing the gun, and O'Neal was called before the superior to explain the incident.

In a recent interview with The Post and Courier, O'Neal denied firing his friend's permission to get the gun. He said he did nothing wrong.

Chief Small didn't see it that way. He said he was prepared to resign first. With O'Neal gone, the department decided to deny an internal investigation before conducting any findings.

Small notified the academy of this and stated as a man that he would restore O'Neal. The academy, however, never found that incident and did not flag O'Neal as a potential problem.

Small said he never mentioned that to the state. Not that it mattered: The State Police Authority didn't even allow to review O'Neal's record before offering him a job.

For officials who felt comfortable hiring O'Neal in December 2000, it was because of a recommendation by Ed O'Neil, a former police chief who now recruits and screens police applicants for North Charleston.

Small disagrees that O'Neil couldn't fill the requirement. He said O'Neil was a pretty good fit, but had a problem out on Folly Beach, the chief said.

OFF THE BOOKS
The records after he was hired by department in December 2000, O'Neal was under investigation again, the law firm allegedly hired by the on Brown, the dockworker.

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One more trip to the beach.

When Clara, mother of four, came to our annual home by the beach, she was told, "My family's favorite place in the whole world is the beach. We've had our first time here. So worth the family to have a moment to relax on the beach. We want to be together. Anytime you can. We'll be there for you. The 'Simply Best' program, every detail home and lawn care. We have a brand new home in Conway in one convenient location. At Carolina, we believe that every life is unique, and every dream should be met. We welcome life.

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Football Players bring timeless
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The Post and Courier

THE SOUTH'S OLDEST DAILY NEWSPAPER

March 6, 2005 Charleston, S.C.

SUNDAY

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TOP NEWS

Food changes can be recipe for disaster

Pages for breakfast each morning, believing it was safe to let special diets slide on, which required her to stay away from foods containing wheat.

Woman says wheat in cereal caused her health to deteriorate

Virginia Reynolds lay in her hospital bed, straining to just more than 100 pounds and getting even thinner. Doctors searched her body for signs of symptoms, but none were found.

Reynolds, a James Island resident, "I had no idea." The normally 130-pound woman ate all through the winter and spring, usually eating oatmeal, oatmeal flakes and oatmeal. She had a daily bowl of cereal. One day she had a bowl of cereal, she ate it, and she learned that her favorite cereal had essentially been poisoning her.

She stopped eating it right away, but the damage had been done, but by 10, 100 by now.



Virginia Reynolds, who has eaten oatmeal for years, says she became ill from eating. Cereals from other brands were added to the cereal ingredients.

Neighbors recall child

One day after a 1-year-old Donald Torres was killed, neighbors around the neighborhood were looking for the child. The community is mourning the loss of one of its children by holding fast to the others. 1B

Students switch schools

Students from struggling, high-poverty schools have transferred to Maritime Middle under the No Child Left Behind law. But not everyone is happy about it. Some parents fear students will bring problems to Maritime. 1B

Living with pain

When Jane Ustinger was hit by a car in 1991, she endured a month of debilitating pain that would have kept her from working. Her doctors believed she might have a rare form of fibromyalgia, but she was told to live with it. 1E

18th-century treasures

Thomas Bennett learned the love of antiques from his grandfather, and now he is a passionate collector. He recently went to the 18th-century British, French, Russian, American and Swedish shows. 1B

INSIDE

Monday

An underfunded, understaffed state agency struggles to keep pace with some 14,000 S.C. law enforcement officers.

INSIDE

Classified burglar lists and other information are available to the public. Police officers remain on duty despite being suspended with no pay. 1A

INSIDE

A 4-year-old boy was injured by a dog in a park. 1A

INSIDE

The beauty of Belize in Belize, rough roads lead to places you'd never find. Two things make it ideal for American travelers: English is the official language, and the exchange rate is fixed at two Belizean dollars to one American dollar. 1E

WEATHER

Modest sunny. High 65, Low 41, 12B

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A frustrating system



North Charleston Police Chief Jon Zumoff promotes one of his officers. Zumoff took over the department in 2001 and has little tolerance for misconduct. He says he is frustrated by a system that lets other agencies quickly hire officers he has fired.

How problem cops keep getting hired

BY GLENN SMITH AND BOON BENCHACHA OF The Post and Courier Staff

North Charleston Police Chief Jon Zumoff promotes one of his officers. Zumoff took over the department in 2001 and has little tolerance for misconduct. He says he is frustrated by a system that lets other agencies quickly hire officers he has fired.

Exploiting loopholes

Some police departments can't afford to be choosy about whom they hire. Other police agencies ignore South Carolina's reporting requirements. Some officers who commit crimes use pardons and court programs to avoid capture records. Some officers resign to avoid back marks on their records.

of the right to wear a badge with any police department in the Palmetto State.

Within a couple of weeks, however, Reeves was in the back seat of a police car in Bluffton, a rural community in Berkeley County.

The town's police chief knew of the allegation against Reeves but needed an officer for the Bluffton department and was willing to take a chance on one who came trained and ready to work.

JK Harris: Under fire in court, by regulators

JK Harris has grown by leaps and bounds, cropping up in the ring when taxpayers get involved with the IRS. But now the North Charleston company finds itself in the crosshairs of regulators and lawyers from coast to coast.

According to its executives, Harris is as much in blame as any of its own internal problems.

Doing business with the IRS. Many in Bluffton, 1D

John K. Harris.

Quilon Coleman of JK Harris helps developers incorporate and out problems with the IRS. Some taxpayers, however, claim the firm makes promises it isn't keeping.

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BA/Sunday, March 6, 2005

TARNISHED BADGES

The Post and Courier

Why did a convicted burglar get a job as a police officer? Because neither the college nor the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy, where Boatwright received police training, ever bothered to examine his background.



Former military policeman Reginal Boatwright was hired as a public policy officer by the Citadel in 2003 despite burglary convictions and a bad conduct discharge.

Academy, Citadel overlooked criminal record

BY RON MENCHACA
AND GLENN SMITH
Of The Post and Courier Staff

All Reginal Boatwright wanted was a chance to prove he'd learned from his crime. But he couldn't get a break until he cleared a law officer's background check. "The convicted criminal and former military policeman led the way into a police job at the Citadel in 2003 and patrolled the streets for a few weeks before a former girlfriend advised school officials. How did a convicted burglar get a job as a police officer?" Neither the college nor the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, where Boatwright received police training, ever bothered to examine his background. "The state blames the Citadel for not conducting an adequate background check. The Citadel says the state should have caught the discrepancy when it accepted him into the academy. Boatwright, 31, regrets that his law enforcement career was short-lived, but he's returned to his job as a living a fare. "It was dumb on my part," he said recently. "I want to work every day doing what they would find out."

Boatwright's military record is a mixed bag. He served eight months in a military prison for the crime and was booted from the service with a bad conduct discharge in 1988. Citadel officials might never have known about Boatwright's past if an old girlfriend hadn't called and told them. "I had never probably talked right along," said the school's Public Safety Department Chair, William Bligh. "He would have talked us into it." The Citadel hired Boatwright in December 2003. By then, he'd been on the job for a few weeks. "It was dumb on my part. I want to work every day wondering when they would find out."

College officials concede that the military school does not verify the military records of police applicants. "That might be a good idea," Bligh says. In the meantime, that responsibility rests with the state academies, he said. "It's the Citadel's responsibility to do a background check on the applicant," Bligh says. Boatwright denies that he fudged the paperwork. He does, however, admit that he lied on his employment application when he reported the burglary conviction. "I'm not sure if I lied or not," he says. "I just didn't want to get into a military school."

Bligh came across that same specific sentence issue while applying for law enforcement jobs in his native Lowcountry. He told each of them the truth about his conviction and each time got the same reaction: "They were not interested." The rejections reminded him that the crime would always haunt him, and he began to wonder what could have been if he hadn't gotten in with the wrong crowd and threw away a promising military career. His friends were abating competitors in the military installation. Boatwright enjoyed tinkering with computers and he agreed to take a look at the institution to determine if he had what it takes to be a police officer. "I had some ideas about it, but I didn't know what I was getting into," he says. "I had some ideas about it, but I didn't know what I was getting into."

The S.C. Criminal Justice Academy trained and certified Reginal Boatwright, unaware of his criminal record. Boatwright was named leader of his training class once it showed addressing his former conduct of production. "You have to look at what I've done since," he said. "I'm a new person." Lying was his only option, he said. It got him a job in the store, and once he was inside, he tried to prove he belonged. He led his training class at the academy and was asked to address his classmates at the graduation ceremony. "I had some ideas about it, but I didn't know what I was getting into," he says. "I had some ideas about it, but I didn't know what I was getting into."

Violent incidents haven't sidelined police officer

BY GLENN SMITH
AND RON MENCHACA
Of The Post and Courier Staff

Eula Richards stopped trusting police the day an officer pulled her brother to death inside the Charleston police station's holding area. She thought officer Rowland Gourdine would get up on his feet after falling but brother 18 years ago. Instead, Gourdine was allowed to remain in law enforcement. He continues to find police work, even after being accused of severely injuring another prisoner during a jailhouse confrontation four years ago. "I don't know if you're a police officer or not, but I know that there are people in here who are afraid of you," Richards said. "I think he's just too desperate to be out there."



The two men struggled and Gourdine hit his brother. Gourdine admitted that he simply couldn't remember the beating. An expert defense witness testified that officers can suffer from a loss of memory perception or memory in high-stress situations. "After deliberating 11 hours, the jury acquitted Gourdine, sending him the way to a police job. That's exactly what he did in July 1989 when he was hired to police the town of Andrews in Georgetown County. Andrews said Gourdine grew angry,



Charleston Police Chief Rowland Gourdine swears on Dec. 14, 1987, after conviction by a jury that he pulled his brother to death in the police station's holding area.

draws police knew of Gourdine's problems in Charleston, but they considered the matter resolved with his acquittal. "There were some discussions about it, but the more there was, the more there was," Andrews said. "I don't know if you're a police officer or not, but I know that there are people in here who are afraid of you."

Andrews said Gourdine grew angry, rushed into the cell and slammed him face-first into a cot. Newton said his arm was twisted with such force that his collar bone broke with a loud snap, according to court documents. "I told him to hurt me, and he just kept me with the cuffs on," Newton said in a February 2004 deposition. "He didn't want to hurt me."

The Georgetown County Sheriff's Office was called in to investigate the incident, but no charges were filed. Newton said Gourdine and the town of Andrews in federal court, alleging negligence and a violation of his civil rights. In an affidavit filed in response to that lawsuit, Gourdine stated that he was forced to place Newton face-down on a mattress to remove his handcuffs because he refused to kneel, as instructed. He denied pulling or twisting Newton's arm.

Richards has progressed. With Gourdine's track record, the mother who says she is willing to take another chance on the man. "I don't know how they can keep him on the job," she said. "It's not a police job any more."

Newton received \$15,000 about the case was settled out of court in August. It was the second time Gourdine's official cost taxpayers money. In 1989, Halls County's family received \$50,000 to settle

Some agencies can't afford background checks

By [Name] Staff Writer

“The only way to stop the reduction of standards is to maintain salary and benefits.”

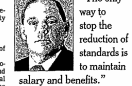


Photo by [Name]

DEPPER POKETS, DEPPER PROBS
Some departments spend thousands of dollars investigating would-be cops. DEPPER POKETS, DEPPER PROBS

Some departments spend thousands of dollars investigating would-be cops. DEPPER POKETS, DEPPER PROBS

Police officers who are about of the law have three ways to avoid bad marks on their records.

TARNISHED BADGES

“The only way to stop the reduction of standards is to maintain salary and benefits.”

The Post and Courier filed dozens of records of officers who are about of the law have three ways to avoid bad marks on their records.

Police officers who are about of the law have three ways to avoid bad marks on their records.

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MONDAY
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BUSINESS REVIEW
Mental Balance



MIND VS. MATTER
S.C. bills seek coverage for
mental illnesses. Section E

**School board wants
budget refined**

The budget proposal for next
year by Charleston school offi-
cials would increase spending by
more than \$10 million. School
board members say the result has
to cut costs before the board will
approve a spending plan. 1B

**Red wolves bidding
farewell to refuge**

Eighteen years after the first
breeding pair of red wolves was
set free on Fausch Island, the U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service is
preparing to end breeding programs
and removing the wolves. 1B

**Senator proposes
higher retirement age**

Republican Sen. Chuck Hagel
says with Americans living
longer, eligibility for full Social
Security benefits should start
at 67 years old. Democrats,
meanwhile, continue to oppose
private investment accounts. 3A

**Syria reported ready
to begin pullback**

The withdrawal from central
and northern Lebanon toward the
Beqaa Valley is scheduled for
July after a meeting in Damascus,
Syria, of the presidents of the
two countries. 7A

**No cure in sight for
tricky influenza virus**

Scientists try to trap the virus
in the virus to develop a vaccine,
but so far the virus remains
unpredictable. 1D

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Journalist disputes account of her shooting in Iraq

**Italian writer says
U.S. soldiers may
have targeted car**

BY ANGELA DOLANO
Associated Press

ROME—Left-wing journalist Chiara Sigona claimed American soldiers were on warning before they opened fire and said Sunday that she could not rule out that U.S. forces intentionally shot at the car carrying her to the Baghdad airport, wounding her and killing the Italian agent who had just met her.

incidents after a man in a military uniform shot at a car in Baghdad, she wrote for a center-right newspaper that routinely opposes U.S. policy in Iraq. In her account, she said the shooting would not affect Italy's support for the Bush administration.

**U.S. IN IRAQ
Parliament to
open March
16 in Iraq, 7A**

The White House called the shooting a "tragic accident" and requested its permission to investigate fully. Without backing up the claim, the 58-year-old journalist said she

believed it was possible she was targeted because the United States suspected her car was used to ferry her release.

The fact that the American don't want negotiations to free the hostages is known," she told the TG24 television by telephone, her voice broke and shaky. "The fact that they do everything to prevent the adoption of this practice to save the lives of people held hostage, everybody knows that. So I don't see why I should rule out that I could have been the target."

Signora, of the daily Il Manifesto, spoke after a meeting with Italian media on Sunday in Italian information offices in Rome. She said she was in Rome for the coffin arrival at the Vittoriano national monument in Rome. See B3A4, Page 6A



Italian media on Sunday in Italian information offices in Rome. She said she was in Rome for the coffin arrival at the Vittoriano national monument in Rome. See B3A4, Page 6A



**TARNISHED
BADGES**

Saturday

**South Carolina lets
problem cops jump from
department to department
despite misconduct and
criminal behavior.**

Sunday

**How troubled
officers and police-agency
spies alert the
public about tracking
and disciplining cops.**

Today

**An underfunded,
understaffed state agency
struggles to keep pace with
some 14,000 S.C. law
enforcement officers.**

INSIDE

**Officer lost his badge
in a fight with a suspect
in the S.C. 4A**

**Crash kills many
officers from performing
postpartum evaluations. 4A**

Missing the target



A cadet aims his point-blank weapon during training at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. The academy gives police cadets the weeks of law-enforcement training. In addition, it is responsible for tracking the state's 14,000 officers after they graduate. See B3A4, Page 6A

Academy struggles to track officers

BY RON MENCIACIA
AND CLYDE SMITH
Of The Post and Courier Staff

COLUMBIA—Workers at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy sift through a jumble of files on a recent afternoon in a futile effort to find a document explaining why a former sheriff's deputy had been fired.

The phone kept ringing, and someone had picked up the handset.

The room felt like a sauna as the workers sorted through stacks of forms and files. It had to be here somewhere, they said.

Suddenly, one worker paused and raised his fingers to his lips as the answer dawned on him. The document, he said, must have been in some manila file left unattended in a room down the hall. What was his supervisor's name?

"You know," he explained, the coos

that were mistakenly tossed out with the trash.

The gaffe is just one example of dozens in the state's system for tracking police officers. The academy is supposed to be a vital clearinghouse of law-enforcement officers' employment records for law-enforcement agencies to screen before making hiring decisions.

But it can take hours for the academy to piece together a com-

plete file on one officer because its records fill various overcrowded cabinets, computer disks and other miscellaneous files, some of which are cross-referenced.

Budget and staffing cuts and a lack of cooperation from the department it was created to oversee have stunted the academy's mission. Academy records are often incomplete, the only because of

Lacking oversight

The state fails to enforce disciplinary laws for cops

Most troubled officers who are required by the state get their badges back

The state fails to use its enforcement powers when police agencies ignore the rules

S.C. unlike most states, doesn't require mental screening for police officers

The state routinely certifies officers with documented histories of misconduct

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The state routinely certifies officers with documented histories of misconduct

State's black lawmakers pressing for bench diversity

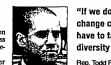
BY JOHN FRANK
Of The Post and Courier Staff

COLUMBIA—Shirley Robinson said she and other black lawmakers are pushing for a state judicial system that should be fair to a state judge who lost his seat.

Robinson said that of another black attorney, spurred aggressive black lawmakers to step an unprecedented walkout Feb. 2.

The protest was meant to highlight the lack of diversity on the state bench.

"I got 'white-washed,'" said David Mack, D-South Carolina, chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus, said she



Rob. Todd Rutherford, D-Columbia

black attorneys were as qualified as the white candidates selected.

"I understand their frustration," Mack said. "I'm not going to tell you I wasn't disappointed ... I think there is a problem that needs to be addressed."

This week, the House Judiciary Committee will begin debate on the first of several bills designed by black lawmakers to increase the number of black candidates in the judicial selection pool.

The bill would eliminate the

three-person cap on nominees for each judicial post. A similar measure passed the House previously but died in the Senate.

The committee's consideration of the measure in the latest development in a continuing dialogue on bench diversity.

Mack and House Speaker David Wildes discussed the issue last week, and the state's Supreme Court just passed it off briefly during a speech in a joint session of the General Assembly on Wednesday.

Black lawmakers, who are still deciding whether more drastic measures are needed, are wading

ing the bill's progress closely. "If we don't see the wheels of change coming around soon, we've got to take more action," said Rep. Todd Rutherford, D-Columbia.

"The lack of diversity in appointing judges is a problem that needs to be addressed," Mack said.

That's in a state with a 30 percent black population, Rutherford said.

Chief Justice John Tull said in her annual state-of-the-judiciary speech that the selection system "does not represent the diversity of South Carolina's population."

See B3C1H, Page 6A

Systems vary from state to state

BADGES from Page 1A

his police powers in one state from issuing a badge in another state, "an enforcement is like in the game," Ray Franklin, second in command at Maryland's police academy, said. "Every other profession has something like that."

Franklin is one of the architects of a national database aimed at sharing vital data on all certified officers. So far, only 10 states are members. The database includes the names of some 4,000 officers who have been barred from the profession.

South Carolina does not participate, despite the fact that officers have sought police work there after being barred in other states. In two or three examples, one manager to get hired and one did not.

Florida's discipline cases are decided by a 19-member commission of public chiefs, sheriffs and other law enforcement officials. Unlike South Carolina, where the discipline process is handled by academy staff behind closed doors, the Florida commission members are public and its decisions are posted on the Internet.

Georgia has a similar review board and allows its local police departments to access officer employment records over a secure Web site.

South Carolina is considering the creation of an advisory board that would consult with local law enforcement agencies and state officials on certification cases and plans to offer local departments limited access to different records over the Internet.

Doger L. Goldman, a law professor at the University of South Carolina, stated that police disciplinary systems for 30 years, and South Carolina is on the mark in some areas but missing in others. The state's ability to take away law enforcement powers, especially removing troubled cops from the streets, is stronger than in many states, he said.

States do have, however, when they have a two-pronged approach that not only focuses on ongoing prevention efforts but also takes them out of the profession in the first place. Goldman said.

The absence of a South Carolina law requiring psychological testing for law enforcement officers and the state's recent decision to quit offering that service is highlighted and creates a glaring hole in the screening process, Goldman said. "You need it on both ends when you are trying to deal with bad cops."

OPEN BORDERS

While many professions such as physicians and lawyers have a mechanism to keep bad apples from slipping back into the system, there is little to prevent a cop who has been stripped of

Journalist disputes U.S. account of shooting

IRAQ from Page 1A

did the news outlet get a reasonable payment, and he details how outraged about how authorities were her release.

An Italian cabinet minister said money likely changed hands. U.S. officials object to ransom payments or negotiation with kidnappers, claiming that only one American remained in a country where people have deeply opposed the war in Iraq, but it did not this weekend provide details like those that have drawn tens of thousands of people into the streets.

At least 10,000 people, however, lined up in the rain to pay the ransom to Nohad Callagi, the agent who died trying to shield Spresni from the American bullet.

In spite of an initial flag, the case lay in state at Rome's Vatican and national government, which houses the tomb of the unknown soldier. A state funeral was planned for today, and Callagi has been awarded the gold medal of valor posthumously. Callagi was struck in the temple a single round and died instantly, the ANSA news agency reported, sending doctors who did the autopsy.

Spresni, Italian consul general Dan Barlett said Sunday the shootings were an accident and that President

Black lawmakers seek more diversity on bench

BENCH from Page 1A

South Carolina is only one of two states in which judges are elected by the state Legislature.

But Sen. Willie Ross, a Democrat, said he thinks it is important to have more diversity on the bench. "I think it only makes sense to have some records of where citizens have been in the past," he said. "It only takes one bad fact, and one more officer to really bring an entire department."

Sen. Ben McChesney and Glenn Gandy, both Democrats, said they would like to see a commission to study the system before sharing career-damaging

Black lawmakers seek more diversity on bench

or deny that lawmakers are properly not voting for black cases.

L.S. Larry Johnson, a black Democrat, said he thinks it is important to have more diversity on the bench. "I think it only makes sense to have some records of where citizens have been in the past," he said. "It only takes one bad fact, and one more officer to really bring an entire department."

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"I don't think it is so much discrimination on the part of one or other types of relationships," he said.

As for changes needed, Robinson said he would like to see more diversity on the bench. "I think it only makes sense to have some records of where citizens have been in the past," he said. "It only takes one bad fact, and one more officer to really bring an entire department."

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FOLLOW-UP · Tuesday, March 8, 2005

FUN FERRETS
Mischievous pet gains popularity. 1D

LOYAL ROYALS
Diana fans protest Charles' wedding. 2A

GOING EASY?
Clemson handles stiffer academic rules. 1C

The Post and Courier

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TUESDAY

March 8, 2005

Windy with clouds yielding to sun. High 70. Low 32.

U.S. IN IRAQ
Political talks continue as Iraqi violence flares. 9A

NASA launches goals for next space ship
The Crew Exploration Vehicle would send astronauts back to the moon by 2015, and eventually, to Mars. A winning contract for the space vehicle is to be chosen in 2005. 1A

S.C. lawmakers want Royall on leave panel
South Carolina banker and former diplomat Robert V. Royall is embroiled in controversy over his role in the military which would help decide which military units should be closed or realigned, supporters say. 7B

Charleston dreams of filling field
Annoyance Field, where a public housing complex once stood, would become home to a football stadium, two hotels, a military school and public park in the waterfront area. 1B

Bush announces pick for ambassador's job
President Bush chose the hard-edged, conservative former State Dept. official John Bolton to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Senate Democrats quickly expressed dissatisfaction. 1A

Students get help to succeed in school
Schools such as Hanahan High are coming up with ways to help at-risk students and guide their learning progression. Students just finding a way to help a student pay for summer school is enough to make a difference. 1B

Stocks finish mixed in roller-coaster day
A top-level shakeup at Boeing and several other tech companies influenced the markets on Monday. The Dow Jones fell 10.52 to 10,524.46, while the Nasdaq composite index gained 19.89 to 2,292.15. 1B

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CORRECTIONS

ON THE WEB
A correction of the March 7, 2005 edition of the Post and Courier is available on our website at www.postandcourier.com.

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SYRIAN EXODUS UNDER WATCH



Syrian soldiers ride Monday on the back of an army truck filled with ammunition near the village of Sha in the mountainous west of Hama. Syrian President Bashar Assad and Lebanese President Ezzeddin al-Nabati, meeting in Damascus, announced that Syrian troops would pull back to Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley by the end of March.

U.S. rejects pullback, saying troops must leave Lebanon

BY HUSSEIN DARRUB
Associated Press

LEBANON — Syrian soldiers loaded trucks with furniture and other supplies and drove east from Lebanon Monday, the first sign of a withdrawal from the Bekaa Valley announced Monday. But its deadline was not their complete withdrawal, and Washington rejected the pullback as insufficient.

Lacking a deadline, the plan also was unlikely to satisfy the Lebanese opposition and the international community, which have demanded that all 14,000 Syrian soldiers leave the country.

More than 100,000 Lebanese are protesting "Sovereignty" in Lebanon, demanding that Syrian troops be pulled out of the country.

Lebanese opposition and the international community, which have demanded that all 14,000 Syrian soldiers leave the country.

Structures waved off the angry but peaceful street protesters that drove Lebanon's pro-Syrian government to resign a week ago. Many Lebanese are blaming the Syrian government and its former government of responsibility for Hariri's death.

Hariri, who was killed in a bombing that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and touched off the protests that drove Lebanon's pro-Syrian government to resign a week ago.

Lebanon's Syrian President Bashar Assad and his Lebanese counterpart, Ezzeddin al-Nabati, met in Syria's capital, Damascus, to outline plans for shifting Syrian troops closer to the border of a Feb. 14 bombing that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and touched off the protests that drove Lebanon's pro-Syrian government to resign a week ago.

Sanford plans cop cleanup

Academy director says agency needs more resources

BY BOB METCALFE AND GLENN SMITH
Of the Post and Courier Staff

Gov. Mark Sanford is troubled by the state's failed efforts to keep problems off the streets, and he plans to call together South Carolina's top law enforcement officials to find solutions, his office said Monday.

Sanford's comments came in response to a 10-page report issued by the Post and Courier that says the state's law enforcement agencies need more resources to deal with the problem of drug trafficking, prostitution and other crimes.

The report, titled "Tarnished Badges," revealed that officers are slipping through the cracks.

Sanford plans to speak with public safety officials from his Cabinet and other police leaders to set a new performance standard in the series, his spokeswoman Will Polk said.

"First and foremost, we want quality people in law enforcement here in South Carolina, and it's pretty clear that the current system has some shortcomings that we need to look at addressing," Polk said. "It's one thing to hire a person who for minutes later or work here six times a row. It's something else if criminal offenses are slipping through the cracks."

The series, titled "Tarnished Badges," revealed that officers

High court: Past factors can't add time

Upgrone police reports can't make for stiffer sentences

BY HOPE YEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court further restricted federal judges sentencing powers Monday, ruling that police reports may not be used to justify a longer sentence if the crime is the same.

The 5-4 decision in a Massachusetts case puts into doubt judicial fact-finding involving a defendant's prior convictions when sentencing. That was the last exception to recent Supreme Court rulings banning enhanced sentences based on factors that had not come before a jury during trial.

Most states rely on some sort of judicial fact-finding for prior convictions in their sentencing systems.

Douglas Berman, a sentencing expert at Ohio State University's law school, said the ruling, coming on the heels of January's decision that barred federal sentencing guidelines' enhancement, adds more confusion.

The Supreme Court ruled on July 12 that the mandatory federal

Windsor Hill Elementary faces 4-year-old's death

BY JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
Of the Post and Courier Staff

Classmates of Donnie "Donnie" Torres drew pictures of the boy on the playground, in the classroom and in the boy's room.

On the first day back at Windsor Hill Elementary since the 4-year-old was struck and killed by a car, students talked with counselors and teachers about his death.

To comfort the students, an assistant principal rode Donnie's school bus route with 35 other students at the school.

The 846 students at the North Charleston school found different ways to deal with grief.

Many of the fourth and fifth graders cried when they spoke with counselors and teachers.

Younger children, like Donnie's 19 classmates, each understood that he was dead.

Donnie's mother, Olga, said she signed a diploma for her son. "To my son, Donnie," she wrote.

Altkorn described Donnie as a energetic, animated boy loved by everyone at the school.

"He was a handful for us," he said.

Donnie was struck and killed about 1:30 p.m. Friday after his school bus was riding through a residential neighborhood on Lindler Avenue near his home in Windsor Hill.

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