

SPLC REPORT

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A special year-end message from Morris Dees and Richard Cohen

As the holidays approach, all of us at the SPLC would like to thank you for helping make our year such a great success. Together, we pushed back against the forces of hate and extremism, won justice for abused children and exploited workers, taught lessons of tolerance to millions of students and much more.

Our work hasn't been easy. And it will only get tougher in 2010.

As we predicted last year, there's been an ugly, racist backlash to President Obama's election. And hatemongers are exploiting the bitterness felt by Americans during tough economic times by stoking anger against minorities and recent immigrants.

With unemployment predicted to remain high next year, we worry that contentious issues like immigration reform will unleash even more hate and extremism. Victims of injustice will be looking to us for help.

Last year, we won a great courtroom victory against the head of the Imperial Klans of America — a \$2.5 million verdict on behalf of a teen who was severely beaten by Klansmen at a county fair in Kentucky. We're continuing to fight the appeal in that case.

Every day, our investigators are pulling back the curtain on hate groups, making it harder for them to operate in the shadows.

As the year began, we documented 926 hate groups operating in America — a record number and an increase of more than 50 percent since 2000. Since then, we've seen the forces of extremism grow even stronger. In the months that followed Obama's inauguration, six law enforcement officers — including a se-



Morris Dees,
SPLC Founder



Richard Cohen,
SPLC President

curity guard at the Holocaust Memorial Museum — were murdered by racial extremists.

The last time we saw this kind of boiling rage was 1994. At that time, we warned the federal government that the "mixture of armed groups and those who hate is a recipe for disaster." Six months later, 168 people were murdered in the Oklahoma City bombing.

This year, we uncovered alarming evidence that potentially violent militias — armed groups steeped in bizarre conspiracy theories and paranoid fantasies about the government — are once again on the rise. We alerted law enforcement agencies and briefed key congressional committees

on the dangers posed by these groups. One federal law enforcement agent told us: "All it's lacking is a spark."

As you may have read in *The New York Times*, we also uncovered a cauldron of anti-Latino hate in Suffolk County, New York — a microcosm for the violence that's occurring in communities across the country. It was here that Ecuadorian immigrant Marcelo Lucero was beaten and stabbed to death by a group of teenagers who regularly went "hunting" Latinos for sport. Our report is already having a major impact. The U.S. Justice Department has launched a civil rights investigation into the police department's handling of hate crimes, and community leaders are demanding answers.

We're also winning justice for migrant workers who face an array of abuses, and we're mounting a national campaign to protect low-income immigrant women from sexual violence in the fields and factories. In one case, we're suing a North Carolina yarn factory for the brutal assault of a woman who had warned company officials about her plant manager's sexual harassment.

Winning justice for children
What's more, we're stopping the shocking abuse of children —



TOM ENGLAND

Civil Rights Memorial celebrates its 20th anniversary

SEE PAGE 5

many of whom have mental disabilities — in detention centers in the South. And we're leading an effort to stop the incarceration of children for minor misbehavior in school. This year we filed suit in federal court to reform a Biloxi, Miss., lock-up where there were 37 suicide attempts in the past two years. Because of our suit, children and teens will no longer be confined to their cells for 23 hours each day and forced to sleep on the floor in filthy, bug-infested conditions while being denied education and mental health services.

In classrooms across America, we delivered lessons of respect and tolerance to millions of schoolchildren in 2009. We owe it to the next generation to do everything we can to stamp out bigotry and hate.

Right now, because of our recent successes and the increase in far-right extremism, our security team is on high alert. Here is just one of the threats we've received: "I hope and pray every day that Dees and Cohen get the justice they deserve and are killed painfully. Amen."

It's not pleasant to receive threats like that, of course, but it's an inevitable part of the work we do. We have great confidence in the ability of our security team to protect us and the SPLC staff.

We also have great confidence in you — our friends and supporters — to carry the message of fairness and understanding into communities throughout our great country. Standing together, we can make a difference in 2010. From the entire staff at the SPLC, we wish you all the best in the coming year.

FIGHTING HATE

Campaign ends in Lou Dobbs' resignation

The departure of news anchor Lou Dobbs from CNN in November marked the successful conclusion of an SPLC campaign to expose a show that incited fear and hatred of Latinos.

Over the past six years, "Lou Dobbs Tonight" evolved into a platform for immigrant-bashing myths that frequently originated in extremist circles.

"Lou Dobbs has done more to defame Latino immigrants than probably any other human being in

the United States," said Mark Potok, director of the SPLC's Intelligence Project, which investigated claims made on

Dobbs' program. "Dobbs has consistently misled the public by reporting conspiracy theories and anti-immigrant propaganda as fact."

Most recently, he promoted the bogus claim that President Obama is not a native-born U.S. citizen, even after it was debunked on his own show. That claim led the SPLC to call on CNN to take Dobbs off the air earlier this year. Dobbs announced his resignation on Nov. 11.

As Dobbs demonized Latino immigrants, FBI statistics

showed a 40 percent rise in anti-Latino hate crime between 2003 and 2007 in the United States. At the same time, Dobbs helped poison the debate over immigration policy and stifle reform by injecting fear, hysteria and hatred into the discussion.

"The issue wasn't that we disagreed with Dobbs' stance on immigration," said SPLC President Richard Cohen. "Our concern was that he was peddling incendiary falsehoods while legitimizing extremists and their racially charged ideas — all under the CNN banner of real news."

Dobbs and the SPLC
The SPLC first contacted Dobbs in early 2004, shortly

after he began producing regular segments entitled "Broken Borders." At first, Dobbs was receptive to criticism. He sent a team of five staffers to the SPLC's offices in Montgomery, Ala., for a briefing on extremism.

The cooperation ended in 2005 when the SPLC published a report exposing racist elements in the Minuteman border vigilante movement. Dobbs erupted during a broadcast, calling the SPLC "despicable" and "reprehensible." But he did not dispute the facts in the report.

By the winter of 2005, Dobbs had hosted enough guests with extremist ties on his show that
Continued on page 8



SPLC President Richard Cohen (center) and Intelligence Project Director Mark Potok confront Dobbs on his factual distortions in their 2007 appearance on his show.

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the Center works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. The Center also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which celebrates the memory of individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement, and the Civil Rights Memorial Center.

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SPLC board elects new chair, vice-chair

Howard Mandell, a longtime civil rights lawyer in Alabama and now a rabbi in Virginia, was elected chairman of the SPLC's board of directors at its October meeting. He replaces Jim McElroy, a San Diego lawyer who had led the board since 2003.

Mandell has been associated with the SPLC since its earliest days and has served as a board member since 1985. In 2003, he gave up his law practice and turned to religious studies in a quest for a more spiritual life. That September, he enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary for a six-year program that included a year's study in Israel and culminated in his ordination as a rabbi. He serves a synagogue in Virginia Beach.

Mandell had been serving as vice chairman of the board. He

was replaced in that position by Lloyd "Vic" Hackley, a board member since 2002. Hackley is a retired Air Force



Howard Mandell



Lloyd "Vic" Hackley

officer and longtime university administrator with a doctorate in political science.

Mandell clerked for legendary judge

A graduate of Georgetown University Law Center, Mandell came to Montgomery in 1970 to clerk for the Honorable Frank M. Johnson, then the chief judge of the U.S. District Court

for the Middle District of Alabama and a legend throughout the nation for his courageous, landmark civil rights rulings.

When he ended his clerkship, Mandell began a 25-year law practice in Montgomery, specializing in constitutional and civil rights law and general litigation.

"My being elected chair of the SPLC board fills me with deep humility," Mandell said. "It was al-

most 40 years ago that Morris [Dees] and Joe [Levin] came to me to tell me of their dream to start a new civil rights organization and to ask if I wanted to become a part of that dream. I quickly said yes, and the Center has been an important part of my life ever since."

One of Mandell's earliest lawsuits was brought in 1974 by

the SPLC on behalf of homeless and unwanted black children in Alabama. The SPLC's suit sought a court ruling requiring the state to provide for all of its dependent children through construction of adequate facilities and operation of all state-licensed shelters without racial discrimination. At the time, although half the children in need of assistance were black, 95 percent of those living in state-licensed shelters were white.

SPLC a 'dynamic organization'

"Over the years, I've watched the Center mature and grow into the dynamic organization that it is today," Mandell said. "Every time I leave a board meeting I'm always inspired — both by the work which is done and by the people who bring it about, employees and donors alike."

McElroy remains a member of the SPLC board of directors.

MAILBOX

The work you are doing is incredibly wonderful and, unfortunately, very useful in these times. As a 91-year-old supporter, I find it impossible to recall so toxic an environment as we now have. There is little question that the far-right commentators with their vitriol and falsehoods share much of the blame for this toxic turn of events. The criticisms of FDR during the Great Depression were very mild compared with the hate being spewed today. Continue with the great work you are compelled to perform these days.

S. R.

Beverly Hills, California

I am proud to be a member and to have signed the petition against Dobbs' rank discriminatory commentary on immigration. I'm relieved to have him surrender his network platform. Thank you for your continuing noble efforts to make America a true, fair-minded country.

P. G.

Naperville, Illinois

I work for the United Auto Workers International Civil Rights Department and use your Teaching Tolerance kits all over the United States. I've received many, many thank-yous from our members, who were entirely spellbound by the videos used in the presentations.

Thank you Morris Dees and all at SPLC for your many years of excellent social justice, human rights and civil rights work.

N. H.

Detroit, Michigan

I'm sure Dobbs' resignation came about in large part due to your efforts to expose his bigotry and use of false information. Thank you for all that you do. I contribute as frequently as my limited income allows as a small way to say keep up the good work.

N. H.

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

In the day-to-day fight to stave off abuse of power and maintain fair application of law, you guys are up front. Thank you for setting an example.

J. G.

Silver City, Nevada

I found your report [fall issue, *SPLC Report*] about the teen "Jody" Beard — one of the Jena Six — wonderful. I am so glad this young man has found himself a mentor and a fresh start. The story of the Jena Six was something I think we here in America think doesn't really happen anymore. It is sad he had to leave his family and hometown to start again. Hopefully, one day he'll be able to go back there with all he becomes.

Thank goodness for a law firm like yours to stand behind him.

K. M.

Wayland, Massachusetts

I am proud of what you have done to call attention to the bias and misinformation of Lou Dobbs. The fact that he resigned is proof of your effectiveness. I am happy to be a part of the work you are doing.

D. M.

Lincoln University, Pennsylvania

Thanks again for the Center's relentless fight against bigotry and intolerance at every level. Lou Dobbs' departure is another sign that it's working. I am proud to do the little that I can to help. Keep up the great work.

D. R.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Was thrilled to hear Mr. Dobbs will no longer be preaching hate on CNN. Thank you for taking on the battle. Unfortunately, damage has been done, and who knows how long it will take to rectify.

We live in a small community near Portland. Our last name is of Latino descent but my husband is from the Philippines. My children have been tormented relentlessly about being "Hispanic." This county has even passed reform against employment of illegal immigrants that has further deepened the rift among whites and non-whites.

I applaud your work. All we can do as citizens is stand up and be vocal when we see the discrimination. Thank you for what you do.

J. A.

St. Helens, Oregon

An amazing job you folks do. Keep it up! We need you now more than ever.

D. G.

Chicopee, Massachusetts

Last June's shooting at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., was a terrible reminder to all! I never could understand how an

individual could be filled with so much hate. Hate is learned at home from one's parents or peers. I still believe on the whole that man is good, and goodness will overcome evil. Awareness and sensitivity training in the community is an excellent approach. God made us all one and the same in his likeness.

D. E.

Seminole, Alabama

Thank you for your tireless work exposing those with extremist viewpoints. I especially appreciate your work exposing the lies of Lou Dobbs. I fear the rhetoric is increasing, and your work is so important!

S. Y.

Blair, Nebraska

Excellent news about Lou Dobbs leaving CNN! Once again SPLC has been in the forefront of exposing the truth. I am proud to be a member of this excellent organization.

B. A.

Cochise, Arizona

Racism, intolerance and hate are the biggest problems facing our society today. I love the work you do. Lou Dobbs is a great score.

J. S.

Gulfport, Florida

Great work! At last Lou Dobbs has been silenced from spewing disinformation and inflaming hatred. Congratulations, SPLC, on all the work you do to help change the climate of the U.S.

S. M.

Madison, Mississippi

FIGHTING HATE

Newspaper accounts confirm SPLC's militia report findings

Evidence of a surging antigovernment militia movement continues to grow nationwide following an SPLC report warning that militias are reenergized after lying dormant for almost a decade.

Since the release of *The Second Wave: Return of the Militias* in August, dozens of reports of antigovernment militia activity have surfaced across the nation, including reports of newly formed militias and "Patriot" groups and

militia movement of the 1990s was gaining steam.

Kentucky is one of many other states also seeing militia activity. The Ohio Valley Freedom Fighters, a Louisville-based militia, has tripled in membership to more than 100, a leader of the group told *The Louisville Courier-Journal* in October.

Militia groups are using the Internet to network and recruit. The SPLC has obtained evidence

Oath Keepers is 'particularly worrisome'

One group cited in the SPLC report as "a particularly worrisome example of the Patriot revival" has seen a big increase in public scrutiny since the release of the report.

Oath Keepers is a group composed of current and former soldiers and police officers who pledge to disobey orders they believe are unconstitutional. These orders include disarming citizens, forcing them into detention camps and imposing martial law.

The group, which formed earlier this year, held a two-day national conference in Las Vegas in October. At that time, one of the group's board members told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* the organization has 2,000 dues-paying members.

"The whole point of Oath Keepers is to stop a dictatorship from ever happening here," Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the group, told the *Review-Journal* in a separate story in October. "My focus is on the guys with the guns, because they can't do it without them."

"We say if the American people decide it's time for a revolution, we'll fight with you."

Rhodes' notoriety has grown to the point that he appeared on MSNBC's *Hardball* news program opposite the SPLC's Potok.

Despite Rhodes' claims that his group is simply about upholding the Constitution, Potok outlined the real danger of its armed members buying into the "dark and utterly false conspiracy theories" peddled by the group.

"The Oath Keepers believe, presumably, that FEMA is out there setting up concentration camps and that kind of thing," Potok said. "This whole list of irrational fears are strikingly similar to those enunciated by people in the 1990s militia movement, some of whom went on to do violent things, like blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma City."



Militia veterans Ray Southwell (left) and Norm Olson are actively recruiting for the Alaska Militia.

their high-profile recruitment efforts. The SPLC has identified at least 50 new militia groups formed within the past two years.

Spurred by the SPLC report, newspapers across the country have published accounts of armed citizens wracked with fear and distrust of their government banding together to form militias. The Associated Press in November described the movement's resurgence as a national phenomenon. Overall, a picture is emerging of a nation where the fiercely antigovernment philosophy underpinning the movement can be found in every region of the country.

Resurrection due to fear of change

The SPLC report attributed this powerful resurrection to fear of the first black U.S. president, changing demographics and conspiracy theories increasingly spread by mainstream media figures and right-wing politicians.

"The recent activity we've seen has been a remarkable confirmation of the report's findings," said Mark Potok, director of the SPLC's Intelligence Project, which issued the report. "Clearly, there is a fertile environment for these groups, and their movement is growing."

In Alaska, for example, two veterans of the movement recently held a recruiting meeting in Nikiski for the Alaska Militia. They spoke of an impending economic collapse, food shortages and catastrophe that could result in martial law and the trampling of rights.

The meeting was led by Norm Olson and Ray Southwell, co-founders of the Michigan Militia, a group formed in 1994 as the

of militias in states as far flung as North Carolina, Washington and Nebraska using the Internet to get their message out.

While the militia movement is resurgent, the SPLC report noted a key difference between the movement of today and the movement of the 1990s: The federal government that the militias despise is now headed by a black man. That fact, coupled with high levels of non-white immigration, has helped infuse the movement with a strong element of racial animus.

Another factor in the rise is the proliferation of cable TV hosts willing to use their platforms to spread and legitimize antigovernment propaganda, such as the conspiracy theory about a secret network of U.S. concentration camps and the false claim that President Obama's presidency is illegitimate because he wasn't born in the United States.



NAACP leader visits SPLC

Benjamin Jealous (center), president of the NAACP, discusses issues with Richard Cohen (left), SPLC president, and SPLC founder Morris Dees. Jealous visited the SPLC in August to learn more about its operations.

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS

Evangelist will live out his days in prison

TEXARKANA, Ark. — A federal judge on Nov. 13 sentenced cult evangelist Tony Alamo to 175 years in prison for transporting young girls he called his "brides" across state lines for sex. The sentence means that the 75-year-old Alamo will spend his remaining days behind bars.

The anti-Catholic, polygamy, gay-bashing evangelist — whose birth name is Bernie LaZar Hoffman — was convicted in July on 10 counts of taking girls across state lines for sex over a period of 14 years. His stepdaughter, Christiaon Coie, wasn't among them but, in an earlier interview with the SPLC's *Intelligence Report*, said she was raped by Alamo when she was a teenager.

"I want to thank the SPLC for demanding justice when so many others turn a blind eye to so many cowards who hide behind Bibles, sheets and children," she said in an e-mail the day Alamo was sentenced.

Death threats painted on Jewish center

CORAL SPRINGS, Fla. — Swastikas and the words "Jews will die" were found painted on the walls of the Soref Jewish Community Center here, police said.

The vandalism was discovered Nov. 9 on the 71st anniversary of Kristallnacht in Nazi Germany, which many consider the beginning of the Holocaust.

Workers at the Soref center found the offensive graffiti spray-painted in gold when they arrived at the center that morning, police told *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*.

Kristallnacht ("night of the broken glass") was a Nov. 9, 1938, pogrom in Germany and Austria in which the official toll of Jews killed was about 100. Thirty thousand Jews were sent to concentration camps, and thousands of buildings and homes belonging to Jews were ransacked and destroyed.

Murder charge filed in Puerto Rico teen slaying

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Murder charges were filed Nov. 18 in the slaying of a gay teenager whose decapitated, partially burned body was found the week before. U.S. authorities said they were considering whether to make it a hate crime case.

Gay activists expressed disappointment that the suspect wasn't immediately charged with a hate crime, saying authorities in Puerto

Rico have never invoked a law covering crimes based on sexual orientation.

The dismembered body of 19-year-old college student Jorge Steven Lopez Mercado was found Nov. 13 along a road in the interior town of Cayey. Lopez was widely known as a volunteer for organizations advocating HIV prevention and gay rights. The suspect, 26-year-old Juan Martinez Matos, was arrested several days later and allegedly confessed to killing Lopez and mutilating his body. He was charged with first-degree murder and weapons violations; bail was set at \$4 million.

A 2002 hate crime law in this U.S. territory has not been applied to any cases involving sexual orientation or gender identity, despite calls to use it more aggressively, said a spokesman for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. A suspect convicted of a hate crime offense as part of another crime automatically faces the maximum penalty for the underlying crime. For murder, that would be life in prison.

Men charged in beating death of Latino immigrant

PLAINFIELD, N.J. — Five young men accused of robbing and brutally beating a Guatemalan immigrant here have been charged with committing a hate crime — which could add an additional 15 to 30 years to the 30-year sentences they could receive for the 2007 murder of Lazaro Tista.

The attackers allegedly targeted their victim because he was Latino. Authorities say they have strong evidence that at least one defendant admitted the group had planned to attack a Latino man.

Tista, a 45-year-old landscaper, was walking home in the early morning hours when a group of men piled out of a car to rob him, police said. One fatally struck Tista with a heavy blow from an aluminum baseball bat, according to a prosecutor. The group then rummaged through Tista's pockets and left him for dead near a bridge abutment. Tista, who had eight children in Guatemala, lay barely alive for several hours before dying.

Four of the alleged attackers range in age from 17 to 21. The fifth is a juvenile who is charged as an adult. All are charged with bias intimidation because at least one defendant admitted they were "Papi-hunting," said a prosecutor. Papi is a Spanish word that refers to Latino males.

CONTRIBUTED



Sarah Chambers



Gabriel Warren



Joshua Ruby

SEEKING JUSTICE

Kentucky children helped by SPLC national campaign

LEXINGTON, Ky. — She spent four years in the ninth grade. Then, in 2008, “J.J.” turned 18 and the school turned her away.

Believing that J.J.’s classroom problems were rooted in a learning disability, her grandmother had asked school officials to intervene while there was still time.

But J.J. never received the special education services that might have helped her make it to graduation day. So she watched the door of opportunity slam shut.

Now, however, J.J. will be getting help with her education because of a class action complaint filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center and its partner in Kentucky, the Children’s Law Center.

Tragically, J.J.’s story is being repeated across America as the educational needs of thousands of students with learning disabilities are being neglected and they are subjected to harsh discipline that drives them from school.

“As a society we’re not giving our most vulnerable children the support they need to succeed, and we’re paying dearly for that neglect,” said SPLC President Richard Cohen. “Too often, we forget the truth of what author James Baldwin once said: ‘These are all our children. We will profit by, or pay for, whatever they become.’”

Students with disabilities are most at risk, especially children of color. Their problems at school can and frequently

do lead them into the juvenile justice system, especially in schools that have adopted zero-tolerance policies that rely on the police and courts to handle discipline issues.

On any day, there are an estimated 100,000 children and teens behind bars in the U.S., many housed in abusive conditions that harden young hearts

Since filing the complaint with the Kentucky Board of Education last February, the Fayette County school system — the state’s second largest — has been ordered by the state board to make reforms that will help identify students like J.J. and provide the services they need.

Fayette County school officials also must review the records

SEEKING JUSTICE

SPLC internships inspire students to public service

Every summer, college students from across the nation travel to the SPLC to work as interns.

The internships provide them with the experience, education and sometimes even the inspiration that can shape a developing career. This summer, more than a dozen interns worked at the SPLC, assisting staffers in Montgomery, Ala., and its satellite offices. They conducted legal research with staff attorneys, assisted Intelligence Project researchers investigating the hate movement and discovered how educators are teaching students to appreciate diversity in Teaching Tolerance.

Sarah Chambers, a law student at Rutgers School of Law — Newark, said her internship in the legal department has shaped the direction of her law career.

“I started the summer with an inclination that public interest law was a good career choice,” she said. “However, I finished my internship certain that a career in civil rights was the best choice for me. SPLC has played a major role in my decision to apply for a fellowship in civil rights law after graduating in May 2010.”

During her time at the SPLC’s Montgomery office, Chambers worked on school discipline policy as part of the SPLC’s efforts to prevent students from being unnecessarily pushed into the juvenile justice system. She also conducted other legal research and writing. Her time in the Deep South even gave her the opportunity to “learn the civil rights

history not taught in grammar school,” she said.

“I cannot wait until I return to school to tell my friends and professors about the fantastic work, people and opportunities one can have spending a summer away from home working towards the preservation of individuals’ civil rights,” she said.

‘An amazing, eye-opening experience’ Gabriel Warren, a student at Vanderbilt University Law School, said his internship provided a chance to work on an array of legal projects.

“The opportunity to spend my summer at the SPLC was an amazing and eye-opening experience into the world of public interest law,” he said. “The chance to work on important projects involving death penalty appeals, the First Amendment rights of Nazis in the military and prisoner conditions in juvenile prisons provided me with incredible real-world practice. I sincerely appreciated my time in Montgomery, and I look forward to continue as a supporter of the center in the future!”

Joshua Ruby, a student at Harvard Law School, had the opportunity to work on a set of constitutional criminal law cases and assist with the preparation of a lawsuit. This allowed him to work with some of the SPLC’s most experienced attorneys.

“I got a chance to do a lot of very good work at the center,” Ruby said.

CHARLES BERTRAM



Yvonne Denning, grandmother of Darryl Warner II, says that students at risk need “to have someone arguing for them.”

and do little, if anything, to put them on a better path. Some studies suggest that as many as 70 percent of children in detention have significant mental health or learning disabilities — the very same children that should be helped in school.

This national crisis led the Southern Poverty Law Center in 2007 to establish its School-to-Prison Reform Project, a national campaign to stop the flow of children from schools into the justice system.

One major goal of the project is to prod school systems — through litigation when necessary — to comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This law requires schools to identify and evaluate students like J.J. and provide the counseling, psychiatric care, special education and other services they need.

Another goal is to bring some common sense to school discipline policies so that children aren’t hustled off to detention and court for misbehaving.

When it came to helping J.J. and her classmates, the SPLC — through a partnership with the Children’s Law Center in Lexington — brought a complaint against Kentucky’s Fayette County school district. The complaint described a school system where officials were quick to suspend students with learning disabilities or to relegate them to alternative schools.

of students who have had excessive suspensions or expulsions and those who have shown a pattern of repeated academic failure or significant behavior problems.

Reforms offer hope

These reforms offer hope for students like J.H. who have attended alternative schools for years with little chance of returning to regular school. At the time the complaint was filed, neither J.H. nor J.J. had been considered for an evaluation to determine if their school problems were related to a disability.

Another student cited in the complaint, Darryl Warner II, was held back four times, and the district was slow in evaluating him for special education services, the state Department of Education found. Warner said he now wants to get his diploma or GED and attend a vocational school where he can learn auto bodywork.

“I want to go back to school,” he said.

But for many students, the path back to the classroom isn’t an easy one. It often requires an advocate who can navigate a school district’s bureaucracy.

“It is important for these children to have someone arguing for them,” said Warner’s grandmother, Yvonne Denning.

The SPLC and the Children’s Law Center are working to make sure Warner’s wish of getting his education comes true.

JIM WEST



Students across America celebrate Mix It Up at Lunch Day

On Nov. 10, Fordson High School students in Dearborn, Mich., joined thousands of students across the country in observing Mix It Up at Lunch Day. The SPLC sponsors the annual event to encourage students to tear down the social boundaries that divide them by sitting with someone new at lunch. Surveys show that the cafeteria is the place where the lines of division are most clearly drawn. “Black, white, Arab, non-Arab, bilingual, special education, jocks, musicians, it didn’t matter,” a Fordson educator said. “What did matter was a group of human beings enjoying lunch, and taking a leap of faith in communication and bonding.”

SPLC celebrates Civil Rights Memorial's 20th anniversary

Twenty years ago, in the shadow of a state Capitol still flying the Confederate battle flag, the nation's first memorial to the martyrs of the civil rights movement was dedicated at the Southern Poverty Law Center's office in Montgomery, Ala.

Six thousand people gathered on Nov. 5, 1989, in a city known as the birthplace of the civil rights movement, to witness the dedication of the black granite monument inscribed with the names of 40 martyrs of the movement — mostly ordinary people who gave their lives in the battle for civil rights.

In the two decades since its dedication, the Civil Rights Memorial has become more than a tribute to sacrificed lives. It has become a tool for education, an "instrument of justice" and a solemn reminder that the march for racial and social justice continues throughout the world.

"The Civil Rights Memorial is a testament to the power of everyday people to create social change through nonviolent means," said Lecia Brooks, director of the Civil Rights Memorial Center. "The history told through the Memorial represents lessons of courage and commitment that continue to inspire millions of people today."

Creating the Memorial

A child's question to SPLC founder Morris Dees sparked the idea for the Civil Rights Memorial.

In 1988, Dees was speaking at a NAACP meeting following the SPLC's victory in a lawsuit against the notorious United Klans of America for the lynching of a black teenager in Mobile, Ala. During the speech, he recited the names of civil rights activists and others who were murdered by white supremacists during the civil rights movement.

Afterward, a young member of the audience approached him and asked about the people he had named — people like Medgar Evers and Viola Liuzzo. *Who were they?* On the way home that night, Dees decided that the SPLC should build a monument to the martyrs of the movement so that their sacrifices would never be forgotten.

"Each name is a history lesson, and we are saying, don't just think of the deaths, but think of a movement of ordinary people who just got tired of injustice," Dees told *The New York Times* in 1989.

The SPLC commissioned Maya Lin, creator of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to design the monument.

In preparing to build it, the SPLC researched deaths during the era considered to be the modern-day civil rights movement — from May 17, 1954, the day the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed school segregation, until

April 4, 1968, when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Selected were victims who fit at least one of three criteria: They were murdered because they were active in the movement; they were killed as acts of terror aimed at intimidating blacks and civil rights activists; or, their deaths, like that of Emmett Till, helped to galvanize

order for it to be healed, in order for it to be cathartic," Lin said in a 1994 documentary.

The dedication

They were the relatives who came to see their slain loved ones honored.

They were the civil rights leaders who came to see the movement remembered.

Mamie Till Mobley, mother of Emmett Till; Chris McNair, father of Birmingham bombing victim Denise McNair; and Myrlie Evers, widow of Medgar Evers. Ethel Kennedy, the widow of Robert Kennedy, was also present.

"Poetry in granite," was how Carolyn Goodman described the Memorial to The Associated Press in 1989. Her son, Andrew

James V. Evers, one of Medgar Evers' children, said the highlight of the ceremony was meeting the relatives of the other martyrs.

"It brought us together," he told *The Boston Globe*. "There is now a bond between us."

An 'instrument of justice'

The research conducted for the Civil Rights Memorial went beyond simply preserving the stories of slain martyrs; it helped revive decades-old civil rights cold cases.

At the time of the dedication, most of the family members in attendance still waited for justice for the killing of their loved one.

Many of the murders remained unsolved because of the callous indifference, and often the criminal collusion, of white law enforcement officials in the segregated South. The whole criminal justice system — from the police, to the prosecutors, to the juries, and to the judges — was perverted by racial bigotry. Blacks were routinely beaten, bombed and shot with impunity. In many cases, such as the murder of Till, suspects were brought to trial only to be set free by sympathetic white juries.

The stories of the martyrs were compiled by the SPLC and published in the book *Free at Last* to provide thorough and compelling accounts of the crimes, in many cases still unsolved, that were fading from memory.

For one Mississippi journalist, the book became a guide to follow as he dedicated his career to investigating civil rights-era cold cases. The research, including files on 75 other suspicious deaths of the era, also has been used by a special FBI unit dedicated to solving cold cases from the era.

"The Memorial stands as a reminder that the martyrs' killers walked free, even though everyone knew they were guilty," said Jerry Mitchell, an investigative reporter at *The Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson, Miss. "After it was dedicated in 1989, it transformed into an instrument of justice."

Free at Last was a rich resource for Mitchell — "my road map on my journey into reinvestigating these cases," he said.

Mitchell's extensive reporting led to several successful prosecutions.

Since the Memorial was dedicated, authorities in five Southern states have re-examined 26 killings — making 15 arrests that led to 11 convictions. Seven of those convictions were for 12 murders chronicled on the Memorial.

A teaching tool

They come from across the globe. Each year, the Civil Rights Memorial attracts more than 20,000 visitors. Civil rights activists from Europe, Africa,

Continued on page 8



Members of Congress joined veterans of the civil rights movement, clergy and others at the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Ala., earlier this year to honor the martyrs whose names are inscribed there.

the movement by demonstrating the brutality faced by African Americans in the South.

The research yielded 40 names. They ranged in age from 11 to 66. Eight were white, and 32 were black. They came from all walks of life — students, farmers, ministers, truck drivers, a homemaker and a Nobel laureate.

Their names were inscribed on a circular, black granite table that chronicles the history of the movement in lines that radiate like the hands of a clock.

Space indicates struggle continues

Lin left a blank space between the first and last entries on the Memorial timeline — to signify that the struggle for human rights began well before 1954 and continues to this day.

Water emerges from the table's center and flows smoothly over the top. Behind it, water cascades over a curved black granite wall. Engraved on the wall are words from the Bible's Book of Amos that King quoted on several occasions: "...until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Lin said when she came across the quote in King's "I Have a Dream" speech, she knew water would become part of the Memorial, an element providing a sacred and soothing atmosphere to the site.

The finished Memorial shares a quality with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Lin said. They both present an honest acceptance of death as a path to healing.

"You have to accept and admit that pain has occurred in

And they were the modern-day activists who recognized the work that remained.

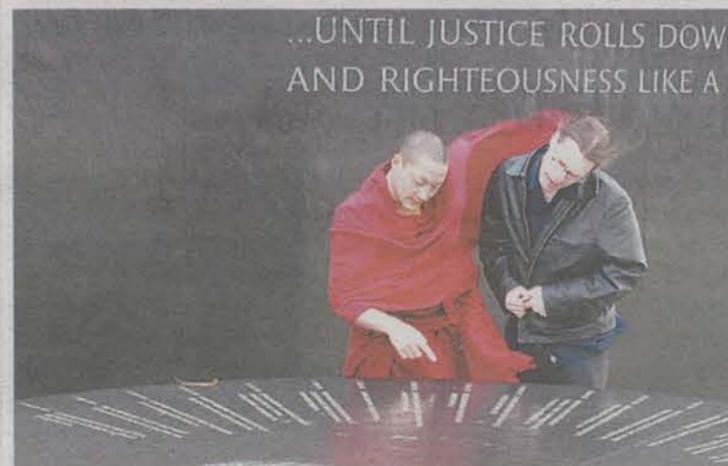
They were all among the thousands who attended the dedication of the Civil Rights Memorial. It was a day, to paraphrase Lin, to recognize a memorial to hope.

The SPLC's first president, Julian Bond, spoke of the hardship and sacrifice endured by the

Goodman, who was shot to death during Freedom Summer in 1964, is included among the martyrs.

"Nobody who sees it cannot feel that it's a moving, moving piece of art," she said. "It brings that period so vividly alive that you can almost relive it."

The sentiment was echoed by Mobley, who described in her autobiography the experience



A group of seven Tibetan Buddhist monks took time from their work on a special project in Alabama to visit the Civil Rights Memorial in 2003. Tenzin Sangpo (left) and the group's road manager, Scott Verberne of New England, read the Memorial's timeline.

martyrs but reminded the crowd they had not gathered in sorrow.

"(The martyrs) gave an equal measure of devotion so that all of us might be free," said Bond, who is now an SPLC board member. "Buried with each is a bit of American apartheid, for their deaths kept the movement marching on. That is why we honor them today not in sorrow, but in celebration."

Relatives of the martyrs filled the crowd, representing 39 of the 40 names. Several were among the speakers: Rita Schwerner Bender, widow of Michael Schwerner;

of touching her son's name on the Memorial.

"It was like touching my son. Like reliving his funeral," she wrote in *Death of Innocence*. "But, as I told people there, it also filled me with such joy to see Emmett honored, to see him included among the martyrs of the movement."

The Memorial also touched Karen Reeb, whose father, the Rev. James Reeb, was beaten to death after he marched with King in Selma.

"It just eases the emptiness in my heart," she told *Time* magazine.

DAVE MARTIN

VALERIE DOWNES

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Siskos' legacy reflects commitment to SPLC

Dr. Arthur Sisko, whose father was a Lithuanian immigrant and mother a French-Canadian, was known for his analytical mind. It led him to a career as a research chemist and served him well as a father with three children who needed to navigate an imperfect world.

Arthur's wife and soul mate, Eva, had a nurturing quality that was a perfect fit for her nursing career. From the day they met at Syracuse University, Art and Eva shared another goal: to help create a more perfect society than

committing. Pleased with the results and deeply committed to the SPLC's work, they later added a second gift annuity.

"Mom and Dad weren't just tolerant," Judy said. "They fought for civil rights. They organized against internment policies during World War II, providing sanctuary for Japanese students to keep them out of camps."

The Sisko children grew up watching their parents live their beliefs. In Gary, Indiana, they campaigned for Richard Hatcher, the city's first black mayor. A Girl Scout leader, Eva sought integrated camps. She was committed to the League of Women Voters and volunteered at one of the first Planned Parenthood clinics.

Eva and Art worked tirelessly on Unitarian church projects, for the ACLU and for various hospices. When their neighborhood association organized to keep minorities out, they established

a "Meet Your Neighbors" dinner program. "The teens would meet in the basement and the adults upstairs," Judy said. Not surprisingly, the Sisko kids grew into their own activism, marching for peace and civil rights.

Before he died, Arthur set up four additional gift annuities with the SPLC, with his sons as the successive beneficiaries. Judy was too young, so "he found other ways to care for me," she said. "We all appreciate the annuities, though. They are regular reminders that our parents are out of sight but still very much with us — and the world."



Art and Eva Sisko

CONTRIBUTED

the one they had inherited. As Partners for the Future, the Siskos used the Southern Poverty Law Center to further that goal.

"My parents were always in this together," their daughter Judy said. "They were married for 62 years when my mother died. They even shared a weaving hobby. Mom did mostly cloths, table runners. She made the material for my wedding dress. Dad concentrated on tapestries."

Art and Eva established a joint gift annuity with the SPLC in 1995. Art explored the impact of the gift on SPLC programs, family finances and their heirs before

Scroll of Remembrance

The Southern Poverty Law Center pays tribute to the memory of deceased supporters who included the Center in their wills or other planned gifts. The Center gratefully acknowledges their bequests, received from October 1, 2008, through October 31, 2009.

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Civil Rights Memorial

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Dobbs leaves post at CNN

Continued from page 1

he was the subject of a story in the SPLC's *Intelligence Report*. A year later, he was promoting the Aztlan conspiracy theory, which holds that Mexico is plotting to re-conquer the American Southwest.

The leprosy claim

In 2007, Dobbs was the subject of a "60 Minutes" profile in which Lesley Stahl confronted him about a report on his show that linked undocumented immigrants to 7,000 new cases of leprosy in the United States during a recent three-year period. Stahl noted there were 7,000 leprosy cases in the last 30 years — not a three-year span — and that no one knew how many cases involved undocumented immigrants.

Dobbs' response?

"Well, I can tell you this," he told Stahl. "If we reported it, it's a fact."

But it wasn't a fact — far from it. The SPLC reported that Dobbs' source was Madeleine Cosman, a right-wing fanatic who once told an audience that "most" Latino immigrant men "molest girls under 12, although some specialize in boys and some in nuns."

The SPLC's Potok also appeared in the segment, telling Stahl that Dobbs gave viewers the false impression, day after day, that undocumented immigrants "are bringing leprosy, they're bringing crime, they're bringing all these terrible things to the United States."

With deepening concern, the SPLC wrote to CNN asking the network to retract the leprosy claim and published an open letter in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. When the SPLC's Cohen and Potok appeared on Dobbs' show in May 2007, Dobbs presented an entirely

new set of leprosy claims that were closer to the truth. But he insisted his program "did not say there were [7,000] new cases at any time."

Shortly after the appearance, *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt, citing the SPLC's work, wrote a column concluding that "Dobbs has a somewhat flexible relationship with reality."

Birther controversy

In 2009, Dobbs became fixated with the "birther" conspiracy theory — the utterly false and racially tinged notion that Obama was born in Kenya and that, therefore, his presidency is not legitimate. Dobbs questioned Obama's birth certificate during a July 15 show and complained that the president had not made the "original document" public.

Two days later, reporter Kitty Pilgrim, a fill-in host on the show, thoroughly debunked the birther claims. She offered evidence that included verification of Obama's birth certificate and birth notices from two newspapers in Hawaii, Obama's home state.

Yet, when Dobbs returned to his show, he continued pushing the conspiracy theory.

The SPLC responded with a letter to CNN President Jonathan Klein that called for Dobbs' firing.

"The fact that Mr. Dobbs suggests otherwise on CNN — while real CNN reporters tell the truth — is both deplorable and an embarrassment to all serious journalists," Cohen wrote.

Several organizations joined the movement to remove Dobbs from the airwaves, including Presente.org and Media Matters. Presente's "Basta Dobbs" campaign recruited more than 100,000 people.

Memorial's 20th anniversary

Continued from page 5

Asia, the Middle East and Latin America have found inspiration at the Memorial. Others have included the Memorial as a poignant part of their vacation or family reunion. Students of all ages have visited it to learn about the movement and modern human rights struggles.

Since 1998, the Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage has brought nearly 150 members of Congress to the Memorial as part of an annual tour of historic civil rights sites.

In 2005, the SPLC added the Civil Rights Memorial Center (CRMC), further transforming the site into more than a commemoration of the past. The visitor center, housed in the SPLC's former office, includes interactive exhibits and a powerful 20-minute film — "Faces

in the Water" — about the martyrs and the movement. It also recognizes current struggles for equality and offers visitors an opportunity to pledge their commitment to justice and equality by adding their name to the Wall of Tolerance. It has become a powerful teaching tool for school groups and others.

Inspiring children was exactly what Dees and the SPLC had in mind when imagining a memorial to those who died for equality.

"As visitors touch the names on the Memorial and see their own faces reflected in the water, we hope they contemplate what they can do in their lives to ensure that 'justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream,'" said SPLC President Richard Cohen. "It's up to each of us to ensure that the march for justice continues."

O'Reilly Raises Bogus First Amendment Claim for Dobbs

When SPLC President Richard Cohen appeared on "The O'Reilly Factor" in November, host Bill O'Reilly claimed that the SPLC had trampled Lou Dobbs' First Amendment rights by leading the charge to force him off CNN. Not surprisingly, perhaps, O'Reilly got it completely wrong.

The First Amendment doesn't give anyone — not Dobbs or O'Reilly, for that matter — the right to have their own prime-time cable news program. What it does,

rather, is protect each person's right to speak out on important issues free from government interference or censorship. In criticizing Dobbs and calling for his ouster, SPLC staffers were exercising their own First Amendment rights to engage in spirited public debate. We're glad CNN listened.

Cohen's appearance on O'Reilly was actually his second this year. The first came in July after Cohen called on CNN's president to take Dobbs off the air. At the time, O'Reilly

ridiculed the idea, saying CNN would never do it.

Cohen responded that he wasn't as cynical as O'Reilly and believed that if enough people spoke out in opposition to Dobbs, CNN would take action. O'Reilly, however, was so certain that he said he had \$10,000 "on the table" for Habitat for Humanity if he turned out to be wrong.

Well, he was wrong. Cohen called his bluff — and to his credit, O'Reilly said he would pay up.

BROKEN RECORD

Lou Dobbs' daily 'Broken Borders' CNN segment focused on immigration for years. But no matter what others reported about the movement, Dobbs failed to present persistent evidence of anti-Hispanic racism in anti-immigration groups and citizen border patrols.

NOVEMBER 2004 — Lou Dobbs sends a five-person team to SPLC offices after the SPLC raises concerns about a guest promoting a fringe conspiracy theory. SPLC staffers brief the team on extremism in the immigration debate.

JULY 29, 2005 — Dobbs erupts on-air over an SPLC report exposing racist elements in the Minuteman vigilante movement. He calls the SPLC "despicable" and "reprehensible," although he does not dispute any of the facts in the report.

WINTER 2005 — The SPLC's *Intelligence Project* publishes a story detailing members of extremist groups who have appeared on Dobbs' show.

MAY 23, 2006 — Then-Mexican President Vicente Fox's trip to the United States is described on Dobbs' show as a "Mexican military incursion." A map of the United States highlighting seven states supposedly coveted by Mexico is attributed to the Council of Conservative Citizens — a hate group that has described black people as "a retrograde species of humanity."

MARCH 6, 2007 — SPLC's Mark Potok tells National Public Radio that Dobbs helps legitimize conspiracy theories and propaganda that originates in white supremacist hate groups. An enraged Dobbs calls Potok after the interview to say he and the SPLC have no integrity and are now "adversaries."

MARCH 28, 2007 — Potok appears on "Lou Dobbs Tonight" and points out that Minuteman founder and frequent Dobbs guest Chris Simcox has reported seeing Chinese troops on the U.S.-Mexican

border preparing for an invasion. Dobbs is amused but doesn't repudiate Simcox.

MAY 6, 2007 — "60 Minutes" profiles Dobbs and notes that his show claimed immigrants were responsible for 7,000 new cases of leprosy identified in the U.S. during a recent three-year period. The reality is that there were about 400 cases new cases and that no one knew what role immigrants played. Potok criticizes Dobbs' reporting in an interview for the story.

MAY 7, 2007 — Dobbs flies into a rage and attacks Potok on his show over the criticism of the leprosy claims. He says he stands "100 percent" behind the report. The source for the leprosy claim is Madeleine Cosman, a right-wing fanatic who once told an audience that "most" Latino immigrant men "molest girls under 12, although some specialize in boys and some in nuns." She has no expertise in immigration or medicine.

MAY 9, 2007 — SPLC President Richard Cohen writes to CNN asking the network to retract Dobbs' false leprosy claim.

MAY 15, 2007 — *The New York Times* and *USA Today* publish SPLC's open letter asking the president of CNN to retract Dobbs' false leprosy claim.

MAY 16, 2007 — SPLC President Richard Cohen and Potok appear on Dobbs' program. Before the interview, Dobbs presents an entirely new set of leprosy claims, which are closer to the truth. He insists his program "did not say there were [7,000] new cases at any time."

MAY 30, 2007 — *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt

writes a column citing SPLC about Dobbs' reporting and concludes that "Mr. Dobbs has a somewhat flexible relationship with reality."

MAY 30, 2007 — *The Columbia Journalism Review* criticizes Dobbs for "tamper[ing] with facts" and "pretending the confusion was someone else's fault."

JULY 16, 2008 — The SPLC reports that the leprosy claim promoted by Dobbs has been included in an American Legion booklet about illegal immigration. After the initial SPLC report, an updated version of the booklet is later re-released without the bogus claim.

JULY 15, 2009 — Dobbs entertains the "birther" conspiracy that contends President Obama wasn't born in the United States. He questions the official birth certificate and complains Obama has not made public the "original document."

JULY 20, 2009 — Dobbs continues to question whether Obama was born in the United States, ignoring a thorough debunking of the theory on the July 17 edition of his own show by fill-in host Kitty Pilgrim.

JULY 24, 2009 — Cohen writes to CNN president Jonathan Klein asking for Dobbs to be taken off the air. Several other advocacy groups soon join the SPLC's campaign.

NOV. 11, 2009 — Dobbs announces his resignation from CNN during his nightly show. He cites a need to "go beyond the role here at CNN" and laments that many important issues are now defined by "ideology rather than by rigorous, empirical thought."