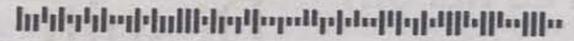


SPLC REPORT

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Published by the **Southern Poverty Law Center**
Fighting Hate • Teaching Tolerance • Seeking Justice

Summer 2012
Volume 42, Number 2



SPLC settlement to protect students from bullying in Minn. school district

COON RAPIDS, Minn. — The SPLC achieved a major milestone in its campaign to stop rampant anti-LGBT bullying and violence in schools when it

reached a settlement agreement requiring Minnesota's largest school district to adopt a wide-ranging plan to protect students from such bullying.

The Anoka-Hennepin School District, in the heart of Michelle Bachman's congressional district, had at least four LGBT students die by suicide over a two-year period. It had become "ground zero" in the national fight against anti-gay bullying.

physically attacked — in some cases choked, shoved, urinated on and even stabbed with a pencil.

The agreement reached in March contains specific requirements that are now in motion to protect students from such abuse. The district's compliance with the comprehensive settlement agreement is being monitored by the U.S. Department of Justice during the next five years.

become a model for other school districts to follow."

The SPLC recently received letters of thanks from the families of two students it represented. For these families, the lawsuit provided a powerful life lesson about taking a stand for change. They have allowed their letters to be published by the SPLC to let others know what the agreement has meant for them.

Rebecca Rooker watched her son Kyle "go from an excited learner to a kid who would rather stay home from school." The family had resolved to just "do the time" at school until they were contacted by an SPLC attorney investigating bullying in the district, which led to Kyle joining the lawsuit.

Continued on page 8



TOM ROSTER

SPLC Legal Director Mary Bauer discusses the lawsuit at a press conference. With her are Kyle Rooker (from left), a plaintiff in the case; SPLC attorney Sam Wolfe, and Ilona Turner, an attorney with the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

Community's concern palpable

In 2010, the SPLC screened its anti-bullying documentary, *Bullied*, in neighboring Minneapolis before an audience of more than 2,000 people, and the community's concern was palpable. The SPLC called on the district to change its policy. When it didn't, the SPLC filed a federal lawsuit in July 2011 on behalf of five Anoka-Hennepin students who faced relentless bullying due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Students were also

Agreement a fresh start, may serve as model

"This historic agreement marks a fresh start for the Anoka-Hennepin School District," said SPLC attorney Sam Wolfe. "Unfortunately, this district had become notorious for anti-LGBT hostility and discrimination. This consent decree sets the stage for Anoka-Hennepin to

SEEKING JUSTICE

SPLC's legal victory against Klan leader upheld by high court

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The SPLC's case against the Klansmen responsible for the savage beating of a Latino teen concluded with a victory in March when the Kentucky Supreme Court refused to reconsider a verdict against the former leader of the Imperial Klans of America (IKA).

Ron Edwards, the former IKA leader, had appealed his \$1.3 million portion of the \$2.5 million verdict awarded to Jordan Gruver after a trial in November 2008.

On the eve of trial, a book written by a former FBI agent came out that said Edwards was involved in a plot to kill SPLC founder and chief counsel Morris Dees when Dees was involved in a separate trial against the Aryan Nations in Idaho.

"Ron Edwards deliberately unleashed violent racists on an unsuspecting public, and Jordan Gruver paid the price," said SPLC President Richard Cohen. "With this final ruling, the courts have rightfully held him accountable. This serves as a warning to other hate group leaders."

The SPLC's verdict against Edwards and one of his chief

Klan lieutenants, Jarred Hensley, decimated the IKA.

As "imperial wizard" of the IKA, Edwards sat atop a sprawling Klan organization. Based at a rural 15-acre compound in Dawson Spring, Ky., the IKA once had chapters in 25 states. The group hosted an annual gathering known as Nordic Fest, which brought together racist skinheads, neo-Nazis and Klansmen to network and listen to performances by hate rock bands. Speakers at the gathering called for the deaths of Latinos and Jews.

Klan leader in prison

Today, because of the SPLC's lawsuit, the IKA has been reduced to two chapters. Edwards is serving time in federal prison on gun and drug charges unrelated to the SPLC case.

Gruver, a U.S. citizen of Panamanian-Indian descent, was 16 when he was attacked by IKA members, who were on a recruiting mission at a county fair in Brandenburg, Ky., in July 2006.

He suffered a broken jaw, broken teeth and permanent nerve damage.



Daryl Dedmon is led into court for his guilty plea and sentencing.

THE CLARION-LEDGER, JOE ELLIS/AP IMAGES

Teen sentenced in racial murder of Mississippi man

JACKSON, Miss. — The white teen at the center of an SPLC case involving the racial murder of a black man in Mississippi has pleaded guilty to a state charge of murder and been sentenced to life in prison.

Daryl Dedmon, who received two concurrent life sentences, was the ringleader of a group of seven white teens who drove to Jackson, Miss., from a nearby suburb last June to, in their words, "f---k with some n-----s."

The teens found James Craig Anderson, a 47-year-old auto-worker, in a motel parking lot. They beat him to the ground and then Dedmon ran over him with his pickup truck — an attack captured on a motel security camera.

Dedmon and two other teens also pleaded guilty in March to federal hate crime charges stemming from a months-long pattern of harassing African-Americans that culminated in Anderson's death. Sentencing was scheduled for June 8, but prosecutors were seeking a delay.

In September, the SPLC filed a civil suit against the seven teens, including Dedmon, on behalf of the Anderson family.

"The family is continuing to pursue its civil litigation," said Morris Dees, SPLC chief counsel.

The Anderson family asked prosecutors not to seek the death penalty for anyone involved in the case. "We are praying for racial reconciliation," they said.

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SPLC REPORT

Published by
the Southern Poverty Law Center
SUMMER 2012

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 SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. The SPLC also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which honors the memory of individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement.

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A MESSAGE FROM SPLC PRESIDENT RICHARD COHEN

Despite senseless tragedy, children offer hope

In this issue of the *SPLC Report*, we update you on our case against the white teens responsible for the racial killing of James Anderson, an African-American man who was beaten and run over by a pickup truck simply for sport.

It was a horrible, senseless crime — a tragedy for everyone involved. Anderson's family is devastated, as are the families of the teens. The three youths who pleaded guilty are going to prison for a long time. Their lives are ruined.

It didn't have to be this way. "I was young and dumb, ignorant and full of hatred," Daryl Dedmon, the ringleader of the group who was known as a notorious school bully, told the court when he was sentenced to two life terms.

Many would like would to see the crime as simply a reflection

of a Deep South state still haunted by its racist past — something that couldn't happen in other parts of this country.

It's wishful thinking.

The fact is, hate crimes like this are occurring across the country. In Patchogue, N.Y., for example, a gang of white teens went out hunting Latinos for sport — "beaner hopping," they called it — and stabbed to death an Ecuadorean immigrant when he fought back.

Growing extremism

These crimes are occurring against a backdrop of rising extremism. Hate groups — neo-Nazi organizations, racist skinhead crews and others — stand at record levels. At the same time, armed militias and other far-right antigovernment groups have surpassed the level of activity we saw in the mid-1990s,

when this movement resulted in the Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people.

It would be easy for us to get discouraged and throw up our hands in despair.

But when I look out of my window here in our office in Montgomery, Ala., I see unmistakable signs of hope.

You see, my office overlooks the Civil Rights Memorial. Virtually every day, groups of eager schoolchildren on field trips — often wearing matching T-shirts — visit the Memorial.

What strikes me first is the diversity. They're children of every color and every shade in between — and they don't seem to care about the differences. They gaze at the Memorial in awe and let the cool water glide through their fingers as they touch the names of civil rights martyrs like Medgar Evers and Viola Liuzzo that are engraved on the circular, black granite table.

These children have all grown up in a multicultural, post-segregation society and have never known separate water fountains or different waiting rooms for white and black people at the doctor's office. They're shaking off the deeply ingrained prejudices that have long haunted our society.

There will always be the Dedmons of the world. But I have to believe they're the exception.

Despite the racists and reactionaries in our midst, our nation is becoming more tolerant as it becomes more diverse. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the growing acceptance of LGBT people. Polls now

show that a majority of Americans now favors allowing same-sex marriage, a remarkable change from just a few years ago. That's partly because younger people are taking their places in our society and making their voices heard.

With each passing year, we will see even greater change as they come of age.

As an SPLC member, I hope you're proud of the work we've done, together, to nurture respect and empathy in our country's youth through our Teaching Tolerance program. Since 1992, we've been providing highly effective, award-winning anti-bias materials free to schools throughout the nation.

It's a cliché to say that children are the future. But it's true. We should all do everything we can to teach them the values of equality and justice and to make sure they understand how important it is to treat others with dignity and respect, no matter the differences.



Richard Cohen



SPLC offices overlook the Civil Rights Memorial, which attracts thousands of school children throughout the year.

MAILBOX

It is very disturbing to hear what is going on in the political discourse in America these days. In the name of patriotism and religion, people are demonizing all who don't look, think or worship like them. Anyone who doesn't agree is anti-American or anti-Christian.

As an American and a Christian, I am offended. America is big enough for all races, ethnicities and religions. Much of what I am hearing is more like Nazi Germany than America. Patriotism and religion are never an excuse for hatred.

America needs organizations like the SPLC now more than ever.

W.B.

Cicero, Illinois

I teach junior-senior level sociology at a high school of about 750 kids in rural southwest Missouri. During February, I teach a unit on racial tolerance. We explore the hate associated with the Civil Rights Movement and also look at the modern-day phenomenon of hate in our society.

Your resources have been invaluable to my teaching, and I appreciate your work as we both strive to cure hate and ignorance in our culture.

K.M.

Nevada, Missouri

I cannot adequately express my admiration for the work done by SPLC and the courage of Morris Dees in exposing himself to the kind of vicious haters that you are fighting. I am not a wealthy person or I would donate more. If I had to eliminate all contributions but one, that one would be SPLC!

A.C.

Barrington, Illinois

Seeing hatred, discrimination and violence against the "have-nots" has always deeply disturbed me. That is why, when I found out about the fantastic work that you do, I felt that I FINALLY found an organization that speaks to what my heart wants me to do with my discretionary dollars.

Being a "Friend of the Center" feels so right to me. So

thank you for doing the work that so many of us cannot do. I love all of you for what you are doing!

K.A.

Lewiston, New York

We are incredibly fortunate here in America to have access to groups like the SPLC fighting against hatred and willful ignorance. Thanks so much for your ongoing efforts to correct the wrongs suffered by so many over the years. We will continue to support your efforts as long as life endures and injustice exists.

A.L.

North Adams, Massachusetts

Thank you for your educational videos. My students are doing a "Stand Up! Speak Out!" unit, and we watched "Viva la Causa" and "Bullied." My freshmen loved it. When I stopped the "Bullied" video halfway through to have them write, they yelled at me! They jumped up yelling at characters on the screen during some of the more intense bullying

scenes. They spoke critically and thoughtfully — and their writing improved from having a rich source of information to write about. They really connected to the stories told.

Keep making these videos and keep encouraging teachers to use them.

K.S.

South Bend, Indiana

Regarding your website's "Stand Strong Map" and the numbers for Erie County in Pennsylvania: I wanted to share with you the fact that the majority of the over 600 who have "stood strong" are students from a class that I teach entitled "Tolerance 101." We use your site as well as Teaching Tolerance materials in our curriculum as part of what is one of the most popular electives at our school. I have introduced each of our students (240 per year) to the work that you have your website to encourage them to become part of that work in some way.

D.H.

Erie, Pennsylvania

FIGHTING HATE

Conspiracy theories invade political mainstream

Conspiracy theories originating on the radical right have invaded the American political mainstream in ways that would have been almost unimaginable a few years ago. While the margins-to-the-mainstream phenomenon is hardly new, false and demonizing propaganda now is increasingly endorsed by important leaders who ought to know better.

Examples include:

- The Republican National Committee says that Agenda 21, a United Nations non-binding plan for global sustainability signed by President George H. W. Bush, is a “comprehensive plan” for “global political control” and that it is a “destructive and insidious” scheme being pushed “covertly” in U.S. towns that would entail “socialist/communist redistribution of wealth.”

- Five-term Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, Ariz., representing nearly 4 million people in the fourth-largest county in the United States, says there is “probable cause” to believe that President Obama’s long-form birth certificate is “a forgery” and that the media engaged in a cover-up of a story “bigger than Watergate” in its reporting about the birth certificate.

- First-term Washington state Rep. Matt Shea (R-Spokane Valley), whose priority is “fighting for families,” thinks there is a secret government plot to impose martial law,

seize the population’s guns, use concentration camps on “former military bases” to imprison Americans, and make the country a “precursor to Nazi Germany.”

As this sickness has infected our political system, no wild-eyed idea or theory seems too far out to gain a toehold in the public consciousness.

Separation of church, state a ‘myth’

There are religious leaders who have advised presidential candidates and say the separation of church and state is a myth. Once-respectable news executives like Sean Hannity insist Obama is really a Kenyan. A Yale Law School grad suggests to his followers that the United States is heading for martial law. Religious-right leaders assert that gay men were essentially responsible for the Nazi Holocaust. So-called media watchdogs claim there’s a secret plot to merge Mexico, the United States and Canada.

As usual, Arizona, which kicked off the recent spate of punishing anti-immigrant laws around the nation with S.B. 1070 in 2010, is a leader in this dubious contest. In recent months, it considered a law that would require federal law enforcement agents to get permission from a local sheriff before undertaking any official action — a concept of sheriff as top law enforcement officer that began with the violent and

anti-Semitic Posse Comitatus of the 1970s and 1980s. Lawmakers in the Grand Canyon State also proposed creating an armed volunteer task force to patrol the border for crime, with participants immunized like sworn officers for any acts while on duty. Fourteen of the state’s 15 sheriffs oppose the measure.

Some 13 states, beginning last year with Oklahoma, have seen bills introduced that seek to prevent the use of Shariah, or Islamic religious law, in American courts. The measures are completely useless and unnecessary under the Constitution.

In Missouri, legislation was introduced that would require candidates for vice president and president to prove their citizenship — a measure that opponents called racist but proponents said had nothing at all to do with our first black president.

And in New Hampshire, a legislator got the state House of Representatives to pass a bill requiring doctors to tell women that abortion causes breast cancer — a claim for which there is zero evidence.

While there are doubtless many reasons to criticize government, allegations of secret concentration camps, mass gun seizures, martial law and Nazi-like plans are not among them. That kind of fear-mongering does nothing so much as make it nearly impossible to deal with the very real problems that face our country.

New video explains racist skinhead threat

The SPLC has produced a new training video that gives law enforcement officers a rare, behind-the-scenes look at the violent subculture of racist skinheads in an effort to help officers protect themselves and their communities from dangerous extremists.

The 12-minute video, designed to be shown to officers during roll call, was distributed in the law enforcement edition of the *Intelligence Report*, released in late May.

Video free to law enforcement

About 55,000 officers will receive “Understanding the Threat: Racist Skinheads” — free of charge — along with their copy of the SPLC’s quarterly investigative journal covering the radical right.

But if the demand for the SPLC’s last training video is any indication, thousands more copies will be sought by officers. More than 80,000 officers received the previous video, which

focused on the antigovernment “sovereign citizens” movement, in 2011.

The SPLC is currently tracking 133 skinhead organizations across the United States. Skinheads have been responsible for numerous murders and other acts of violence against both officers and civilians. The new video will help officers understand the skinhead culture and identify warning signs,

including tattoos and clothing, that could save their lives.

SPLC chief investigator Joe Roy narrates the video, which features Bryon Widner, a former skinhead “enforcer” who renounced racism and underwent a series of painful treatments to remove the racist tattoos that covered his face and neck. A documentary about Widner, *Erasing Hate*, aired on MSNBC last year.



Joe Roy (left), chief investigator for the SPLC’s Intelligence Project, narrates the new video, which features former skinhead Byron Widner.



INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS

White supremacists arrested in Florida

ST. CLOUD, Fla. — Members of the American Front — a well-armed white supremacist group in Florida — were planning acts of violence and preparing for “an inevitable race war” when 12 of them were arrested in May, court documents say.

The documents, the outgrowth of a two-year investigation, also say American Front members received paramilitary training at a fortified compound near St. Cloud from one of its Missouri members who is a U.S. military reservist. He was not among those arrested.

The American Front compound is on 10 acres in Osceola County and is owned by group leader Marcus Faella, 39, and his wife, Patricia, 36, who were among those arrested on state charges of conducting illegal paramilitary training, attempting to shoot into an occupied dwelling, and prejudice while committing a crime.

The documents describe the American Front as a “militia-styled, anti-Semitic, white supremacist, skinhead organization (that) is a known domestic terrorist organization.”

The group’s activity in Florida dates back to the 1980s when its late founder, David Lynch, lived in the state. Lynch, who moved to California and led a major resurgence of the group about five years ago, was murdered in his Sacramento home in March 2011. His murder remains unsolved.

Dead neo-Nazi vigilante was investigated by FBI

PHOENIX — J.T. Ready, the infamous neo-Nazi and border vigilante who killed himself and four others in early May in a suburban home here, was the subject of a federal domestic terrorism investigation into activities on the border, an Arizona television station reported.

James Turgal, the special agent in charge of the FBI office in Phoenix, told KPNX-TV that Ready had been under investigation dating to his days as a swastika-wearing neo-Nazi targeting ethnic groups. Turgal also confirmed that the FBI had looked at arresting Ready but was never able to develop enough evidence.

Ready was notorious for his aggressive suggestions for violence on the border. He had talked about placing landmines on the U.S.-Mexico border where he and other armed vigilantes conducted

patrols. He also called Adolf Hitler “a great white civil rights leader.”

His death has reignited scrutiny of vigilante groups operating on the border, especially in the wake of a separate shooting in April that left two migrants dead north of Tucson. Turgal said the FBI would continue to investigate the U.S. Border Guard, a group Ready founded and which conducted armed border patrols in search of immigrants.

Georgia militia leaders plead guilty

GAINESVILLE, GA. — Two members of a Georgia militia — arrested late last year in a plot to bomb federal buildings, assassinate public officials and attack cities with deadly ricin — pleaded guilty April 10 to conspiracy charges in a courtroom here.

Accused ringleader Frederick W. Thomas, 73, and Emory Dan Roberts, 67, both entered guilty pleas to charges of conspiring to possess explosives and firearms.

The case was labeled by the FBI as one of its top domestic terrorism investigations of 2011 following the arrests of Thomas and Roberts and two others last November. The two each face a maximum of five years in prison.

When federal agents searched Thomas’ home, they seized 52 firearms and 30,000 rounds of ammunition.

White supremacist sentenced in mail bombing

PHOENIX — A white supremacist convicted of masterminding a bombing that injured a black city official in Scottsdale eight years ago was sentenced May 22 in federal court.

Dennis Mahon, 61, will serve 40 years in prison for the Feb. 26, 2004, mail-bomb attack that wounded Don Logan, who was the diversity director in Scottsdale (See related story, page 4.).

Mahon’s identical twin brother, Daniel, was acquitted. The jury declined to find Mahon guilty of a hate crime. “It’s a mixed bag,” said Logan following the verdict. “I can’t understand why they chose not to include race as a factor in the case. This was a hallmark case as a hate crime.”

Logan said he would move on. The end of the emotionally and physically exhausting ordeal was a relief to Logan and his family. This has not deterred him in his work of promoting diversity and tolerance. He told his story to hundreds of SPLC supporters at an event here in April.



Richard Cohen, SPLC's president, provides an overview of the state of hate and extremism in the nation to a full house of 800 SPLC supporters. Founder Morris Dees is seated at left.

Arizona presentation aimed at fighting hate, extremism

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — On Feb. 26, 2004, Don Logan received a mysterious package at his office here, where he served as director of the city's diversity and dialogue office.

Logan cut the packing tape, opened the cardboard box — and heard what sounded like a gunshot. The windows and picture frames around him shattered. Smoke filled the room. The fire alarm sounded.

The explosion — from a pipe bomb in the package — badly injured Logan's right arm and ring finger. Two other city employees were hurt in the blast. Earlier this year, a jury convicted a white supremacist in connection with the bombing against Logan, who is black.

Since surviving the bombing, Logan has dedicated his life to telling his story and raising awareness of the hate and extremism that persists in the country today. In April, he joined SPLC officials in Scottsdale for a presentation on the state of hate and extremism in America, attended by about 900 SPLC supporters.

Hatred still prevalent

"There are some who refuse to accept the fact that there is a certain element in our communities that still lives in the past, that still carries hatred for people who are different than they," Logan said before the event. "In this case, they took it as far as acting out on that. I think what the Southern Poverty Law Center is doing in terms of drawing attention to these types of behaviors is relevant and good information for us all to know."

Arizona has long been a center for extremist activity.

In 2010, Arizona passed a vicious anti-immigrant law that has served as a blueprint for similar laws in other states where lawmakers are exploiting the nation's anti-immigrant climate.

In 2005, the Minuteman Project was launched in Cochise County, Ariz., as the first of the major groups comprising the border vigilante movement. Four years later, anti-immigrant

activist Shawna Forde, who had been a member of various Minuteman-style groups, and two accomplices murdered a Latino man and his 9-year-old daughter during a home invasion. Forde is now on death row.

'Dire situation in Arizona'

Police still are investigating a 2007 incident where four men wearing camouflage and military-style berets shot at a vehicle carrying undocumented immigrants, killing a 12-year-old child and a man. On April 8, two Latino immigrants were shot and killed by men, also in camouflage, who ambushed their truck. The incident is still under investigation.

Arizona is also home to Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. The Department of Justice sued the sheriff in May, alleging racial profiling of Latinos by deputies on immigration patrols.

"We can't ignore the dire situation in Arizona," SPLC President Richard Cohen told SPLC supporters in Scottsdale. "We've seen how events here are felt nationwide. This gathering is a way to discuss — and fight — the rise of extremism."

The persistent threat of extremist violence was highlighted during the evening, as several of the historic SPLC lawsuits that have devastated hate groups were recounted.

Triumphing over hate

The SPLC event also provided a powerful example of how one person can triumph over hate when Holocaust survivor Gerda Klein spoke. Klein is the subject of *One Survivor Remembers*, an Oscar-winning documentary recounting her ordeal.

The SPLC's Teaching Tolerance project has helped Klein tell her story by offering the film as part of a teaching kit for educators and has distributed 130,000 copies of the film since its release in 2005.

Teacher Sarah Green, who attended the event with her mother and father, said the SPLC's teaching aids have become a standard part of her classroom lessons.

SPLC seeks ban on pepper spray in Birmingham, Ala., schools

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A mother whose daughters were doused with pepper spray by a police officer at their school here, joined the SPLC to present city officials with a petition signed by more than 25,000 people urging the city to stop allowing police officers to discipline students with chemical weapons.

"I will never forget my daughter's red and swollen face," said LaTonya Stearnes, who presented the petition to the city council and mayor in February. "I sent my girls to school thinking they would be safe and protected. I never thought they would be pepper-sprayed. These are teenage girls, not criminals."

Chemical weapons used frequently

Stearnes, the mother of three Birmingham schoolchildren, recounted an incident at Huffman High School that occurred after a boy pushed one of her daughters. When the girl defended herself, a police officer grabbed her from behind and sprayed her in the face. When another daughter ran to help her sister, she was caught in the mist of chemicals.

The petition is one of the latest actions taken by the

SPLC and its allies to end this dangerous practice in Birmingham, a city where an earlier generation of civil rights activists were blasted with fire hoses and threatened with police dogs. The SPLC filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of district students in 2010 after it discovered that almost 200 Birmingham students had been sprayed with chemical weapons during a five-year period — mostly for petty offenses that

"I sent my girls to school thinking they would be safe and protected."

—LATONYA STEARNES,
Mother of three Birmingham schoolchildren

schools typically address with a trip to the principal's office.

The SPLC is unaware of any other school district in the nation where police officers use chemical weapons against students on such a frequent basis. Since filing the suit, the SPLC has participated in community meetings to organize opposition to this practice, including a May event attended by more than 200 people.

"Chemical weapons are intended to be a last resort for public protection, not a method for disciplining high school students engaging in typical adolescent misbehavior," said Ebony Howard, lead attorney on the case for the SPLC. "Using pepper spray on schoolchildren only encourages drop-out and derails young lives. We sincerely hope the mayor and city council will join our fight to protect the city's children."

The Birmingham chief of police, who is named as a defendant in the lawsuit, has indicated he is not interested in mediation and doesn't believe the lawsuit will be resolved through a settlement agreement. Several Birmingham police officers are also named as defendants in the case as well as a school's assistant principal.

Last year, the federal court dismissed the Birmingham Board of Education as a defendant in the lawsuit after the board's attorneys argued the board has no duty to protect the students attending its schools — a remarkable argument that suggests the school board

Continued on page 8

University creates professorship honoring civil rights leader Bond

NEW YORK CITY — Noted civil rights leader Julian Bond, who was the SPLC's first president and served on its board for years, retired from the University of Virginia (UVA) on May 1 after a distinguished 20-year career as a history professor at the university.

In his honor, the university is establishing the Julian Bond Professorship in Civil Rights and Social Justice, a permanent position within the College of Arts & Sciences that will continue Bond's scholarly legacy.

Bond's legacy is 'a beacon that shines hope'

"In an era where the rights of citizens are still questioned, the legacy of Professor Bond is a beacon that shines hope for all those who are treated unjustly," said UVA alumna Kathy Thornton-Bias. "Endowing a chair in his honor will enable students for years to come to have the ability to study civil and human rights."



SPLC President Richard Cohen poses with Julian Bond at the gala.

To help fund the professorship, a group of alumni and friends organized the Julian Bond Celebration Gala, held May 2 at the Plaza Hotel Ballroom here. The event featured co-chairs Harry Belafonte and Dave Matthews. Former President Bill Clinton was the event's honorary chair.

In his remarks at the gala, Bond cited an SPLC report released last year that found that across the country, state educational standards virtually ignore civil rights history. "The report found that students know two names — Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King — and four words: 'I have a dream,'" Bond said.

The endowed professorship will ensure that future students at the University of Virginia will have the chance to learn civil rights history in depth, Bond said. "As they do, they will learn that young people like themselves were often leaders in the movement, facing jail, risking life and limb, side by side with the more famous adults," he said.

"From the beginning, I tried my best to tell my students that the civil rights movement was a story of mostly ordinary people doing extraordinary things, and I hoped that by learning that, they would be inspired to do extraordinary things themselves."

"If the University of Virginia is successful, as I believe it will be, other schools will follow its example, and the appalling ignorance will disappear," Bond said.

Representing the SPLC at the gala were Founder Morris Dees; President Richard Cohen and Legal Director Mary Bauer, both UVA law school graduates; Outreach Director Lecia Brooks; Board Members Alan Howard and Marsha Levick; and former SPLC staffer Daniel Gutman, currently with the Campaign for Fair Sentencing of Youth.

SEEKING JUSTICE

SPLC exposes barbaric conditions at for-profit youth prison in Mississippi

JACKSON, Miss. — Michael McIntosh couldn't believe what he was hearing. He had come to visit his son at the Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility near Jackson, only to be turned away. His son wasn't there.

"I said, 'Well, where is he?' They said, 'We don't know.'"

Thus began a search that lasted more than six weeks. The desperate father repeatedly called the prison and the Mississippi Department of Corrections. "I was running out of options. Nobody would give me an answer, from the warden all the way to the commissioner."

Finally, a nurse at the prison gave him a clue: Check the area hospitals.

After more frantic calls, he found Mike in a hospital in Greenwood, hours away. His son could barely move, let alone sit up. He couldn't see or talk or use his right arm. "He's got this baseball-size knot on the back of his head," McIntosh said. "He's got cuts all over him, bruises. He has stab wounds. The teeth in the front are broken. He's scared out of his mind. He doesn't have a clue where he's at — or why."

SPLC provides answer

But still, no one would tell him what happened — that is, until he received a phone call from an SPLC advocate who was investigating Walnut Grove, a privately operated prison for youths ages 13 to 22.

"When I was at my wit's end and couldn't get anywhere, an advocate from the SPLC actually found me," McIntosh said. "She said, 'Your son was in a riot.' They [SPLC] just took bits [of information] and started putting this puzzle together. Without them, we wouldn't have a leg to stand on."

Mike, who had just turned 21 and was serving a four-year sentence for a nonviolent crime, suffered brain damage. A U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) report about the conditions at Walnut Grove later noted that after weeks of hospitalization, his "previously normal cognition resembled that of a two year old."

DOJ investigators wrote that on February 27, 2010, "a youth melee resulted in the stabbing of several youth, as well as other types of physical injuries necessitating treatment at an outside hospital. One of the injured youth ... suffered irreparable brain damage and sustained a fractured nose, cuts and stab wounds."

And no one bothered to tell his father.

Others were hurt, too — stabbed, punched, kicked, stomped and thrown from an upper floor to a lower one. Mike and his cellmate, who was stabbed in the head, were both nearly killed. A dozen others were hospitalized.

There was another shocking detail: A female guard had "endorsed the disturbance by allowing inmates into an authorized cell to fight," according to the March 20, 2012, DOJ report. She was fired but not charged with any crime.

The guard's involvement wasn't uncommon. Investigations showed that guards frequently instigated or incited youth-on-youth violence. Often, they were the perpetrators.

What happened to Mike was symptomatic of a youth prison — one run for profit by a private corporation — that was completely out of control.

The SPLC investigation, which began in 2006, turned into a federal civil rights lawsuit, with the ACLU and Jackson-based

civil rights attorney Robert McDuff as co-counsel. It was settled in March with a sweeping consent decree designed to end the barbaric, unconstitutional conditions and the rampant violations of state and federal law that were documented separately by both the SPLC and the DOJ.

The Walnut Grove story is

Walnut Grove, "has allowed a cesspool of unconstitutional and inhuman acts and conditions to germinate."

Violence by youths and guards wasn't the only problem. There were the gang affiliations of some guards. There were the grossly inadequate health care, education and rehabilitative

important than providing humane conditions and services that would protect youths from violence and help get them back on the right track.

For the youths at Walnut Grove, the settlement agreement offers hope.

The state is required to remove all boys under 18 and certain others from the prison and house them in separate, juvenile facilities. Pepper spray will no longer be used to punish youths. Guards won't be allowed to rely on prisoners to enforce rules or impose punishment on others. Youths will not be subject to solitary confinement. Regular rehabilitative, educational and recreational programs will be available. Mental health and medical care will be required. And, "at all times," youths will be provided with "reasonably safe living conditions and will be protected from violence" and sexual abuse.

"This represents a sea change in the way the Mississippi Department of Corrections will treat children in its custody," said Sheila Bedi, deputy legal director for the SPLC. "As a result of this litigation, Mississippi's children will no longer languish in an abusive, privately operated prison that profits each time a young man is tried as an adult and ends up behind bars."

Today, Mike is 22 and no longer at Walnut Grove. He's finishing his sentence in a county jail and is slowly recovering.

Meanwhile, GEO, the country's second largest prison company, decided to cancel its \$21 million-a-year contract to operate a separate prison in Mississippi, perhaps in anticipation of another SPLC lawsuit. The state then decided to revoke the company's remaining contracts.



Michael McIntosh testifies before the Mississippi House Juvenile Justice Committee about the horrible conditions at the Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility. For six weeks authorities there failed to provide him information about his son, who was hospitalized with serious injuries.

a cautionary tale that raises alarming questions about the treatment of youthful, mostly nonviolent offenders in Mississippi and elsewhere. And it calls into question the wisdom of turning over the care of youths, some as young as 13, to private companies that exist solely to turn a profit — companies that have no incentive to rehabilitate youths, that thrive on recidivism, and that increase their profits by cutting corners.

'Deliberate indifference'

On March 26, U.S. District Judge Carlton W. Reeves issued a blistering court order approving the settlement of the SPLC lawsuit. He wrote that the GEO Group Inc., the company that runs

programs. And passive youths were subject to the wild overuse of pepper spray.

The DOJ also found that sexual abuse — including brutal youth-on-youth rapes and "brazen" sexual misconduct by prison staffers — was "among the worst that we have seen in any facility anywhere in the nation."

What's more, both the prison staff and the Mississippi Department of Corrections, which pays GEO \$14 million each year to run the prison, showed "deliberate indifference" to these problems.

In other words, nobody cared. Nobody cared that the bottom line — private profit, secured in part by dangerously understaffing the prison — was more

New Teaching Tolerance guides help create inclusive schools

After receiving requests from educators across the country seeking help in addressing acts of bigotry on campus, Teaching Tolerance is releasing two new guides designed to help create safe, welcoming schools.

The guides — *Responding to Bias and Hate at School* and *Speak Up at School* — will be available to educators, free of charge, in time for the new school year this fall.

"We receive a steady flow of calls and e-mails from educators looking for guidance on these issues," said Maureen Costello, director of Teaching Tolerance. "There was clearly a need to help people recognize danger signs at

school and address them before a crisis occurs."

Responding to Bias and Hate at School is written primarily for school administrators, although it provides valuable information for counselors and teachers as well. It offers research-based strategies for reducing bullying and creating welcoming schools. In developing model responses to incidents of bigotry and hate, Teaching Tolerance researched best practices and interviewed administrators and teachers from across the country. Its staff also spoke with teachers who train peer mediators and organizations concerned with bias and hate at school.

Safe, inclusive schools also require the work of dedicated individuals throughout the building. That's where *Speak Up at School* comes in. This booklet provides advice for responding to verbal slurs, racist jokes or disrespectful remarks that can be heard anywhere in school, and from anyone.

Biased remarks first step to bullying

"These kinds of hurtful and biased remarks too often constitute the first steps in bullying and harassment," Costello said. "But responding to offensive remarks takes forethought and courage. *Speak Up* coaches individuals to confront bigotry without being confrontational."

The booklet gives educators the tools to help students take action rather than be a bystander. It also shows educators how to respond when the biased remark or offensive joke comes from a peer, parent or even an administrator.

Speak Up recognizes that not every intolerant remark is made in the same spirit. Some reflect genuine animosity, while others are said out of ignorance or a desire to get along with the crowd. *Speak Up* examines these differences and explores the best ways to handle them. It also provides advice from teachers about situations they've faced and what worked for them.

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Bequest continues connection with SPLC

When Rita Silberman died last year, her obituary was brief, her estate modest. Yet the world is a greatly diminished place without her, because Silberman spent her life as generously as she spent her limited funds.

She was a faithful member of the SPLC, donating monthly. Her final gift of a \$6,000 bequest punctuated a relationship of nearly 20 years with the SPLC. Silberman's family expressed both pleasure and pride to see her great loyalty to the SPLC's mission translated into a permanent statement of support.



Rita Silberman and her granddaughter Jessica Dennis

"My mother believed in giving help financially, and she donated to many worthy organizations," Rita's daughter, Barbara Dennis, said. "But the SPLC was one of her favorites. She believed that for many people our legal system doesn't always work, that there is still prejudice against poor people and minorities."

Born and raised in New York, Silberman graduated from NYU when relatively few women earned college degrees. She established a career as an executive secretary before marrying Jack Silberman. His plastics company took them to Connecticut and

Long Island, where they manufactured buttons and buckles and raised their daughter.

Living through the post-World War II era, the tumult of the '60s and the ongoing struggles for civil rights, Silberman was a witness to the damage caused by prejudice. When she became aware of the SPLC's work on behalf of those underrepresented in our country's legal system, she and her husband began to support its work.

"My mother cared about people from all walks of life," Dennis said. It didn't matter to her if you spoke another language, had a different religion or skin color, or were disabled in some way. You were a human being first and deserved to be treated with respect and dignity."

Silberman passed her values to others by taking action in very personal ways. For years, she visited a homebound woman suffering from agoraphobia, an anxiety disorder that involves a fear of public places. She was 92 when she retired as the "grandreader" of a preschool where she faithfully read to children every week. She was also a longtime volunteer and board member of a program assisting disabled veterans and others with mental and physical disabilities.

"My mom was a huge influence on me and my children," Dennis said. "I became a special education teacher, and both of my kids are involved with an organization that serves people with disabilities. She taught us empathy for folks who are overlooked."

Silberman's bequest is her legacy that continues to help those who need it the most.

Scroll of Remembrance

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Civil Rights Memorial

Settlement protects students from bullying

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"The changes the SPLC settlement agreement brought to the district's anti-bullying policies will help ensure that no student will have to endure the torment Kyle experienced as a student," Rooker said in the letter. "It will also ensure no parent will have to endure the anguish I experienced: The repeated phone calls from your child to be picked up from school, to be rescued from the hell of relentless bullying."

Brittany Geldert, another student represented by the SPLC, also endured bullying, and lost her best friend to suicide — a friend who had experienced bullying as well.

"Today, she knows when good people take a stand against bullying, it can make a world of difference," her family wrote.

They added: "The settlement agreement that resulted from the SPLC's lawsuit will help teachers confidently stop bullying within the schools — and hopefully prevent it in the future. We believe

the policy changes the SPLC has brought to the schools will provide students, parents and teachers with the peace of mind they so desperately need here. No one should ever feel they are in danger at school."

The SPLC lawsuit charged that the school district's "neutrality" policy — which hampered the efforts of teachers to address the harassment — stigmatized gay and lesbian students and helped perpetuate the abuse. In several cases, officials told the harassed students to "lay low" or "try to stay out of people's way."

New policy affirms dignity of all
The 18-year-old policy was repealed in February after the SPLC and other groups urged district officials to end it. It has been replaced with a policy that requires district staffers to affirm the dignity and self-worth of all students, including LGBT students.

The agreement outlines specific steps the district must take to address and prevent

anti-LGBT harassment, including fully investigating reports of harassment and instituting training that specifically addresses anti-LGBT bias.

The agreement also resolves a separate complaint brought by the U.S. Department of Justice. An investigation by the departments of Justice and Education found that the school district violated Title IX and Title IV of the Education Code by permitting a hostile environment against students on the basis of gender, including the failure to conform to gender stereotypes.

The settlement will bring urgently needed change, said Tammy Aaberg, who lost her 15-year-old son Justin to suicide in 2010 after he endured ruthless anti-gay bullying in the school district. Aaberg also expressed her thanks in a letter to the SPLC.

"Quite simply, your work in Anoka-Hennepin has provided hope for so many," she said in the letter. "My sincere wish is that students who feel hopeless in the face of bullying — who feel they have no one left to turn to — will see what the Southern Poverty Law Center did in Anoka-Hennepin and know there are adults who care about them — adults willing to fight for them. Thank you."

Tammy Aaberg's letter and the letters from the Anoka-Hennepin students' families can be read in their entirety at www.splcenter.org/get-informed/news/parents-of-bullied-students-thank-splc-for-change-at-minn-school-district.

SPLC FLYERS COUNTER ANTI-GAY PROPAGANDA IN MARYLAND SCHOOLS

ROCKVILLE, Md. — The SPLC recently distributed nearly 50,000 flyers countering anti-LGBT propaganda targeting public high schools in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Earlier this year, high school students there received flyers at school saying that being gay is a choice and that people can change their sexual orientation. The flyer's message is a popular and harmful piece of propaganda about LGBT people — the claim that they can change their sexual orientation through what is commonly known as "ex-gay" or "conversion" therapy. It's a notion that has been rejected or highly criticized by every mainstream American medical and mental health professional association.

SPLC responds with educational campaign

The SPLC and its allies responded with flyers countering the propaganda with facts and providing resources for LGBT students. These flyers were distributed to all high school students within the school district as part of its flyer distribution program — the same method used to distribute the anti-gay flyers by Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX).

"It's tempting to urge a school district to ban the distribution of flyers that spread misinformation, but such efforts can often backfire because they give groups a platform to argue that their free speech rights have been violated," said Christine Sun, SPLC deputy legal director. "It's far better to provide students with the facts and let them know they are supported by the adults in their community."

Anti-gay propaganda, such as the PFOX flyers, can encourage students to enter harmful conversion therapy programs where participants

have experienced anxiety, depression, and in some cases, suicidal thoughts. It can lead other students to believe they're justified in bullying LGBT students.

"Students across the country continue to face serious harassment, and often violence, because they are LGBT or are perceived to be LGBT," said Maureen Costello, director of the SPLC's Teaching Tolerance project. "Giving students the facts is a critical step to ensure our schools are safe and supportive environments for all students."

PFOX is the ex-gay movement's answer to Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). PFOX is blatant about its effort to target schools that have supportive environments for LGBT students. On its website, PFOX instructs its followers to "choose only those schools that need your services — schools with [Gay-Straight Alliance] or other gay clubs that celebrate Day of Silence or other gay events, etc."

The SPLC formed a coalition with PFLAG and the Equality Maryland Foundation to distribute flyers countering the anti-gay propaganda. The flyers note that the American Medical Association explicitly opposes "therapies" based on the incorrect premise that gay people are ill or that they should change their sexual orientation.

They also quote the American Psychological Association (APA), which has determined: "There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that sexual orientation can be changed."

They also describe how the APA has expressed concern that the aggressive promotion of efforts to change sexual orientation creates "an environment in which prejudice and discrimination can flourish."

GOP leaders fight SPLC suit over LGBT veterans' rights

The SPLC has condemned efforts by House Republicans to prevent a decorated 12-year U.S. Army veteran and other married gay and lesbian veterans from receiving the same disability benefits provided to their heterosexual counterparts.

In an effort to deny these veterans their benefits, the group of legislators, who are part of the so-called Bipartisan Legal Advocacy Group (BLAG), moved to intervene in the case filed by the SPLC in February on behalf of Tracey Cooper-Harris and her wife, Maggie. The couple has been denied dependency benefits available to married veterans because the federal government will not recognize marriages by same-sex couples.

"This shameful crusade by Rep. John Boehner and his colleagues against our brave men and women in uniform is nothing short of disgusting," said Christine P. Sun, deputy legal director for the SPLC. "These lawmakers are actually spending our taxpayer dollars in this fight against those who put their lives on the line in defense of our country. It's really remarkable the lengths they will go to discriminate."

The U.S. Justice Department normally defends federal laws in court but has decided not to contest the SPLC suit, deeming the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) discriminatory and unconstitutional.

House Republicans, however, are not backing down and are using BLAG to launch a legal defense estimated to cost \$1.5 million, even though Democrats on the panel object.

'They should not face prejudice at home'

In a March 30 letter to Boehner, the Democratic members of BLAG denounced the motion to intervene in the SPLC suit.

"This latest decision not only ignores the civil rights of LGBT Americans but opens a new, direct assault on veterans," Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Whip Steny Hoyer wrote. "The men and women of our Armed Forces serve with courage and dignity on behalf of our safety and security. They risk their lives for the country they love — and they should not face prejudice at home because of whom they love. These brave soldiers deserve nothing less than our gratitude, our respect, and the benefits they have earned in battle."

The lawsuit filed by the SPLC and the law firm of WilmerHale charges that the Department of Veterans Affairs discriminated against Cooper-Harris and her wife by denying them disabled veteran benefits available to other married veterans and their spouses, even though their marriage is legally recognized in California, the state where they live.

SPLC seeks ban on pepper spray in schools

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wouldn't even be obligated to protect students from a gunman on a school campus.

Individuals exposed to pepper spray are at risk for serious health effects ranging from temporary loss of vision to blistering of the eyes and skin. They can also experience life-threatening effects such as inflammation of the throat that restricts the size of the airway and limits the amount of oxygen entering the lungs.

The SPLC is dedicated to protecting children from harsh discipline policies that result in suspensions, dropouts and arrests for even minor, nonviolent misbehavior — policies that unnecessarily push students into a juvenile justice system that criminalizes many of them.

Recent discipline cases brought by the SPLC include:

- A 2011 federal lawsuit against the school system in Jackson, Miss., brought on behalf of students at the Capital City Alternative School. Students have been shackled for hours at

a time to a fixed object as punishment for minor infractions such as not wearing a belt or for wearing mismatched shoelaces.

- A federal lawsuit against the school system in Mobile County, Ala., which has violated the constitutional rights of students by suspending them for months at a time for minor misbehavior without giving parents and guardians an opportunity to defend them. The SPLC filed the lawsuit in 2011 on behalf of six students suspended for apparent misbehavior such as un-tucked shirts, tardiness or failing to carry a school ID.

- A 2010 federal lawsuit on behalf of a first-grader at Sarah T. Reed Elementary School in New Orleans. The student was handcuffed and shackled to a chair by an armed security officer after the student argued with another child. A settlement agreement resulted in the school district prohibiting the use of fixed restraints and limiting the use of handcuffs. The district will provide formal training to all security personnel on proper discipline practices.