

state news briefs

Court overturns death penalty

PITTSBURGH (AP) - The state Supreme Court yesterday overturned the death penalty against a Pittsburgh man convicted of killing an elderly couple in part because the court said there wasn't enough evidence to prove they were tortured.

The court said Christopher Caldwell should be sentenced to life in prison for the January 1985 slayings of Boykin Gibson, 88, and his wife, Sara, 85, who were tied to chairs in their home, slashed across the throat and stabbed in the chest.

The court also said there wasn't enough evidence to substantiate the prosecution's claim that Gibson was killed to prevent him from testifying against Caldwell for his wife's murder. Mrs. Gibson was killed minutes before her husband as Caldwell and four other youths ransacked their Pittsburgh home.

Those factors were two of four aggravating circumstances in the Allegheny County jury's decision to sentence Caldwell to death, rather than life in prison.

Dick Clark honored in Walk of Fame

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Dick Clark, host of television's American Bandstand for three decades, won a spot on the Walk of Fame of music yesterday in the city where the show began introducing music talent and dances to the nation.

The Philadelphia Music Foundation unveiled a bronze plaque on the Walk of Fame outside the Academy of Music, where Frankie Avalon and Chubby Checker joined Clark, who gave each performer an early boost.

"I can come and polish it every now and then," Clark remarked before a large replica of a 45 rpm record with his name on the label was rolled away, revealing the plaque on the sidewalk in front of the Academy, the 11th plaque honoring a musical figure with Philadelphia roots.

Clark took over as host of the local Bandstand show in 1956, the next year selling the idea to ABC for American Bandstand.

"We used to have a lot of people making jokes about our city, but now they don't anymore because it's in the forefront," Clark told about 100 people gathered for the brief noon ceremony on a sunny, mild day.

Later, Clark said his place on the walk was special "as a non-musician because you accept on behalf of all of us who love music and can't perform it."

Others on the Walk of Fame, begun last April by the foundation, are Marian Anderson, Pearl Bailey, Checker, John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, Bill Haley, Mario Lanza, Bessie Smith, Bobby Rydell and Leopold Stokowski. All were one-time residents of Philadelphia.

Phila. dedicates Vietnam memorial

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - The sun shone on hundreds of men in khaki, on rifles, bugles and mothers weeping, as Philadelphians turned out by the thousands yesterday to mourn their dead and mark the dedication of the city's Vietnam veterans memorial.

As veterans unveiled the gleaming granite mural along the Delaware River, families cheered, proclaiming their thanks that Philadelphia's 630 war dead had finally come home. The dedication capped a long weekend of ceremonies, songs and prayers that emphasized, again and again, "the healing has come."

"I don't know if there are any words for it," said Alma Day of Philadelphia, whose 19-year-old son, Edward, died aiding a wounded soldier on Aug. 26, 1968, and was awarded the Navy Cross.

"I'm so upset emotionally. I'm worn to a frazzle. I've cried for two days. But finally, I'm at peace because I know finally he's home. And I can sit down at a bench here and feel like I'm talking to him."

nation news briefs

Nancy Reagan's mother dies

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) - Edith Davis, the mother of Nancy Reagan, died yesterday at her home in Phoenix, Ariz., of "cerebral thrombosis," the White House announced.

A cerebral thrombosis is a blood clot in the brain, a form of stroke. Davis, the wife of the late Chicago neurosurgeon Loyal Davis, had been ailing for several years.

The White House, in a statement, said President Reagan and the first lady will travel to Phoenix today.

Davis, 91, was born on July 16, 1896. She has been a resident of Phoenix for several years, the White House said.

Davis had lived in Phoenix since 1963, where she retired with her husband, Loyal Davis. The couple moved to the southwest when Loyal Davis retired as head of the surgery department at Northwestern University.

Milk may produce pharmaceuticals

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) - Genetic engineering experiments have developed mice that produce a useful human protein in their milk in a development that could have billion-dollar implications for drug manufacturers, scientists said yesterday.

The procedure holds out the prospect for making a variety of pharmaceutical proteins relatively safely and inexpensively in what would amount to living animal factories.

While the initial experiments were on mice, a herd of goats is already being assembled to get a larger volume of milk. Eventual plans are to use cows.

The protein induced in the initial experiments was TPA, an anticlotting agent in human blood that is being developed as medication for heart attack victims.

world news briefs

Chinese peasants to get land rights

BEIJING (AP) - The government soon may allow Chinese peasants to buy and sell their land rights, letting some leave the land for good and others farm more efficiently on a larger scale, a Communist Party official said yesterday.

The announcement came as the party held its first national congress in five years to reaffirm top leader Deng Xiaoping's policy of introducing market reforms and opening to the world.

"We are now considering the transfer of (land) utilization rights," Du Runsheng, head of the party's Rural Policy Research Office, said at a news conference.

Du stressed that only land rights would be sold and not the land itself, which still is considered public property even though communes have been dismantled and families farm separate plots.

Yesterday's meetings of the national congress were not open to foreign reporters, as was the opening session Sunday.

Iran executes 5 drug smugglers

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) - Iran said it put five drug smugglers to death yesterday, raising to 14 the number of people described as smugglers or "bandits" executed in a week.

Tehran radio said the five were executed publicly in Mashhad, a northeastern city, but did not say whether they were hanged or shot by firing squad.

The official radio and the fundamentalist regime's Islamic Republic News Agency have reported 27 executions since Sept. 26, beginning with 10 drug smugglers. Most of the sentences have been carried out in Tehran, the capital.

Last week, the radio said Iran's Supreme Judicial Council approved death sentences imposed on six "Iraqi-trained bandits" by revolutionary courts in the northwestern provinces Kurdistan and Azerbaijan.

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