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U.S. DISTRICT COURT
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

NEWS STAFF PHOTO/HAL YEAGER

RAINSVILLE — Court-imposed restrictions on school-sanctioned prayer in DeKalb County are just one more example of "the political correctness of today," Gov. Fob James told a prayer rally in Rainsville Thursday night.

"Do you see how far the deceit of the meaning of the constitution has been stretched?" James asked the crowd of about 300 people.

He urged the crowd to oppose a federal injunction not by disobedience but at the ballot box and by supporting his appeal of the recent federal guideline on religious practices

October order was wrong, the governor said because he had no right to rule on the matter.

"I do not think we can go against the constitution," he said. "It is a federal issue. Therefore, we are going straight to the United States Supreme Court on the grounds it is not a federal issue. There is no turning back."

He said the struggle over prayer could last a decade.

James compared restrictions on school-sanctioned prayer with the "insanity" of allowing a copy of the Ten Commandments to hang in a

See **Rally**, Page **2B**

derholt's remarks while waiting to speak at a prayer

Jan 30(?)-'98

6 Greene County residents indicted over voter fraud

By **Val Walton**
News staff writer

Six Greene County residents, including a county commissioner and other county employees, were indicted Thursday by a federal grand jury on voter fraud charges in connection with the Nov. 8, 1994, general election.

U.S. Attorney G. Douglas Jones and Attorney General Bill Pryor said those indicted were Lester "Bop" Brown, 37, a Greenetrack racing commissioner; Booker T. Cooke Jr., 54, former head of the Greene County Planning and Development Council; Spiver W. Gordon, 58, county director of community services; Felephus "Flea" Hardy, 30, a county employee; Garria Spencer, 41, a county commissioner and former commission

chairman; and Althenia Spencer, 40, Spencer's wife.

The 31-count indictment charges that the six people conspired to violate federal election laws and submitted false information regarding the names and addresses of voters to election officials on absentee ballot applications and affidavits.

Spencer said he was unaware of the indictment and declined to comment until he talked with his lawyer.

Gordon said he knew nothing of the indictments until contacted by a reporter. "I am going to be in touch with my lawyer to look into this matter," he said. "I know I have not done anything wrong or anything illegal."

Efforts to reach Brown, Cook and Hardy were unsuccessful

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City Council supports school building plans

By **Patricia Dedrick**
News staff writer

Most Birmingham City Council members pledged their support Thursday to an ambitious \$200 million building and renovation program proposed by the Birmingham school system. In return the

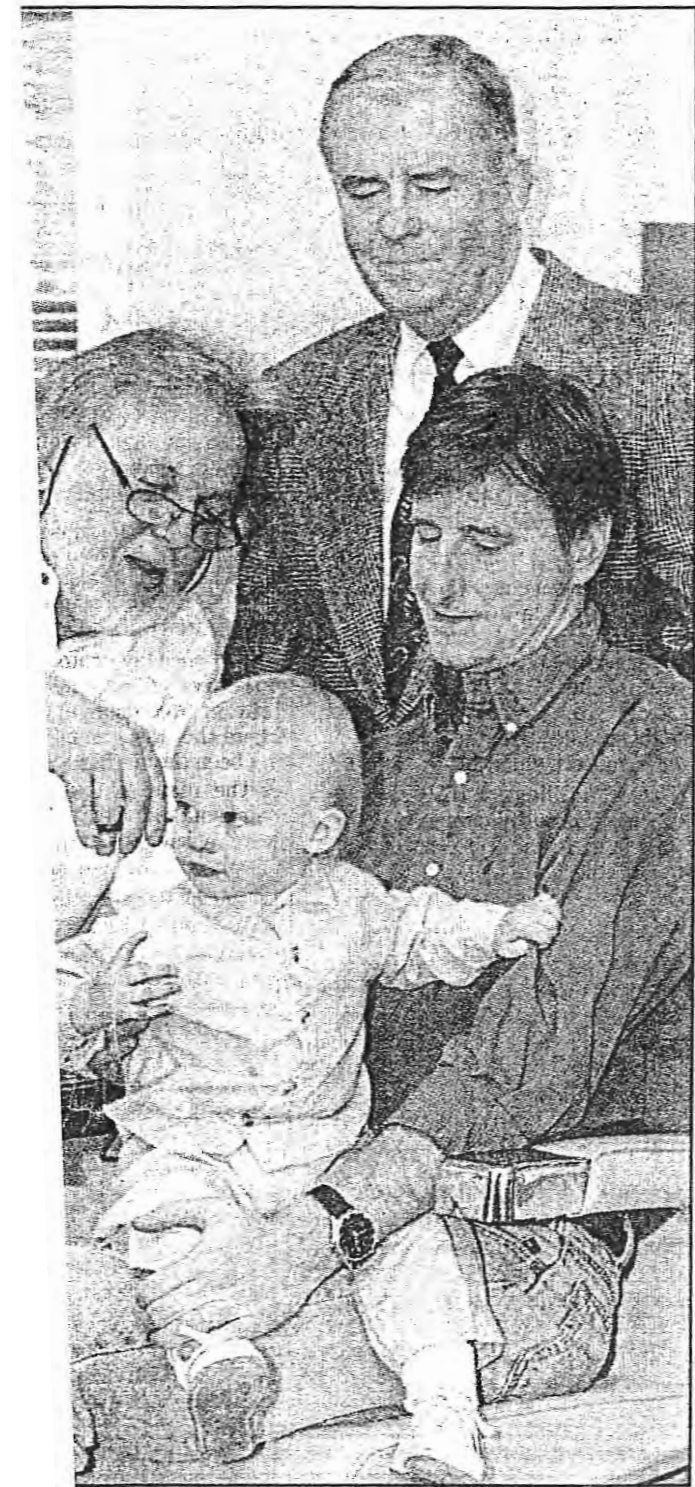
dollars. ... The fundamental issue of restoring order and what we are going to do to make these schools reasonably safe so parents feel good about sending their children there is not about money," Councilman Jimmy Blake told his fellow board members at a school board meeting.

DEFENDANT'S
EXHIBIT
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NEWS STAFF PHOTO/JOHN ...



at tell people they can't court," she said, adding n't file suit over religion ublic schools until after to get relief from local s.

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from Washington, D.C., ames for his support of ; looking for new laws

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urder," James said.

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eed to be very careful ing our own liberties tread on the liberties said at the time.

month DeMent ap- ple attorney and Bap- iver "Buzz" Thomas to or, but he declined be- to be involved in court- er training conducted . University's First nter.

ESSE

by ITRAIL

Hian, nationally ranked trailrunner.

crushing ... ward and snipping bangs. Five minutes into the cut, the novelty of the scissors wore off and Richard rocked in his dad's lap, reaching out for mom.

When the chore was finished, Richard hopped off the chair and brushed the blond hair from his shirt like a pro.

Selman handed him an orange Mickey Mouse lollipop and tucked the fine, curling locks in a plain, white envelope for mom.

Indictments

From Page 1B

Thursday.

The indictment charges that Spencer was a candidate for the commission and that the other five people were his supporters and conspired to make sure candidates they supported were elected.

According to the indictments, people who were registered to vote either were not residents of Greene County or were registered to vote without their knowledge.

Federal officials also charge that the six people placed false addresses of voters on the applications for absentee ballots, and that in some instances they had voters sign their names to the affidavits but did not allow the voters to mark the ballots.

"The right to vote is the fundamental of our democratic society," Jones said. "But the right to vote becomes meaningless if elections are not free and fair. The best way to keep our elections fair is to have aggressive enforcement of the law when the election process is tampered with."

Greene County is one of several places in the Black Belt that has been the site of investigations based on complaints of illegal voting. Last September, former Greene County Commissioner Frank "Pinto" Smith and Connie Tyree, a county employee at the time, were found guilty of several counts of voter fraud.

Gordon was found guilty in federal court of four counts of voting fraud in the 1984 Democratic primary. The conviction was overturned on appeal.

...the 6900 block of Old Springville Road, was traveling north on the road alone in his 1991 Ford Taurus when he ran into the back of a 1995 Freightliner 18-wheeler, according to an accident report by Jefferson County sheriff's deputies.

The truck, carrying groceries for Associated Grocers of the South, had just pulled into the intersection of Alabama 79 and Sunhill Road when the accident occurred, according to the report.

Sheriff's deputies blocked the highway and Sunhill Road for about an hour and diverted traffic onto Old Alabama 79/Old Pinson Road until the

driving home from working all night before the accident said Deputy David Boggan.

The cause of the accident was not available Thursday evening.

Wieschaus was airlifted by Life-saver helicopter to Carraway Methodist Medical Center. He remained in the hospital's intensive care unit Thursday afternoon listed in critical condition, according to a hospital spokeswoman.

The truck's driver, David Graham Treadwell, 52, of Odenville, said he was not injured in the incident.

Victoria L. Coman

Schools

From Page 1B

go together, especially when the existing facilities are in the condition of much of Birmingham's schools.

Brown talked of visiting Ramsay High School, Parker High and Wenhah over the past week. "Just look at the overall condition. Part of taking care of business is putting the resources in place," he said.

But academic performance would not be overlooked in the battle for dollars, he said. And he's already begun to make principals and teachers responsible and accountable for the learning that should go on in their schools.

Brown said he met Thursday for the first time with principals and one teacher from every city school that has been placed on academic alert by the state Board of Education.

"I talked to them like I was in the neighborhood. I said, 'I ain't playing with you. I ain't playing,'" he said.

He said they told him that many times they lack the resources to do their jobs well.

"We have to support them adequately and take away the excuses," he said.

In addition, Brown said he has told his department heads or cabinet members that they can't sit around his table if they aren't performing.

Brown wants to build 10 new schools by 2002 while expanding five existing schools and renovating another 16.

He told council members that he will need their help in selling the plan to the public.

Acting Deputy Superintendent Wayman Shiver said he hopes to have the land for the new schools purchased by December. "We would like to plan that North Birmingham School this summer and start construction this fall," Shiver said.

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