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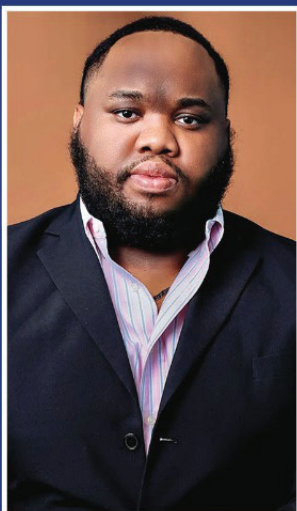


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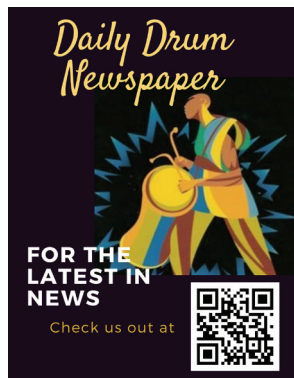


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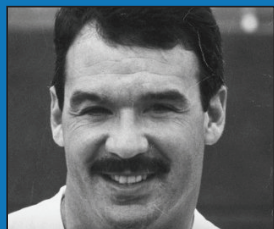
Texas Republican says he'll nominate Trump for House speaker Page 3



Supreme Court debates reining in disability rights lawsuits Page 5



Phillies, Diamondbacks, Twins, Rangers win Wild Card openers Page 8



Russ Francis, former New England Patriots tight end, dies in plane crash Page 10

Jim Jordan, Steve Scalise announce they want to be next House speaker

By Doug Cunningham
UPI



Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio and Steve Scalise of Louisiana said Wednesday they are running to be the next speaker of the House after Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., was ousted Tuesday by a small group of far-right Republicans.

On Wednesday, Jordan said in his letter posted on the social media platform X that House Republicans need to come together to focus on the changes that improve the country and to unite in offering real solutions.

“But no matter what we do, we must do it together as a conference. I respectfully ask for your support for Speaker of the House of Representatives,” Jordan wrote.

Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., also said on X Wednesday that he is running for speaker. Scalise said in his own “dear colleagues letter”

See **SPEAKER**, page 4

Trump lashes out at DA as he returns to court for third day of \$250 million civil fraud case

By Patrick Hilsman
UPI

Former President Donald Trump appeared in a New York court Wednesday for the third day of his civil fraud trial.

Arriving at court, he railed against the state’s district attorney, calling her “a political animal” and the reason “why New York State is failing.”

Trump’s legal team notified the New York state appellate court of their intent to appeal the \$250 million fraud case a day after Judge Arthur Engoron issued a partial gag

order in response to a social media post Trump made Tuesday against one of the court’s staff.

Trump had posted an image of one of the court staff meeting with Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

“This morning one of the defendants posted on a social media account a disparaging, untrue and personally identifying post about a member of my staff. Although I have since ordered the posted deleted and apparently it was, it was also emailed out to millions of other recipients,” Judge Engoron said.

See **TRUMP**, page 5



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OPINION

Court precedent says book bans can't be political

By Suzanne Eckes
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Efforts to ban books in public schools and public libraries reached an all-time high in 2022 and show few signs of abating for 2023, according to the American Library Association.

The recent movement to remove books appears to be a coordinated campaign taking place at the state and local levels; it often targets books that address race, gender or both. Some of these efforts have resulted in laws that threaten to jail librarians.

Most Americans oppose removing books from libraries. That may explain why Illinois recently enacted a law that outlaws banning books: If any public library in the state bans materials because of "partisan or doctrinal" disapproval, it will be ineligible for state funds.

Bans -- and the banning of bans -- have ended up in the courts.

For example, in a lawsuit in Florida, a First Amendment advocacy group, a publisher, parents and authors whose books have been targeted filed suit against the Escambia County School District's removal of 10 books and restriction of 100 others in the school library. They alleged that school officials violated students' First Amendment rights when they removed books that discussed, race, racism and LGBTQ+ people. The case is ongoing.

One or more of these sorts of cases could end up at the Supreme Court -- but until then, the lower courts will look to existing precedent, set in a legal ruling that dates back to 1982. In that ruling, the court declared that school personnel have a lot of discretion related to the content of their libraries, but this "discretion may not be exercised in a narrowly partisan or political manner."

Encounters with new ideas

My analysis of that 1982 case, Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District vs. Pico, finds useful information that can help put these book ban lawsuits in context.

The case specifically focused on the school library and was not about curriculum in the classroom. A school board on Long Island, N.Y., wanted certain books removed from the shelves of the junior high and high school libraries because board members believed the books to be, they said, "anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic and just plain filthy."

The banned titles originated in a list compiled by a conservative organization that deemed them objectionable.

One student, on behalf of four other students in the school district, filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court. The suit claimed that removing the books from the library infringed upon the students' First Amendment rights to freely access ideas and information.

The school board prevailed in U.S. District Court because the judge found that school boards should have discretion in those matters. But the appeals court overturned that ruling, saying the fact that the school board's reasoning relied in part on external evaluations of the books raised concerns about censorship.

An unclear ruling

When the case came before the Supreme Court in 1982, the justices agreed to analyze whether the school board's decision to bar certain books from its libraries, based on the books' content, violated the students' rights.

The ruling was divided -- five justices affirmed the appeals court's decision in favor of the students, though not all of them agreed on exactly why.

Justice William Brennan Jr. wrote that the First Amendment does limit school officials' authority to remove books from school libraries, because that authority infringes on students' rights to receive ideas and information.

The Rising Cost of Living: An Underreported Story Impacting Everyday Americans

As the cost of living continues to rise in America, many families are struggling to make ends meet. Inflation and wage stagnation have made it increasingly difficult for everyday Americans to keep up with the rising costs of necessities such as housing, gas, health care and food. The severity of this issue is impacting millions of hardworking Americans looking for relief amidst economic uncertainty.

difficult for families to afford their basic needs.

Wage stagnation has further compounded this issue. "Since the early 1970s, the hourly inflation-adjusted wages received by the typical worker have barely risen, growing only 0.2 percent per year," according to a 2017 Harvard Business Review report. This means that while the cost of living has continued to rise, wages have not kept pace, leaving many families struggling to make ends meet, and it's even worse for those who live in large cities.

The impact of these economic trends on everyday Americans cannot be overstated. A recent Primerica survey found that three-quarters of middle-income Americans said their earnings aren't enough to pay for their cost of living. Many are cutting back on expenses such as restaurants and takeout meals, while others are skipping upgrades to their phones and other technology because of inflation.

The rising cost of living impacts millions of Americans, making it increasingly difficult for them to attain economic security. It is time for policymakers to take action to address this issue and ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to thrive. The burden of the rising cost of living falls disproportionately on vulnerable populations. Low-income families, in particular, are grappling with the harsh reality of choosing between essentials like rent and health care. The lack of affordable housing options and the soaring costs of medical treatment have turned these decisions into impossible dilemmas. Children growing up in such circumstances often face limited access to proper nutrition and quality education, hampering their chances of breaking the cycle of poverty, and often leading to a life of drugs, crime or a combination of both.

However, it's not just younger Americans who are feeling the wrath of today's cost of living; it's also our nation's senior citizens on fixed incomes. Today's seniors are finding it increasingly challenging to cover their medical expenses and maintain a decent standard of living, eroding their retirement savings at an alarming rate.

The geographical disparities in the cost of liv-

ing further exacerbate the issue. While inflation and stagnant wages affect everyone, those living in metropolitan areas face even greater financial strains due to the inflated costs of housing, transportation and other necessities. The dream of city life, once synonymous with opportunities and advancement, is now accompanied by the harsh reality of financial stress and the constant struggle to make ends meet. This phenomenon also has wider societal implications, as the diversity and dynamism that urban areas bring to the cultural landscape are threatened when only a privileged few can afford to partake in them fully.

The current state of affairs demands a multifaceted approach from policymakers, community leaders and businesses alike. Policies aimed at boosting affordable housing initiatives, wages that keep pace with inflation, and health care can significantly alleviate the challenges faced by American families. Investments in education and workforce development are equally crucial, as they empower individuals with the skills needed to secure higher-paying jobs and navigate the evolving economic landscape.

The geographical disparities in the cost of living further exacerbate the issue. While inflation and stagnant wages affect everyone, those living in metropolitan areas face even greater financial strains due to the inflated costs of housing, transportation and other necessities. The dream of city life, once synonymous with opportunities and advancement, is now accompanied by the harsh reality of financial stress and the constant struggle to make ends meet. This phenomenon also has wider societal implications, as the diversity and dynamism that urban areas bring to the cultural landscape are threatened when only a privileged few can afford to partake in them fully.

The geographical disparities in the cost of liv-



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

Sex workers' rights: Governments shouldn't decide what is good or bad sex

By Meredith Ralston,
Mount Saint Vincent
University

An Ontario Superior Court justice has dismissed a constitutional challenge to Canada's sex work laws, saying that the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act does not violate sex workers' Charter rights.

A coalition of 25 sex workers' rights groups organized a challenge to the legislation, arguing that sex workers are harmed by the partial criminalization of sex work. Anti-prostitution groups argued that the law discourages men from buying sex and reduces commercial sex, in line with the goals of the Nordic or Equality Model of sex work.

The judge ruled that while he believes the laws don't violate the charter -- which is what he was asked to rule on -- regulation and decriminalization might be better policy options. But, he wrote, it is up to Parliament to make those decisions, not the judiciary. And it is about time the government did so.

Canada's sex work laws

The current law was developed by the conservative government of Stephen Harper. PCEPA makes buying sex illegal while selling sex is legal in some circumstances. This asymmetrical model still leaves sex work in a legal gray area because one side of the transaction

is legal and the other is not.

Much research has been done on the benefits of decriminalizing sex work, including work done by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. These are not fly-by-night organizations. They based their stance on solid research about the harms of criminalization. They are against trafficking and against the abuse of sex workers and they have policies against both.

There is also the example of New Zealand, which has decriminalized sex work and uses health and labor laws to regulate the industry. I won't reiterate the arguments here in favor of decriminalization because there is so much research already out there.

What I want to discuss is the very conservative (perhaps unconscious) sexual beliefs that underlie many people's negative view of sex work. The issue is a complicated one, and I recognize how it can be easier to believe that all female sex workers are victims and all male clients are predators, instead of taking a more nuanced view.

That was certainly my opinion before I did interviews with working escorts. Meeting women who sell sex and do so with respect and dignity changed the way I viewed sex work.

Conservatism and sex

Sex has historically been separated into "good sex"

and "bad sex" because of what is called the heterosexual conjugal bond, or more colloquially, traditional marriage. Those who defined what was good and bad sex were often men.

Traditional socially conservative views see acceptable sex as being with one person, only after marriage, heterosexual and relational, meaning that even masturbation was taboo. Scholars have outlined the detrimental effects of the heterosexual conjugal bond on women and sexual minorities.

Canada has liberalized its laws significantly since the 1960s sexual revolution. Gay sex, premarital and extramarital sex and polyamory are more acceptable than they once were, but the vestiges of this conservative ideology remain. Recent protests against sex and gender identity education in the school system illustrate this.

Most feminists would reject the idea that they are complicit with ideas that harm women or LGBTQ+ people because they have no problem with gay sex, premarital sex or extramarital sex. But anti-prostitution activists draw the line at commercialized sex for essentially moral reasons. Sex work remains bad sex.

As the director of an anti-trafficking group said to me:

"I don't believe that every aspect of being a human being can be reduced to labor, to work. I think human sexuality is that part of ourselves, that part of

being human that should not be for sale, should not be turned into a commodity that can be bought or sold, so on that front we don't recognize sex as work, so we don't call anyone a sex worker."

In this view, sex should not be commercialized. And to many people that is common sense. If you are raised in any kind of organized religion, you are likely to believe that sex is special and should be limited to heterosexual marriage. But that is a moral argument based on personal views of sex, and not necessarily what we should base public policy on.

Value of sex work

The sex workers I interviewed saw the value in sex work. They felt they were helping people, and providing a service and giving others pleasure was a part of that.

This is vehemently rejected by anti-prostitution activists. As one such activist told me:

"If you are disabled or in some way unable to have a normal, sexual relationship with another person, so you think that the right way is to buy it? Well, my answer to you is that unfortunately due to your illness and your disability you cannot have sex with another person."

So those who might have problems accessing sex because of disability, age or physical attractiveness are simply out of luck.



Daily Drum Media Group
PO Box 965
Greenville, NC 27835
www.dailydrummedia.com
tdd@dailydrummediagroup.com

Roger Johnson.....Publisher
Ben Johnson.....CFO
Alishia Albrooks.....Sales Consultant
George Ayino.....Sales Consultant
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Texas Republican says he'll nominate Trump for House speaker

By Darryl Coote
 UPI

Rep. Troy Nehls of Texas said he intends to nominate former President Donald Trump for speaker of the House after the position was left vacant Tuesday following the ouster of Rep. Kevin McCarthy.

The Republican and former sheriff of Fort Bend County announced his intention to put forward the name of the controversial former president once Congress reconvenes next week.

"Kevin McCarthy will NOT be running again as Speaker. I nominate Donald J. Trump for Speaker of the House," he tweeted.

Kevin McCarthy will NOT be running again as Speaker.

I nominate Donald J. Trump for Speaker of the House.— Congressman Troy E. Nehls (@RepTroyNehls) October 3, 2023

The speaker of the House does not have to be a member of Congress. But no speaker has ever not been a congressman.

McCarthy, R-Calif., became the first House speaker in U.S. history to lose the gavel in a vote

-- a vote that was put in motion by Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida following recent in-party fighting over keeping the government funded.

The Californian's tenuous grasp on the position was established from the start when it took 15 rounds of voting to name him head of the Congressional branch in January after the Republicans retook the House.

He gained the position only after making compromises with the extreme right-wing of his party, including allowing the reinstatement of a procedure that allows for a sole member to call a vote to vacate.

His ouster was back by a unanimous Democratic Party and only eight far-right Republicans, including Gaetz.

Nehls, who voted against unseating McCarthy, described Trump in

a statement Tuesday as "the greatest president of my lifetime" and said he would nominate him as his first order of business once the House reconvenes.

McCarthy late Tuesday said he would not run for the position again, and the former sheriff's intention to nominate Trump seemed to have some backing from at least other far-right Republicans.

"The only candidate for speaker I am currently supporting is President Donald J. Trump," Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia tweeted. "We can make him speaker and then elect him president!"

Rep. Greg Steube of Florida also voiced his support for Trump as speaker.

Trump is also the front-runner in the Republican presidential primary for the 2024 general election.

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PITT COUNTY, N.C. – Pitt County Economic Development (PCED) announces the **29th Annual Existing Industries Reception will be held Wednesday, October 4, 2023** at the Hilton Greenville located at 207 Greenville Blvd, SW, Greenville, N.C.

The event will take place in the **Room Carolina DEF from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** and media partners are invited to attend.

Existing Industries Reception is presented by Pitt County Economic Development with supporting sponsors: Electricities, Greenville ENC Alliance, Greenville Utilities Commission and Hilton Greenville.

For more information, contact PCED at 252-902-2079.

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"They don't care about fair maps," 17-year-old Eric Willoughby told elected officials last week at a public hearing at the state legislature. He was speaking directly to three stone-faced state lawmakers. "All they care about are three things: reelection, power, and dollar signs," he told them.

Facts. See for yourself in [this short video below](#).



You speak truth, Mr. Willoughby. And with the help of young people like you, we can repair and restore our democracy.

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Speaker

continued from page 1

that Republicans must mend the deep wounds that exist within their own conference in the House.

“It is with that sense of responsibility and purpose that I am seeking the Conference’s nomination for Speaker of the House,” Scalise wrote.

Jordan, a staunch ally of former President Donald Trump, defied a subpoena from the House Jan. 6 committee investigating the violent 2021 assault on the U.S. Capitol that temporarily halted the peaceful transfer of presidential power.

The House speaker is a U.S. constitutional officer second in line to the presidency after the vice president.

As Jordan announced his bid to be House speaker, Texas GOP Rep. Troy

Nehls said he intends to nominate former president Trump as speaker.

Trump currently faces criminal charges alleging that he conspired to illegally overturn the will of the voters in the 2020 presidential election in an “unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy” according to Special Counsel Jack Smith.

He’s also charged with felonies for retaining and refusing to return classified documents and was found liable by New York Supreme Court Justice Harold Engoron for massive business fraud for systematically inflating the value of his properties.

Despite these felony indictments, GOP Rep. Greg Steube of Florida said on X that he also backs Trump to become House Speaker.

McCarthy said he will not seek the position again.

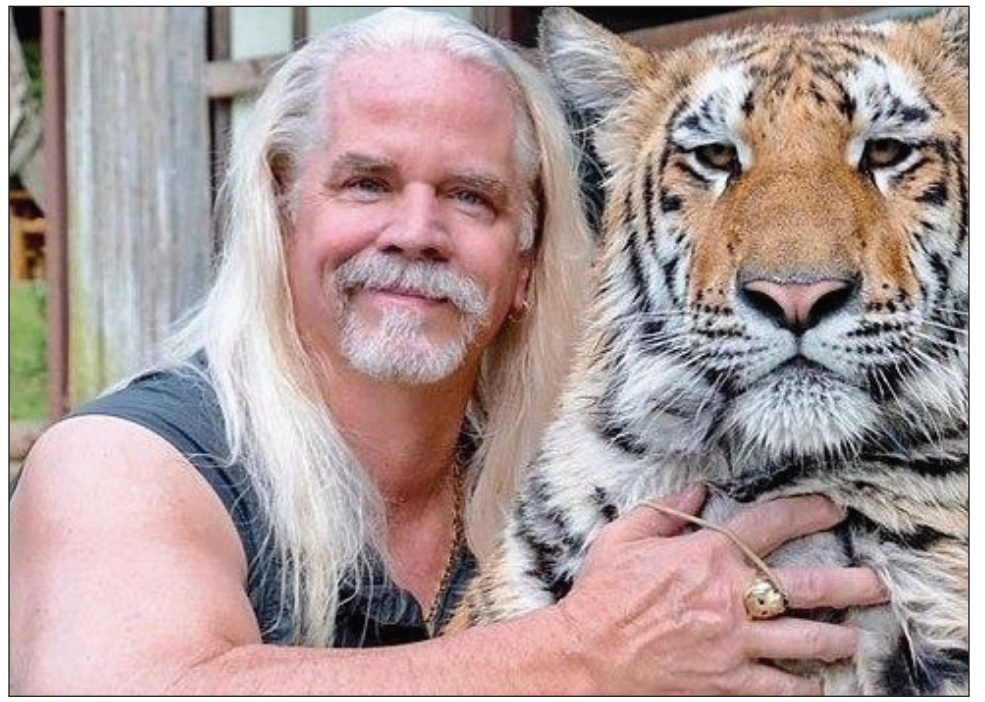
‘Tiger King’ star Doc Antle fined \$10K, avoids prison time in wildlife trafficking case

By Adam Schrader
UPI

Bhagavan Antle of Tiger King fame has been fined \$10,000 and banned from owning or trading exotic animals for five years.

Antle, more commonly known as Doc Antle, was sentenced in a Virginia state court Tuesday for illegally purchasing endangered lion cubs to house at his Myrtle Beach Safari zoo business in South Carolina, Attorney General Jason Miyares said in a news release.

The wild animal trainer rose to fame when he was featured in the 2020 docuseries Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness, which became a worldwide phenomenon at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The series documented



the life of Joe Exotic, a fellow zookeeper in Oklahoma convicted for plotting to kill a third rival zookeeper named Carole Baskin.

In June, Antle was convicted of two charges of wildlife trafficking and two charges of conspiring to wildlife traffic, all felonies. The \$10,000 fine represented the maximum fine of \$2,500 for each of his four charges.

“In Virginia, we uphold the rule of law without exception, whether dealing with violent repeat offend-

ers, big pharma, fraudsters and scammers, or wildlife traffickers,” Miyares said. “This case sends a clear message that bad actors will not be tolerated in the commonwealth.”

It was not immediately clear what would happen to the animals in Myrtle Beach Safari. The zoo’s website still states it is open for the 2023 season.

Last June, Antle was arrested by the FBI and indicted for alleged money laundering believed to be proceeds from smuggling

illegal immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico border, according to court records obtained by UPI.

He faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted in that case and has 35 violations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture dating to 1989.

Exotic, whose legal name is Joseph Maldonado-Passage, is imprisoned at a federal facility in Fort Worth, Texas, according to Federal Bureau of Prisons records. He is scheduled for release in 2035.



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Supreme Court debates reining in disability rights lawsuits

By Haajrah Gilani
Medill News Service

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments Wednesday in a case with possible ramifications for Americans with disabilities, but some justices questioned whether it should be dropped instead.

If the Supreme Court does rule, that decision could redefine the role of an American with Disabilities Act tester -- a person who checks whether businesses or other entities comply with the ADA.

At issue is whether an ADA tester has the right to sue when a public place fails to provide accessibility information on its website, even if the tester doesn't intend to visit the place.

The case began in 2020 with Deborah Laufer, a Floridian and self-appointed ADA tester. Laufer is visually impaired, has limited use of her hands, and uses a wheelchair or cane. Any time she travels, she needs the hotel to meet certain requirements.

Since 2018, Laufer has filed more than 600 ADA complaints because of her work as a tester. When she came across the Acheson Hotels website, she said, she didn't see any mention of an accessible room or the option to book one.

Laufer initially lost her district court lawsuit when the judge ruled she lacked standing because she didn't intend to visit the hotel. However, an appellate court reversed the lower court's decision.

Justices debated Wednesday what plaintiffs need to allege to show they suffered an injury -- a requirement the hotel's lawyers asserted had to be met to establish legal standing.

Conservative justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh expressed skepticism, suggesting



that obtaining information online did not necessarily equate to visiting the hotel.

And Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson compared remote testing to having a Black person observing a restaurant refusing to serve Black people, but not actually sitting down and ordering a meal.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, also a liberal, took an opposing view, saying, "If I go on a drive to a place and there's a sign up that says 'no disabled person is welcome' I've been discriminated against, correct?"

By the time justices heard the arguments in the case, Acheson Hotels LLC v. Laufer, a lot had changed since they agreed to take it in March.

After the initial lawsuit, Laufer withdrew from the case, one of her previous lawyers was disciplined, Acheson stopped operating the hotel in question and the hotel updated its website to comply with ADA requirements.

Justice Elena Kagan asked the counsel for

Acheson why a court should use this "dead" case to establish an important precedent.

"This is like, dead, dead, dead in all the ways that something can be dead," Kagan said.

Erica Ross argued for the Department of Justice, which was present as an impartial adviser. Ross suggested the court consider this case moot and wait for a future case to decide whether a tester has legal standing.

"This is a particularly poor case to do it in," she said.

However, Chief Justice John Roberts raised concerns that by declaring the case moot, the Supreme Court would encourage other lawsuits that emulate Laufer's.

Advocates said it's a misconception that people with disabilities are eager to file ADA cases.

These cases are stressful with attorney and litigation fees that aren't guaranteed, according to Michelle Uzeta, deputy legal director of the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, based in Berkeley, Calif.

That group was one of 18 organizations that supported Laufer in a friend-of-the-court brief.

"It just takes a certain type of person to villainize ADA plaintiffs and their attorneys when the businesses at issue haven't been complying with the law," she said.

Uzeta said ADA testers are essential to pressure private businesses to comply with the disability law. If the Supreme Court limited their standing, that could cause serious regression.

"If there aren't testers, enforcing the law, the law is just not going to be enforced to the same degree it is now. And that lack of enforcement is just going to result in continued barriers to people with disabilities in the community, frustration of the goals and purpose of the ADA," she said.

Trump

continued from page 1

The partial legal order bars Trump from disparaging members of the court staff.

On his way into court on Wednesday, Trump criticized New York Attorney General Letitia James as "a political animal."

"You borrow money, you pay it back and you get sued by a political animal, and that's where we are and that's the way it goes, and that's why New York State is failing, and that's why companies are leaving by the thousands," Trump told reporters Wednesday.

Engoron reminded Trump's legal team that there was no jury present in the case due to the nature of the civil charges brought against him after Trump lawyer Jesus Suarez called the credibility of one of the witnesses, accountant Donald Bender during cross examination.

Suarez questioned why Bender had made previous statements claiming someone else had been the lead partner on Trump account.

"There's no jury in here, I don't think it matters that much whether somebody was the lead partner, or is not the lead partner, who signed it. I think it's easiest just to move on," Judge Engoron told Suarez.

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Florida death row inmate Michael Zack expresses love, regret before execution

By Adam Schrader
UPI

Before being put to death for sexually assaulting and killing a Florida woman in 1996, death row inmate Michael Duane Zack expressed love for the governor, acceptance for his crimes and regret for not having "a second chance" to live.

Zack used some of his final words to tell Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and the state clemency panel that he forgives them despite not receiving a stay of execution.

"And, finally, to Gov. DeSantis and the Clemency Board: I love you. I forgive you. I pray for you," Zack said in his last statement, provided by the group Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

His last spoken words were, "I love you all."

Zack, 54, denied his last meal but met with his wife and spiritual adviser earlier in the day, the Pen-

sacola News Journal reported. He was put to death by lethal injection and declared dead by 6:14 p.m. local time.

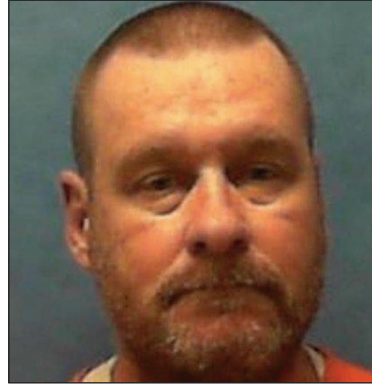
DeSantis signed Zack's death warrant on Aug. 17 and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to stop the execution.

Zack was convicted of murder for the death of Ravonne Smith during a crime spree that also claimed the life of another woman, Laura Rosillo.

"Twenty-seven years ago, I was an alcoholic and a drug addict. I did things that have hurt a lot of people -- not only the victims and their families and friends, but my own family and friends, as well," Zack said in the final statement.

"I have woken up every single day since then filled with remorse and a wish to make my time here on earth mean something more than the worst thing I ever did."

Zack said he replaced drugs and alcohol with "happiness and positive relationships" in



prison, where he learned to read and write. He later met his wife, Ann-Kristin, while behind bars.

"I make no excuses. I lay no blame. But how I wish that I could have a second chance, to live out my days in prison and continue to do all I can to make a difference in this world," Zack said.

Attorneys for Zack had argued he should not face the death penalty because he suffered from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, or FAS, which caused him to function as if he was "intellectually disabled."

The Florida Supreme Court and the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals also passed on stopping the execution, as well.

In its ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court said there was "no real possibility" that it would expand the 2002 precedent set by Atkins vs. Virginia, which established that executing people with intellectual disabilities violates the Eighth Amendment ban on cruel and unusual punishment, to include a FAS diagnosis.

"Zack would not succeed in having this court wholesale defer to the views of the psychiatric community on the matter of whether Atkins should be expanded to include other types of diagnoses," the court wrote.

"While he asserts that the psychiatric community now views FAS as functionally identical to intellectual disability, courts determine Eighth Amendment law, not unelected unrepresentative experts."

Smith worked as a bartender in Pensacola Beach when she was murdered on June 13, 1996, where authorities found her at her home with four stab wounds in the chest. During his arrest, Zack confessed to killing Russillo on the same day.

He met Russillo at a bar in Okaloosa County and her body was found near the beach on Okaloosa Island, beaten and strangled. Investigators found traces of Russillo's blood inside Zack's car, which he had stolen from a friend in Tallahassee.

"We acknowledge the painful truth that our brother's actions resulted in the tragic losses of Ms. Smith and Ms. Rosillo. We can empathize with the unimaginable pain experienced by their families and respect their unique feelings about this execution," his sisters said in a statement, which also referenced Zack's loss of his mother to violence when he was 11.

Biden administration announces 'life-changing' \$9B in student debt relief

MOVE FOLLOWS SUPREME COURT DECISION IN JUNE THAT TOOK TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN DEBT RELIEF OFF THE TABLE FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

By A.L. Lee
& Sheri Walsh
UPI

The Biden administration announced a new round of student loan relief that will wipe away \$9 billion in debt for 125,000

Americans. The announcement comes as student loan payments restart this month following a three-year break during the pandemic.

"With the latest debt cancellation, in total, my administration has canceled \$127 billion in student debts

for nearly 3.6 million Americans," President Joe Biden announced Wednesday.

The White House said it would provide new relief to targeted segments of the population, including \$2.8 billion that will go to 51,000 borrowers who have made loan payments for at least 20 years.

Another \$5.2 billion is being provided to 53,000 people under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and \$1.2 billion in debt will be discharged for 22,000 borrowers with permanent disabilities.

"The Public Service Loan Forgiveness program was designed originally to make sure schoolteachers, firefighters, social workers, and other public servants can get their student loans forgiven if they make 10 years of payments and do 10 years of public service," Biden said.

"This kind of relief is life-changing for individuals and their families, but it's good for our economy as a whole as well," the pres-



ident added. "By freeing millions of Americans from the crushing burden of student debt, it means they can finally get on with their lives. They can think about buying a house, starting a business or starting a family. It matters."

By freeing millions of Americans from the crushing burden of student debt, it means they can finally get

on with their lives. They can think about buying a house, starting a business, or starting a family.

The latest move comes as the administration seeks new approaches to student loan forgiveness following a Supreme Court decision in June that took tens of thousands of dollars in debt relief off the table for millions of cash-strapped Americans.

That plan would have forgiven up to \$20,000 in individual loan debt for every borrower, but it was rejected after Republican states sued in the nation's highest court, claiming the move would leave taxpayers on the hook for the money.

"And the Supreme Court sided with them, snatching from the hands of millions of Americans thousands of dollars in debt -- student debt relief that was about to change their lives," Biden said Wednesday. "As I said at the time, I believe the court's decision to strike down my student debt relief program was wrong."

At the same time, federal student loan repayments were coming back due this month after being paused throughout much of the pandemic.

As part of the latest relief effort, the Education Department released a state-by-state breakdown showing the positive impact of debt forgiveness nationwide, with hundreds of millions of dollars going toward the effort in nearly every state.

"Today's announcement builds on everything our administration has already done to protect students from unaffordable debt,

make repayment more affordable and ensure that investments in higher education pay off for students and working families," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said.

Since Biden took office, the administration has rolled out a number of piecemeal reforms, like those that recently wiped away debt for defrauded or disabled students and public service workers, leading to \$127 billion in total debt cancellation for nearly 4 million people.


However, the debt cancellations have fallen far short of what was sought by progressive Democrats in Congress, while the broader swath of the middle class has been left empty-handed.

After the high court rebuffed his original loan forgiveness program, Biden vowed to pursue an alternative path to debt relief through the Higher Education Act.

"This act allows the Secretary of Education to compromise, waive, or release loans under certain circumstances," Biden said Wednesday.

"Last week, the Department of Education took a critical step in this process by identifying specific challenges that borrowers face in the current system so we can move forward with a new rule to address these changes," the president added.

In August, the administration launched an affordable student loan repayment plan that makes monthly payments more affordable and prevents balances from rising due to unpaid interest.



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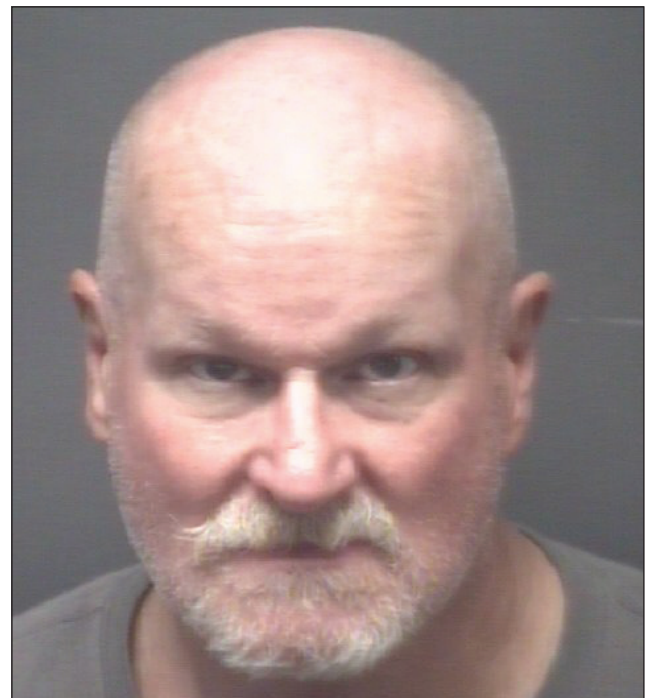
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Fantasy football: Love, Burrow among 4 must-start QBs for Week 5

By Alex Butler
UPI

Jordan Love and Joe Burrow are among my four must-start fantasy football quarterbacks for Week 5.

My Week 5 running back and wide receiver rankings and waiver-wire additions articles remain available for your preparation. My positional rankings will continue to be updated for developments, including injuries.

Josh Allen leads my Top 20 quarterback rankings, which are listed below. Justin Fields and Zach Wilson join Love and Burrow as my must-start options. Several streaming options also can be found within my rankings.

Quarterbacks from the Cleveland Browns, Los Angeles Chargers, Seattle Seahawks and Tampa Bay Buccaneers should be benched or dropped, as those teams have Week 5 byes.

Each of my must-start options land inside the Top 14 of my quarterback rankings.

Green Bay Packers quarterback Jordan Love is among the top fantasy football options so far this season. File Photo by Tannen Maury/UPI

Jordan Love

Love continues to be one of the top quarterbacks in fantasy football. The Green Bay Packers passer logged at least two total scores in each of his first four games. He



eclipsed 240 passing yards in three of his four starts.

This week, the Packers will take on the Las Vegas Raiders. The Raiders allowed the eighth-most fantasy points and tied for allowing the second-most touchdowns to quarterbacks so far this season.

Love is my No. 5 play for Week 5. I expect at least 250 passing yards and three scores from him.

Chicago Bears quarterback Justin Fields (R) threw for 335 yards and four scores in Week 4. File Photo by Jon Robichaud/UPI

Justin Fields

Fields is the No. 7 player in my Week 5 quarterback rankings. The Chicago Bears quarterback got off to a slow start, but roared

back with 355 passing yards and four touchdown tosses in Week 4 against the Denver Broncos.

Fields, the No. 2 fantasy football quarterback last week, should again provide a Top 10 performance against the Washington Commanders. The Commanders allowed 319 passing yards and two scores to Jalen Hurts in Week 4.

They also surrendered 218 passing yards, 46 rushing yards and two scores to Josh Allen in Week 3 and 308 yards and three scores to Russell Wilson in Week 2.

Fields should total at least two touchdowns, 200 passing yards and run for 75 yards in this matchup.

I expect a Top 12 fantasy football performance from Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow in Week 4. File Photo by Kyle Rivas/UPI

Joe Burrow

Burrow ranks outside the Top 30 fantasy football quarterbacks in points through four weeks. He failed to throw a touchdown pass in three of four games. Burrow totaled fewer than 200 passing yards in two of those starts.

Burrow, my No. 12 play, should rebound this week against the Arizona Cardinals. The Cardinals allowed the eighth-most fantasy points and tied for allowing the second-most touchdowns to quarterbacks through four weeks.

The Cardinals surrendered 283 yards and two scores in Week 4 to Brock Purdy. They also allowed 249 yards in Week 3 to Dak Prescott, 321 passing yards and three total scores in Week 2 to Daniel Jones and 202 yards and two total scores in Week 1 to Sam Howell.

Look for Burrow to total at least 250 passing yards and two scores in this matchup. He should provide his stock owners with his best performance so far this season.

Quarterback Zach Wilson and the New York Jets will face the Denver Broncos on Sunday in Denver. File Photo by Amanda Sabga/UPI

Zach Wilson

Wilson is my No. 13 play and can be plugged in as a streamer if your starter is on bye or has a bad Week 5 matchup.

The New York Jets quarterback did not eclipse 170 passing yards or score more than once in any of his first three games this season. He rebounded with a 245-yard, two-score performance in Week 4 against the Kansas City Chiefs.

This week, the Jets will face a generous Denver Broncos defense. The Broncos surrendered the most fantasy points and passing scores and the third-most passing yards through four weeks. Opposing quarterbacks averaged more than 302 yards and three touchdown passes per game over that span,

Phillies, Diamondbacks, Twins, Rangers win Wild Card openers

By Alex Butler
UPI

The Texas Rangers, Minnesota Twins, Arizona Di-

amondbacks and Philadelphia Phillies each claimed victories in their Wild Card series openers and are now one win shy of advancing to

the next round of the 2023 MLB playoffs.

The best-of-three series started Tuesday afternoon and will resume Wednesday at the same stadiums. Potential Game 3s will be held Thursday in those venues.

Left-handed pitcher Jordan Montgomery and the Rangers opened the MLB postseason with a 4-0 shutout of the Tampa Bay Rays on Tuesday in St. Petersburg, Fla.

"We have to do it right and take nothing for granted and stay humble and come here [Wednesday] and play our finest game and try to close them out," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo told reporters.

"They're going to come with everything they have. That's for sure."

Montgomery allowed six hits and no runs, while issuing five strikeouts over seven innings, to earn that victory.

The Rangers took a 1-0 lead on an RBI sacrifice fly from third baseman Josh Jung in the top of the second. They never lost that advantage.

They loaded the bases in the fifth and doubled their lead when Rays starter Tyler Glasnow threw a wild pitch. Shortstop Corey Seager drove in the final runs with a two-run single in the sixth.

Seager went 2 for 4 with an RBI, a walk and a run scored. Center fielder Leody Taveras and left fielder Evan Carter recorded two hits apiece.

Left fielder Randy Arozarena and shortstop Taylor Walls logged two hits apiece for the Rays.

The Rays (0-1) will host the Rangers (1-0) in Game 2 at 3:08 p.m. EDT Wednesday on ABC. Rangers starter Nathan Eovaldi is expected to start against fellow right-handed pitcher Zach Eflin.

The Twins also took a 1-0 lead in their series with a 3-1 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays on Tuesday in Minneapolis.

Twins starter Pablo Lopez allowed five hits and one run over 5 2/3 innings. Designated hitter Royce Lewis homered in his first two at-bats to power the triumph.

Lewis gave the Twins a 2-0 lead with a 386-foot, two-run homer in the bottom of the first. He returned to the plate to lead off the bottom of the third.

Blue Jays starter Kevin Gausman missed the strike zone with his first three

offerings of that exchange. Lewis then hit a 3-1 fastball to right-center field for a 397-foot solo shot, giving the Twins a 3-0 lead.

The Blue Jays scored their lone run on an RBI single from center fielder Kevin Kiermaier in the top of the sixth.

Kiermaier and shortstop Bo Bichette recorded two hits apiece in the loss. Lewis went 2 for 3 with 3 RBIs, two runs scored and a walk for the Twins.

First pitch for Game 2 between the Twins (1-0) and Blue Jays (0-1) is scheduled for 4:38 p.m. EDT Wednesday on ESPN. Blue Jays starter Jose Berrios is expected to face fellow right-handed pitcher Sonny Gray.

Star rookie Corbin Carroll homered to spark a comeback victory for the Diamondbacks in the third game of the playoff-opening slate.

The Diamondbacks trailed 3-0 through two innings before they rallied for the 6-3 win over the Milwaukee Brewers.

Brewers first baseman Carlos Santana drew first blood with an RBI single in the bottom of the first. Right fielder Tyrone Taylor followed with a 403-foot, two-run homer in the second, but the Brewers never scored again.

Diamondbacks shortstop Geraldo Perdomo singled in the second at-bat of the third. Carroll hit a 444-foot, two-run homer three pitches later to cut into the deficit.

Second baseman Ketel Marte homered again on the next pitch from Brewers starter Corbin Burnes, tying the score.

Catcher Gabriel Moreno homered off Burnes again to lead off the fourth. First baseman Christian Walker brought in the game's final two runs with an RBI double in the ninth.

Diamondbacks pitcher Brandon Pfaadt allowed seven hits and three runs over 2 2/3 innings in his first career postseason start. Diamondbacks relief pitchers combined to allow five hits and no runs over the final 6 1/3 innings.

Game 2 of the series will start at 7:08 p.m. Wednesday on ESPN2. The Diamondbacks are expected to start Zac Gallen. Fellow right-hander Freddy Peralta is expect to pitch for the Brewers.

Phillies starting pitcher Zack Wheeler dominated the Miami Marlins, allowing just five hits and one run over 6 2/3 innings to fuel a 4-1 victory in Tuesday's nightcap in Philadelphia.

Third baseman Alec Bohm drove in center fielder Johan Rojas with an RBI double in the bottom of the third to start the scoring.

Second baseman Bryson Stott doubled the Phillies lead with an RBI single in the fourth. Left fielder Christian Pache singled in Stott for the Phillies' third run.

The Marlins finally answered with an RBI single from outfielder Bryan De

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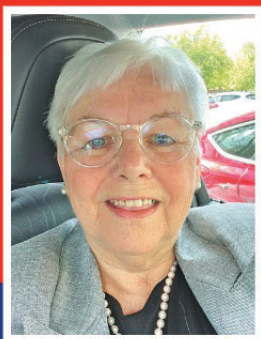
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Mayor of Detroit suburb charged with accepting bribes

By Darryl Coote
 UPI

The mayor of a Detroit suburb has been indicted on federal bribery charges over accepting tens of thousands of dollars in exchange for facilitating the sale of city property.

The Justice Department announced the bribery charge Tues-

day against Inkster Mayor Patrick Wimberly, who, if convicted, faces up to 10 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

"Mr. Wimberly was elected to serve the people of Inkster, yet he prioritized his personal interests and greed over their needs," Cheyvorvea Gibson, special agent in charge of the FBI in Michigan, said in a

statement.

Prosecutors accuse Wimberly of accepting \$50,000 in cash from an unidentified person in exchange of assurances that they would have the winning bid on a parcel of city land.

According to court documents, Wimberly demanded cash payments to facilitate the sale that began as \$5,000

monthly bribes with expectations that the amount would increase.

Discord then emerged between the pair after the briber, identified as Person A, didn't increase the amount, which prompted Wimberly to complain that he was owed "10\$ a month," prosecutors said.

Following the complaint,

Person A allegedly increased his monthly payments to \$10,000.

"Elected public officials owe a duty to their community to act in the citizens' best interest," U.S. Attorney Dawn Ison said Tuesday. "Our office is committed to prosecuting those public officials who betray the public trust by accepting bribes."

U.K. PM Rishi Sunak reveals plan to raise smoking age every year

By Sheri Walsh
 UPI

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak unveiled an ambitious plan Wednesday to prevent smoking-related deaths for future genera-

tions by raising the age to buy cigarettes one year every year "so that eventually no one can buy them."

Sunak's plan, which he discussed at a Conservative Party conference, would be among the toughest anti-smoking

rules in the world and prevent 14-year-olds today from ever buying tobacco.

"There is no safe level of smoking," the prime minister told the conference. "If we want to do the right thing for our kids, we must try

and stop teenagers taking up cigarettes in the first place."

"Because without significant change, thousands of children will start smoking in the coming years and have their lives cut short," Sunak added.

England already has banned smoking in public places and raised the smoking age to 18. There are more than 5 million smokers in England and 6 million across the United Kingdom, according to the country's Office for National Statistics.

Sunak called smoking the leading cause of preventable ill-health, which includes one

in four deaths from cancer. Tobacco use also increases the risk of strokes, heart disease, dementia and stillbirth.

Sunak said members of parliament would be given a free vote on the proposed tobacco rules, which would raise the age of sale from 18 every year, as recommended by a government-commissioned review in 2022.



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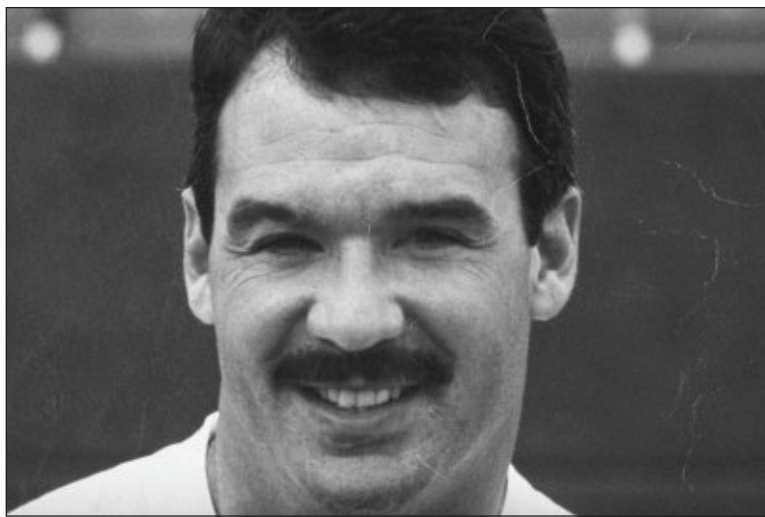
Russ Francis, former New England Patriots tight end, dies in plane crash

By Alex Butler
UPI

Former Pro Bowl tight end Russ Francis, who played for the New England Patriots and San Francisco 49ers, died after he was involved in a plane crash in Lake Placid, N.Y., officials announced Monday. He was 70.

The New York State Police said that Francis and Richard McSpadden, 63, were onboard a Cessna 177, which crashed Sunday afternoon into an embankment at the Lake Placid Airport. Officers responded shortly after 4 p.m. Francis and McSpadden were pronounced dead at the scene.

The airplane "crashed under unknown circumstances short of



the runway" while attempting to land, according to a preliminary report from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Police, the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board said their investigation is ongoing. McSpadden was the senior vice

president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Air Safety Institute.

Preliminary findings from the investigation did not include information about who was piloting the plane, but the AOPA stated that McSpadden was in the right seat when the aircraft "experienced an emergency after takeoff."

"The airplane attempted to return to the airport but failed to make the runway," the AOPA said.

Francis, a Seattle native, attended the University of Oregon. He was the No. 16 overall pick by the Patriots in the 1975 NFL Draft.

Francis made three Pro Bowls through his first six seasons. He retired after the 1980 season, but was traded in 1982 and returned to play for the 49ers.

Francis, who won a Super Bowl in 1985 with the 49ers, returned to the Patriots during the 1987 season. He spent his final season with the Patriots in 1988.

"On behalf of the entire New England Patriots organization, we extend our sincerest sympathies to the family of Russ Francis, who tragically passed away yesterday," Patriots owner Robert Kraft said in a statement.

"Russ was a fan favorite throughout his playing career. He was a dynamic player on the field who had an even bigger personality off it. He knew no boundaries, pushed the limits and lived his life to the fullest."

Francis totaled 393 catches for 5,262 yards and 40 touchdowns over 167 career appearances.



Ex-Red Sox knuckleballer Tim Wakefield dies at 57

By Don Jacobson
UPI

Tim Wakefield, who possessed one of the best knuckleball pitches in baseball's modern era and helped the Boston Red Sox win two World Series titles, has died, the team announced Sunday. He was 57.

"Our hearts are broken with the loss of Tim Wakefield," the team said in a statement posted on X, formerly Twitter.

"Wake embodied true goodness; a devoted husband, father, and teammate, beloved broadcaster, and the ultimate community leader. He gave so much to the game and all of Red Sox Nation."

Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said all of the baseball world is "deeply saddened by the loss of Tim Wakefield, one of the most unique pitchers of his generation and a key part of the most successful era in the history of the Boston Red Sox."

In a statement, Manfred cited Wakefield's famed knuckleball in his emergence as a top-flight MLB pitcher beginning with his rookie season with the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1992 and then during his 17-year tenure in Boston, "where he made a mark that will be remembered forever."

Our hearts are broken with the loss

of Tim Wakefield.

Wake embodied true goodness; a devoted husband, father, and teammate, beloved broadcaster, and the ultimate community leader. He gave so much to the game and all of Red Sox Nation.

"Tim was more than just a versatile and reliable All-Star pitcher, a highly respected teammate, and a two-time World Series Champion," the commissioner noted.

Wakefield was named the Roberto Clemente Award winner in 2010 for his community service work in New England.

Red Sox principal owner John Henry echoed the praise for Wakefield, stating, "He not only captivated us on the field but was the rare athlete whose legacy extended beyond the record books to the countless lives he touched with his warmth and genuine spirit."

Reports that Wakefield was battling brain cancer surfaced only this week, indicting he had recently undergone surgery to fight the aggressive disease.

On the field, he was a core member of two World Series championship teams in Boston. He notched 186 of his career 200 victories for the Red Sox, placing him behind only behind Cy Young and Roger Clemens, each of whom had 192 wins for Boston.

Wakefield is survived by his wife Stacy, son Trevor and daughter Brianna.

'The Boys in the Boat' photos: George Clooney directs new sports drama

By Annie Martin
UPI

MGM is giving a glimpse of the new film 'The Boys in the Boat.'

The studio shared first-look photos and a featurette for the sports drama Wednesday.

The Boys in the Boat is based on the Daniel James Brown book, which recounts how the University of Washington rowing team competed in Men's Eight at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics.

The film is written by Mark L. Smith and directed by George Clooney. Callum Turner, Joel Edgerton, Jack Mulhern, Sam Strike, Peter Guinness and Alec Newman star.

"This inspirational true story follows a group of underdogs at the height of the



Great Depression as they are thrust into the spotlight and take on elite rivals from around the world," an official synopsis reads.

In the featurette, Clooney shares how The Boys in the Boat is about "strong, tough kids" pushing through adversity.

"They're rowing because

it's the only way they could stay in college," the actor says. "The stakes were much higher for them, and it gave them an edge."

The Boys in the Boat opens in theaters Dec. 25.

The film marks Clooney's first project as a director since the 2021 film The Tender Bar.

Busan International Film Festival kicks off after tumultuous year

By Thomas Maresca
UPI

After a troubled year that saw a shakeup of its top leadership, the 28th Busan International Film Festival kicked off Wednesday with cheering crowds and stars walking the red carpet at a packed opening ceremony.

Asia's largest international film festival runs through Oct. 14 and will screen 209 films from 69 countries, including 80 world premieres.

The festival opened with Jang Kun-jae's Because I Hate Korea, a drama that takes a nuanced and piercing look at the challenges today's young Koreans face. The closing film is Chinese director Ning Hao's industry satire The Movie Emperor, featuring Hong Kong star Andy Lau.

Wednesday's opening ceremony, held in the outdoor theater of the Busan Cinema Center, was hosted by Park Eun-bin, star of last year's hit Netflix drama Extraordinary Attorney Woo. Among the luminaries on hand was Hong Kong legend Chow Yun-fat, who was honored with the Asian Filmmaker of the

Year award for his contributions to the Asian film industry.

This year's festival has already seen more than its share of drama off-screen after a power struggle in May that led to the resignations of artistic director Huh Moon-yung and BIFF chairman Lee Yong-kwan. Around the same time, Huh was also hit with allegations of sexual harassment, which remain under investigation.

Managing director Cho Jong-kook was removed by the BIFF board in June and a fourth top figure, Oh Seok-geun, director of Busan's Asian Contents & Film Market, also stepped down later that month.

The turmoil scared off sponsors, interim festival director Nam Dong-chul said in September, leading to a slightly pared-down selection of films compared to last year and the cancellation of the BIFF Forum conference section.

However, the show has managed to go on, and organizers are touting a strong selection of content drawn from the festival's traditional strengths of Asian cinema and emerging directors.