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Cries for justice at funeral

Sharpton among those mourning man fatally shot at mental health call

By Justin Muszynski
HARTFORD COURANT

The somber mood in The First Cathedral in Bloomfield on Thursday was overcast by chants and demands for reform as the community lay to rest 55-year-old Steven Jones, who was shot and killed by a Hartford police officer during a mental health crisis last month. "This is a difficult time for me," Jones' sister, Audrey, told news crews before the services. Standing beside 71-year-

old Rev. Al Sharpton, Audrey Jones said she never would have called for an ambulance if she knew it was going to end with a police officer fatally shooting her brother on Feb. 27. "And I just asked that you pray for me and my family during these trying times," Audrey Jones said. Her remarks were met by a number of chants of "Justice for Stevie." Sharpton, a civil rights and social justice activist, delivered Steven Jones's eulogy.

In a news briefing before the funeral and throughout the eulogy, Sharpton was critical of Officer Joseph Magnano of the Hartford Police Department, who shot Steven Jones nine times shortly after arriving at the scene on Blue Hills Avenue in Hartford. "This policeman came after three policemen were already on the scene, and he decided to execute him within 90 seconds," Sharpton said. "How does he explain his behavior over the other policemen? Because he

will have to defend what made him shoot. "And the police that had been there minutes before, they didn't see a threat. If they didn't feel threatened, how did he feel threatened?" he asked. Nationally recognized civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who is representing Steven Jones' family, said one of the first things Audrey Jones expressed to him was that it almost felt like her brother's life did not matter

See **FUNERAL** on Page A4



Attorney Ben Crump, left, walks into The First Cathedral in Bloomfield with Audrey Jones, Steven Jones' sister, and the Rev. Al Sharpton before services Thursday. **AARON FLAUM/HARTFORD COURANT**

NCAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS



As their UConn careers soon come to an end, Azzi Fudd, left, and Alex Karaban will undoubtedly be remembered as two of the most celebrated Huskies off all time. **UConn**

TWO OF A KIND

Azzi Fudd, Alex Karaban share same birthday and, lucky for UConn, a whole lot more

By Emily Adams and Joe Arruda
HARTFORD COURANT

A SWEET DOUBLEHEADER

No one knew it at the time, but it was a simple 3-point contest that may have been the first sign of greatness to come for Azzi Fudd and Alex Karaban. The first time the UConn stars took the court together, as teammates to compete in the 3-point contest during the programs' First Night event in 2022, they felt completely confident in victory before either ever touched a ball. On the threshold of their first season together as Huskies — Fudd as a sophomore, Karaban a redshirt freshman — the pair combined to hit 18 of 24 shots, securing a win for the white team. When they participated together again in 2023, the reigning champions came in even more nonchalant, and secured back-to-back titles with another 18-for-24 performance. "It was electric," Fudd recalled. "We knew no one was going to beat us. We were locked in. We were like, 'We can't lose this, we've got to lock in,' and that's exactly what we did. (The second one)

■ No. 1 UConn women vs. No. 4 North Carolina, Fort Worth I Regional semifinal, 5 p.m., ESPN
■ No. 2 UConn men vs. No. 3 Michigan State, East Regional semifinal, 9:45 p.m., CBS
wasn't as much; we weren't like 'Oh, we got it.' It was more chill, and that's just what happened." Born just hours apart on Nov. 11, 2002, Fudd in Fairfax, Virginia, and Karaban in Framingham, Massachusetts, they arrived at UConn with the same goal: Win national titles. They've each witnessed the amount of work the other puts in behind the scenes, their bond forged in weight rooms and contrast tubs within the confines of the Huskies' shared practice facility. Though they've walked dramatically different paths, they've both made those championship dreams a reality five years later. "It's a super cool place where you get to have that relationship and spend

time with them and talk (when) we're both going through it with the ups and down of the season," Fudd said. "To see how much Alex has grown over these last few years has been insane. To see him in this role he's in, this leadership role, to see how important he is and see him be put in the Huskies of Honor, it's really cool." "I think the First Night stuff helped us get close, and having the same birthday is actually super cool, too," Karaban said. "If I see Azzi, I always talk to her, say what's up, joke around with her. I have so much respect for Azzi and just everything she's been through as a player, how great of a player she is, how hard she works." College sports may never see another duo across men's and women's basketball programs that measures up to this one. It seems like they have been in Storrs forever, and in the context of today's college athletics, they have been. They came in before NIL and yearly use of the transfer portal became

See **HUSKIES** on Page A2

Restaurant chain suffers major blow at last 3 locations

The Place 2 Be has state permits revoked

By Kenneth R. Gosselin
HARTFORD COURANT

A shrinking restaurant chain that once drew national attention for its social media-savvy, all-day brunches saw its troubles deepen this week, as required state permits were revoked at the chain's three remaining locations, shutting them down. The Place 2 Be at downtown Hartford's Constitution Plaza, in West Hartford's Blue Back Square and in New Haven lost their sales and use tax permits on Monday, approvals required for businesses to transact business under state law. The closures are a major blow to restaurateur Gina Luari who vowed last fall to rebuild her millennial-focused brand that had suffered serious setbacks in the past two years, marked by a tangle of four evictions, landlord disputes and state sales tax problems. The state Department of Revenue Services confirmed that the three restaurant locations did not have a valid sales tax permit. But a spokesman declined further comment, citing confidentiality of the taxpayer's information. At least two of the locations — Hartford and West Hartford — had

See **PERMITS** on Page A2

Trump extends deadline for Tehran

He says no attacks on Iran's power plants if strait open by April 6

By Jon Gambrell and David Rising
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran and the United States appeared at an impasse Thursday, hardening their positions over ceasefire talks and setting the stage for another potential escalation in the Middle East war. Thousands more U.S. troops neared the region, Israel poured more troops into southern Lebanon to fight the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah, and Tehran tightened its grip on the crucial Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, President Donald

See **IRAN** on Page A7

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WEATHER FORECAST

Early A.M. shower, breezy, cooler. High of 53. **LIVING, PAGE 12**

INDEX

Advice B8 Connecticut A3
Classified A11-12 Living B6
Comics B10-11 Markets B12
Obituaries A9
Puzzles B9, B11
Sports B1

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