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Colonie junior wins state, national high jump titles within one week. **A6**



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# TIMES UNION

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## State to pay \$8M to man wrongly convicted of murder

Carl H. Dukes spent 20 years in prison; another man later confessed

By Brendan J. Lyons

ALBANY — The state attorney general's office recently agreed to pay \$8 million to settle a claim filed by a man who was wrongly convicted in 1999 of murdering a University at Albany student, allegedly as part of a plot to silence a robbery witness. The plot had been fabricated by police.

The settlement of the case, which was filed in the state Court of Claims, came after a state appellate court overturned a lower court judge and ruled in December that Carl H. Dukes' murder confession had been co-

erced by Albany detectives. The appellate panel found that he was "actually innocent" of the 1997 homicide and should be further compensated after spending nearly two decades in prison.

The settlement adds to the \$5.75 million that Dukes received in a settlement with the city of Albany four years ago — an outcome that stands as the largest legal settlement on record for the municipality. Three years ago, the city voted to borrow \$4.3 million to pay the estate of Lavell R. Jones, who along with Dukes was also wrongly convicted in the murder of 23-

year-old Erik Mitchell based on coerced statements of both defendants and witnesses.

Jones died in a motorcycle crash on Long Island in June 2021; his estate was later awarded an additional \$5.5 million in a Court of Claims verdict.

Under New York law, someone wrongfully convicted of a crime can potentially bring two lawsuits — one for civil rights violations against the municipal agency that obtained the conviction, and a second against the state if the person can prove their innocence by clear and convincing evidence. The latter

See **PAY**, A3



Will Waldron/Times Union archive  
Carl H. Dukes is shown in 2017 at his residence in Albany. Dukes was released in 2016.

## Making a splash



WILL WALDRON/TIMES UNION

Construction work at Albany's Lincoln Park Pool continues on Monday. Among the upgrades is a new tower with two twisty water slides attached. The pool area, which is tentatively scheduled to open July 4, is also expected to feature a zero-entry pool, a half Olympic-style lap pool, a splash pad and upgraded restrooms.

## Fray over Trump, court orders

Legal groups seek answers on deportations barred by judge

By Nicholas Riccardi and Regina Garcia Cano  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two prominent legal groups asked a federal judge Monday to force officials in the Trump administration to explain under oath whether they violated the judge's court order temporarily barring deportations by removing more than 200 people from the U.S. after the order was issued.

The request was the latest salvo in a high-stakes legal fight that began when President Donald Trump invoked a rarely used 1798 war-time law to remove immigrants over the week-end. It also marked an escalation in the battle over whether the Trump administration is flouting court orders that have blocked some of his aggressive moves in the opening days of his second term.

On Saturday night, District Judge James E. Boasberg ordered the administration not to deport anyone in its custody over the newly-invoked Alien Enemies Act, which has only been used three times before in U.S. history, all during congressionally-declared wars. Trump issued a proclamation that the law was newly in effect

See **TRUMP**, A4

## Cornell students sue Trump over free speech rights

By Raga Justin

ALBANY — Two graduate students and a professor at Cornell University are suing the Trump administration over its executive orders targeting pro-Palestinian sympathizers who are in the United States on student visas, a move that comes days after the high-profile arrest of a graduate student in New York City who was active in campus protests against Israel last spring.

The arrest of Mahmoud Khalil, a 30-year-old lawful U.S. resident at Columbia who had been a prominent voice criticizing the prolonged violence between Israel and Hamas in the war-torn territory of Gaza, was the first person targeted under two executive orders signed by President Donald Trump in January and February.

Trump has promised to take swift action against non-U.S. citizens who participated in widespread protests supporting Palestinians or Hamas against the U.S.-backed Israeli

See **SPEECH**, A4

## Children's performer charged with abusing a child in 2003

By Patrick Tine and Wendy Liberatore

CLIFTON PARK — A well-known Capital Region children's performer has been arrested and charged with first-degree sexual abuse in connection with an alleged incident from 2003.

The Saratoga County Sheriff's Office said it received a sexual assault complaint on the evening of March 11 against Stephen E. Bottino, 58. The

charge accuses the Gansevoort man of subjecting someone younger than 11 to sexual contact.

The sheriff's office has declined to discuss the circumstances surrounding the arrest of Bottino, who for years has been the keyboardist for the Zucchini Brothers, a ubiquitous Capital Region children's act.

The alleged victim, who is now an adult, told a sheriff's deputy last week that the abuse started in the

See **PERFORMER**, A5



Paul Buckowski/Times Union archive  
Stephen Bottino performs in 2011. On Sunday, the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office announced Bottino was charged with first-degree sexual abuse of a child under 11.