

# The Bismarck Tribune

## Girls soccer

Bismarck, Century play to draw

SPORTS, B4



## National Day of Prayer

“Unity” is theme of this year’s annual observance **DAKOTA, B1**



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# Cosby convicted of sex assault

Comedian can remain free on \$1M bail while he awaits sentencing

**MICHAEL R. SISAK AND CLAUDIA LAUER**  
Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — After decades of whispers, lawsuits, investigations and close calls — and a multitude of women who lost hope anyone would ever believe their word against that of America’s Dad — Bill Cosby could be on his way to prison at age 80 for the remainder



**Cosby**

of his life. The comedian was convicted Thursday of drugging and molesting Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia home 14 years ago in a verdict women’s advocates called a turning point in the #MeToo movement that proved what Cosby’s accusers had been saying all along — that his nice-guy image was a sham.

Lili Bernard, who said Cosby

sexually assaulted her before giving her a one-time role on “The Cosby Show” in 1992, became so emotional in the courtroom gallery that she accidentally banged her forehead on the bench in front of her.

“I’m overcome with gratitude,” Bernard, sobbing, said outside the courthouse. “I feel like I have to pinch myself. Am I awake? It’s a miracle.”

The verdict in the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era sealed the spectacular late-in-life downfall of an entertainer who broke racial barriers in Hollywood on his way to

TV superstardom as sweater-wearing, wisdom-dispensing Dr. Cliff Huxtable.

It was the only criminal case to arise from a barrage of allegations from more than 60 women who said Cosby drugged and molested them over a span of five decades — but whose stories were often disbelieved or ignored years before #MeToo put a spotlight on sexual misconduct by powerful men.

The jury of seven men and five women deliberated 14 hours over two days before convicting Cosby of violating Constand in 2004.

Constand, a 45-year-old Temple University women’s basketball administrator, said Cosby knocked her out with three blue pills he called “your friends” and then penetrated her with his fingers as she lay immobilized, unable to resist or say no. Cosby claimed the encounter was consensual, saying he gave her the cold and allergy medicine Benadryl to relax.

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■ **More inside:** *Cosby’s road to conviction, A5*



**TOM STROMME, TRIBUNE**

## JUMP ROPE FOR HEART EVENT

Four male staff members at Pioneer Elementary School in Bismarck had makeup and nail polish applied at the end of the school’s annual American Heart Association’s Jump Rope for Heart event on Thursday afternoon. Showing off their new Man Makeover, are, from left, physical education teacher Kurt Weinberg, principal Jim Jeske, instructional aide Lance Balzer and fourth-grade teacher Justin Miller. Weinberg, who is retiring next month, has held a Jump Rope for Heart event all 39 years he’s been teaching, said Mary Reiser, of the AHA, with this being the 17th year at Pioneer Elementary. “He’s the longest running coordinator for the schools, and in the state, Bismarck is the top school district,” Reiser said. For a video of the Man Makeover go to [bismarcktribune.com](http://bismarcktribune.com).

# President’s VA pick bows out

Jackson reluctantly withdraws nomination after facing accusations

**ZEKE MILLER AND HOPE YEN**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s White House doctor reluctantly withdrew his nomination to be Veterans Affairs secretary Thursday in the face of accusations of misconduct, the latest embarrassing episode highlighting Trump’s struggles to fill key jobs and the perils of his occasional spur-of-the-moment-decision-making.

The weeks-long saga surrounding the nomination of Navy Dr. Ronny Jackson leaves the government’s second-largest agency without a permanent leader while it faces an immediate crisis with its private health care program. And it abruptly tarnished the reputation of a doctor beloved by two presidents and their staffs.

White House officials say they are taking a new look at the way nominees’ backgrounds are checked — and they believe they will persuade Trump to take additional time to ensure that a re-

placement is sufficiently vetted.

The leading person now under consideration for the VA post is former Rep. Jeff Miller, who chaired the House Veterans Affairs Committee before retiring last year, according to White House officials. Miller is a strong proponent of expanding private care for veterans, a Trump priority.

Trump quickly selected Jackson, a rear admiral in the Navy, to head the VA last month after firing Obama appointee David Shulkin following accusations of ethical problems and a mounting rebellion within the agency. Jackson, a surprise choice who has worked as a White House physician since 2006, faced immediate questions from Republican and Democratic lawmakers as well as veterans groups about whether he had the experience to manage the massive department of 360,000 employees serving 9 million veterans.

Then this week’s unconfirmed allegations by current and former colleagues about drunkenness and improper prescribing of controlled substances, compiled and released by Democrats, made the nomination all but unsalvageable.

“The allegations against me are completely false and fabricated,”



**EVAN VUCCI, ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Then-Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, right, and White House physician Dr. Ronny Jackson, left, watch as President Donald Trump talks with a patient during a Veterans Affairs Department “telehealth” event in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on Aug. 3, 2017.

Jackson said in a statement announcing his withdrawal.

Press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Jackson was back at work at the White House on Thursday. But his future there remains uncertain. He had stepped aside from directing Trump’s medical care and leading the medical unit while his nomination was being

considered.

“I would hope the White House would closely consider whether he is the best person to provide medical care for the president,” said Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware.

Trump himself praised Jackson,

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# Budget concerns raised for N.D. courts

Sustaining criminal justice reforms could become an issue

**JACK DURA**  
Bismarck Tribune

State legislators of the interim Justice Reinvestment Committee heard Thursday that certain potential budget cuts for next biennium would greatly affect the state’s judicial system.

Aaron Birst, legal counsel for the North Dakota Association of Counties, said he’s spoken with prosecutors who are concerned by Gov. Doug Burgum’s proposed 5 and 10 percent budget reductions for agencies and additional 3 percent contingency, “that that would absolutely have a hit to the criminal justice system — in particular, the court system and, even narrowing it down further, the juvenile court system.”

North Dakota’s courts don’t have

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# SBHE leaders call for urgency in fight against proposed cuts

UND could see \$25M cut from state funding

**ANDREW HAFNER**  
Forum News Service

GRAND FORKS — Some North Dakota higher education leaders have begun calling for urgency in fighting a potential continuation of budget cuts to public campuses.

Casey Ryan, a member of the State Board of Higher Education, described the prospect of deeper cuts as “incongruent” with the state’s goal of improving the higher education system, particularly the research institutions at the University of North Dakota and North

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DISCOVER DIGITAL



■ Video: Jump Rope for Heart Man Makeover  
■ Today in history: Expo 67

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