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# The Tuscaloosa News

TUSCALOOSA, NORTHPORT, WEST ALABAMA

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## Experts link tanning beds to cancer

### Local tanning bed owners dispute studies

By Lydia Seabol Avant  
Staff Writer

International cancer experts have determined that tanning beds and the ultraviolet radiation they produce definitely cause cancer, moving them this week into the top cancer risk category.

A new analysis of about 20 studies concludes the risk of skin cancer jumps by 75 percent when people start using tanning beds before age 30.

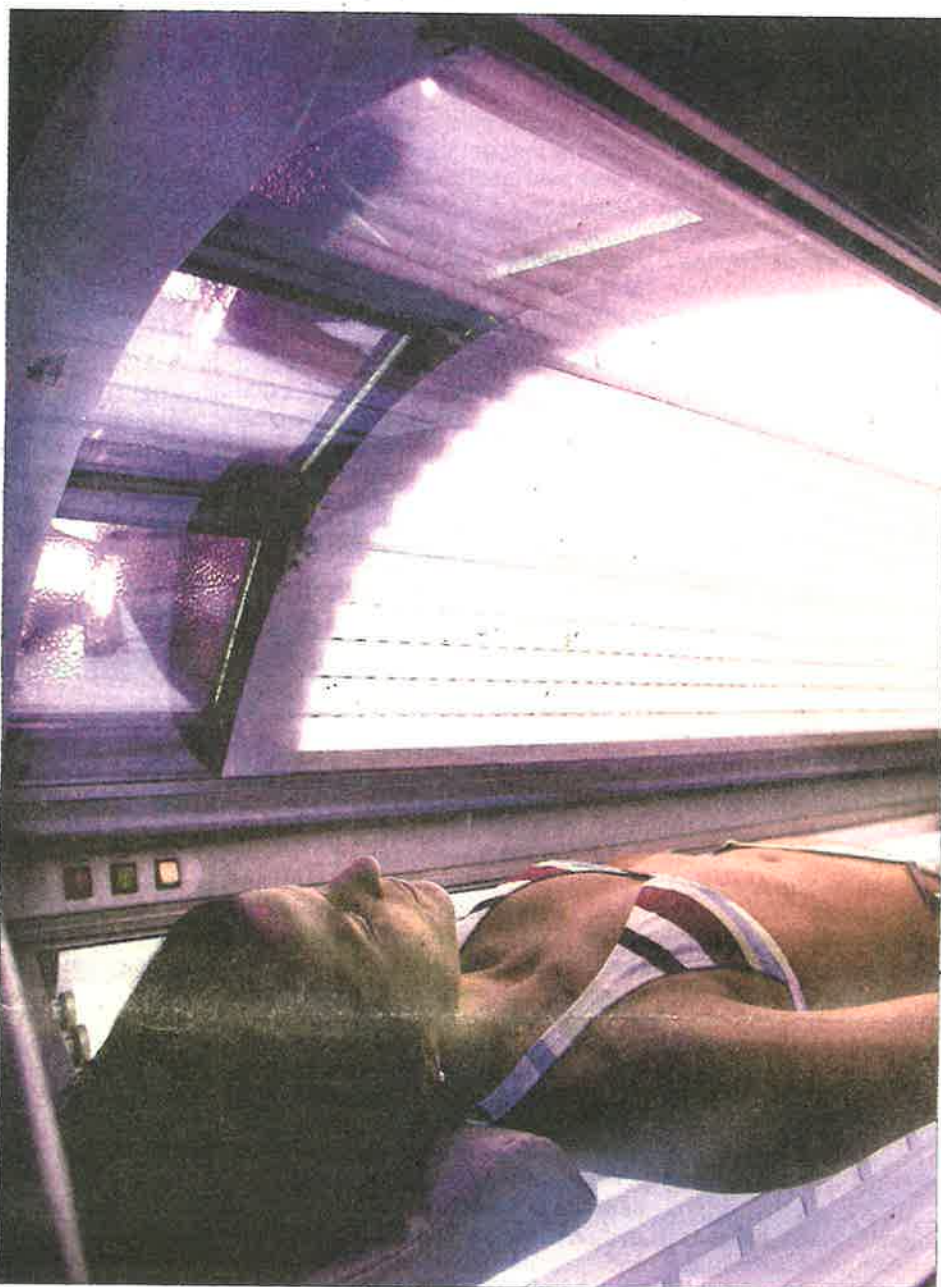
The new classification means tanning beds and ultraviolet radiation are definite causes of cancer, alongside tobacco, the hepatitis B virus and chimney sweeping, among other factors.

The research was published online in the medical journal *Lancet Oncology* on Wednesday by experts at the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyon, France, the cancer arm of the World Health Organization.

"People need to be reminded of the risks of sunbeds," said Vincent Coglian, one of the cancer researchers. "We hope the prevailing culture will change so teens don't think they need to use sunbeds to get a tan."

Alan Blum, a professor of family medicine at the University of Alabama's College of Community Health Sciences, has been trying to get UA to stop printing ads for local tanning salons in its student publications, comparing them to ads from

SEE TAN | 7A



A woman lies in a tanning booth in Anchorage, Alaska, in December 2005. International cancer experts have moved tanning beds and other sources of ultraviolet radiation into the top cancer risk category.

FILE | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



How often do you use a tanning bed? To vote in our Web poll, visit [www.tuscaloosaneews.com](http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com).

## Jail backlog includes murder cases

Program could help get to serious cases

By Stephanie Taylor  
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | James Scott Largin is accused of murdering his parents, Jimmy and Peggy Largin, in the Hills home in March 2007.

But because of the length of time it takes for cases to move through the court system, Largin has already spent more than two years at the crowded Tuscaloosa County Jail awaiting his capital murder trial.

Largin's trial is set to begin Aug. 10, but he is just one of 48 men accused of murder who are being held at the jail, two of whom have cases pending that date back further than his — Mikeun Foster, accused of killing a man at an apartment complex in November 2006, and Kevin Ruffin, accused of killing his father in May 2006. Many of the others have been jailed for more than a year.

"It takes the court system a while to get a case through," said Sheriff Ron Abernethy. "It's an overwhelming task."

Of the 48 murder suspects, 28 are charged with capital murder, which could result in the death penalty. The remaining 20 are charged with murder.

Court backlogs and jail overcrowding is a major problem in Alabama's prisons and county jails.

As of Tuesday, 633 people were being held at Tuscaloosa County Jail, which was built to house 400 inmates. Tuscaloosa County District Attorney Tommy Williams says that a new pre-trial diversion program will help reduce the jail population.

## Israel stopped N.C. family of jihad suspect

By Mike Baker  
The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. | Israel denied entry two years ago to members of a North Carolina family that includes three men accused of plotting to execute terror attacks in foreign countries, an official said Wednesday.

Daniel Boyd, 39, was arrested Monday with six others, including two sons. Authorities claim Boyd was the ringleader of a group that

## Compromise with 'Blue Dogs' sets up vote on health care

By David Espo  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON | After weeks of turmoil, House Democrats reached a shaky peace with the party's rebellious rank-and-file conservatives Wednesday to clear the way for a vote in September on sweeping health-care legislation.

Bipartisan Senate negotiators reported progress, too, on a bill said to extend coverage to 95 percent of all Americans without raising federal deficits.

"We're on the edge, we're almost there," said Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa, the senior Re-



President Barack Obama speaks during a town hall meeting.

## Judge Wiggins asks for leniency from Court of Judiciary

By Dana Beyerle  
Montgomery Bureau Chief

MONTGOMERY | Hale County Circuit Judge Wiggins asked the Court of the Judiciary for leniency Wednesday, saying that he did not willfully violate the rules when he failed to recuse himself from a case that involved three of his relatives.

Wiggins was suspended from the bench in May. Through his lawyer, Lewis Gillis,

the politically-intelligent thing?  
I think it's simple. I think he looked at Henry Louis Gates and saw his brother-in-law, his

likely, they say, his arrest, misguided as it was, had nothing to do with race.  
The first argument misses

"This [expletive] happens all over the place, and it has nothing to do with race."  
And I say: I'll see you 3 a.m.

death for speeding, the dozens of men jailed on manufactured evidence in Los Angeles and manufactured police testimony

again. And then we move on and leave it behind.  
But others don't have that luxury; don't get to move on and

mentary, is a copy of the Miami Herald may write to him at lbittsmiamiherald.com

## WIGGINS

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Wiggins was automatically suspended on May 4 when the inquiry commission filed seven judicial ethics charges against him, although he is still being paid.

"He has not had the opportunity to serve the people he was elected to serve," Gillis said. "I urge the court to allow him to resume his duties as a sitting judge, even if there's a forfeiture of 30 days pay, or more."

He said Wiggins sought guidance from the Judicial Inquiry Commission concerning how to handle his participation in preliminaries in a 2006 Hale County

voter-fraud investigation by Attorney General Troy King.

"There was no intent on his part, no willfully flagrant violation of these canons," Gillis said.

Wiggins was accused of violating the Canons of Judicial Ethics by not recusing himself from the AG investigation.

Several of Wiggins' relatives by blood or marriage were involved in voter-fraud motions that required judicial rulings. The relatives were his sister, former Hale County Circuit Clerk Gaynell Tinker, his former brother-in-law, state Sen. Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, and a cousin, Carrie Reaves.

The trial of Wiggins before seven Court of the Judiciary members lasted 15 minutes. None of the judges asked a question.

Birmingham attorney Doug Jones, the prosecutor for the Judicial Inquiry Commission, asked the court to "look at all the facts in the case," but did not suggest a penalty.

The Court of the Judiciary could impose a range of penalties, including removing Wiggins from office.

Wiggins declined comment after the court hearing. He proposed a similar punishment to the one he sought Wednesday in a previous attempt to settle his case. The court rejected that offer. Another offer to settle with the Judicial Inquiry Commission was not disclosed but it, too, was rejected.

On Wednesday, supporters claimed seats on one side of the gallery of the state Supreme

Court courtroom where the hearing was conducted.

Singleton, who had been married to Tinker, said the large judicial circuit needs Wiggins back on the bench. The Fourth Circuit includes Hale, Bibb, Dallas, Perry and Wilcox counties.

"Judge Wiggins is willing to do what is a legitimate compromise in this court," Singleton said. "The Judicial Inquiry Commission has taken this farther than any other judge in the state of Alabama. Judge Wiggins has not done anything wrong under the judicial canons, and he should be exonerated."

"He's been a committed worker and a great judge, and I'm here to support him," said Yellow Bluff Mayor Glen McCord. Wiggins' case drew other ob-

servers from Hale County.

"I think he had two chances with the court already, and I think they need to send him a message that justice is for everybody not just for a small group of people," said Faye Cochran, a member of the Democracy Defense League, a grassroots organization that has protested voter fraud in West Alabama.

The court has the authority, after notice and public hearing, to remove, suspend with or without pay, censure or apply other sanctions to a judge for misconduct in office or failure to perform his or her duties. The court also may retire a judge who is physically or mentally unable to perform his or her duties.

The Court of the Judiciary removed Alabama Supreme

Court Chief Justice from office in 2003; federal court order Ten Commandment from the state Judicial Inquiry Commission executive director Je said that since the creation in 1973, 37 been presented ago. She said five judges moved from office, 11 were suspended, was dismissed and judges were certified.

Wiggins was first a circuit judge in Judicial Circuit in 1994, elected in 2004. He was re-elected in 2008.

"He'll be re-elected," said Albert T. Perry County com-

## TAN

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tobacco companies.

"[The research] agrees with what I've been saying for years," Blum said. "I think getting a tan has got to be the stupidest thing next to smoking. They are two of the most harmful behaviors."

According to the studies reviewed by researchers, using tanning beds caused about a 20 percent increased relative risk of developing melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer.

About 8,650 people in the U.S. have died from melanoma this year. In Tuscaloosa County, the annual death rate for melanoma was about three out of every 100,000 people. But there is no way to know if any of those cases are linked to tanning beds.

Previous studies found younger people who regularly use tanning beds are eight times more likely to get melanoma than people who have never used them. In the past, the World Health Organization warned people younger than 18 to stay away from tanning beds.

But some say that the tanning bed is better than tanning in the sun.

Gordo resident Cathy Smith went to tan at the Sun Palace in Northport on Wednesday. She said she has to tan.

"I'm not worried about skin cancer from the tanning beds," Smith said. "If I don't tan here then I'll burn when I get out in the sun."

Adam Lewis, owner of Tanning Oasis in downtown Tuscaloosa, said the recent research was "a joke."

"Tanning is just like anything on the face of the planet; it's all about moderation," Lewis said. "You just have to know your family history and your skin type. If you have a decent skin tone, it's perfectly safe."

Rachel Kelley, manager of Bama Tan, agreed.

"I think [the research] is pretty unfair," Kelley said. "If you overexpose, you can get anything, but you can control what you get in the tanning bed."

Lewis said there are different levels of tanning beds that filter out harmful UVA rays, lessening the chance of skin damage.

But Blum points to research that shows that even UVB rays are more harmful than previously thought. Experts have found that all types of ultraviolet radiation caused worrying mutations in mice, proof the radiation is carcinogenic. Previously, only one type of ultraviolet radiation was thought to be lethal.

The American Cancer Society

**"I think [the research] is pretty unfair. If you overexpose you can get anything, but you can control what you get in the tanning bed."**

Rachel Kelley, manager of Bama Tan

advises people to try bronzing or self-tanning creams instead of tanning beds.

Reach Lydia Seabol Avant at 205-722-0222 or [lydia.seabolavant@tuscaloosaneews.com](mailto:lydia.seabolavant@tuscaloosaneews.com).

Information from The Associated Press was used in this report.

## CASES

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some of the backlog. Smith wrote a bill introduced by Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa, that passed in May allowing his office to divert some non-violent offenders to programs such as drug court. Clearing the judicial dockets would make way for the more serious cases to be resolved sooner.

"This will be very good for victims. Their cases will be handled much quicker," Smith said.

The defendants will be under court supervision and monitoring, which Smith said should contribute to the low recidivism he expects.

Defendants could have their charges reduced or dismissed if they enter a guilty plea and agree to meet program conditions.

Offenders charged with Class A felonies, the most serious, and crimes involving injuries, sex crimes involving adults or children, child pornography, child abuse, stalking, kidnapping, gang membership and drug trafficking would not be eligible for the

program. Public officials charged with a crime involving their positions would not be eligible.

Smith said the program will have two benefits: easing the backlog and more effectively rehabilitating offenders.

Ninety-six percent of people

who have participate program in Montgomery have not re-offended.

The DA's Office offenders to participate in court, community or another program appropriate to their situation

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