

RAGBRAI

Continued from Page 1

While in school, Welker proved to be a talented multi-sport athlete but excelled most in cycling. In 1896, the 15-year-old won a 13.75-mile race, and the next year attended Grinnell Academy, a college prep school for Grinnell College; he won several

half-mile and mile races for the track team. At the time, he was the only Black student enrolled throughout his six years at the school.

While competing, Welker was accused of "professionalism" to the inter-Collegiate Games Committee in 1901. Local universities submitted affidavits accusing Welker of accepting prize money for non-school affiliated races.

By doing do it would make Welker a professional athlete.

Residents of Colfax and Newton submitted affidavits testifying in his defense that they witnessed Welker refusing cash prizes during races in the communities. He also testified under oath that he did not even participate in some of the races where he was accused.

Unfortunately, Welker

was found to be disqualified and barred from competing in collegiate races, and his achievements were struck from Grinnell College for that season.

Although his athletic career stalled, Welker graduated with honors with a degree in chemistry and biology. He went on to study at Harvard Medical School, one of the first Black students in

the program. Once again he faced struggles being barred entry from participating in lessons with other white students at a hospital in Boston. That setback cost him his diploma.

Welker persisted and completed his courses, becoming a doctor along with a World War I medical corps veteran and he taught at Fisk University.

Veterans

Continued from Page 1

home visits. Veterans affairs has also brought in more than \$2 million this past quarter for veterans.

"Between the volume of appointments and walk-ins compared to the actual case work that goes in to making sure these cases are successful just isn't there with only one of us full-time," Wilson said to the Jasper County Board of Supervisors. "Other than that, we're busy."

Jasper County Supervisor Doug Cupples remarked that Wilson was handling a lot of appointments. Wilson nodded her head, saying she is tired. She said the veterans affairs office averages about nine to 17 veteran visits a day. The most she has seen in one day is 23 veterans.

Veterans will be coming from outside of the county for case work soon, too. Wilson said a retirement from an individual in the Marion County veterans affairs office has directed veterans to Jasper County. While Wilson and Thorpe can assist those veterans, she is prioritizing Jasper County veterans first.

"If they're outside of the county, I'm sorry I would be willing to help you but I'm looking to probably schedule two to three weeks out. My cal-

endar is still for actual scheduled appointments is still scheduling a week to a week-and-a-half out," Wilson said. "I do not schedule more than four, (one-)hour appointments in a day."

Which Wilson said is because she does not know how many walk-ins to expect. The fourth quarter report shows walk-ins outnumber scheduled visits and home visits. Of the 328 total visits, about 201, or more than 61 percent, were walk-ins. One month in the fourth quarter saw as much as 81 walk-ins.

It's a lot, she said, especially when she has four appointments in a day and potentially three to six walk-ins — or more — to handle with Thorpe.

"Now I have no time for my case development stuff and responding when there are subsequent development letters to keep those cases going," she said. "The reason why my cases have been so successful is because I've been able to do the work to keep those things going for the veteran."

Wilson complimented her veterans for being more than willing to do everything they can to help out. But she's only one person and she has not got "enough time in the day." Cupples asked if Marion County has a succession plan. Wilson said a new hire is in the works, but there is still training to go through.

"Poweshiek (County) is part-time so we do occasionally have some of the Poweshiek veterans,"

Wilson said. "...I hate having to turn a veteran away when they need assistance, but you're going to have to call Poweshiek and leave a message."

Jasper County Veteran Affairs currently has 307 open cases or claims. Cupples said he has spoken to Thorpe who has reiterated much of what Wilson reported.

Wilson said, "We were talking again this morning and he's like, 'My position needs to be moved to a full-time salaried position, so we can get somebody in here to get them trained.' Mr. Thorpe is probably looking to retire. But we had a deal. He's like, 'I ain't leaving yet until I know you're taken care of.'"

Cupples responded, "Sounds like Keith."

Thorpe is supposed to work 28 hours. But he has been working an average of 30 to 35 hours to keep up with the workload. Thorpe is getting paid overtime for those hours, too. On average, Thorpe earns about 10 to 15 hours of overtime every pay period.

"I am also working on average 10 to 20 hours of overtime each pay period, and our commission has instructed us to start keeping track of all of that on a spread sheet," Wilson said.

Jasper County Supervisor Brandon Talsma thanked Wilson for keeping track of the data and said budget discussions will be beginning again soon.

Vacation

Continued from Page 1

If the updated policy is approved by supervisors in a future board meeting, employees would not be able to accrue any more vacation time once they

hit the 280-hour cap. Those over the 280-hour mark will likely have two years to use their vacation. But supervisors may have to pay up to a certain amount.

Either way, the cap affects all employees in the same way, whether they have worked for the county for 20 years or one

year. Jasper County Supervisor Brandon Talsma said some payouts could be provided to employees with substantial accruals, but they would be limited in the amount of hours used for payouts.

"In situations where they're over a certain threshold, wheth-

er they're over 400 hours or 500 hours, maybe it's a (scenario where) we want you to burn down 200 hours over the next two years and we'll pay you out for the remainder to get you down to that 280 balance," he said. "But we're not going to pay you for all."

Supervisors expect if the policy is updated and approved that department heads will have to encourage their workers to take more down time, which Jasper County Human Resources Director Dennis Simon said is something the county is very much in favor of.

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