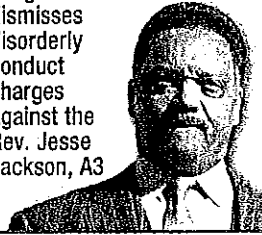


## INSIDE

Judge dismisses disorderly conduct charges against the Rev. Jesse Jackson, A3



# Judge tosses charges against Jackson, others

### Arrests stem from Yale union strike actions

By Michelle Tuccitto  
Register Staff

NEW HAVEN — A Superior Court judge on Friday dismissed a disorderly conduct charge against the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who had been arrested for obstructing traffic at a Yale University strike in September.

Superior Court Judge Stuart Bear also dropped the charges against two of Jackson's fellow demonstrators, the Rev. Scott Marks and the Rev. William David Lee.

The state's attorney's office had entered a nolle in the cases, which means it didn't plan to pursue the charges, but had the option of reopening the cases within 13 months.

However, Bear granted a defense motion to dismiss the charges entirely.

"In Dr. Martin Luther King's tradition, there are times when you must be willing to use your body as a sacrifice," Jackson said as he was leaving the courthouse.

"Our intent was to eliminate the conditions of the workers, even if it meant serious sacrifice. We were willing to face the consequences. We ultimately were victorious in this round of the struggle," he said.

Jackson and other members of his Rainbow PUSH Coalition were arrested in September after leading thousands of marchers downtown.

Jackson was showing support for Yale University's striking union clerical, technical and service workers, who were fighting for better wages, job security and pensions.

In an act of civil disobedience, the group sat down and blocked the intersection of Elm and College streets. Police then arrested them.

The strike ended later in September, when unions ratified a new contract.

When asked how many times he has been arrested during demonstrations of civil disobedience, Jackson said "it is in the double digits."

Several courthouse staff members and members of the public asked Jackson for his

autograph and to shake his hand as he was leaving Friday.

Attorneys Hugh Keefe and Tara Knight have been representing the approximately 300 people who were arrested during the demonstrations. Most of the cases have been tossed out.

"I think it takes a certain amount of willpower and panache to be willing to get arrested, get handcuffed, get photographed and get booked - knowing you'll have to come back and face the charges," said Keefe.

"I know the union is very appreciative of all the people who were willing to submit to being arrested," he said.

Bob Proto, president of the Greater New Haven Labor Council and Local 35 of the Federation of University Employees, expressed gratitude to everyone who helped out.

"I feel as though hundreds of workers, community and religious leaders made a great sacrifice in support of our cause to get good contracts," Proto said. "We are thankful for that outpouring of support. Rev. Jackson has always come when working people are in a struggle with their company."

With the cases being nolle and dismissed, the question remains - will there be any repercussions if demonstrators are disorderly or block traffic in the future?

Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney David Newman, who handled the case in front of Bear Friday, could not be reached for comment.

New Haven police Capt. Stephen Verrelli, the head of the patrol division, said the department views itself as partners with the state's attorney's office and was "in no way annoyed, mildly or otherwise" at the charges being dropped.

"We did what we needed to do for public safety," he said Friday. "The court did what the court needed to do."

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