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# News Digest

By The Associated Press  
 Edited by Eric Pfanner

## Magic quits basketball

### NBA ambassador says he has AIDS virus

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Magic Johnson, whose beaming smile and sparkling play entertained basketball fans for more than a decade, announced Thursday that he had tested positive for the AIDS virus and was retiring.

"Because of the HIV virus that I have obtained I will have to retire from the Lakers today," Johnson told reporters gathered at the Forum, where he played for 12 seasons with the Los Angeles Lakers.

"I plan on going on, living for a long time . . . and going on with my life," he said. He added that he planned to become "a spokesman for the HIV virus."

Johnson, 32, led the Lakers to five NBA championships. He is the most prominent American to announce his infection with the human immunodeficiency virus since Rock Hudson.

More than just a basketball star, Johnson has been a philanthropist, a prominent corporate spokesman and a role model for young people. His broad grin, familiar nickname and electrifying ability have made him familiar to people around the world.

Johnson came in fourth in a recent consumer survey of the appeal of athletes as commercial endorsers, ranked behind Michael Jordan, Bo Jackson and Tommy Lasorda. He has endorsed Converse athletic shoes, Slice soft drinks and Kentucky Fried Chicken, among other products.

Johnson appeared nervous at the outset of his announcement, but later relaxed and smiled frequently. "I'm going to go on, I'm going to beat it and I'm going to have fun," he insisted.

Both Johnson and the Lakers' physician, Dr. Michael Mellman, said he does not have AIDS, only the virus that leads to it. "I feel really good," Johnson said. "I feel great."

Johnson didn't say how he contracted the virus, which is usually transmitted through sex or intravenous drug use. Mellman said he didn't know.

"What we have witnessed today is a courageous act by a very brave man," Mellman said. "He is not a person who is invisible, and because of his presence, because of his potential impact on society . . . I think that he should not only be commended but held as a modern-day hero."

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## Bush is given endorsement of U.S. role in new NATO

ROME — President Bush won assurances Thursday from NATO leaders that they still want America's help in defending Europe. In a landmark summit, NATO agreed to invite old Warsaw Pact adversaries to join them in "a new era of partnership."

In a long day of re-evaluation, NATO also adopted a slimmer military structure in a bow to the end of the Cold War and prepared to call on the Soviets to put their armaments under the control of a single central authority.

"We must clasp the outreached hand of the people whose freedom has at last been won by a combination of their courage and our resolve," said Bush.

"We have lost our former enemies," NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner said in opening the meeting. "We all rejoice in that."

But it was Bush's challenge to NATO that dominated the opening sessions of the two-day summit. Bush pledged that the United States would never abandon NATO but bluntly told his West European allies they must say whether they need or want the United States in their drive toward closer European union.

"If, my friends, your ultimate aim



Brian Sheltro/DN

is to provide independently for your own defense, the time to tell us is today," Bush told the allied leaders.

Bush's challenge produced a flurry of pro-American sentiment as the alliance undertook its largest transformation since it was formed in 1949.

A document on future military strategy issued by the summit leaders stressed the importance of the link between the United States and Canada and Europe. It said the presence of U.S. conventional and nuclear arms in Europe remained vital.

Secretary of State James Baker, asked later about Bush's comments, said suggestions that there was a move to eliminate the U.S. role in NATO were "a total red herring." But he said that as the goals of the alliance were redefined, "we want to make certain that there are no ambiguities and that there is no confusion."

Britain, doggedly pro-American, and Italy declared that a NATO political declaration to be issued today spells out what Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis called an "undoubtedly answer."

"Europe does want to maintain the trans-Atlantic partnership, including the military aspect, including the central role of the alliance," said De Michelis.

But France, always edgy about U.S. domination in Europe and the prime advocate of the West Europeans assuming their own defense role, reacted coolly to Bush's statement.

"We wish the American presence to remain in Europe," French President Francois Mitterrand's spokesman Jean Musitelli told reporters.

Bush had asked during a closed session whether a French-German proposal this month for a European army was intended to exclude the United States.

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## Abortion-rights backers seek high court position

WASHINGTON — Abortion-rights advocates, hoping to ignite a major political fight in next year's elections, asked the Supreme Court on Thursday to state definitively whether it has abandoned its 1973 ruling that legalized abortion.

The groups said they expect the increasingly conservative court to overturn its 18-year-old ruling in Roe vs. Wade and spark a heated election-year battle.

But they said that even if their appeal in a Pennsylvania case still were pending before the justices next November, the issue would be on the front burner for candidates and voters in 1992.

Meanwhile, the Democratic-controlled Congress sent to President Bush legislation allowing abortion counseling at federally subsidized family planning clinics.

The Senate vote Thursday was 72-25, more than enough to override a veto. But the House vote Wednesday fell short of the two-thirds majority that would be needed to enact the bill over Bush's objections.

Abortion-rights groups held a news conference to announce that they had asked the Supreme Court to review a federal appeals court ruling that upheld a new Pennsylvania law restricting abortions. The groups asked the high court to use the case to decide whether it still believes that abortion is a fundamental right for women.

"The Supreme Court's failure to reaffirm Roe has fostered a steady erosion of (women's) liberties," said Kathryn Kolbert of the American Civil Liberties Union. "We therefore call upon the Supreme Court . . . to determine whether Roe vs. Wade remains the law of the land."

"If the answer is no," she said, "American women must look elsewhere for redress."

The abortion-rights advocates said they intend to turn to the ballot box for help.

"From county sheriff to the U.S. president, no elected official will escape scrutiny," said Faye Wattleton, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.