WHEN YOU FINISH READING THIS AFRO PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND

# STUDENT, FRIEND HELD IN SLAYING

## Baltimore Notebook

By MAX JOHNSON

There were some things said, and action taken, at that rally of NAACP State branches in Annapolis last Thursday—which merit serious thought by every citizen of this State.

The occasion was a demonstration to urge passage of public accommodations legislation.

**First — let's look at some of the things said.**

For those who argue that the sit-in demonstrations have hurt chances of passage of such legislation—Mrs. Juanita Jackson Mitchell, chairman, NAACP's legal redress committee, reminded:

• • •

"THERE WERE no such demonstrations eight years ago. There were none six years ago. There were none two years ago.

"There were no such demonstrations a year ago—and still they passed no public accommodations legislation.

"These charges of the demonstrations hurting the chances of this legislation is a subterfuge. It's a lot of hog wash."

Then — Roy Wilkins, NAACP national executive secretary, and the featured speaker, had these things to say:

"We couldn't have made it this far without our white friends.

"They are not particularly in love with you.

"They just want to see liberty and justice — and the Constitution work.

"The trouble is, though, there are millions of white Americans in this country, who honestly believe America is a white man's country.

"And that they are endowed to hand you a little bit of it."

• • •

MR. WILKINS then said further, referring to the history of the colored man in America:

"You must remember, what you put into building and defending this country has not been put where whites can find out about it.

"Blood from black soldiers' feet streaked the snow with Washington at Valley Forge.

"A black man was the first to fall in the Boston Massacre.

"And when Teddy Roosevelt got stuck on San Juan Hill it was black soldiers who came to his rescue.

"Whenever this country has needed men — black men have rallied to the flag.

"The least you can expect is to be able to enjoy this country's civil liberties."

• • •

A BIT further along, Mr. Wilkins told the assembly:

"We are a great law abiding people, we colored folks. Our whole fight has been — give us rights under the law.

"But, if we are to be continually pushed around, and told they can't do anything for you;

"If this is exhibiting the kind of legislation the colored citizen will face from now on — it will weaken our faith in this country.

"So, if you don't get what you want this time down here, come back again.

"The longer you lie down and take it (injustices)—the longer they are going to hand it to you."

• • •

THEN — THERE were two significant activities by those NAACP members at Annapolis last Thursday.

First — the delegations from each of the counties represented collared as many of their respective lawmakers as they could find.

They let their General Assembly representatives know in no uncertain terms, that if they didn't vote favorably on civil rights legislation — these lawmakers would not get their votes come next election.

Secondly — this delegation of about 400 NAACP mem-

(Continued on Page 27)

GETTING THE GUN — For safety, that is, James A. Hendricks, center, receives award plaque from Governor Tawes, left, while Richard Mullikin of Marlin Firearms Co., right, presents him with the 22-calibre target rifle.

## Trucker wins top award for safety on the highway

A 63 - year - old "Gentleman of the Highways" has been named Maryland's Driver of the Year for 1961 by the Maryland Motor Truck Association.

He is James A. Hendricks of 2535 W. North Ave., a road driver for a local transfer and storage company with 39 years experience.

Mr. Hendricks has his company's best record as a safe driver, with 32 years service without a preventable accident, under National Safety Council rules, the most rigid in this country.

In achieving this record, he has driven trucks over 2,500,000 miles, mostly in the heavy traffic between Baltimore and Jersey City, his current run.

Prior to this run, he drove all over the country.

• • •

MR. HENDRICKS, a widower, has been a member of Shiloh Baptist Church for over 25 years, and is also a Mason.

Among his hobbies he lists gunning, fishing, horseback riding and baseball.

He is the father of 13 children. They are:

Mesdames Myrtle Anderson, Bernita Brinkley, Dorothy Green, Genevive Stokes, Theresa Lean, Josephine Jones and Ernestine Hendricks.

The sons are Irvin, Leroy, Stanley, Calvin, James Jr. and Burnell Hendricks.

Leroy works at the same

(Continued on Page 27)

FIRST IN — The Rev. John H. Clarke, pastor of the Cherry Hill First Baptist Church, receives gold bonded membership certificate from Mrs. Sarah J. Bundy, chairman of the Coordinating Council's membership committee. First Baptist was first organization to get 1962 membership.

## 95 registered this week; registration, 111,917

Only seven weeks left to register.

If you have not yet registered to become eligible to vote, you may now do so.

Who should register:

These persons over 21 years of age who have lived in Baltimore for one year or more — and are not yet registered to vote.

Where to register — Supervisors of Elections, ground floor of People's Court Building, Gay and Fayette.

Hours you can register — Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Total registered as of May 31: 108,355.
Total registered for Nov. 1960 election: 106,306.
Registered this week period: 95.
Total to date: 111,917.

| | D. | R. | I. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thursday | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Friday | 21 | 3 | 0 |
| Monday | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Tuesday | 26 | 3 | 0 |
| Wednesday | 25 | 3 | 0 |

Total number of prospective voters of age unregistered, 63,172.

Final registration date before May 15 primary—April 14.

## Housewife held in 65 bad check cases

A five - foot - two - inch tall housewife who three weeks ago escaped from police while awaiting a Court hearing, has been charged with passing 65 bad checks.

Bail for Mrs. Beatrice M. Nicholson, 42, of the 2500 block Arunah Ave., was set at $67,000 Tuesday by Judge Aaron A. Baer in Northwestern Municipal Court.

The defendant, through her attorney, requested a jury trial.

• • •

MRS. NICHOLSON, who earlier gave a Jessups, Md. box number as her home address, was also charged with escaping from the custody of a Pine Street police officer and violation of probation.

The 65 check charges involve obtaining merchandise (clothing and household items) but no cash, from 14 stores.

Detainers have also been filed against Mrs. Nicholson in Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, and in Connecticut and Delaware according to police.

Sgt. William Miller and Patrolman John Scroggs said that Mrs. Nicholson had been sought for more than a year.

Efforts to locate her were complicated by the fact that Mrs. Nicholson had an account in a bank where another woman with the same name and age had an account.

MRS. NICHOLSON was first arrested in a Reisterstown Rd. department store on Feb. 8 and was taken to the Pine Street Station.

While at Pine Street, she complained of feeling ill and was taken to University Hospital where she escaped from the emergency room.

Mrs. Nicholson was arrested four days later in the 500 block of N. Carey St.

• • •

THE PRELIMINARY hearing was more of a nuisance to court clerk Walter Bolling than to Mrs. Nicholson.

Acting on the assumption that the defendant would want her case tried before Judge Baer, Mr. Bolling typed up 67 commitment papers in advance of the hearing.

When Mrs. Nicholson asked for the jury trial, Mr. Bolling had to discard the commitment papers, and type up 67 new commitments in triplicate for the grand jury.

## Cherry Hill restaurant deadline

Monday, March 5, is the agreed - upon deadline for a decision by the management of a newly - opened Cherry Hill Restaurant - Motel on whether or not it will be desegregated.

"The whole community is heated up about this thing. We are ready to surround this place with picket signs" said Shephard Burge, chairman of the Cherry Hill Coordinating Council, an association of churches and civic groups.

The restaurant opened three weeks ago at 3049 Waterview Rd. It's discriminatory policy did not become known until a week later.

• • •

THE DEADLINE was agreed upon by Leo Economas, co - owner of the establishment, Baltimore CORE officials and representatives of the Cherry Hill Community, in a meeting at the restaurant late Monday evening.

Mr. Economas told the group that he did not have any prejudices and that his policy was "a matter of finances."

"I don't like the policy. It hurts me to have to refuse to serve a colored person. I wish a law was passed so that the decision would be taken out of my hands," he said.

He asserted that most of his trade is transit — truck drivers and motorists.

"I talked with several truck drivers about this — asked them how they would feel about it . . . they gave a flat 'no'," he maintained.

He said he would reconsider the policy and let them know of his decision by Monday.

• • •

PRESENT AT the meeting were Walter Carter, co - chairman of Baltimore CORE; Lennie Slaughter, a CORE member; Walter Blake of Cherry Hill; Roger Walker, secretary of the Cherry Hill New Frontier Democratic Club, in addition to Mr. Burge.

Mr. Economas said that he rents the establishment from James Kourkoulas, a Baltimore businessman who owns several other restaurants in predominantly colored sections of the city, including one known as Jim's Restaurant at 600 N. Fremont Ave.

Mr. Economas said that he is at liberty to make policy decisions on whem he should serve.

If Mr. Economas' decision is negative, Walter Carter said CORE will aid the Cherry Hill Community in non - violent action strategy.

"A business in a colored neighborhood exists there only with the tolerance of the community. If that community no longer wishes to tolerate it, it can no longer exist," said Slaughter.

## Suspended patrolman quits force

A Central District patrolman who was awaiting a departmental hearing has resigned from the Police Department.

The former patrolman, Albert Holt, 31, of the 3100 Block Leighton Ave. was suspended from the force in January after he, and his estranged wife, and a Social Worker appeared in Northwestern Municipal Court.

• • •

MR. HOLT was charged with assaulting his wife, Mrs. Geraldine Holt, 28, a secretary.

Mrs. Holt was accused of assaulting Miss Diane O. Rose, 23, of the 500 block Marlyn Ave., and larceny of the complainants' purse. Miss Rose, in turn, was charged with assaulting Mrs. Holt.

All of the charges were dismissed.

Testimony was given that a disturbance occurred at the Holt home when Mrs. Holt visited her husband's apartment unannounced.

DR. HAROLD L. TRIGG, a Morgan alumnus and professor of education at Livingstone College, will deliver the Alumni-Tradition Day address at Morgan Wednesday. He will speak on "Freedom and Responsibility."

## Long pants net long jail term

A hold-up man, who was followed by a businessman and chauffeur, after beating and robbing a tailor at North and Pennsylvania Aves., was sentenced to 10 years in prison Wednesday.

Criminal Court Judge Shirley B. Jones imposed the term on Michael R. Chandler of the 1700 block Payson St.

Sgt. Kenneth Hornberger of the Western District said Chandler struck the tailor, Elderidge James, in the head with an iron pipe before rifling his wallet of $58.

Mr. James testified the assault took place when he bent over to take the defendant's measurements, who said he wanted a pair of pants cut off.

Milton Schwaber, 61, 7100 block Park Heights Ave., testified he was leaving his office with Woodrow Frazier, his chauffeur, when the saw Mr. James bleeding from the head and a men fleeing the scene.

They followed Chandler to the Payson St. address and notified police.

When Patrolman John Brown arrived, Chandler was in a store across the street from his home, the stolen money still in his pockets, Judge Jones was told.

## Tri-State Elks schedule meeting

Plans for assisting Provident in its project for a new hospital will be outlined at a meeting of the Tri - State Elks Association on Sunday.

The meeting will be held at 4 p.m. at the Monumental Elks Home, 1528 Madison Ave. The public is invited.

• • •

TALKS WILL be given by Dr. Saul M. Perdue, principal, Carver Vocational High School, and Theodore Perkins, superintendent, Provident Hospital.

Dr. Bernard Harris Sr. is president of the Tri - State Association. Mrs. Amy Warden is president of the auxiliary.

NEW VA HEAD

Dr. Albert Tomasulo, area chief of staff of the Veterans Administration Area Medical Office at Columbus, O., is the new director of the Baltimore VA Hospital. He will succeed Dr. Horace D. Smith, who has been named director of the VA Hospital at Coral Gables, Fla.

## Student, pal held in slaying

"Carlis is an ordinary boy.

"He is a real quiet boy. He never runs around with gangs or anything, but it seems like some older boy has led him astray.

"The police say he was the lookout, but he claims he had nothing to do with it and didn't know what was going on.

"He was supposed to be going to a wedding."

Those were the comments made by the uncle of a high school pupil accused of murder and robbery.

• • •

CLARENCE JONES of the 1800 block N. Washington St. talked about 16-year-old Carlis H. Daugherty after the youth was arraigned on a homicide charge in Central Municipal Court Wednesday.

Along with Charles Hackett, 21, of the 1600 block N. Calhoun St., Daugherty was charged with causing the death of a grocery store owner.

Judge A. Jerome Diener ordered the young men held without bail for a preliminary hearing.

• • •

THE VICTIM, 56-year-old Sol Cohen, was found beaten to death at his store in the 2000 block N. Washington St., Saturday night.

Police said Mr. Cohen was beaten about the head with a claw hammer, and that $44 was taken from his cash register.

Hackett and Daugherty were arrested at their homes by Sgt. George Waldhauser of the Northeastern District, and Det. Sgt. Robert Lewis and Det. Furrie Cousins.

Mr. Jones said his nephew was about to return to his mother's home in the 1300 block Kenwood Ave. when he was picked up for questioning.

### Dr. Taylor accepts

Dr. Julius H. Taylor, chairman of the physics department at Morgan State College, has accepted an invitation to participate in a panel sponsored by the National Science Foundation to be held in Chicago on Monday and Tuesday, March 12-13.

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## Gas, Electric Co. concedes Jim Crow

The president of the Gas and Electric Company conceded this week that the company has separate facilities for colored and white employees in at least two of its stations.

Austin E. Penn said that the separation was motivated more along "occupational lines" rather than race.

The charge was made Wednesday by an employee of the company who testified, before a representative of the National Labor Relations Board.

Lloyd A. Hart, 39, 5714 W. Mulberry St., who said he is a laborer-cleaner for the company, said he was told by a foreman when he reported for work at the Westport plant, that he was not to use the cafeteria. He said he has never seen a colored worker eat in the plant cafeteria.

Mr. Hart said he ate in the locker room when he was working at the Westport plant, in the spring of 1961. He has been working for the Gas and Electric Company since Aug. 10, 1960, he stated.

He asserted that the company also sponsors separate social functions for its white and colored employees.

• • •

MR. PENN stated that separate locker facilities also exist at the Crane station on Carroll Island Rd.

He explained that they were "historical remnants—remnants of the past"—when the company had colored employees only in menial positions.

"Occupations tend to desegregate themselves," he asserted.

"But we have made a definite effort over the past two years to break down the barriers and put colored employees in some of the other fields," he said.

Referring to the segregated company-sponsored social activities he said it has been done this way "traditionally over the years."

He maintained that both colored and white employees prefer it that way and that there are no immediate plans for a change.

• • •

IN RECENT weeks, the company has sponsored its annual parties for longtime employees on separate occasions.

All the colored employees of the company will be entertained at a downtown hotel Saturday.

• • •

THE NLRB hearing has been under way since Feb. 5 at the Gas Co. office, Lexington and Liberty Sts.

A group of employees filed a petition in January seeking to establish a local of the United Utility Workers of America Union, AFL-CIO.

Earle K. Shaw, attorney for the company, moved three times that Hart's testimony be struck from the record as "irrelevant."

The motions were denied by NLRB representative, Louis Wallestein.

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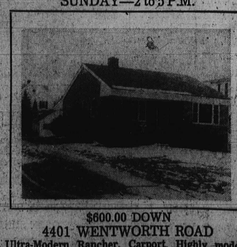

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MR. AMBROSE SMITH and family wish to express their gratitude to friends, neighbors and organizations for floral designs, comfort given and sympathy expressed in every way during their recent bereavement at the passing of their loved one, GLADYS R. SMITH. Special thanks to Rev. Reginald Daniels and Rev. Edward G. Carroll for their service and assistance.
THE SMITH FAMILY.

Rights Law Day In Annapolis
(STORY IN COLUMN 1)

BLUE STREAK EDITION

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# FORMER MAGISTRATE CRITICIZED AS JUDGE AWARDS CPA $1,000

## Rights measure takes spotlight in Annapolis

By MAX JOHNSON

ANNAPOLIS — Today (Friday) is Public Accommodations Day before the General Assembly here.

Gov. J. Millard Tawes has called the Assembly into special session at 10 a.m. today for the express purpose of setting up public accommodations legislation to cover as many areas of Maryland as possible.

**At the 11th hour, as the AFRO went to press, this terse outlook for chance of passage of such legislation came from Alexander Stark (D. 5th Dist., Balto.), one of the chief draftsmen of the bill:**

"I would say it's touch and go."

Mr. Stark revealed that a number of county representatives, principally on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland, are set to exempt themselves, and then vote against the bill.

• • •

EXEMPTIONS IN a special session will not in themselves kill the bill, as they would have done at the regular 30-day session, which ended last night.

All the eighty bill requires for passage at the special session is a 62 majority vote of the 123 bill member house, and a 15 majority vote of the 29-member senate.

Some of the opposing county representatives had agreed earlier, only to exempt themselves, and not vote against the bill, thus decreasing its chance for passage.

Mr. Stark said Thursday afternoon, however, that considerable lobbying was under way to get these counties to vote against the measure, thus decreasing chance of passage.

He said this was principally caused by Governor Tawes' tactics in pushing a reapportionment bill through the House, against the will of the smaller counties.

• • •

MANY OF the Baltimore City 36 - member delegation are also prepared to vote against the bill, it was learned.

At a closed caucus a few days ago this delegation was split with a 20-15 vote of the members present, on whether to bring Baltimore under provisions of the bill.

The First, Sixth and three members of the Third District, were reported to be those voting to exempt Baltimore.

Mr. Stark and William Walsh (D. Alleghany) drafted the present bill with the agreement of Governor Tawes, after it was determined that two previous bills on this matter had no chance of passage.

• • •

THE NEW BILL, House Bill 1 for the special session, will be brought in by Perry O. Wilkinson (D. Prince Georges), speaker of the House, as an administration measure.

**Here is what it would not cover:**

To make services in hotels, public restaurants, inns and motels open to all without regard to race, color or nationality.

**Here is what it would cot cover:**

Taverns, bars and places where alcoholic beverages are the primary item for sale, and places of amusement such as bowling alleys, billiard parlors, swimming pools, etc.

• • •

THE PROPOSED legislation would set up these enforcement procedures:

1. Complaints would be directed to the Commission on

(Continued on Page 2)

## Portrait Of A Lady And A Cause

By ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

MRS. JUANITA J. MITCHELL
*Attractive as a model, she prefers being a model citizen, model mother*

Recently I observed a young woman seated in her law office with her hat on, her coat tossed back on her chair, one foot out of her shoe.

Her pencil in her hand, she was recording a telephone conversation. Other telephones, ringing madly were being answered by two of her sons.

Another son answered the door.

The hour was midnight. The weather, cold, blustery, a night when any woman, a mother with a household to mind, should have been at home in bed.

The young woman is Mrs. Juanita Jackson Mitchell, noted lawyer, member of the NAACP Legal Defense Committee, self-styled defender of civil rights, defender of the cause of all minorities and protector of the forgotten man, the unfortunate.

At midnight she had not eaten, and had been on the go since 5:45 a.m., when she got in her car, drove over 200 miles to defend Freedom Riders in an Eastern Shore Maryland courtroom.

This was the day the NAACP Legal

(Continued on Page 20)

## Says there was no evidence to justify verdict

Superior Court Judge Joseph R. Byrnes this week criticized former police court magistrate Calvin A. Douglass as he granted a former defendant in a Western Police Court case $1,000 damages.

In a three-page opinion, granting Richard E. Perkins, a certified public accountant, damages against Ben Zablonski, night club operator, Judge Byrnes said that the then Magistrate Douglass cooperated with Zablonski who attempted to use the state's criminal process as a private collection agency."

A motion for a new trial is scheduled to be heard today (Friday).

The case grew out of the arrest, conviction, and fining of Mr. Perkins, whom Mr. Zablonski, defendant in the civil action, accused of larceny after trust.

According to testimony in the civil court action, Mr. Perkins of the 4500 block Fairfax Rd., was arrested at 2 a.m. on Feb. 23, 1961, on a warrant issued by Mr. Douglass.

• • •

AT THE trial, April 28, Mr. Perkins was convicted and fined $50.

*This was suspended and Mr. Perkins was granted probation on the condition that he make restitution.*

*On appeal before Criminal Court Judge Dulaney Foster, May 31, the conviction was overturned with the approval of Russell J. White, assistant attorney, who said:*

"I don't understand why he was convicted in the magistrate's court."

In his opinion, Judge Byrnes expressed similar views:

"It seems clear to this court that not only was there insufficient evidence to sustain the magistrate' findings, of guilt, but there was in fact no evidence on which the verdict could possibly be based."

Throwing out the defendant's (Zablonski's) argument that Mr. Perkins failed

(Continued on Page 2)

## Alphas move meet

Disturbed by the refusal of so many establishments in Baltimore to serve everybody, members of Delta Lambda chapter, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Wednesday recommended cancellation of the organization's Eastern Regional Convention here.

The convention had been scheduled for April 6-8 at the Hotel Stafford.

It had been expected to draw some 300 delegates from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland.

The local chapter's withdrawal as host was telegraphed late Wednesday

(Continued on Page 20)

## Protest plan to aid Ocean City

Ash Wednesday, March 7, 1962 will long be remembered.

As the day heralded the Easter high holiday for Protestants and Catholics, the Eastern portion of the nation witnessed the most severe snowstorm in several years.

The bitter storm hit the East Coast from New England to the Carolinas late Tuesday night with snow filled gales up to 40 miles an hour.

Many areas of the Eastern Shore of Maryland were declared in a state of emergency by Wednesday night as the Army, State Police and Coast Guard forces evacuated hundreds of residents.

Hardest hit in Maryland was segregated Ocean City on the Eastern Shore.

Damage to the all - white playland has been calculated in the millions. The town was submerged in two to five feet of water and residents had to be evacuated.

DAMAGE WAS so great that Governor J. Millard Tawes and Representative Johnson of the Eastern

(Continued on Page 3)

## Young clerk dies of wounds

Bobby Moore, 21, 1900 block N. Castle St., died at St. Joseph's Hospital today (Friday) at 3:30 a.m.

The youth was wounded by gunfire in the robbery of a liquor store at Washington and Federal Sts., last Saturday. He was a clerk in the establishment.

The owner of the store,

(Continued on Page 2)

## Coming Tuesday

● WHY YOU CANNOT BE A PRIEST in the Mormon Church.
● NIGERIAN ART — It reminds AFRO Book Review Saunders Redding of Harlem in the 1920's.
● HERE'S WHY WE HAVE COLORED NEWSPAPER — Another prize-winning letter on the justification of the colored press.

VICTORY SMILES are displayed by City College coach Jerry Phipps and players, left to right, George Roderick, Quinton Pinkney and Leroy Brown after the Collegians defeated Douglass High, 44-38 Thursday night to square championship series 1-1. Final game will be played Saturday night.

## City evens Series

BULLETIN

*The final game of the Douglass-City series for the city basketball championship will be televised tomorrow (Saturday), beginning at 7:30 p.m., by WBAL-TV.*

Exhibiting a poise rarely seen in high school circles, City College took the measure of Douglass, 44-38, at Morgan Thursday night to send the Maryland Scholastic Association playoff the full route.

The two teams now square off in the deciding battle tomorrow (Saturday) night at Morgan.

• • •

CARVER, having evened

(Continued on Page 19)

## Clarke Davis rites set Monday

Funeral services will be held Monday at 10:30 a.m. from Grace Presbyterian Church for Robert Clarke Davis, 45, 1913 Gwynns Falls Parkway, who died in his sleep.

Mr. Davis, veteran housing manager and chief of renewal operations in the Harlem Park Area since October, 1961, was discovered dead in bed at 6:45 a.m. Wednesday by his wife, Dr. Elaine C. Davis, vice principal at Garrison Junior High School.

Mr. Davis had been appointed to the Morgan State College board of trustees on Tuesday. Mrs. Davis said the formal letter of announcement arrived on Wednesday.

She said Mr. Davis had visited a physician on two occasions last week but they

(Continued on Page 2)

## 5

Weeks left to register before the May 15 primary.

April 14 is the last day you can register to vote in the primary. If you are a new resident of Maryland, or if you become 21 before the next election, you must register to vote.

Registration hours are: Mondays through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m. to noon, at Supervisors of Elections Office, People's Court Bldg., Fayette and Gay Sts.

## The Lord Gives Them Hell

(AN EDITORIAL)

The NAACP's telephones were ringing Thursday morning.

Callers wanted to know what action can be taken to prevent restoration of Ocean City as a jim crow resort at public expense.

Said one caller, "When we get to praying on them, the Lord gives them hell."

The NAACP wired President Kennedy urging any expenditure of federal funds to restore the storm-wrecked city be coupled with a no racial discrimination clause.

The NAACP said that Marylanders have to leave the state to enjoy ocean front recreation because of segregation practices at Ocean City.

## Why Does A Man Choose Jail Instead Of His Freedom?

By GEORGE W. COLLINS

"I cannot accept it and be true to my Christian principles. If I did, I would still be under an authority other than the great Jehovah."

This solemn declaration fell on a packed and hushed federal court room Tuesday when a minister for Jehovah Witnesses chose jail, rather than compromise his religious convictions.

Leonard V. Coleman, 24, of the 2300 block Roslyn Ave., was charged with refusing civilian employment in lieu of being drafted in the Army.

To avoid imposing a jail term, Judge Harrison L. Winter sought to effect a compromise.

INSTEAD OF serving a tour of duty in the armed forces, Judge Winter asked Mr. Coleman to serve his obligation doing civilian work at Crownsville State Hospital.

The minister rejected the offer, pointing out that to bear arms against his fellowman is in violation of the tenets of his religious beliefs, adding:

"To become a party to an agreement growing out of this refusal is equally wrong."

Judge Winter, after Mr. Coleman turned down all efforts to compromise, including those of his court-appointed attorney, George L. Russell Jr., imposed a 30-month prison term.

Mr. Russell, appointed by Judge R. Dorsey Watkins, pleaded for acquittal when the minister steadfastly refused to relent.

"Although I can't agree with him, I have the highest respect and admiration for a man who is so determined to be true to the teachings of his religion," the attorney told the court.

Judge Winter agreed, but pointed out he had no alternative but to impose sentence under existing laws.

After passing sentence, Judge Winter thanked the attorney for an "able and intelligent defense" of the Jehovah Witness, adding:

"I would not have been able to arrive at the proper decision without the aid and excellent work of Mr. Russell."

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IN AN attempt to determine why a young high school graduate would prefer two and a half years behind bars instead of a quasi-military term of no more than two years, the AFRO visited his family at their spotless detached home on Roslyn Ave.

The answer was found to be quite simple.

Simply stated, Mr. Coleman's actions were triggered by dedication. His mother, Mrs. Leonard Coleman, in complete agreement, explains it this way:

"You can not be a servant of God and man. If we are to be followers and imitators of Jesus Christ, we must be willing to do what His Son did.

"Going to jail is no more than He did. So you see my son has backing from the Scripture."

Mrs. Coleman said her son was dedicated to Jehovah Witness doctrine in 1958, after graduating from Carver Vocational High School.

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UNTIL he was arrested in Orangeburg, S.C., last December, Mr. Coleman did vacation pioneer work in South Carolina and Palm Beach, Fla., his mother said.

Pointing out that her son is not a draft dodger or criminal, Mrs. Coleman continued:

"He is a good boy, always has been. He's never been in trouble in his life and the government people knew where he was at all times.

"They have been after him since he was 19. He didn't register at 18 because he was hospitalized with ulcers, but as soon as he recovered my son registered and told the authorities that he would refuse to bear arms."

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ONE OF SEVEN children, Mr. Coleman, his mother said, willingly went to jail because:

"Through the accrued knowledge you come to appreciate God and the necessity to suffer in order to be a true servant."

Mr. Coleman's wife, the former Miss Lois Jackson, according to his mother, is in perfect agreement with her husband of two weeks. They were married while he was free on $2,500

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