-Top Camp for Black America

(Continued from Page 11)

honorary chairman of the national advisory committee for the camp, says he recalls the days when W. E. B. DuBois visited the campers, and when Roland Hayes came to sing for the campers.

Because Atwater was for so long the only camp of its kind, Dickerson said, the result was "so many sons and daughters of men and women leaders from all walks of life came to the camp."

"It was an eye - opener for a boy from New England to have a bunkmate from Florida, from the Carolinas," he said.

"It was a unique experience for, say, a doctor's son from a small town to find out there were other blacks like himself, other doctor's sons, from other small towns,"

Dickerson concluded.

Besides Dickerson, other wellknown people on the national
committee include U.S. Sen.
Edward Kennedy, former U.S.
Sen. Edward Brooke, Alma
Brown, Dorothy Height, Robert
King, Ann Tannyhill, George
Yancy and Arthur "Pickles"
Young:

Groups like the Girlfriends, the National Association of Negro Women, the Hartford - Springfield Chapter of Links and various Urban League Guilds in



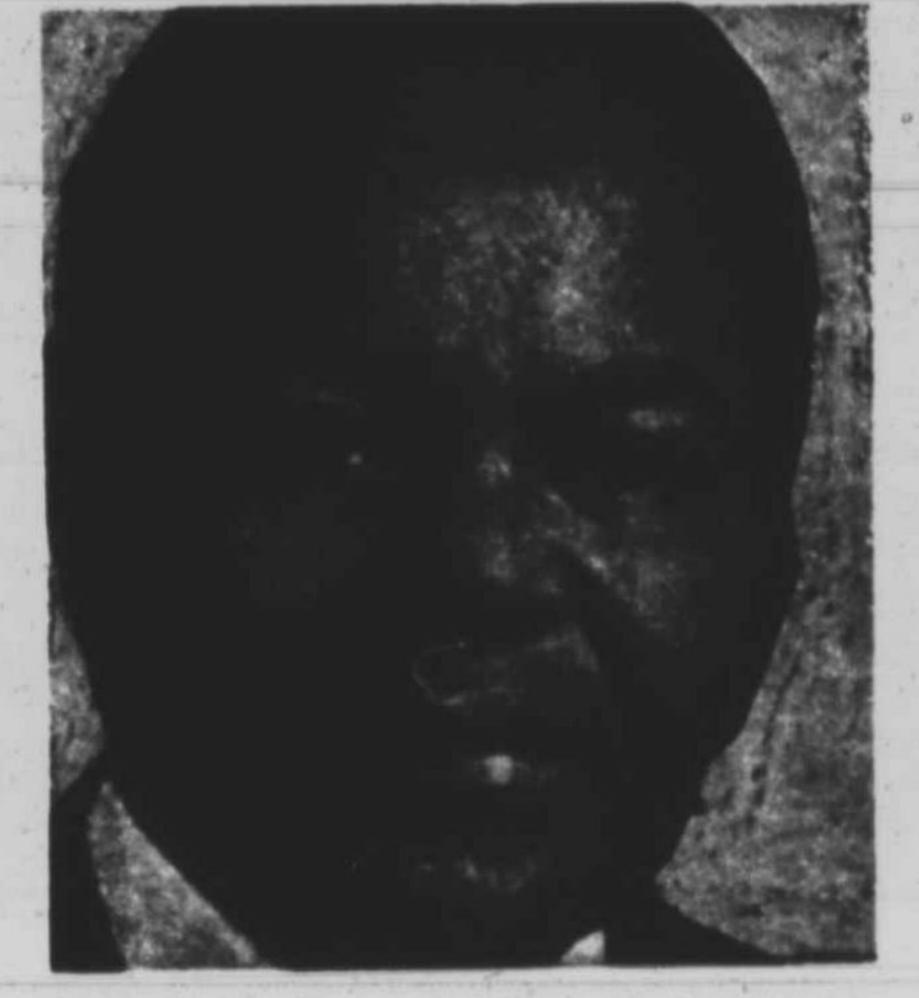
Mayor Coleman Young, former camper.

the northeast region have helped raise money for the revitalization efforts at the camp.

Many local groups, who Thomas said couldn't really afford to do it, donated generously.

through the Domestic Action
Program operated under the
auspices of the Eastern
Massachusetts Urban League,
donated several days of electrical
repair work at the camp prior to
the camp's opening.

A group of 15 alumni put in seven weekends in a row last summer at the camp helping in repairs and general cleaning work.



Solicitor General Wade McCree, they remember him as a table waiter.

Directing the revitalization from the offices of the Springfield Urban League was Kim Allen.

The camp was donated to the Urban League in 1921 by Mary Atwater for the purpose of enhancing self - development of minority youth through a viable camping experience.

The camp is named after her father. Dr. David Atwater and over 20,000 youth have attended the camp over the years.

At its beginning, the camp consisted of about 60 acres of land and a farm building located on the north side of Lake Lashaway.

In the camp's second season, a two - story lodge was erected to



Clifton Wharton, now chanceller of NYU at Albany.

house the dining area, kitchen and office as well as camper living space. Over the years, four additional acres and an island in the middle of the lake were acquired.

There are 12 individual cabins, a bath house, a dining hall, a recreational hall and athletic fields.

But it's more than the physical beauty of the camp that keeps alumni so loyal.

"Atwater's revitalization does not mean one year of gratification," Thomas said. "It means year after year of continuous impact on young people."



Archery lessons were a must for female campers through the years. This is a typical scene of a class on the archery range, circa 1960s.



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