The AFRO visits in Prison:

Clarence Mitchell, III

(Continued from Page A1)

Mitchell says "I receive thousands of letters each week from supporters who want me to know that they are with me and Michael in our struggle. They see our presence here for just what it is, an attempt of the power brokers to silence us."

"Baltimore's black leaders should return to the mores of past black leaders who fought the civil rights struggles and took a stance against injustice. They were true to the trust passed on to them by their people."

"Those who do not are perpetrating a silence, a criminal silence. In most cases the leadership has contacted us here, those who do not are out of step and are unrealistic, they do not realize that if they are not around to offer support when 'they' come for someone else (Clarence and Michael) the next time 'they' will come for them, and no one will be around to offer help."

These days their upcoming appeal trial is foremost on the minds of the Mitchell brothers. Clarence feels confident that he and his brother will win their appeal case which is to be tried before the United States Court of appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, Virginia between February 10th and the 14th.

Mitchell says, "We have garnered the support of many National black leaders and they have rallied to our cause and will be in Richmond, Virginia at the time of our appeal case." Reverend Jesse Jackson has written a letter to black leaders in behalf of the appeal case of my brother and me." (This letter is on page 4A.)

A partial listing of other notables who have joined the Mitchell Defense Committee are C. Delores Tucker, Benjamin Hooks, Andrew Young, Elijah Cummings, Leon Sullivan, Dorothy Height, Percy Sutton and Troy Brailey.

"I am stronger and will continue to fight the battle for justice..."

Clarence requested the Federal Bureau of Prisons to

grant him a furlough to attend the court proceedings in Richmond, Virginia. Once more the Bureau has denied Clarence both a social furlough to see his family and the furlough to his trial in Richmond.

The Richmond furlough was denied on the grounds that it would have to be requested by either the United States Attorney's office or the presiding judge in his case (They were referring to Judge Norman P. Ramsey who presided at the Mitchells' conviction).

Many legal minds are in agreement as to the legal merits of the appeal case. The Mitchell brothers were jointly charged in a four count indictment that charged them with conspiracy to obstruct a congressional investigation, obstruction of congressional investigation and wire fraud.

They were acquitted of the conspiracy charge and one count of wire fraud but were convicted of obstruction of Congress and one related count of wire fraud. Michael Mitchell was alone convicted with one charge of wire fraud.

The main points of the case are Michael and Clarence's retention by Wedtech officials on October 4, 1984. At this time the uncle of the Mitchell brothers Congressman Parren Mitchell had requested the Small Business Administration to provide him with documentation and answers to questions concerning both Wedtech compliance with various SBA regulations and Wedtech's relationship with government officials.

The government contends that the retention of the Mitchells by Wedtech was intended to "corruptly influence" the duly authorized investigation of Wedtech by congress.

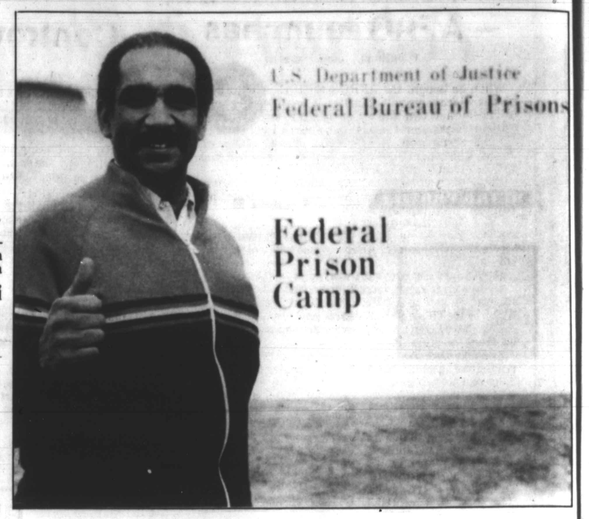
All of the Wedtech officials who testified at the trial entered into plea agreements with the government permitting them to limit their exposure to numerous criminal offenses. They all testified that Michael and Clarence indicated that they could help "stop the investigation."

These witnesses conceded that neither Clarence or Michael ever indicated that would accomplish this through a corrupt means, i.e. bribery, threats to congressman or his staff, or any improper persuasion.

A communication from the office of the attorneys representing the Mitchell brothers contains a summary of the charges against the Mitchells and ends with this description of the case's legal implication. This case represents the first reported prosecution of any individuals under this statute, where no specific corrupt act was either alleged or proven.

The government contended that the statement that the Mitchell brothers could "help stop the investigation" is sufficient to warrant prosecution under the statute.

The attorneys who represent the Mitchells contend that even if one accepts the testimony of the government's witnesses as true, the mere statement that someone could "help stop an investigation" or "take care of an investigation" is legally insufficient to warrant the verdict, and that any such statements are constitutionally protected under the First Amendment's right to petition the legislature.



Clarence Mitchell, III at the Lewisburg facility.

The attorneys in this case are in agreement that the Mitchells have been convicted of agreeing to lobby with no evidence that they did anything improper or that they knew that Wedtech was a corrupt company.

This month Clarence Mitchell is to meet with prison officials to determine if he is eligible for parole to a halfway house.

Mitchell says, "I am stronger and will continue to fight the battle for justice. When I return home I will continue to fight within the civil rights struggle."

"I don't know if I will be fighting as an elected official or not but I do know that this travesty of justice cannot continue."

—Legislative Round-up

(Continued from Page A1)

war on drugs, but it seems like the good guys are losing the battle," said Mayor Blackwell.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Decatur Trotter, would "add a few more weapons to our arsenal," Blackwell said.

Sen. Trotter's bill would authorize the Secretary of Environment to investigate illegal drug trafficking under the nuisance control law. Local health officers would investigate complaints and notify police of illegal drug activity.

Another of Trotter's bills would allow landlords to evict tenants participating in drug-trafficking on rental property.

Another black mayor, James Fletcher, of Glen Arden, said his town has curtailed the proliferation of drugs, but the drug traffickers have now moved down the road to Lansdowne.

Trotter said a Prince George's narcotics division officer said more than 90 percent of the drug-related arrests for drug trafficking and weapon seizures occurred in the "open air" markets inside apartment complexes.

Morton Shapiro, chairman of the Property Owners Association of Greater Baltimore, Inc. wrote a letter to Trotter saying he had serious concerns about the measure.

Shapiro said landlords would like to evict drug-traffickers but they are not protected if the investigating police officer's charges are wrong.

"The landlord would then be subject to a countersuit by the tenant," wrote Shapiro.

Other opponents said the untrained health official would be endangering his life.

Other bills heard before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee involved suspending those drivers under 21 who are convicted of drunk or drugged driving. Those drivers would be charged with two crimes- drinking illegally and driving while drunk.

The fines for drunk driving range from $500 to $3,000.

In 1987, 1,580 young drivers were involved in alcohol-related accidents.

Sen. Larry Young introduced a bill that would double the minimum sentence for people selling illegal substances within 1,000 feet of schools or school buses.

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—AFRO launches

(Continued from Page A1)

of his home.

When he bought the AFRO-AMERICAN with money borrowed from his wife, Martha, it was a weekly bulletin of church and community news published by the Rev. William Alexander, the pastor of Sharon Baptist Church.

At the same time, Rev. George F. Bragg, pastor of St. James Episcopal Church, was publishing another church and community organ called Ledger.

On January 6, 1900 the two publications were merged and shortly thereafter Rev. Bragg sold his interest in the paper to John Murphy.

"The Church Community Enrichment Program" is another way for us to go back to basics, back to our strength, emphasized AFRO publisher John "Jake" Oliver.

Here's how the program works:

1. Churches agree to sell individual subscriptions to their members and friends between February 19 and April 16 for $26.00 per subscription.

The church keeps $5.20 of every subscription. (see sign-up blank on page D3 .

2. Each week the AFRO will publish a "ranking" of the participating churches listing how many subscriptions each has sold to date.

3. The church with the highest number of subscriptions at the end of the drive will receive a cash prize of $2,500 and a page in the AFRO-AMERICAN devoted to what ever they wish to publicize.

The second and third place churches will receive $1,500 and $1,000, respectively.

Every participating church is urged to kick-off this unique subscription drive on the third Sunday in February, AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER Awareness Day.

The AFRO has produced a special bulletin cover to be used February 19 (or any other time during the subscription drive).

Free copies of the bulletin covers may be obtained by calling Rev. Melba Wharton or Andre Draper at 728-8204.

Requests must be received **February 8** in order to ensure delivery **by February 15.**

—Controversy erupts

(Continued from Page A1)

into remodeling and he's trying to make up for it, but he is ruining the base of good black establishments.

"Martin's is getting black dollars and they are going into white hands," stated Johnson.

Johnson also points to the fact that other businesses in the area are suffering because of The Five Mile House woes. "Reisterstown Road has been dead," said Johnson.

Earl Banks, president of the Maryland United License Beverage Association, (MULBA), is playing down the situation.

"The situation was discussed briefly at our meeting last week, but what Martin's is doing is not affecting the majority of our members.

"It's only affecting the Liberty Road corridor," said Banks.

He also said that competition is going on all around the city (e.g., the Fish Market, downtown hotels).

Banks suggested that the bar owners that are taking losses should do something to combat Resnick's happy hour.

Johnson responded to Bank's comments.

"It's not just a thing of competition, we aren't going to lay down and die.

"The problem is that I employ a staff of more than 30 people and they are all black.

"Most of the liquor distributors that I deal with are black.

"If I go down, then they all lose, the other businesses around me lose.

"This short term situation may cause long term problems in our community."

Roundtable On Crime

Saturday February 4, Bishop Robinson, the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services will be the featured speaker at a Roundtable discussion on crime.

The workshop is the second in a series of quarterly meetings being sponsored by Senator Larry Young, D.-39th District.

It has as its theme "Crime . . . It's Not On Time."

In addition to Robinson, the expected speakers will be drawn from the Maryland State Legislature and the Baltimore City Police Department.

Del. Ralph Hughes, D.-40th; Cornell Dypski, D.-46th; and Kenneth Montague, D.-44th legislative districts have been invited to serve on a legislative briefing panel regarding public safety and corrections issues.

The Roundtable discussion will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Morning Star Baptist Church (1064 W. Fayette St.).

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—Oaks replacement

(Continued from Page A1)

District, who will work with all of us and do things for the 41st District," said Del. Margaret Murphy, also a committee member.

Del. Murphy said the person chosen would have to be willing to strengthen the district's economic conditions and improve its housing problems.

Members of the General Assembly said Rev. Wendell Phillips and businessman Samuel Parham are the leading candidates to fill Oaks' vacancy. Rev. Phillips served as a delegate for eight years.

"The deck is already stacked against me," said Linwood Taylor, the Baltimore City Council reading clerk, who plans to apply for Oaks' seat. "Sen. Blount already has a preference."

A state source said Parham will be selected. There has been discussion Blount does not favor Phillips.

The senator could not be reached for comment at Afro press time.

After making a selection, the committee will give the name to Gov. William D. Schaefer for final approval.

Banks said he was worried about submitting a name within the 30-day deadline period. After the 30 days, state law says the governor can appoint a replacement 15 days thereafter.

"We need to name a replacement as quickly as possible because we can't afford to have a vacancy, especially on budgetary items for the city," said Baltimore City Councilwoman Agnes Welch, Second District. She is a member of the Central Committee.

Oaks lost his seat automatically when he received a five-year suspended sentence and a $1,000 fine Jan. 30. He was found guilty of double-dipping his campaign fund and the state for travel expenses.

The two-term delegate was also ordered to serve 500 hours of community service.

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Black History Supplement
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—AAH

(Continued from Page A1)

Heritage Tour, (AAH), was the brainchild of Dr. Thelma B. Cox, retired assistant superintendent of Baltimore city public schools.

The AAH tour was created essentially to expose and enlighten the citizens of Baltimore, as well as tourists visiting the city, to some of Baltimore's significant landmarks of black history.

Initially, Mrs. Cox conceived the tour just as an activity for black tourists visiting the city, however, after some primary research, she discovered a wealth of information about black historical sights.

This prompted her to broaden the scope of the tour to encompass black businesses, black neighborhoods, as well as statues, museums and other landmarks.

Dr. Cox stated, "The theme of the tour is struggle, survival, spirit and success. I specifically wanted the tour to highlight the success stories of blacks."

There are two tour routes; the maxi-tour, which is four hours long and the mini-tour which takes two hours.

The AAH tours begin at Mondawmin shopping mall.

The AAH tours will run each Wednesday and Saturday. The price of the tour covers the admission to the Great Blacks Wax Museum. For further information, contact Dr. Thelma B. Cox at, 367-6291.

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