—Mother Bryant

(Continued from Page A1)

Wilberforce State University in Zanesville, Ohio, and completed one year of graduate study at Ohio State University.

She was a high school English teacher until she met and married Bishop Harrison James Bryant in 1936.

Her life was then completely dedicated to the Lord through a shared Ministry with her husband. God anointed her to write literature to aide in building the body of Christ.

She was an ardent missionary to her local conference as well as in the district.

After her husbands election to the Bishopric, she served as Episcopal Supervisor of both the 15th district (South Africa) and then the 5th district (from Alaska to California) of the Episcopal Districts of the A.M.E. Church.

When her eldest child became 13 years of age, Mrs. Bryant took a fulltime position as a social worker for Baltimore County until 1964.

She is the mother of 6 children. Edith, Cynthia Ann Pitts, Hazel Joan, Harrison James, Jr., Bishop John Richard Bryant and Rev. Elenore Louise Bryant Graham.

Mother Bryant was the grandmother of four, Chere' Monique Graham, Jamal Harrison Bryant, Kia Edith Graham, Thelma Simone Bryant.

She leaves one brother, 3 sisters, neices and nephews.

—Massinga

(Continued from Page A1)

unanimous choice," said Shay.

Gov. William D. Schaefer at a press conference Monday in Annapolis, calling Massinga "a very fine lady," said Human Resources would undergo a reorganization. The governor did not say who would replace Massinga.

Gov. Schaefer said he has often asked if the department could legally refuse to take any more children to help alleviate some of its problems.

"... the answer to that is you can't do that apparently," Schaefer said.

Massinga, a native of Baton Rouge, La., has degrees from Southern University and the University of Massachusetts.

She has lived in Maryland for 12 years.

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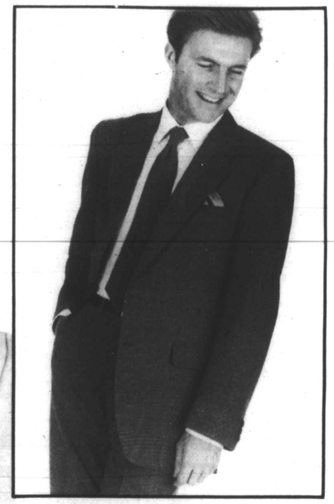

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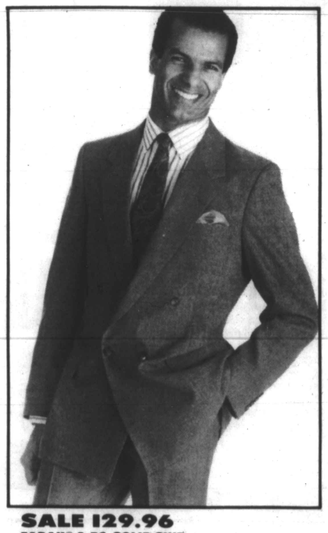

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Saturday, March 18, 1989

Court Appointed Special Advocate Program

CASA: 'A child's voice in court'

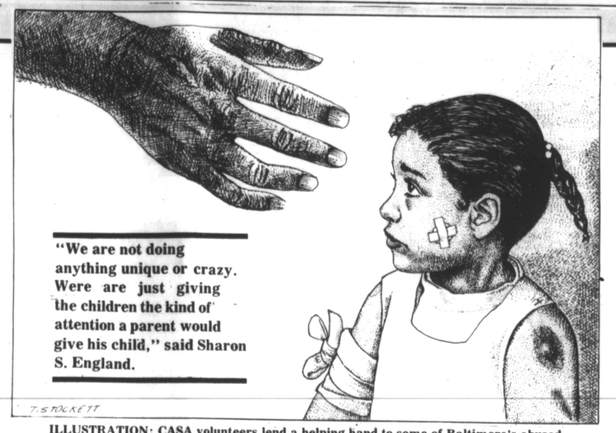


ILLUSTRATION: CASA volunteers lend a helping hand to some of Baltimore's abused and neglected children.

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

Stepping into an awesome and somber courtroom can be an intimidating experience for anyone, especially if that someone is young, confused and hurt.

The Court Appointed Special Advocate Program, which proclaims to be the "child's voice in court," sees to it that 45 abused and neglected children in Baltimore have a friend in court.

Thirty volunteers, many of them professionals and retirees and even the president of Coppin State College, advocate, monitor and act as protectors working with the children's social workers, attorneys and the Department of Social Services to guarantee the children's best interests are met in court.

"We think it's important they are the contact and the continuity for the children in the courthouse," said Pearl Kirby, the program's coordinator.

The volunteers work with one child or one family of children at a time until their cases are completed. To date none of the program's September-assigned cases have been finished.

And if a volunteer can not see a case through, another volunteer will take over.

Sharon S. England, executive director of the Baltimore CASA program, said the program is unique, because unlike the overburden social workers and lawyers, the court-approved volunteers are able to give children individual attention and follow-up.

"The CASA helps when the social worker can't... providing cheerleading," said England, who has a bachelor's and master's degree in social work.

The volunteers often visit the children and their families at home cutting through the bureaucratic rigamarole. The children are aged infant to 21.

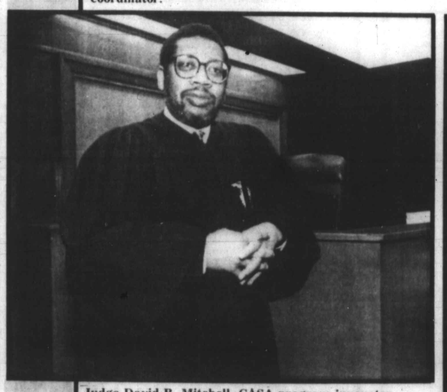
"Sometimes I have to be careful, because I get so involved and I feel like I have ownership and I just want to get there," said CASA volunteer Gretta G. Burnett.

"That's what a mother would do," said Burnett who was recently named Baltimore CASA Advocate of the Year.

Mrs. Burnett, a retired school principal, said she has invited her CASA children for dinner, housed them when their home had no heat and visited their schools to confer with teachers.

Mrs. Burnett and her husband, Calvin Burnett - Coppin's president — work with six children. She has a family of five teenagers and he has a 17-year-old boy.

Sharon S. England, CASA executive director and Pearl Kirby, program coordinator.



Judge David B. Mitchell, CASA program innovator.

Coppin president's wife Gretta Burnett, a CASA volunteer.

She joined the program, which has a 25-member advisory board, in September and her husband joined afterwards.

The CASA volunteers conduct case research and present written reports and testimony before court hearings.

England said when a child is no longer able to stay with his natural parents, he is placed in a foster or adoptive home. Some are placed with other relatives.

The executive director said six of the cases involve teenagers who are either pregnant or who have children.

Judge David B. Mitchell, presiding Juvenile Court judge, started the program last year in Baltimore after visiting a CASA conference on the West Coast. The national CASA program is 12-years-old.

All CASA volunteers are trained and acquainted in the courts. Montgomery County is the site of Maryland's first CASA program.

"The CASA program is successful because the CASA concentrates on one child giving him or her all of his energies," Judge Mitchell said.

The program, located in the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Community Planning on West Redwood Street, received a $35,000 start-up grant from the Abell Foundation and a $20,000 donation from an anonymous source.

England said Abell plans to increase its grant to $62,000.

"We are not doing anything unique or crazy. We're just giving the children the kind of attention a parent would give his child," said England.

England said the program is seeking blacks, particularly black men, to work with its majority black children.

Sixty percent of the children in Maryland foster homes come from Baltimore.

England and Kirby said the Baltimore CASA program plans to expand its functions to help other kinds of children, including juvenile delinquents. There is already a new CASA program, called the Advocates for Children in Criminal Court Proceedings, which helps prepare sexually abused children to testify in court against their offenders.

For more information on CASA call 328-7367.

"We are making sure whatever the children's needs appear to be are taken care of," said Burnett, the mother of four adult children.

AFRO Photos by Paul A. Greene