

LOCAL NAACP

Produces Brutality Witness

The Rev. James A. Wadsworth, president of the Detroit Branch NAACP, this week forwarded to Mayor Jerome Cavanagh, Police Commissioner Ray Girardin and the Michigan Civil Rights commission copies of a sworn statement made by an eye-witness to the reported beating by a police officer of Barbara Jackson, 34.

At the same time, the Rev. Wadsworth disclosed he had received complaints from witnesses involved in the case that they had been "intimidated" by police.

The witness, whom the NAACP branch president said is a public official, corroborated Miss Jackson's charges that she had been cuffed behind her back, "picked up like a baby and slammed" to the ground.

"The policeman took her by the arm with her arms behind her and grabbed her by the shoulders," the witness said. "He threw her down head first and she hit her left side.

"The other officer came up, pulled a wig off her head, and kicked her in the back. Then they picked her up, and the big one made a statement, 'Now, you're really going to the hospital'."

Commenting on charges of intimidation, the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth cited what he termed the "depth of corruption" within the police department.

"Since this complaint was first made . . . despite promises of protection, Barbara Jackson was subse-

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Find Witness

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quently arrested and held for four hours by officers whose sole aim was to try to get her to deny her complaint that she was beaten by police officers.

"On Friday, Sept. 2, a Detroit police sergeant picked up her boy friend and promised him an opportunity to operate illegally in return for a signed statement from Barbara Jackson or him that she had lied," the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth said.

The police department, which conducted its own investigation of the case, found itself not guilty and ruled Miss Jackson sustained her injuries as the result of a self-inflicted fall in the police garage.

The NAACP branch president said a "number of questions required forthright answers.

● "If, according to the official investigation, Barbara Jackson was arrested in a house of prostitution, why was the house left operating?

● Why was she questioned . . . to get her to say her boy friend had beaten her and then an official report (says) her injuries were the result of a fall?

● "How . . . a police investigation failed to produce a disinterested eyewitness (while) the NAACP was able to produce such a witness?

● "What happens in a police department when an officer is accused of violence against a citizen that can cause a false report of the event to become the official document of the department?"

The NAACP leader concluded, "Mayor Cavanagh promised us in a recent interview that he would not countenance a white-wash of police brutality and he appeared sincere.

"The matter is now in his hands and the hands of his commissioner and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission."