

Mitchell Details Beatings As Officers Face Trial Board

Outstanding Citizens Cited for Positive Community Influence During Past Year



Progress Noted in Diversified Fields During Past Year

Annual Chronicle Selections Based On Democratic Community Service

By CHARLES J. WARTMAN

OUTSTANDING contributions to good community and race relations were made during 1956 in the fields of social action, business, communication, research, the arts and medical care.

The persons who have been chosen this year by the Michigan Chronicle for citations for community service are, like those of past years, representative of many more who made strong contributions to the community in which they live.

Edward Turner, president of the Detroit Branch of the NAACP and President of the Michigan State NAACP, made an exceptional contribution through the work of the NAACP branch on behalf of local citizens and Negroes in the South.

Serving his fifth term as president of the local branch, Turner's efforts showed the result of five years of planning and growing in the field of militant social action.

Once again in 1956, the Detroit Branch led all branches in membership and contributions to the national organization.

Locally-sponsored efforts on behalf of the Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Ala., and the aid given by the branch in bringing the fight for a fair employment practices bill to a successful conclusion are a tribute to the work of Edward Turner who not only has given leadership but gathered around him some of the best minds in the Detroit community to do an outstanding job.

NINETEEN FIFTY-SIX saw the fledgling Fair Employment Practices Commission in operation for its first full year. Much of the credit for the record of the field staff and the interpretation of the functions of the commission to the public must go to John Field, who as its first director, moved into what had been an uncharted field in Michigan.

The firm businesslike way in which complaints have been handled by the commission has earned for it the respect of complainants and defendants alike.

For many years, Richard Austin, a self-proclaimed certified public accountant, has been laboring in the forefront of a field in which Negroes have only recently gained prominence.

His quiet proficiency and businesslike manner have earned for him the respect and confidence of countless business firms in our community.

In 1956 Austin terminated several years of operations from his Warren Avenue offices and moved to new quarters on Woodward.

The significance of this step can be measured most in terms of the years of pioneering Austin has been doing in Detroit.

RICHARD V. MARKS, statistician for the Committee (Continued on Page 9)

"MIRACLE FINISH" WINS

Walters Tops Race for Valley Mayor

Against what had appeared to be insurmountable odds, Don Walters, determined incumbent in the hectic Chronicle-sponsored race for Mayor of Paradise Valley, 1957, polled an astonishing 843,940 votes this week; upset all predictions and reclaimed the right to his throne for the current year.

Walters, who had maintained throughout the competition he "will again serve



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Davenport Sets Pace in Primary

Judge Elvin Davenport, Judge of Common Pleas, led the field Monday in the primaries to win nomination to succeed himself for a full term on the Common Pleas Bench.

Davenport, who was appointed by Governor Williams last Fall, finished first in a field of twenty-one candidates. He will be opposed by Charles Kaufman in the final election.

Davenport polled more than 43,000 votes in the primaries which saw a light turnout. Kaufman trailed Davenport by more than 30,000 votes.

In other races, the four to appoint to Gov. Williams to the Circuit Bench won nominations with Joseph Rashid, former Wayne County assistant prosecutor, leading the field.

Those nominated were Rashid, Victor Baum, George E. Bowles, and Horace Gill.



JUDGE DAVENPORT

They will be opposed in the final elections by Ira Kaufman, James M. Lincoln, John M. Wise and James McNally.

(Continued on Page 4)

Fifth Daughter Born to Wife of Louis E. Martin

Louis E. Martin, publisher of the Michigan Chronicle, caught up with Eddie Cantor Wednesday night when his wife, Gertrude, gave birth to their fifth daughter.

Both Mrs. Martin and the seven-pound, three-ounce baby girl are doing well at the Lying in Hospital of the University of Chicago.

The Martins have two daughters in college in Massachusetts, Trudy at Wellesley and Anita at Radcliffe. Another daughter, Toni, is in the University of Chicago Laboratory School and the fourth, Linda, enters nursery school next

Teen Slayers Await Sentence



CONVICTED of killing 14-year-old Gerald Roudoux when he refused to accept a ride with them, Tommy Rollins, 19; Odell Gray, 18; and Horace Collier, 18, will be sentenced Feb. 28 by Recorder's Judge Gerald W. Groat. Rollins was found guilty of first degree murder. His companions face sentences on second degree murder charges.

TRIAL BOARD HEARING OPENS

"Struck 50 Times," Mitchell Tells Board

By ISAAC JONES
Chronicle Police Reporter

Two Vernor Station policemen charged with conduct unbecoming an officer went before the official Police Trial Board Tuesday.

Patrolmen James Davis and Robert Lessnau are charged with the Jan. 18 beating of a 32-year-old West Side bar owner, Robert F. Mitchell, of 2081 Virginia Park.

Held in the conference room on the third floor of Police Headquarters at 1388 Seaboard, the trial is expected to end Wednesday night.

The trial was conducted by Nathaniel H. Goldstick, Asst. Corporation Counsel.

Mitchell was cross-examined by Goldstick for one hour and 45 minutes.

The trial opened with the two nervous-looking officers standing with raised hands.

"You are charged with conduct unbecoming to an officer," said Goldstick. "How do you plead?"

"Not guilty," answered the two policemen as they took their seats at the conference table directly across from this reporter.

Goldstick turned to Mitchell: "Is your name Robert Mitchell?"

"Yes sir," replied Mitchell.

"What is your business," asked Goldstick.

"I am a bar owner," replied Mitchell.

"Were you in the vicinity of

Family to Occupy Cherrylawn Home

Mrs. Ethel Watkins Returns To House Despite Threats

By WILLIAM C. MATNEY

Frightened from her newly-purchased home at 12356 Cherrylawn by protesting white residents of the neighborhood and directly intimidated by threats of bombing, Mrs. Ethel Watkins, 30-year-old divorced seamstress, resolutely changed her mind Monday night and decided to occupy her property.

Mrs. Watkins decision came after she had signed an "offer to purchase" with James Del Rio, president of Associated Brokers Investment Co., who handled the original property transaction.

But after a series of conferences with Del Rio, who urged her not to vacate the premises, and with representatives of city agencies, Mrs. Watkins indicated she would "ride it out."

The sudden change in events came after she yielded to the highly organized "non-violent demonstration" by persons living in and around the area in North-West Detroit north of Grand River and west of Eberstadt.

The first large demonstration occurred Monday, Feb. 11. On that evening, Mrs. Watkins left the home under police protection.

Successful gatherings on the next three nights and threats to bomb the home resulted in Mrs. Watkins' action on Friday to sign the "offer to purchase."

This transaction gave Del Rio the authority to repossess the property.

Investigators of the Mayor's Commission on Community Relations disclosed in a "Fact Sheet" progress report that a visiting delegation from the neighborhood contacted Del Rio Friday, offering to purchase the property for \$1,500.

Del Rio reportedly refused the offer. Mrs. Watkins paid \$11,900 for the property.

Thursday evening, an estimated 700 residents of the area attended an emergency meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Baptist Church, Grand River at Burnette.

This meeting reportedly was conducted by outside

LEGISLATORS TO APPEAL

"M" to Play Georgia Despite Opposition

A decision by the Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics at University of Michigan to play a scheduled game in Ann Arbor against the University of Georgia will be appealed to the University Board of Regents, three legislators said here Saturday.

State Senators Basil W. Brown and John B. Swainson and Rep. George E. Edwards appeared before the Board in Control of Michigan's athletics Friday and asked that the game be cancelled because of state laws in Georgia which forbid interracial competition.

After a lengthy meeting, the Board voted to go through with the scheduled contest.

In announcing its decision, the Board said it was convinced that playing the game would improve race relations.

The Board reasoned that it would be "legally, morally and socially unjustifiable to cancel this game."

(Continued on Page 6)

Mother Held in Death of 4 Children

Mrs. Madie Batts, 22-year-old mother of four children, was freed on \$1,000 personal bond Wednesday after pleading innocent to charges of cruelty to children following the death of her family during a fire which swept her home at 3125 Monroe.

Examination was scheduled for Feb. 28 before Recorder's Judge Frank G. Schenmann.

Police said Mrs. Batts, who is estranged from her husband, left the children unattended from 10:30 to 1 a.m.

Mrs. Batts' children range in age from 13 months to six years.

A fifth child, Trina, 2, is in serious condition in Receiving hospital.

Charles Wartman Appointed to Advisory Group

Charles J. Wartman, executive editor of the Michigan Chronicle, has been appointed a member of the newly-formed Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs, it was announced this week by Samuel M. Brownell, superintendent of public schools.

The first meeting for organizational purposes, will be held in Chadey high school Thursday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m.

Also named to the 13 member committee were Ernest T. Marshall, administrative assistant, Guidance, and Placement department; Detroit public school, and Ramon S. Scroggy, customer-relations manager, Michigan Bell Telephone company; George Roming, president of American Motors, is

Ex-Bellhop Dies, Police Probe Lover's Tryst

Police are holding a 26-year-old woman as a police witness following the death Thursday of Alvin Morton, 47, of 1191 W. Philadelphia.

Morton was found dead in the bedroom of an apartment rented by Miss Leisa Barron, of 3788 Second.

Police said Morton, a former bellhop, died shortly after he arrived at the apartment of his former sweetheart.

Miss Leisa said Morton "suddenly collapsed" and she summoned aid. However, Morton was dead on admittance to Receiving hospital.

Morton's 1957 hardtop convertible is being held at Wood-

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"You are charged with conduct unbecoming to an officer," said Goldstick. "How do you plead?"

"Not guilty," answered the two policemen as they took their seats at the conference table directly across from this reporter.

Goldstick turned to Mitchell: "Is your name Robert Mitchell, Jr?"

"Yes sir," replied Mitchell.

"What is your business?" asked Goldstick.

"I am a bar owner," replied Mitchell.

"Were you in the vicinity of West Warren and Williams on

January 18?" asked Goldstick.

"What happened?"

"After I let a passenger out my car, I was stopped by two walking policemen. They rushed toward me with

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"Struck 50 Times" Mitchell Tells Board

(Continued from Page 1)

their nightsticks," related Mitchell.

"The officers pulled both doors of my car open and asked me what I was doing. One of them started poking in my car with his nightstick. When I asked him what he was doing he said, 'Just looking'."

"Did that arouse your resentment because the officers stopped you?" asked Goldstick.

"No sir, they had a right to stop me. I asked the officers to close my doors, because it was cold and I had a severe cold. I pulled my overcoat up around my ears.

"Patrolman Davis told me that he had stopped 'you fellows' before—that I couldn't tell him how to do his work.

"I had given Patrolman Lessnau my driver's license."

Mitchell said at this point Patrolman Davis ordered him to park his car.

"As I started to get out my car the two officers grabbed me by my arms and pulled me out."

"Did either officer tell you why they wanted you out of the car?" asked Goldstick.

"Yes sir, they said they wanted to search me."

"Did you say anything against being searched?" inquired Goldstick.

"No sir, not at that time."

Mitchell said he got out the car, the policemen walked him over a snow bank to the sidewalk.

"They told me to raise my hands over my head," related Mitchell. "After I raised my hands, they frisked me. Then they went into my overcoat pocket and took out some rolls of change which I had picked up at a DSR terminal for my business."

Mitchell said at this point he voiced his objection to being searched in this manner by the policemen.

"I told them that I was a businessman in the neighborhood and that it was embarrassing to be searched on the street, because a crowd had gathered. I told them to take me to the station and search me."

"What did the officers say?" asked Goldstick.

"One of them remarked that I was a numbers man," asserted Mitchell, "and the other officer stated that I might operate a floating crap game."

"The officers became abusive and said they didn't have to take me to the station to search me. They called me smart; they also called me a s.o.b and a nigger."

Mitchell said he was standing on the sidewalk between the two officers:

"They first struck me in the stomach with their fists. Next I got a blow on the back of my head with the nightstick."

"How many times did they strike you?" inquired Goldstick.

"I don't know sir," I replied Mitchell. "I was struck repeatedly; the blows knocked me to the ground and the officers continued to beat me."

"Would you say you were struck several times or how many times?" asked Goldstick again.

"I would estimate about 50 times," replied Mitchell.

Mitchell said the officers knocked him to the ground three times.

"They handcuffed my hands behind me and continued to beat me. I was bruised from head to feet and I was a mass of blood when I reached Receiving Hospital."

Mitchell said he lay face down, bleeding in a doorway, with his hands cuffed before the officers took him to the station.

"Do you recall seeing two other officers come to the scene?" asked Goldstick.

"Yes sir, they came up as I was being led to the scout car."

"They were colored officers, weren't they?" asked Goldstick.

"Yes, they were colored, but at the time I was bleeding so until the officer who spoke to me looked white."

(The officers were Patrolmen James Banks and Jerome Jenkins of Vernor Precinct.)

Mitchell said the colored officers instructed the arresting policemen to remove the handcuffs.

"I told them I preferred to be taken to the station handcuffed as I was. At this point I was struck again, by one of the policemen."

Mitchell said at the police station he was told to stand against a wall.

"One of the officers talked to his superior at the desk. He returned to me and accused me of being drunk and attacking them. When I told him that I didn't drink, the officer remarked, 'a bar owner and he doesn't drink!'"

Mitchell said he was kept in Vernor Station about 20 minutes before he was transferred to Receiving Hospital.

"How severe were your injuries?" inquired Goldstick.

"At the hospital," related Mitchell, "they took ten stitches in my head; I suffered a broken bone in my hand; I had bruise marks across my head, my eyes were blackened; my gums were torn and sore; I lost one tooth and I was bruised from head to foot."

At this point Atty. Julian Rodgers produced pictures of Mitchell's injuries and turned them over to Goldstick.

Mitchell said the officers kicked him in the face and head while he was prostrate.

Other members of the trial board present at the hearing included Commissioner Edward S. Piggins, Senior Inspector Charles O'Brien and Louis Berg.

The attorney for the accused policemen cross-examined Mitchell during the afternoon session. Several witnesses were scheduled to testify Tuesday afternoon.

to the Rev. Hubert N. Robinson, campaign chairman of the St. Antoine YMCA Membership Drive for his civic membership.

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Urban League Rips Housing Restrictions

(The following statement was released by William Price, Community Service Director, Detroit Urban League, in connection with the racial disturbance involving Negro occupancy of property at 12356 Cherrylawn.)

"The Detroit Urban League has maintained a policy of helping to provide the opportunity for all families to purchase or occupy housing, irrespective of its location, consistent with their economic status, needs, and desires.

"Inherent in this policy is the belief that there is no such thing as a white neighborhood or a Negro neighborhood. All families should have as a matter of democratic right the opportunity to select for themselves the neighborhoods in which they desire to live.

"Part of our responsibility as a community social service agency is to attempt to negate those community factors which prohibit the free exercise of this right.

In this instant case we are interested foremost in seeing to it that, this family enjoys the peaceful possession of the home which they have selected, coupled with an opportunity to accept the benefits and responsibilities which attend home ownership.

We feel that the implications to be drawn from the communication alleged to have been circulated in the neighborhood by Gross Realty Co. militates against the implementation of these stated objectives and creates undue hardship upon the new resident family.

"The principle involved in community matters such as this transcend personal or vested commercial interests.

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