

Black presence lags

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quality people on them and that's what we try to do."

When a vacancy exists or is about to exist on a board, Corpening says the vacancy is announced through legal advertisements in newspapers. Interested residents are encouraged to send a letter of application, he says, which are taken into consideration before any appointments are recommended to the aldermen.

But sometimes, Corpening says, he personally contacts a potential appointee to persuade him to take the post.

"Sometimes you have to call up and ask them to serve," he says. And in the case of Watlington, he says, "we had to have a little prayer meeting with him to get him to do it."

Corpening says there hasn't been any deliberate attempt to keep qualified blacks off those boards considered to be the most powerful, such as the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which has 30.6 percent black representation.

"Again, this is another on money," he said. "It costs us \$100,000 a year in the red."

"I'm not saying blacks are dumb," he says, "but you need someone who can handle money."

As for the way the appointment process works now, he says, "It's about as good as you can do. I don't see how we could better it."

Black East Ward Alderman Virginia Newell says one problem the city faces is a shortage of qualified, experienced blacks who have the time to serve on those boards exercising the most influence.

"I see that as a problem," she says. "When we think about those powerful commissions, we just don't have the blacks who can afford to come on those boards. We have just felt that we didn't have the black manpower to serve on those commissions." Another problem is that, once the city decides to properly balance black and white representation on these boards, it takes time.

"Basically, you can't put people off who are on there," Newell says, "and some of them have two terms. I think that as far as we are able to put blacks and women on there, we have done well."

Newell said Corpening had made a "good faith" effort to make black appointments.

Black Northeast Ward Alderman Vivian Burke says the boards are "not as balanced as I feel they should be," but says the situation has improved considerably since 1978, when the black aldermen teamed up with Republican Aldermen Jack Cavanagh and Robert Northington Jr. to press for more black and Republican appointments to the boards.

In 1978, Burke says, the aldermen passed a resolution making it city policy to appoint more minorities to the boards.

Still, there have been problems and she cites the Insurance Advisory Commission as an example.

"From the time I first looked at that particular board, I was told at that time we don't have any minorities which can fill that bill," she says.

"There's a lot of talk about the expert, but I feel the board could have better representation. I'm sure we have black people who work for insurance companies who are qualified."

As for the Tourism Development Authority, she says she moved for a "no consideration" vote when Corpening presented the aldermen with his list of recommended appointments.

"I said, without any hesitation, that there are credible people who can serve on these boards and commissions among blacks, females and other minorities."

The basic problem, she says, isn't the appointment process as much as the lack of will to right the situation.

"I have always felt that in any situation, ... (the difficulty) is the

will to do it."

Black North Ward Alderman Larry Little says, "I don't know of any area where I think the black number is what it ought to be."

But, he adds, "I'm not just concerned with having black faces on a board if they aren't going to do something."

He says there have been some instances where the mayor proposed appointing blacks and he opposed the appointments.

"I think that black is a state of mind," he said. "There are some 'Negroes' on these boards. I'm not hungup on black faces, I'm looking at the mind-set. I think we've put some people on there who are not doing the job, black and white."

Little says the city is afflicted by what he calls the "revolving Negro syndrome," where the same black people serve on various boards -- city and private -- and that as a result, these black board members are stretched too thinly and don't accomplish much.

Simply appointing blacks will not solve the problems facing the city's black and white communities, he says.

"There have been some instances where I feel the white representatives have been more concerned about the needs of black people than the blacks have."

He says the problem of black underrepresentation on city boards isn't simply Corpening's fault.

Black aldermen should look for qualified black appointees from all areas of the city, he says, not just their own wards. "I don't think all blacks should come from the East Ward or the North Ward," he said. "There needs to be some geographical balance."

He cautions that appointing blacks to the various boards won't solve some problems, either. "The boards are legally advisory bodies," he says, "not final arbiters of power. The Board of Aldermen are the final arbiters."

Similarly, Newell says the mayor knows what the aldermen will allow and won't allow.

"If the mayor hasn't done what we wanted him to do, we haven't approved his appointment," she says. "Now, the

mayor will generally use some method to get blacks. After we let him know that we meant business, he has been pretty fair about getting blacks on these boards.

"I don't think he had much choice," she says. "I think it (refusing to approve his appointments) has happened about twice since we have been down there. He's not going to let it happen much."

The basic solution to the problem of low representation, she says, is two-fold. First, the city needs to make a greater effort to use the pool of black expertise which already is available.

Second, she says, is that the black community needs to create more economic opportunities which would bring highly-qualified blacks into Winston-Salem -- increasing the pool of potential black appointees.

"It's on those commissions where you gain expertise," she says, "and if you don't serve on those commissions, you don't get expertise to bring to the black community."

Blacks have always been consumers, she notes, but they have sufficient resources now to produce and market goods and services, as well. She says the city needs a black savings and loan institution to help lure some of the nation's best trained and educated blacks to the area. When that happens, finding qualified blacks with the time to serve on city boards should be less difficult.

"I think the problems we as blacks face, we have to initiate the solutions ourselves. I don't think we should look to whites to solve our problems for us."

Listed below are the city-appointed boards and commissions, their total number of members in parentheses and their percentage of black representation as of early October 1984:

- Board of Alcoholic Control (3 members) -- 33.3 percent.
- Firemen's Relief Fund (5 members) -- 20 percent.
- Cable Advisory Committee (15 members) -- 40 percent.
- Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee (9 members) -- 33.3 percent.
- City-County Planning Board (9 members, city appointed 5, including 1 black) -- 22.2 percent.
- Convention Center-Coliseum Commission (11 members) -- 27.1 percent.
- Fairgrounds Commission (9 members) -- 22.2 percent.
- City-County Emergency Management Advisory Council (12 members, city appointed six, including two black males) -- 25 percent.
- Tourism Development Authority (9 members) -- 22.2 percent.
- Historic District Commission (5 members) -- 0.0 percent.
- Historic Properties Commission (9 members) -- 22.2 percent.
- Housing Task Force (12 members) -- 50 percent.
- Insurance Advisory Committee (8 members) -- 8.3 percent.
- Recreation and Parks Commission (10 members) -- 30 percent.
- Sports Commission (7 members) -- 42.7 percent.
- City-County Utility Commission (11 members) -- 18 percent.
- Development Advisory Commission (7 members) -- 28.4 percent.
- City Retirement Commission (10 members, city appointed 2 white males and 1 black male) -- 10 percent.
- Winston-Salem Transit Authority (8 members) -- 25 percent.
- City-County Transportation Advisory Committee (12 members, city appointed 1 black female, 1 white male and 1 white female) -- 16.6 percent.
- Zoning Board of Adjustments (13 members) -- 30.6 percent black.
- Human Relations Commission (21 members, including 7 white males, 3 black males, 5 white females, 5 black females and 1 Greek male) -- 38 percent.
- Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee (9 members) -- 33.3 percent.

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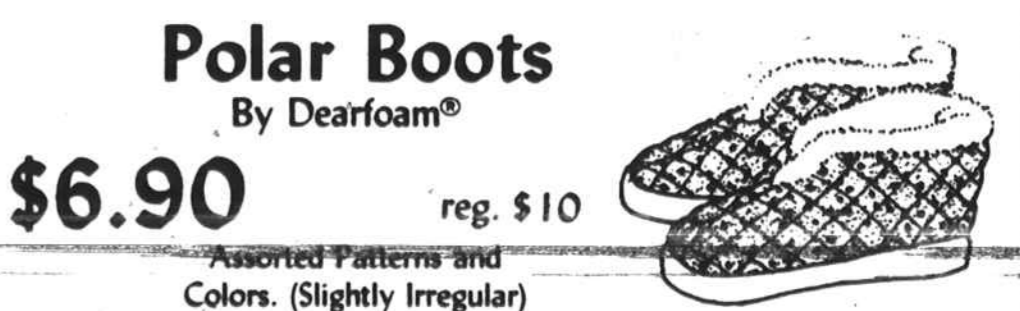
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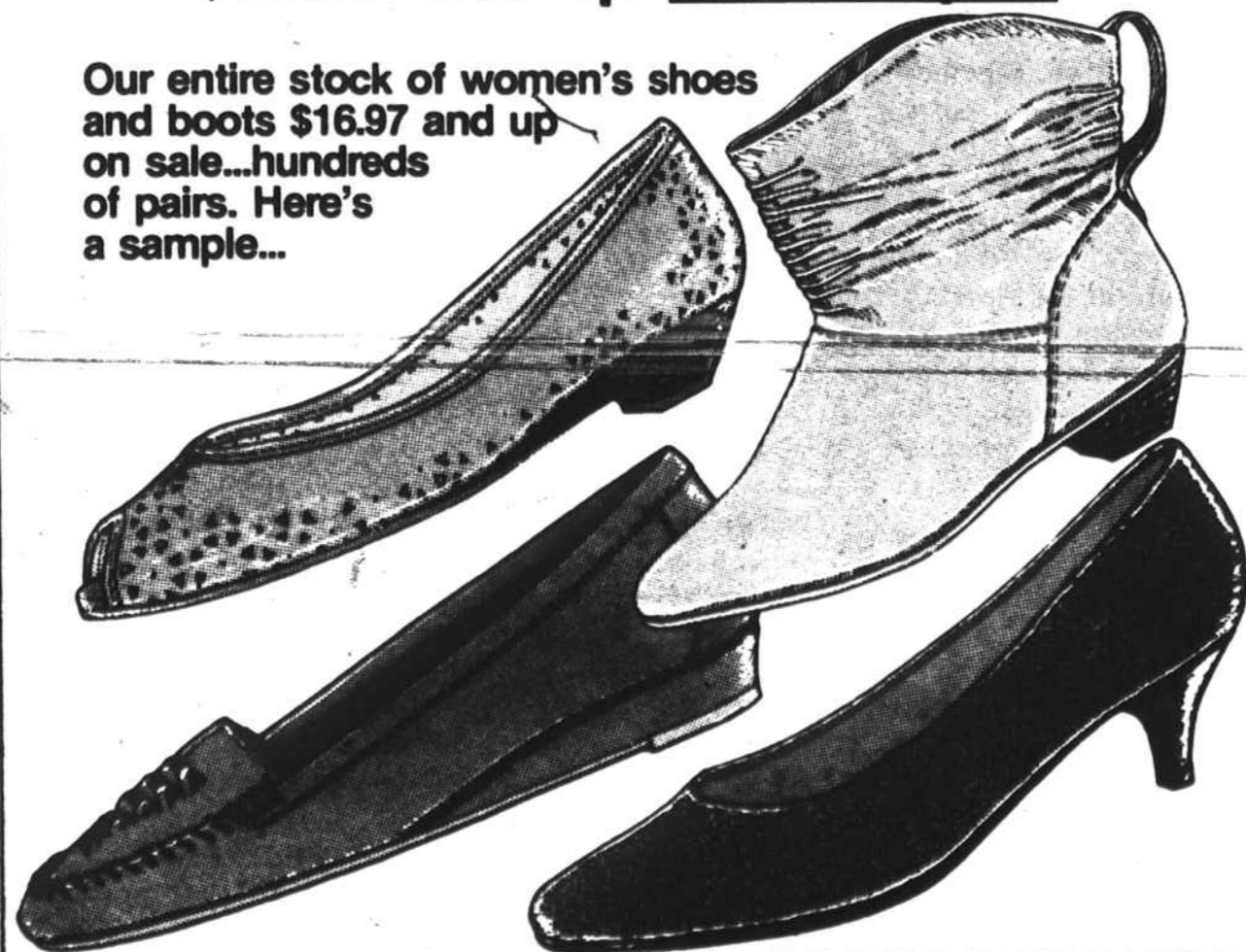
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