

## Supporters Rally for Womble

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campaign.

"We don't have to create Larry Womble," he said. Little said because of Womble's name recognition, the campaign will "have a broad base of support."

However, Little said, because of Womble's defeat in the aldermanic race, "we've learned something and I think we're prepared." The campaign won't "take anything for granted."

Womble was publicly pilloried for a letter he wrote earlier this year to the All-American City officials that detailed the city's shortcomings.

His supporters felt he told the truth, while his detractors blamed him for the city being denied the All-American City designation.

The controversy may have cost him the aldermanic election, which Womble lost by just over four percentage points.

North Ward Alderman Nelson Malloy Jr., who was also at the news conference, said that if Womble wins the election, he shouldn't have to change his political style to be an effective legislator.

"I don't think he'll have to change anything," he said.

Malloy, who will serve on Womble's issues committee, described the former alderman as "hardworking, dedicated and sincere, and very truthful."

"Larry has always demonstrated his ability to represent all the people," he said.

He called Womble's November defeat an "act of fate."

"One door was closed and a bigger one was opened for him," he said.

County Commissioner Earline Parmon said that because Womble does things differently doesn't mean that it's bad.

People may not agree with his "aggressive stand," Parmon said. She felt, however, that it was his approach to issues that made him "so effective on the board."

Rep. Warren C. "Pete" Oldham, the county's other African-American state legislator, who represents the 65th District and who was not at the news conference, pointed out that there's a difference in serving on the board of alderman and serving in the General Assembly.

"You have to expand your thinking," he said. Womble, he said, may have already adjusted to that.

"I think he would make a very

good representative," former East Ward Alderman Virginia Newell said. "I don't see how he can lose."

Charles Wallschleger, chairman of the Republican Party, said a GOP candidate will challenge Womble.

"We will certainly have somebody in the race," he said. He declined to say who the person would be, or when he will announce. "I hope the Democrats run somebody against him," he added.

Wallschleger praised Kennedy and said she will be missed.

To political insiders, Womble's announcement on the heels of Kennedy's decision was apparently no surprise.

Little said that it was well known that Kennedy didn't want to run in 1992.

Little intimated last month that he and other Womble supporters had something in store for the former alderman.

Womble said his retirement from the school system will allow him to have more time, if elected, to devote to his legislative duties.

"I have the energy. . . . I have the interest and the dedication," he said.



Larry Womble (seated in middle) is surrounded by supporters last week as the former alderman announced that he would run for a seat in the N.C. General Assembly. Womble will run in the 67th District that will become vacant when Rep. Annie Brown Kennedy retires after her current term expires in December.

## Liberian Organization Elects New President

The president of the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont, Mathu H. Gibson, witnessed his campaign pledge of two years ago become a reality when a new president to succeed him, William P. Ross, was elected on Dec. 5.

Gibson had pledged to serve only one term and step down to allow other members within the community to step up to the plate and assume the leadership, so as to ensure that all Liberians duly qualified under the organization's constitution receive an opportunity to serve.

Despite a resolution from the people to succeed himself, he respectfully maintained his grounds. James Y. Hunder Sr., executive vice president and former administrative vice president of the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA), former president of the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont, was narrowly defeated by Ross, who received the endorsement of Gibson.

Gibson praised Hunder for being the first president and one of the founders of the organization, coupled with the strong coalition they formulated over the last two years which has further strengthened the organization.

However, he said, it would be counter productive to his campaign pledge and toward the enhancement of ensuring new leadership for the organization if he didn't endorse Ross and, as he put it, "no single person is indispensable to any organization."

Dempster P. Mason also defeated Clavenda Clarke as vice president.

After the election, Gibson embraced both Hunder and Ross as he called for unity, dedication and commitment toward not only our organization, but also to our country.

Hunder strongly pledged to work harder than ever before to ensure the continuity of a strong organization. Hunder further stated that his entrance into the race was not driven by greed nor his lust for power, but it was due to the fear which many members shared with him that Ross was not the right man for the job and that the organization may fail under Ross's administration.

Ross thanked the people and promised to work alongside all members within the community by saying "let the exile rejoice."

The election results are as follows: William P. Ross, president; Dempster P. Mason, vice president; Velma Hoff, general secretary; Justine Hunter, assistant general secretary; Kweta Dolo, financial secretary; Yelda Bartu, Treasurer; Angie Johnson, social secretary; Donald MacThompson, parliamentarian; Romeo K. Johnson, public relations officer; Lerine Gibson, program and planning chairman; and Nancy Woazeah, chaplain.

The installation ceremonies are scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 22. The venue and time will be announced later.

## Jackson Speaks Out On Charge

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The NAACP entered the Michael Jackson fray, saying the singer accused of child molestation had been victimized by the news media.

Jackson, believed to be secluded at his Neverland ranch, made a statement yesterday.

The NAACP also held news conference to discuss "the media bashing of entertainer Michael Jackson" and other prominent blacks. Shannon F. Reeves, West Coast Region Director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said in a news release.

Reeves did not answer a request for further comment made through her publicist.

Jackson's attorney, Johnny Cochran Jr., said last week that the singer would break his weeks-old silence with a statement about the allegations against him.

Jackson is accused of sexually molesting a 13-year-old accused boy whom he had befriended. Jackson has denied the allegations through his representa-

tives, and has not been charged with a crime.

He has not publicly discussed the allegations except to deny them on an audio tape that was released when he canceled his world tour Nov. 12.

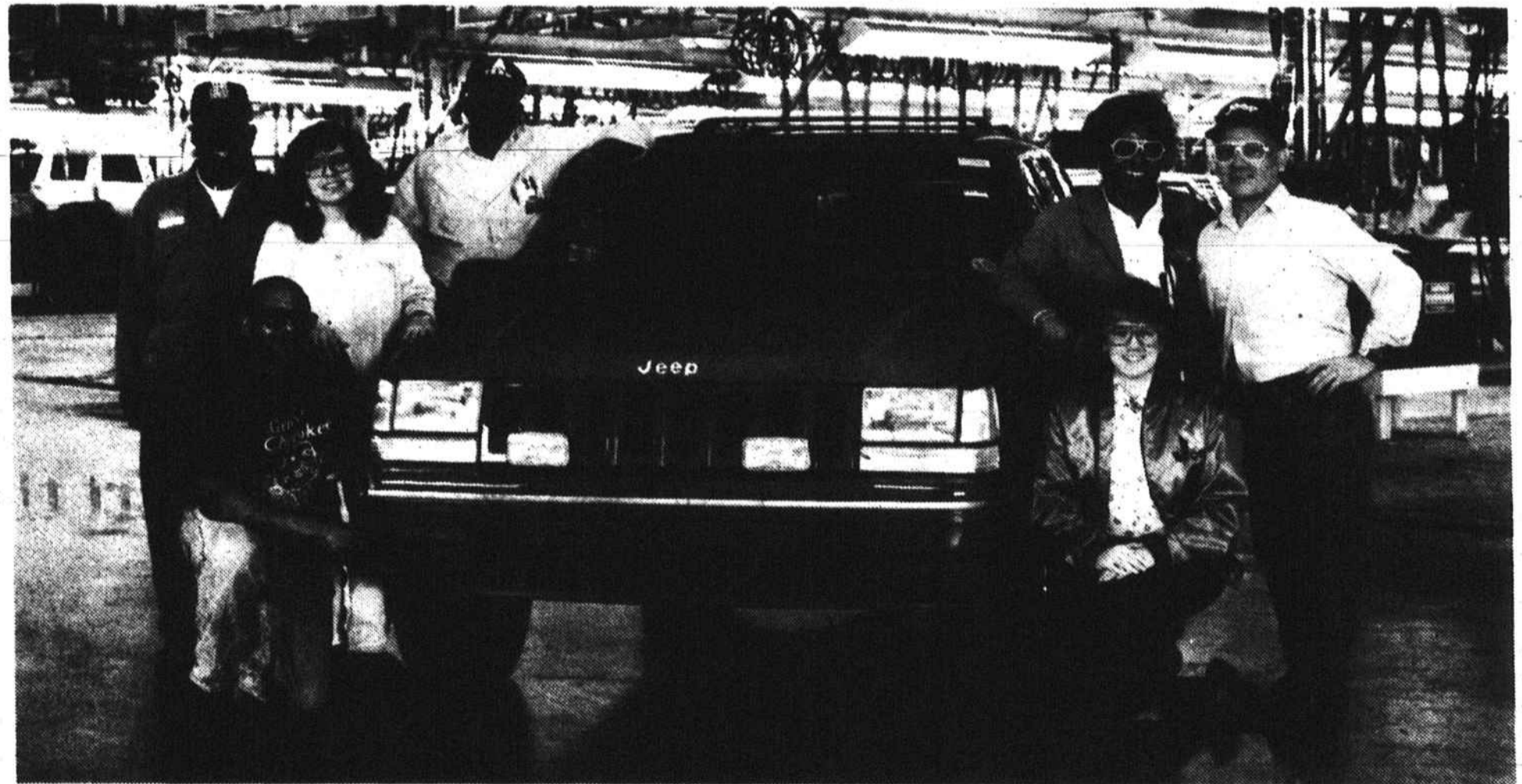
Soon after releasing the statement in Mexico City, Jackson went to Europe, where he reportedly was treated for an addiction to painkillers.

He returned to Southern California on Dec. 10.

Statements by former Jackson employees, his relatives and depositions taken by attorneys in the case has kept the Jackson story in the news.

Jackson's deposition in a civil suit filed on the boy's behalf is scheduled for Jan. 18; trial is scheduled for March 21.

Activities around Jackson's ranch in Santa Barbara County seemed routine Sunday, other than the departure of a chimpanzee who rode out of the compound in a pickup with two men.



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