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The Charlotte Post

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THE AWARD-WINNING "VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY"

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Shoney's, Inc. To Face Charges Of Racial Bias

Washington, D.C. --- The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund is filing a major class action employment discrimination suit against Shoney's, Inc. this week. Shoney's, Inc. is a significant employer in the food service industry with outlets in 30 states. System-wide sales for Shoney's, Inc. for fiscal year 1988 exceed \$1.4 billion.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida in Pensacola, Fla., charges Shoney's with a policy of "classic illegal class-wide disparate treatment" of black people and "maintaining a hostile, racist work environment."

The suit contends that the policy "limits the employment op-

portunities of blacks in ... job selections (initial hire, assignments, and promotions) and terminations," and that it "is specifically calculated to deny members of the black race equal treatment and opportunities."

The suit also charges Shoney's with "retaliating against (white) employees who refuse to implement or who oppose the Defendants' illegal employment policies or practices."

"This is a case of national importance because the employer is a large and prominent corporation which employs a great number of people," said Julius Chambers, Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, "As far as I know, this is the largest employment discrimination class action which private attorneys have brought against a private company. In order to assure effective representation of all possible victims of Shoney's discrimination, LDF is committing substantial resources to the lit-

gation and associating experienced civil rights lawyers in Florida, California and Tennessee." Chambers added that "it is important that several white former supervisors at Shoney's have been willing to protest the discriminatory practices and to join this lawsuit."

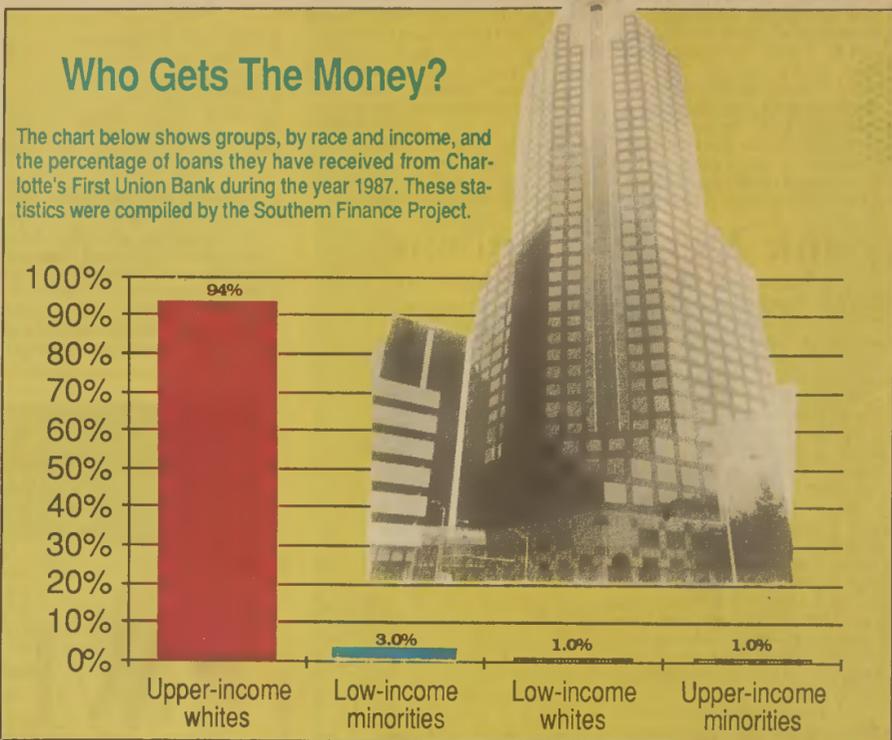
The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund has established a toll free number, 1-800-950-1556, for persons to call who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or who believe they have witnessed such illegal acts. This toll-free number may be called 24 hours a day. Callers to the 800 number will reach the office of Thomas A. Warren, local counsel in Tallahassee. This information will be treated confidentially.

The lawsuit seeks to end the alleged discriminatory and retaliatory practices, expand job hiring and promotional opportunities for blacks, obtain mon-

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Chambers



NAACP Seeks Investigation

Fatal Shootings Elicit Concern, Outrage From Black Community

By HERB WHITE
 Post Staff Writer

Citing the concerns of Charlotte's African-American community, the president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP branch wants the N.C. and U.S. attorneys general to investigate two recent fatal shootings by Charlotte police.

The victims, Louis Columbus Relford III and Jake King, both black, were unarmed. The officers who shot them were white.

In letters dated April 2, Mary Clarke, president of the local chapter asked N.C. Attorney General Lacy Thornburg and U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh to conduct investigations of the police to determine if the suspects' civil rights were violated. The letters were mailed Monday.

"The black community is fearful that a pattern of police violation of the civil rights of black suspects is emerging," Clarke wrote.

King's shooting Saturday

touched off a public outcry in the Cherry neighborhood where he was a resident. Officer Scott Pope shot King, 33, twice while responding to a call at King's home at 1509 Luther Street. Brenda King, the victim's sister, told authorities she was reading in her bedroom when Jake King hit her over the head with a glass.

Witnesses said King was shot as he walked down the steps with his hands over his head. Police found no weapon on King.

On January 14, Relford, 24, was warned to keep his hands up by officer Barry Goodson, police said. According to police, the suspect was described as carrying a weapon as Relford was chased from the scene of a robbery.



Clarke

A Mecklenburg County assistant district attorney ruled the shooting was justified because Relford appeared to reach into his car, giving Goodson reason to suspect his life was in danger. Relford was unarmed, but police found two knives and cash from the robbery in his car.

"In both instances white officers fired on unarmed blacks (sic) suspects without apparent provocation," Clarke said.

Charlotte police are continuing its investigation while keeping details of the King shooting under wraps.

"We have not established what happened just prior to the shooting because there are several witnesses whose versions are in conflict," said Chief Sam Killman at a Monday press conference. He did not answer reporters' questions about the shooting.

In addition to the investigation, police are scheduled to meet with Cherry residents tonight to discuss the shooting.

Groups Move To Prove Bank Discrimination, Block Merger

By HERB WHITE
 Post Staff Writer

Charlotte-based banks haven't been dealing fairly with minorities when it comes to loaning money, alleges Jane Burts of the Charlotte Organizing Project. But that doesn't mean they will get away with it for long.

Burts, an organizer with CHOP, one of three neighborhood groups challenging First Union's proposed merger with Florida National Bank, said local institutions have a history of taking deposits from minorities but not extending services to their communities.

"It's clear the major banks are not loaning money to minority neighborhoods," she said.

Last week, community organizations held public discussions of First Union's alleged indifference to extending loans to low-income neighborhoods. Ed Crutchfield, First Union's president, was in attendance to listen

to complaints.

At stake is First Union's plan to acquire Florida National, which must be approved by the U.S. Comptroller of Currency. Usually such mergers have met little resistance, but community organizations have been bolstered by a recent ruling that has put financial institutions on notice.

The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), a federal initiative intended to prevent red-lining by banks, was considered by many community activists to be a law without teeth. Red-lining is a practice in which banks refuse loans or other services to low-income neighborhoods.

Last month, the federal government put bite into the CRA by blocking the merger of Continental Bank Corp. of Illinois and Grand Canyon State Bank of Scottsdale, Az. The ruling, the first to go against a bank merger, was based on the govern-

ment's assertion that Continental failed to deal equitably with minority and low-income communities.

For First Union to merge with Florida National, it must meet the same criteria, which makes First Union an inviting target. Another is NCNB, which wants to buy Atlanta-based C&S bank for \$2 billion.

"The best time to challenge a bank is when it's getting ready to merge," Burts said. "It gives us more leverage because they want to look good to the regulators."

First Union stands by its record, said Connie Fuller, the company's Vice President of Media Relations.

"Our regulators cited our CRA compliance to be exemplary. According to the CRA, we're in compliance," she said.

The city's major banks are

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Eastern Strike Puts Former Worker On Hold

By M.L. LANEY
 Special To The Post

Naomi Jackson, a non-unionized Eastern Airlines reservationist, has found herself sidelined by the machinists' and pilots' strike at the airlines.

A 22-year veteran of the company, Jackson lost her job March 10, when, contrary to the company's assurances, all 641 employees of the reservations center were laid off.

The move has for now blocked Jackson's long planned dream of home ownership. Just as she was about to sign papers for her new home the strike came up and this mother of three says everything's on hold. "I had hoped to be all moved in to my new house by now. This situation has changed all of that," says Jackson.

For the present, she's finding

little in the job market that would suit her financial needs. Many of Eastern's unionized workers were taking home salaries between \$65,000 to \$100,000 and even though Jackson's salary was not that high, she says the job market has only offered employment in the \$12,000 range so far.

To make matters worse, because of North Carolina labor laws, Jackson is not eligible for unemployment benefits.

Many under these circumstances would feel justified in shedding bitter tears, but Jackson is not crying.

Relating the words of an old blues song, she says, "Crying won't help you. Crying won't do you no good. When the levee breaks you just have to move on."

"I haven't given up on going back to Eastern and my career."



Jackson

But I do agree with the expressed remarks of many of my fellow workers, "enough is enough!"

Jackson recalls the recent history of the airline company, saying, "At first, it was just like a big family. We all knew one

another's families. The supervisors were friendly and more

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Gethsemane Student Program Wins Award

Special To The Post

Washington, D.C. --- Ninth District congressman Alex McMillan paid tribute Wednesday to Charlotte's Rev. George Battle, calling him a man of "great vision and humanity." Battle was in Washington to receive one of three national awards given by the National Community Development Association.

Rev. Battle was honored by the NCDA for founding the successful Gethsemane Student Enrichment Program. The after-school and summer program currently helps 450 low-income students reach their full potential in academic and personal pursuits. It also seeks parental involvement in steering youngsters toward higher grades and goals.

One such student, Gary Capers, stood beside Rev. Battle and Congressman McMillan, Wednesday before more than 300 NCDA delegates from across the country. Gary won the heart of the audience by telling them that the Gethsemane program has improved his grades and kept him "out of the principal's office." Gary was joined on the podium by his mother and Gethsemane's program director, Adela Hunt.

another's families. The supervisors were friendly and more

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Drug Abuse Conference

Leaders from North Carolina's largest cities will meet in Charlotte, April 20-22 to discuss drug-related problems, share experiences and develop a better understanding of the relationships among enforcement, education, prevention and treatment.

Co-sponsored by Charlotte Mayor Sue Myrick and Governor Jim Martin, the conference will focus attention on drug abuse problems in the state and specifically in the large urban areas.

"Illegal drugs abuse and its tragic consequences have become the most serious problem

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Legislators: No To Fayetteville's Slave Market

RALEIGH (AP) --- Holding a ceremonial session of the General Assembly this month at a former slave auction site in Fayetteville is inappropriate, say black state legislators who plan to boycott the session.

"It's a sensitivity issue," Rep. H.M. "Mickey" Michaux, D-Durham, said last Friday. "To go back to the slave market reminds us of an ugly past. We

want to look to the future." The Legislative Black Caucus voted unanimously last Wednesday to boycott the April 13 session, he said. Black legislators from Fayetteville were permitted to abstain so they would not be put in a difficult position, said Michaux, chairman of the caucus.

The session will commemorate the 200th anniversary of North Carolina's ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Delegates to a constitutional convention met to ratify the document Nov. 21, 1789, in Fayetteville, one of several towns that served as the state capital in colonial times.

Fire destroyed the State House, where the constitutional convention was held, in 1831. It was replaced by the Market House, which still stands.

The building is too small to hold the Legislature, so lawmakers are scheduled to meet on the grounds around the Market House.

Rep. Dan Blue, former chairman of the Black Caucus, said black legislators have no quarrel with celebrating North Carolina's ratification of the Constitution. But the Market House "is the wrong symbol from which to talk about it," said Blue, D-Wake.



Blue

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