

# Board Vote Puts System At Odds

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had been handled in the past. When asked his opinion at the board meeting last week, Relic agreed with Campbell and Hogewood concerning denying the warehouse workers a hearing before the board. He said then, "The path the complaint ultimately took was EEOC. Whatever was being done in the internal EEO process then changed. Once the EEOC decision was made then that indeed became binding upon us. It brought us to the decision of waiting for EEOC." Later, it was learned that Relic disregarded this stance in favor of an opposite one in another similar case; this one involving a white employee. The white CMS employee has a case being reviewed by both the EEO office and the EEOC and in this instance Relic has advised that the internal investigation proceed. Relic has not responded to attempts to have him clarify his position on this matter. Neither Hogewood or Campbell had discussed with Johnson the facts surrounding the warehouse workers complaints or the EEO policies before making the decision to deny the employees a hearing. They also clouded the facts in presentation to the school board members last week. First, it was never clearly related to the board members that CMS EEO policy does not prohibit complainants from going

outside the internal process to have grievances heard by the EEOC. Secondly, Hogewood, Campbell and Relic, throughout the meeting, referred to the warehouse employees as three persons. In fact there are eleven complainants in this issue. Also, Campbell told board members if they decided to hear the case of the warehouse workers, they would then have to engage in a fact-finding mission. "There is no record of the complaints," Campbell related to the board. However, the facts surrounding the issue had been uncovered and documented by the school's EEO office during an internal investigation held between February and June 1988. Fourth, Hogewood repeatedly told board members that no decision had been reached from the internal investigation, when, in fact, a decision had been reached by the school system's EEO office. The decision cited racial discrimination. Recommendations for rectifying the situation were forwarded to the superintendent and the warehouse employees' supervisor in June 1988. The recommendations were never acted upon. School board member Griffin who, along with George Battle and Joe Martin, voted to hear the employees complaints said that Hogewood's, Campbell's and Relic's double talk and conflict-

ing statements all point to overt, institutional discrimination. "Our responsibility is to hear truth," Griffin said, "not legal mumble jumble. We are here to make fair, equitable decision regarding employment practices." Griffin said the warehouse workers were blamed for following the system and Hogewood and Campbell offered "flimsy excuses" for not hearing the issue. "It's denial, denial, denial, excuse, excuse, excuse," said Griffin. Billy Roddey, one of the complaining warehouse employees says Campbell "misconstrued the case" before the board. "He continued to say we were trying to appeal the EEOC decision back to the school board," pointed out Roddey, "that was not the case. We were appealing the inaction of the school system concerning the discrimination charges." Roddey, who has been employed with CMS for five years, said he initially felt he and his co-workers would be treated fairly by the system and the board. Now he admits to being puzzled as to the system's reaction. Roddey understands that his case was the first case handled in this manner. "They made an exception of our case and we like to know why," he said. Roddey has written another letter to Hogewood requesting a second appeal before the board.

In the letter the black warehouse employees state that they want to "clear up the misunderstanding that was allowed to develop." Roddey now says, "We intend to see this thing resolved. We intend to stick it out." "We are seeking justice. We know that's a hard job for blacks. While our counterparts (whites) get (justice) freely, we have to start a commotion to get our rights." Hogewood said Tuesday that he does not know the "precise status" of the employees' complaint. "I have consulted with the superintendent and the matter has not been concluded."

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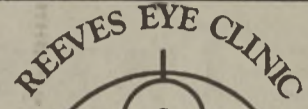
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## Martin Backs Appeal Of Black Workers

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He recommended that the complainants work through the school system's channels to resolve the case. In addition, Hogewood said schools' attorney Hugh Campbell advised him that the complaint had not been concluded by EEOC, thus voiding the school board's role. Martin didn't agree with that assessment, saying the board should be responsible for hearing an appeal and determining the outcome.

"With the board's vote putting the worker's appeal on hold, Martin said there is little

chance for a reprieve. "They'll have to come up with something that causes people to change their minds," he said. "You can't make the board have an appeal if it votes not to." Although six white board members voted to uphold Hogewood's decision, Martin said that doesn't translate into insensibility of discrimination in the school system. "I don't think that's true," he said. "I don't think that Ashley

Hogewood... (or anyone else) is insensitive. On the other hand, I don't think this makes the three of us more sensitive."

The board's decision, Martin asserted, is a case of people having differing views of a difficult subject.

"Reasonable people can look at a set of circumstances and come up with a different conclusion," he said. "I honestly think the majority thought the case was concluded by EEOC."

## South African Vendors

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the right to try their hand at economic development without government interference.

"If we are given a right to earn a living, that would give us an economic base to compete with our white counterparts," he said.

As blacks become more empowered economically, the day will come when the government can't deny their push for human and civil rights. "A master and slave cannot negotiate to decide when to free the slave," Mavundla said. "Having an economic base will consolidate the power of the black community."

## Black Caucus Meets Sunday

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