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IV DISTRICT CANDIDATES

City's largest black councilmanic district race presents interesting and new possibilities

It is the largest black councilmanic district with the largest number of black voters.

The major fourth district political candidates are the two incumbents, Michael Mitchell and Kweisi Mfume.

The newcomers to the race whom political experts believe will get one of the three seats are Bobby Cheeks and Agnes Welch.

Mrs. Welch embraces Victorine Q. Adams, as the incumbent and Cheeks has been head of the Welfare Rights Organization for eight years and has been very outspoken.

The majority of the candidate all agree unemployment and education are the primary issues.

Willa Bland

"This 1983 election provides citizens of the fourth district the opportunity to select leaders who can help them take charge of this district, their own space, develop their own agenda for the future and mark out the parameters within which they are willing to work.

"If elected, I will work to raise the consciousness level of our citizens and mobilize them at all levels and across all age groups so that they will have a vested interest in improving the quality of life for all."

Mrs. Bland, 58-year-old director of Flair Studio and fashion consultant said the most critical issues facing the City Council are jobs, business, health, education crime, the elderly, rehabilitation of neighborhoods."

When speaking of education, she believes there should be an elected school board, community support at all levels, restore teacher aides, and enhance volunteer programs.

Bobby Cheeks

Bobby Cheeks has been head of the Welfare Rights organization for the last eight years and says he has directly helped 15,642 people in need from all over the city. Indirectly, he has helped or given aid to 153,128 people in Baltimore.

Cheeks says he "works for everyone's welfare" and is "unbought and unbossed."

Cheek is the chairperson of Committee to Save The Emergency Services Center, chairperson, Peoples Campaign For Rent Control. He organized the Public Housing Tenants Rent Strike.

He is a member of the board for Planning Parenthood, Echo House Foundation, James McHenry Recreation Advisory Committee, NAACP, Black United Fund.

Cheeks says he has received endorsements from The Baptist Ministers Alliance, The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, AFL-CIO and Union 1199E.

He is the father of six children and was born in 1934 on Greenwillow Street and has lived on Myrtle Avenue, Biddle Street, Linden Avenue. He has been a resident of West Baltimore for many years and says he understands its needs.

Frank Conaway

"The overriding issue in the contest for the 4th district council seats is the ineffectiveness of the district's council representatives. With the retirement of Councilwoman Adams, the district's residents now have articulate but mostly ineffective representatives.

Conaway says, "The prime measures of the councilmanic effectiveness are: The ability to garner majority support for your legislative initiatives and the ability to deliver needed constituent services.

"The current incumbents exhibit neither quality. Without the ability to produce articulation is reduced to rhetoric.

"Rhetorical oration is no substitute for the geniune need to provide greater employment opportunities through aggressive economic development; or for the need to improve the performance of our education system or to reduce drug traffic, as a means of reducing crime.

"Fourth district residents are affected by unemployment and under-employment more than the residents of any other district. Greater efforts to develop employment opportunies for district residents must be made.

If elected to the City Council, Conaway says he would strive to achieve establishment of an effective working relationship with my fellow councilpersons, in order to assure passage of my legislative initiatives.

"Establishment and maintenance of open channels of communications with the mayor's office and executive agency heads, in order to assure my constituents receive needed services."

"Greater economic development and job creation in the Pennsylvania Avenue retail district and the Park Circle Enterprise Zone . . .

His goal for education is "Secure greater funding for the public school system by lobbying my former House of Delegates colleagues for positive changes in the state funding formula, and by reducing the administrative overhead for the operation of the school system.

"Reduce class sizes and amend the city charter to increase the size of the school board, and to add requirements for the appointment of representatives from specific segments of the community . . ."

When speaking on crime, Conaway stated, "Institution of an effective anti-drug education campaign to be conducted in both the schools and the neighborhoods.

"Institution on stricter enforcement of drug distribution laws and creation of greater citizen involvement in the prevention and reporting of criminal activities."

Arlene Fisher

"It is with a great sense of urgency that I seek an office in the City Council. I beleive that by working in the City Council full time and year round, elected representatives can have a substantial impact upon improving the quality of life for the people of Baltimore City.

Ms. Fisher talked about housing, jobs and education. She said, "I would concentrate of legislation and funding which would make decent and affordable housing available for all citizens of Baltimore City, particularly, low to moderate income persons. Where possible, programs should be developed to assist persons in becoming homeowners not just renters.

"I will support legislation to make lead paint detection a housing code and not simply a health code violation.

"Economic development should go hand in hand with providing jobs. Corporations and developers financed with municipal bonds and/or city monies should be encouraged to hire city residents and to utilize minority contractors and sub contractors.

"I will support legislation for a more equitable state funding formula for Baltimore City. This formula should take into account the fact that the higher degree of poverty in Baltimore City and its lesser tax base, make it impossible for the city to fund education at a level comparable to other subdivisions in the state of Maryland.

"I will also support legislation to reduce sizes in public schools." Ms. Fisher is the executive director of Sandtown Winchester Improvement Association, Inc. She is a social workers for the Department of Social Services and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

She is a graduate of Morgan State University and received her masters degree in administration and community organization from the University of Louisville.

Andrea G. McKoy

Ms. McKoy, a 33-year-old former employee at the Constant Care Community Health Center was not available for comment at AFRO presstime.

Michael Mitchell*

"For the past eight years I have been your voice in the City Council. I have been able to correct many problems that concerned you. However, there is still much more to be done. I will keep fighting for the human dignity we all seek for the citizens of the fourth district and the city of Baltimore."

Mitchell is a Civil Rights Lawyer and a NAACP freedom fighter. He sponsored legislation creating $100 million dollar mortgage fund which has provided home ownership for moderate and low income citizens.

He has sponsored legislation creating Park Circle Industrial Park to provide jobs. He fought for clean alleys and rat control, more foot partolmen in the neighborhoods.

Also, legislation which provided shelter for the city's homeless and improvement of Lafayette Market and Lafayette Square.

Kweisi Mfume*

For the last four years I have had the distinct honor of serving as your representative in the Baltimore City Council.

"During that time over $50 million dollars of federal and local funds have come into West Baltimore for housing, business development, education, street improvements, recreational facilities, crime prevention and beautification projects. I want to continue fighting for even more.

"Your support will go a long way in helping to assure a peoples victory in the September 13th election. Together we can see to it that our schools, our churches and neighborhoods are never ignored again.

Among legislation introduced and enacted by Mfume were Education-Co-authored legislation to place a limit on class size in city schools thereby reducing teather ratios.

Unemployment-Co-authored and passed a resolution of the council calling on the state to assume some liability for hardships caused because of a late unemployment check.

Redistricting — Fought for and won a new 10 year redistricting plan for Baltimore City which allows for greater political representation for black people.

Other legislation introduced and enacted by Mfume include property tax, labor, cable TV, police, drug abuse, rent control, lead paint, libraries, pensions, animal rights and zoning.

Mfume is a member of Brown's Memorial Baptist Church and a graduate of Morgan State University.

Daki Napata

Napata is 31 and says as a City Council member, he will fight for full and adequate employment for the fourth district and Baltimore City.

Also, better relief benefits for the underemployed and unemployed. Effective action programs to fight crime and drug programs will be a number one priority.

Napata would also like to see better housing, health and general services for senior citizens. Also, an elected school board superintendent and smaller classrooms.

He is a member of the NAACP, Outreach Ministry Union Baptist Church, Peace Justice and Human Rights Activist.

Rev. Aaron Powell

"This is the answer to the problem of crime, give then something to do. We have youth all over the country standing on corners who could be working if they had a skill," says Rev. Powell, 66-year-old candidate for fourth district City Council.

Rev. Powell says he is also concerned about the city school system. He is the associate minister at Providence Inspirational Baptist Church.

If elected to serve on the City Council, he says the City Council is "very powerful" but is not doing a lot of things that should be done in the city.

Jacqueline Proctor

Ms. Proctor is one of the youngest candidates in the fourth district. She is a 29-year-old computer school student and was also not available at AFRO presstime.

Rev. Willie E. Ray

Rev. Willie E. Ray, 34, is pastor of New Promiseland Community Church. Her says the main issue is economic development. For years. Rev. Ray has been working with inner city youth and is the founder of Redeemer's Palace.

Agnes Welch

Mrs. Welch has 30 years of community service and is considered a serious challenger. In the 1979 Democratic primary, she finished a strong fifth in a field of nine.

Mrs. Welch is vice president of Lutheran Hospital Board of Governors and president of Vanguard Political Organization. She obtained funding and spearheaded the building of a 203 unit senior citizen high rise.

Mrs. Welch is the founder of the Rosemont Edmondson Chapter of the American Cancer Society and obtained funding for summer youth employment.

She is also a member of St. Edward Day Care Board, Knights of St. Peter Claver Auxiliary, Baltimore City Fuel Fund and Metro Democrats, Inc.

William Whetstone

Whetstone, 23, says he is expressing interest in the City Council because he has a history of involvement in government and legal responsibilities, because of his desire to help achieve public task for the good of the people.

Whetstone served as legislative aid for Del. Margaret H. Murphy and is a member of the Five In Five Democratic Organization. If elected City Councilman, Whetstone wants to provide health care to the poor, housing to the homeless and relief to the unemployed.

Also, to inform community leaders, on a timely basis of vital issues, by holding meetings and public forums. Also, to provide work incentive programs for the areas that are most economically depressed and to employ the combined resources of the citizens and the police department in placing foot patrolman in the areas that are devastated heavist by street crime."

At AFRO presstime Charles P. Stokes Jr., was not available for comment.

Ike Dixon

Ike Dixon has 16 years of legislative experience. He has served as vice chairman of Baltimore City Delegation and Governor's Task Force on Violence and Extremism. He has been an insurance broker realtor for over 20 years.

Dixon saw 10 years efforts rewarded recently, when city workers removed the street signs on Harbor City Boulevard downtown and replace them with signs that read Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

He said, "I've been trying for 10 years in the legislature to honor Dr. King." He felt the honor was necessary, Dixon say, because Dr. King's organizing efforts were largely responsible for bringing about the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Left to Right — *Top*: Arlene B. Fisher, Rev. Aaron Powell, William Whetstone, Michael B. Mitchell, Kweisi Mfume, Willa Bland. *Bottom*: Ike Dixon Jr., Agnes Welch, Irvin Conway, Bobby Cheeks, Daki Napata, Frank Conaway. (*) "indicates incumbents"