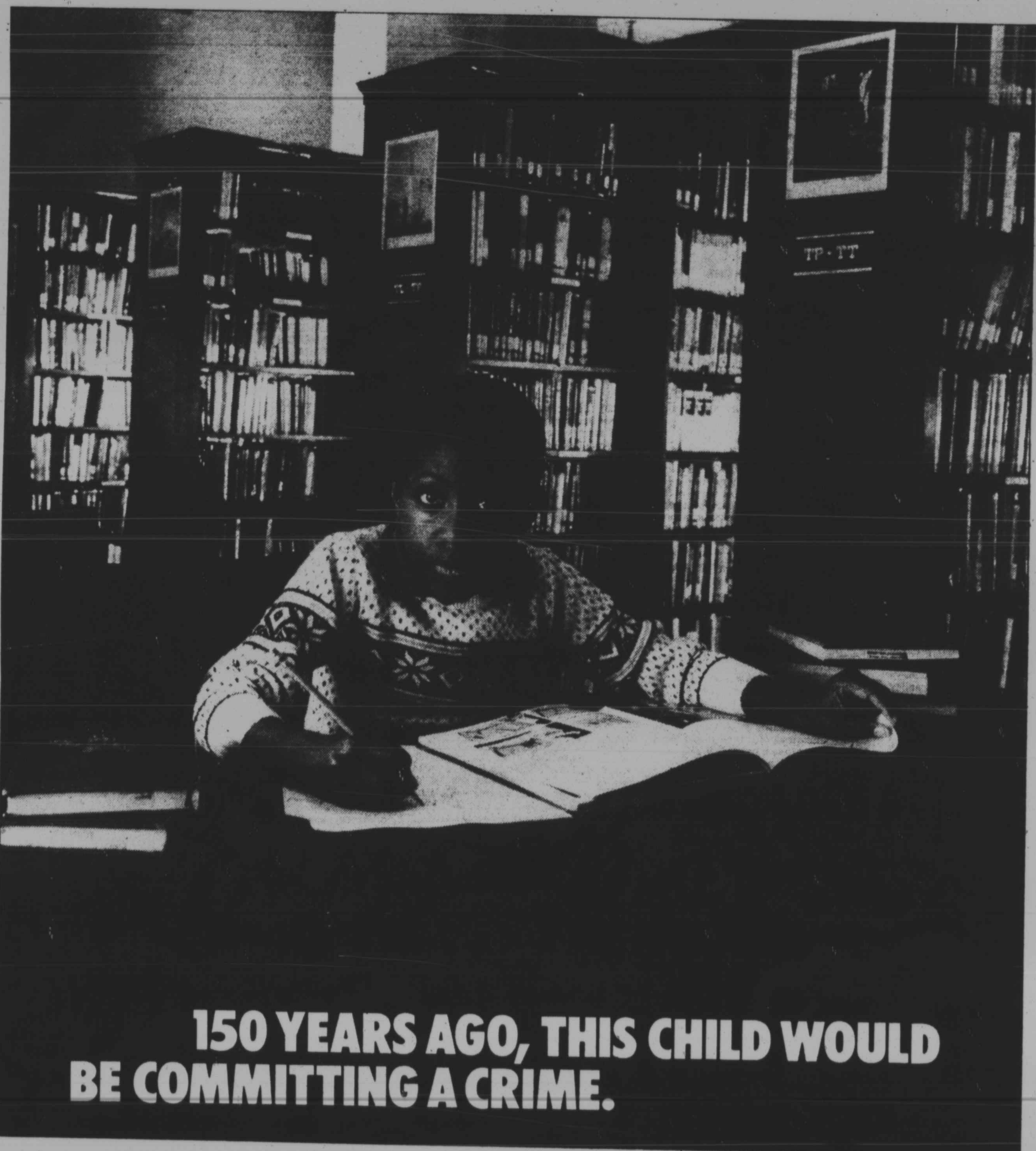

150 YEARS AGO, THIS CHILD WOULD BE COMMITTING A CRIME.

There was a time in the United States before the Civil War when some people had no rights. It was even a crime for them to read or write. Today, it's a crime if they don't. Now, with State aid to education, the opportunity to learn is boundless. One of our important resources of learning and education is our public libraries.

In 1985 public education agencies will spend 37 cents of each General Fund dollar, 25 cents of which is budgeted to the State Department of Education. This Department administrates the Public Library Program, the State Library Network and the Division of Library Development and Services.

The Maryland State Board of Education has also provided the leadership and helped greatly expand the range of services available to citizens with special needs. Most hearing impaired residents of Maryland now have access to the public library through a teletype. Aging residents in many counties receive a regular library service through such programs as Anne Arundel County's Care-A-Van. Unemployed citizens in Baltimore City and Garrett County can receive job and career information from the public library. Blind residents of the state receive materials from the library for the blind and physically handicapped, and handicapped children in Montgomery County use the Department of Libraries' Microcomputer to meet their special needs. All of these services would not be possible without contributions from the General Fund.*

THIS MESSAGE WAS PROVIDED BY THE MARYLAND STATE LOTTERY.

MARTIN H. PUNCKE, DIRECTOR

*The Maryland State Lottery contributed over $209 million to the State General Fund in fiscal year 1984

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Rape victim tells how to cope

(See column 2)

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Baltimore Afro-American

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(AFRO photo by Pat Ward Williams)

Dr. Ernest Brown, Dr. Margaret Fountain

Provident Hospital controversy continues
The doctors speak

By Bob Matthews

AFRO — Dr. Ernest Brown and Dr. Margaret Fountain. Now the big hassle of course is the certified letter received by both of you, from the Board of Trustees last week saying that your services are no longer needed, wanted or accepted and you're barred from the hospital. What was your immediate reaction when you received this letter? I assume you were looking for it — it had been talked about, but the exact language of it — you didn't know what it was going to be. What did you think, Dr. Fountain?

DR. FOUNTAIN — Well, first of all I was not surprised. I was surprised at the intensity of the letter, in terms of barring us from the hospital grounds. And I was surprised that Judge Murphy would sign his name to a document or a letter, that in fact we had not participated in any of meetings, we had not attended any meetings — when a number of times, Dr. Brown and I have been the only persons there at board meetings when there were not quorumms to make decisions about issues that were going on in the hospital.

The other thing is, they continually accuse us of setting out to economically destroy the institution, which again — we stated two weeks ago in a board meeting — were not our objectives — this was their summations of what we had done.

We took our patients to seek better medical care for them, which we had asked the board to do for that facility before we took them out. That was our objective — not to financially ruin the hospital.

However, when a board allows the major admitting positions to walk out of an institution, to alienate them and for the CEO to say he spits on us and he would kick our butts — for them to sit there and do something like that to the persons who admit and financially support that hospital — any logical person would realize that economically you're going to suffer.

They said they didn't need us — they said that they could get the Baptist ministers to take care of the institution, which obviously has not occurred.

So that I am very surprised that now they're saying that we are responsible for that as opposed to putting the responsibility where it lies — with the board who should have made the right decision before we left that institution — done something about the situation and retained those positions so that that hospital could get on with the business at hand.

So I was surprised about — not surprised, I was probably — I can't think think of the right word for it — when I got the letter for those reasons. Words just don't describe how I felt about that because I was saddened — probably saddened was a better word than anything — that they would still think so illogically about everything.

***

AFRO — Dr. Brown.

DR. BROWN — Well, I came to this job because Dr. Randall could not continue as the president-elect. Over a period of time, between the time I was asked to be president-elect and now, I had began to learn more and more about what was happening at Provident Hospital and why it was happening.

I began to realize more and more that if there were any strong resistance to what was happening — to come about — then there would be action taken against anyone who opposed the system as it was.

The medical staff began its campaign with meetings, first of which was on Oct. 10, 1984 in which they stated that they would do everything that they could to try to bring more patients to Provident Hospital, but there were a number of problems and Dr. Oakley Saunders was in the center of those problems and if those problems were not addressed, they would have to begin taking their patients elsewhere.

***

AFRO — Now this is one of the points that's been little known. According to Dr. Saunders and some of the administrators at the hospital — the problems that you mentioned were never spelled out to them, it was said. Were they spelled out — and can you spell them out, now for us?

DR. BROWN — I think that the problems were sufficiently spelled out to them — we told them that there were problems with the harmony in the hospital. A hospital such as Provident, not overwhelmingly endowed with monies, needs the harmony of the people who work there in order to conduct themselves smoothly, especially for doctors to bring their patients there.

This harmony brought about a condition which the doctors would want it to be, a lot of times, elsewhere. Oct. 25, brought on a statement from Dr. Saunders in which he stated, "I'm not the vice president for congeniality" and statements from members of the board which said "I could care less how abrasive they are — to the medical staff."

Well if you're going to be abrasive to the medical staff you're going to go out of your way to be non-congenial to the medical staff — then you cannot really blame them if they go elsewhere where people seem to feel like they're wanted.

***

AFRO — Well, this seems more or less a personal basis.

DR. BROWN — If personal bases are getting into the way of people bringing patients to the hospital, well it's not a personal basis any more. It then becomes a hospital thing and when doctors complain about coming to meetings and have the meetings

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Council bill to force criminal investigation of daycare workers

By Racine S. Winborne
AFRO Staff vriter

The people who operate day care facilities throughout the city and their workers aren't pleased with a proposed City Council bill introduced on Monday and requiring criminal background checks on new employees and prospective center owners — as a deterrent to child abuse.

In fact, the overwhelming majority contacted by the AFRO this week, see the legislation as a threat to their credibility; one that could have a grave affect on the industry as a whole.

"A lot of time the abuse is not done in the daycare center; its done in the home by parents and friends. It singles us out."

"If we are gonna be investigated they should investigate others. There are too many others who work with children, like public school teachers, who have kindergartners and pre-schoolers," said Noel Wilson, director of the Progressive Day Care Center.

Noting a similar complaint about Bill 777, Mamie Jackson, a senior staff instructor at the Walter P. Carter Day Care Center said, "Don't make it look like if you're in day care you can't be trusted with children. They're setting us aside from everybody who works with children."

Still, another cites a different concern involving the proposed measure which will be referred to the council's Judiciary Committee for further review.

"I only feel that with day care workers it's hard to get people to work in day care centers as it is because the pay is so low (only minimum wage). This would make it harder to get employees," commented Irene Saunders, senior instructor at the Y.M.C.A.'s Upton Day Care Center.

Sponsored by Fourth District Councilwoman Agnes Welch, the bill — which was introduced on Monday — would require that any new or prospective employees and daycare operators undergo a criminal background check before being

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(AFRO Photo by Paul A. Greene)

Mrs. Anna Minor, a 70-year-old retired foster parent has been named Baltimore's Best Mom in the eighth annual Wendy's Best Mom competition. It was due to the loving words penned by her daughter, Latrail, that the woman was so honored. The youngster recounted in the essay about how Mrs. Minor took her in as an infant only 16 months old, and later adopted her despite her being diagnosed as having a birth defect known as spina bifada.

Sunday is Foster Mom day too

(AFRO Photo by Pat Ward Williams)

MOM AND THE KIDS—Mrs. Roena Epps flips through the family album as members of her family look on. Pictured from left to right are Melissa, age 6, granddaughter to Mrs. Epps; Mrs. Epps and her grandson (Cricket) Christoper age 19 mos.; Sharon, 19; and Jackie 12, two lovely young people who have come to the Epps via the foster parent process.

By Tea Montier
AFRO Staff Writer

Foster parents are very special people. Take the home of Leroy and Roena Epps, a modest abode in West Baltimore that overflows with the kind of love and comfort only special people can provide.

Over the past 20 years, in addition to raising five children of their own, the Epps have opened their home to seven in need of temporary placement. Persons who have raised children of their own know that five kids is no light load, and when the number starts reaching six, seven and eight kids at the same time then the load can become a bit taxing. But, for Roena Epps it was a taxing load that she and her husband readily accepted.

"I learned about the need for foster homes one day when I was watching television back in 1965. Those kids needed some help and I felt I could give it to them," recalls Mrs. Epps, 50, a quiet woman with a calm demeanor.

"I inquired about being a foster parent and got a response about three months after that. I requested infants because I like to raise them the way I raise my own kids."

Mrs. Epps raises her children with love, care and commitment and she readily adds that, "All of the kids are spoiled."

"One thing I love about these children is that they are all sisters and brothers. We don't have foster kids here."

The concept of foster care is quite different than that of adoption. Foster care is temporary placement while adoption is forever. According to Vernell Smith, recruitment coordinator with the Department of Social Services, the primary goal of foster care is to reunite families or to ensure the child will leave foster care for a permanent placement.

"We work with reuniting the child with his or her family," said Smith, "that's our primary objective."

There are various reasons why children may come into foster care, says Smith. Some of those reasons include neglect, abuse, parents who may be physically or emotionally ill or recently deceased. None of these factors, however, negates the need of these children to have someone to love and to be loved.

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Assault victims learn survival

By Valerie Smith-Madden
AFRO Staff Writer

The Mayor of Baltimore, by way of a representative, presented Sharon Komlos of Boca Raton, Florida with an engraved plate from the city. She was made an honorary citizen of Baltimore.

It was silver and no doubt, very pretty. But Sharon Komlos could only imagine its beauty; only her fingers could marvel at the intricacies of the engraving.

Komlos is blind, having lost her sight as a result of being a victim of a violent crime. She was raped.

But she overcame her experience and she came to Baltimore to talk about it, to serve as a shining example of a woman whose light shines while she walks in darkness.

As a participant in the seminar, "Coping With Violence," sponsored by the Baltimore Police Department and the Metro Crime Stoppers, Komlos, a divorced mother of three, pleaded with her audience to remember that "people in numbers make a difference."

The audience sat transfixed as

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Clifton J. Gordy circuit court judge

By Tea Montier
AFRO Staff Writer

A senior prosecutor in the Baltimore State's Attorney's Office has been appointed by Governor Harry Hughes to fill a judgeship on the city circuit court.

Clifton J. Gordy, 38, was appointed last Friday by the governor to fill a vacancy in the Circuit Court of Baltimore City. That vacancy was created in January when Judge James W. Murphy retired because of declining health.

Gordy has been a prosecutor for eight years. For the past two

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