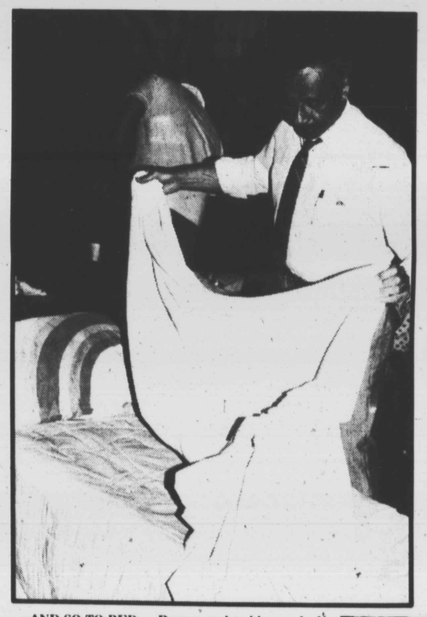
24-hour Fast — 'Let's be hungry together'

OBLATE NUNS OF PROVIDENCE entertain. Sisters M. Benigna Holland of Baltimore, watches as octogenarian Sister M. Wilhelmina Lancaster of St. Louis plays Ave Maria.



AND SO TO BED — Parren makes his own bed for a good night's sleep.

"The Fast has ended but the money can keep rollin' in

The 24-hour "fast" spearheaded by Cong. Parren J. Mitchell has ended, but the deadline for contributions has been extended at least another two weeks.

On Sunday morning at 6 o'clock, in the gymnasium of the Community College of Baltimore, Liberty Campus, the fasters and supporters were led in prayer by the Rev. Sidney Daniels of Emmanuel Christian Church, and they joined hands as they sang, "Lift Every Voice And Sing." Ms. Shirley Baker, soloist of the All Saints Church, shook the rafters as the "Fast" came to an end.

Sponsored by the Maryland Federation of Organizations and the Young Democrats of Baltimore, the event had begun at 6 a.m. the day before, Saturday.

At the end, approximately $15,000 had been raised to send medical supplies to Africa, and the Maryland Food Committee and begin the implementation of the Maryland Black Family Plan.

Encouraged by pledges that are still being made, the sponsors have decided to continue accepting contributions. Checks are payable to the "24-Hour Fast," P.O. Box 7036, Walbrook Station, Baltimore, Md. 21216. The final accounting is being handled by the CPA firm of King, Miller and King. It was a joyous 24 hours as fasters and supporters were treated to song, dance, games, martial arts exhibitions and lectures.

The "Fast" began as it ended — with prayer. Then it became time to accept the challenge of a day without eating. Various juices, supplied by area supermarkets, provided the sole nourishment.

As the sun began breaking through the early morn, the day-long trek of supporters began. There were substantial contributions, mixed with those who "gave what I could."

A little boy dropped a nickel in the box. A lady walked nearly two miles to offer her pennies. A politician sent reps with a $500 check. It was that kind of sharing day.

The signs at the gymnasium front, set the theme for the day — "We're Hungry Together." As the hours moved on, there was casual conversation about fresh asparagus, crab cakes, beef steak tomatoes, silver queen corn and the Maryland crab. But, they kept on fasting.

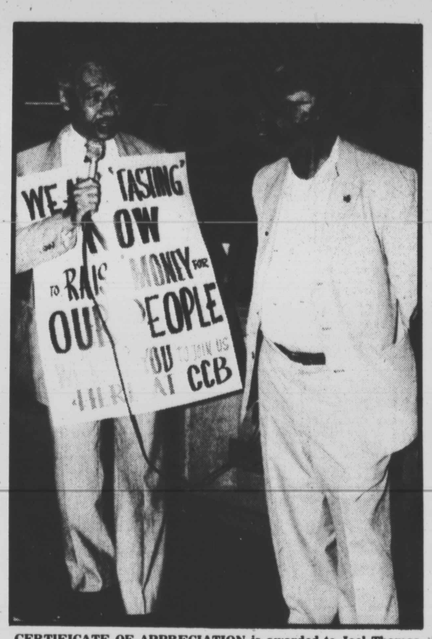
The three major TV stations came to record the historic commitment and were surprised as they approached the campus to find the congressman and other fasters in the middle of busy Liberty Heights Avenue, wearing signs and encouraging motorists to "turn in" and become a part of history.

Monies raised will be divided equally. However, the Maryland Black Family Plan has become top priority of the sponsors and they are readying to make it a permanent project.

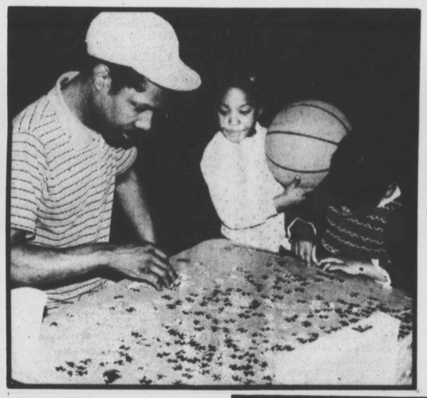
An endowment fund is being established and other fundraisers are being planned. September has been targeted as the beginning of the effort to raise $500,000 (five hundred thousand) per month for black institutions threatened with extinction, and families struggling to survive.

The call is for at least $500,000. Black Marylanders to give one dollar each month to ensure success.

"A dollar a month does not require sacrifice, it requires commitment," the congressman stated, as the "fasters" were leaving to partake of that fresh asparagus, crab cakes, and other goodies.



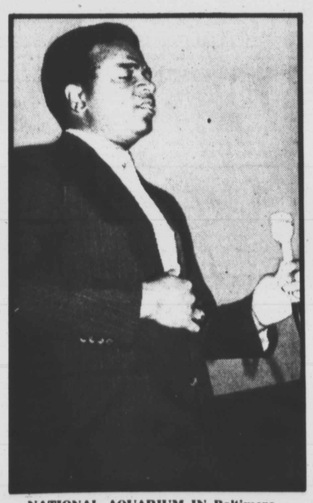
CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION is awarded to Joel Thomas Staton for his active participation in the 24-hour Fast Program.



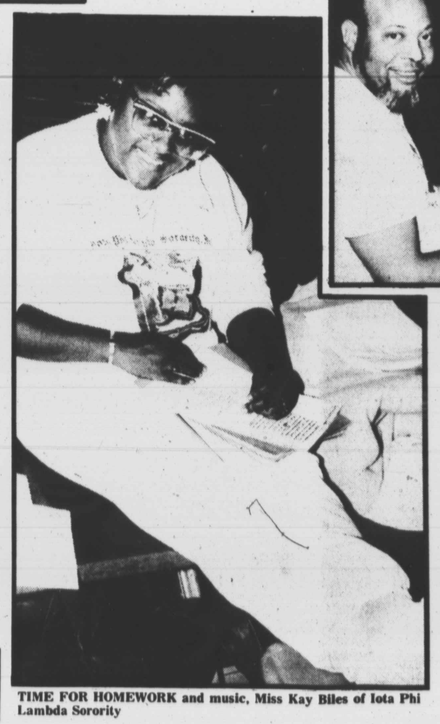
JIGSAW PUZZLE FASTER Michael Alexander gets a little help from his friends as night draws nigh.

ALREADY BEDDED DOWN, Verna Jones of Wo-Be-Co-Inc. does her part to assist The Maryland Food Committee.

A 24-HOUR PINOCHLE GAME and no thought of food. L/R Tom Robinson, of A. Philip Randolph Inst., Clifton Harris, National Alliance Federal Employees, Mrs. Blanche Harris, Mrs. Erla McKinney, chairman and Larry Smith, Alpha Phi Omega.



NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN Baltimore Executive, Rodellanford moves the crowd with his rendition of Ave Maria.



TIME FOR HOMEWORK and music, Miss Kay Biles of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority

MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEAM do their part as Ann and Irma Pilgrim join the fasters.

Photos by
John H. Murphy, III