—Still fighting

(Continued from Page A1)

But his return was a far cry from his departure.

While the fire and enthusiasm are still there, his once robust frame had become fragile.

Yet, after he got out of his wheel chair and discarded his oxygen mask, he let his voice boom out across the ballroom on the Howard University campus.

Robinson was the main speaker at the Frederick Douglass Awards Banquet which was the closing activity of the University's 17th Annual Communications conference.

He was introduced to the audience by a video tape on his life's accomplishments. This brought the audience to its feet with sustained applause as Robinson was wheeled into the ballroom.

Following the show of emotionalism, he had difficulty pulling himself together after this standing ovation,but once he did he was his old self again.

"I don't know how I got here" he told the audience "but things are difficult."

He stated that he was "tired of the treatment" Jesse Jackson had gotten during this campaign, but said this did not mean that blacks should stay away from the polls on Nov. 8.

On another note, he warned the students in the audience to always keep their integrity because "it is a terrible thing.. selling out. Then, you don't have anything left to sell." He apologized to the audience for not being able to stay because of his illness but invited his friends to visit him in his room at the Howard Inn.

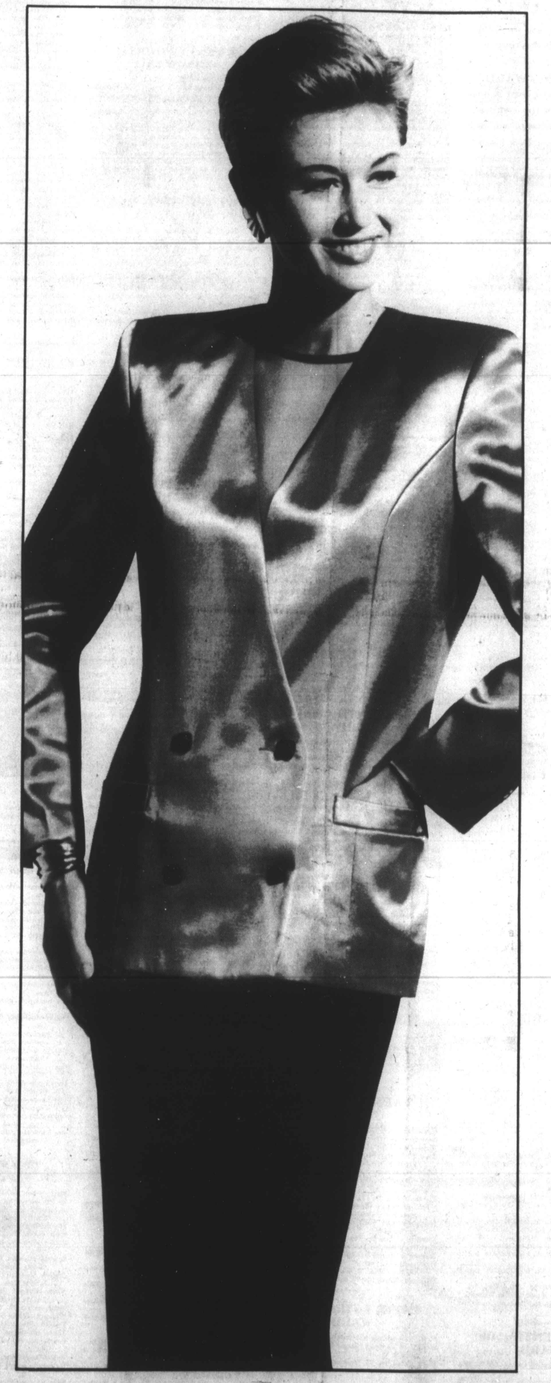
James Hadley, president of the Howard University Communications Alumni Association in presenting honorary membership to the speaker, said Robinson showed what true courage and tenacity means.

Receiving awards in their absence were the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Rep. Mickey Leland (D-TX).

Dr. Jannette Dates, associate dean, gave the salute to the honor students and Ms. Michelle Parkerson presented the film festival awards to Frances Gatewood of the University of Maryland and Kevin Withersbee of Howard.

Dr. Orlando Taylor, dean, presented awards to Dr. William Starosta, the academic award and Ms. Joni Jones, the service award.

Dwight Ellis, vice president, Minority and special Services, National Association of Broadcasters, presided



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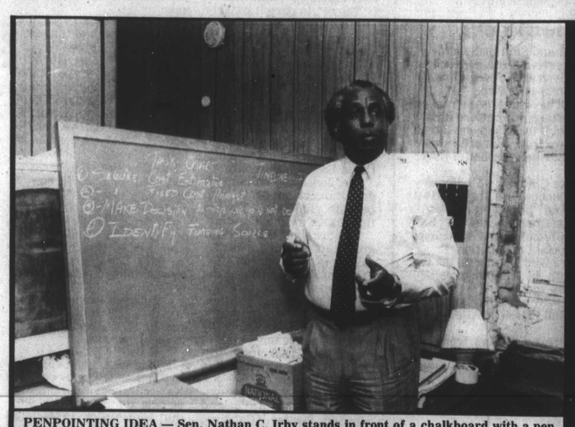


PENPOINTING IDEA — Sen. Nathan C. Irby stands in front of a chalkboard with a pen in his right hand pointing out facts to one of his many projects.

SENATOR LENDS A HAND — Sen. Nathan C. Irby sits at his East Baltimore desk discussing job leads for Tanya Nichols.

NATHAN IRBY:

NEW URBAN SERVICES COMMISSION CHAIRMAN LOOKING FORWARD TO CHANGES

By Alisa Samuels

At first glance, the salt and peppered haired man resembles a counselor or a prospective employer fumbling through a candidate's job application.

Look again, and you discover it is 57-year-old Sen. Nathan Irby, District-45, sitting at his front desk in his East Baltimore office trying to help a young mother find a job.

Irby asked job applicant Tanya G. Nichols, 24, what kind of job she was seeking and if money was available, would she go to one of three predominantly black colleges in Baltimore—Morgan State University, Coppin State College and the Community College of Baltimore.

"I would like a job in the business field like a receptionist or a secretary to help care for my son," Nichols replied.

Nichols also said she would attend one of the three institutions for higher learning, if she could receive a scholarship or financial aid.

Trying to boost local black colleges' enrollment and assisting young people in finding jobs are two of Sen. Irby's pet peeves.

"I'm trying to get as many young people to go to Morgan and Coppin to make these schools more viable," said Irby.

"The first thing they (General Assembly) want to know in Annapolis is what the enrollment is like at these schools" when Morgan and Coppin ask for state funds, Irby said.

Across the nation, black colleges and universities have seen a dip in their enrollments. Many black students have opted to go to white colleges and universities instead.

Morgan State University has approximately 4,000 students, the school's admissions office reported.

Irby said he sees CCB as a "feeder" to Morgan and Coppin. "Students can do two years there and then go to Morgan or Coppin," Irby said.

The divorced husband and father of four received his bachelor's in urban studies from Antioch College. He graduated from Dunbar High School.

Last month, Irby, whose little office is adorned with photos of charismatic leaders like Jesus, Malcolm X, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Pope John Paul II, Dr. Martin L. King and Pres. Ronald Reagan, was appointed chairman to the Urban Services Commission.

As chairman of the commission, Irby said he would work to address the social problems in the city and focus special attention on infants and the elderly.

"These are two of the most vulnerable citizens living in the city," Irby said.

Irby said the infants are too young to care for themselves and the elderly "are not keeping pace with the cost of living."

He did not mention any particular programs he plans to implement to help the young and the elderly.

The chairman said he would like for the Urban Services Agency to become a separate department in the future, but expects if it were, city ordinances would have to be rewritten to allow other agencies to do so.

Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke listened to Irby's idea and said he supported any efforts that would allow Urban Services to grow. The mayor however, did not say yes or no to Irby's plan, the senator said in a back room with an uncharacteristic colored poster of Schmoke in dark sunglasses hanging on the wall.

"I'd like to see the agency move from that of an agency to that of a legitimate arm of the city....and not be just a Mickey Mouse for the city," the Maryland senator said. He has been a senator for six years.

"It will not be a rubber stamp commission," Irby said.

Irby was a Baltimore City Councilman for eight years. While a Second District councilman, Irby served on the city's Policy and Planning Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee and the Labor Committee.

As chairman of the $36 million budgeted-agency, Irby said he hopes he can dispel the myth that Urban Services is a black-only service.

"It serves the entire citizens of the city," said Irby.

"As long as we are perceived as an illegitimate service by the city, our funding will suffer."

There are nearly 460 workers employed at Urban Services,Irby said.

Most of the agency's monies are used for the weatherization and energy assistance programs, Irby said.

Urban Services also provides housing, daycare, tutoring and teenage parenting and drug abuse programs.

Irby said he wanted the chairman's post, so he could remain involved in local matters, since most of his time is spent in Annapolis.

The senator, who aspired to be a plumber while a little boy, is a member of the East Baltimore Deliverance Church on North Caroline Street.

A young girl took him to the "holyroly" church years ago and Irby, then a Baptist, realized three things about his religious self.

Irby said the Deliverance Church taught him he could move his feet, clap his hands and still feel a spiritual "something" during the remainder of the week.

He is a lover of tropical fish, flowers and stuffed animals.

Stuffed animals and musical boxes are conspicuously dispersed throughout his office.

"This is a pretty unique office. You walk in off the street and here I am," Irby said.

What about his political future?

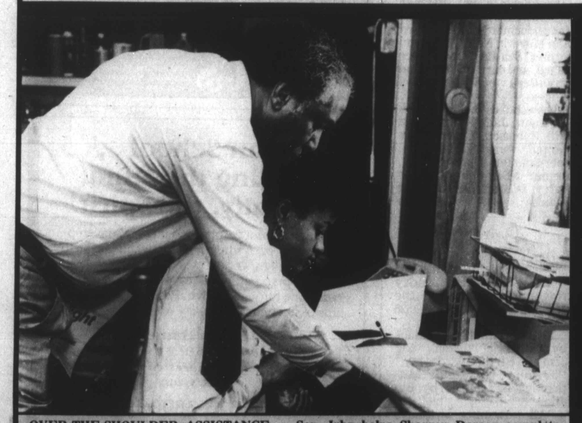
Irby said he may seek reelection.

The senator was one of the first local politicians who publicly announced Baltimore should have a black mayor in a city which has a large black population. He supported George Russell and William "Billy" Murphy. Both proved to be unsuccessful.

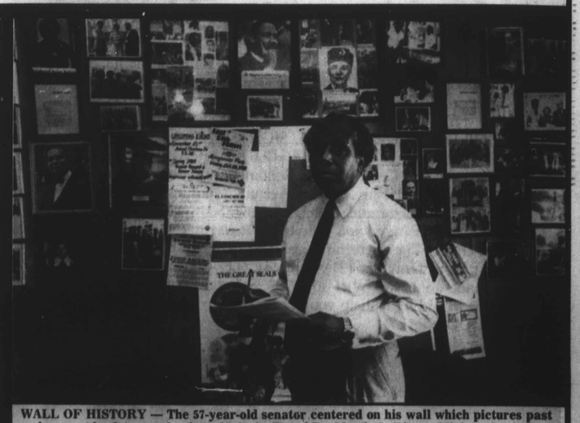
"I caught hell for supporting Billy Murphy and I am still catching it," said Irby.

In 1987, Irby supported Schmoke.

"With Schmoke and Clarence H. Du Burns competing for mayor, I knew we finally had our first black mayor," Irby said.



OVER-THE-SHOULDER ASSISTANCE — Sen. Irby helps Sharron Dorsey complete paperwork.



WALL OF HISTORY — The 57-year-old senator centered on his wall which pictures past and present leaders ranging from Malcolm X and Dr. Martin L. King to Minister Louis Farrakhan and Rev. Jesse L. Jackson.