

## **BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT ADDRESSED AT MEETING - Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) - March 18, 1987 - page 7**

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The solution to the problem of high unemployment among blacks lies mainly within the **black** community itself, said Parren Mitchell, chairman of the Minority Business Legal Defense Fund.

"As our own entrepreneurial efforts increase they are slowly beginning to strip away at that unemployment rate," he said.

Mitchell was in town Saturday to address the third annual meeting and awards reception of the 29th District Citizens Caucus at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Performing and Cultural Arts.

He is a former Democratic U.S. Representative from Maryland.

Although President Ronald Reagan said he supports **black** business, the track record of his administration hasn't been good, Mitchell said.

"For **black** business, he has been almost a disaster," Mitchell said.

There have been efforts to phase out the Small Business Administration and one administration official has said that he thinks the minority set-asides in the Surface Transportation Act, which Mitchell helped write, are unconstitutional, Mitchell said.

The set-asides require a certain percentage of every federal contract be set aside for minorities. Even though Mitchell said he is "convinced that" the unemployment problem will not be solved entirely by the federal or state governments, minority set-asides are a way governments can help.

"One of my many thrills (as a Congressman) was when a **black** guy from Indiana came to my office. He said that under the Surface Transportation Act, he was able to work with a bridge builder. He became the first **black** bridge builder in the state of Indiana. That kind of thing has been happening all over the country," he said.

As blacks continue to start businesses of their own in greater numbers, the challenges facing them will change, Mitchell said.

In the next 10 years, "we will be more and more able to move into acquisitions," he said.

Blacks will be in the position to buy subsidiaries of large white corporations as those small companies become available, he said.

And then things will be very tough for **black** businesses, because the move into acquisitions will pit **black** businesses against white ones in "cutthroat competition," Mitchell said.

The 29th District Caucus is an organization that promotes **black** involvement in politics and other fields.

Five people were given awards at the reception Saturday. They were Franklin County Municipal Court Judge Janet Jackson; William Carter, president of the Action Alliance of **Black** Managers; Rhonda Downs Robinson, president of the **Columbus Black Expo**; William Sykes, director of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services and State Rep. C. J. McLin.

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