

non-partisan campaign
Rochelle is shy part - but
Castel is not a verbal
switcher - unlike Shale
who plays his verbal skill
in town meetings. The play
has outside interest & that
reflects on her. By
as proud of her. Let
Shale. But after some
time is getting the
down.

Barbara Jordan, April 25-27, 1972

Schedule of Events

Tuesday, April 25

- 2:00 Tour of 18th District (start 3rd wards)
- 4:00 Radio interview (Lionel Taylor at Pacifica Radio Station)
- 9:00 Fourth Ward Civic Improvement Association, Rose of Sharon Church, Valentine Street

Wednesday, April 26

- 11:00 Phillips Wheatley HS*
- 8:30 Harris County, AFL-CIO Council Meeting
 - 10:00 Settegast Community Meeting in school Wayside Road

Thursday, April 27

- 7:00 - 3rd Ward*
- 3:00 Radio Debate, Station KXYZ, Fannin Bank Building
 - 8:00 193rd Democratic Precinct Committee Meeting, 3rd Ward

* * *

Staff Cecile Harrison - 510 Dewberry, Houston 77021
Alice Laine
Lestine Lakes
Garnet Guild

Cecile teaches at TSU; Alice at UH. They share a house. Lestine is BJ's long time secretary. Garnet works for AFS, is old friend of BJ's and is LWV type. With the exception of Lestine, they are a very unfeminine group, mannish haircuts, mannish dress. They are incredibly hardworking. Alice and Cecile are in charge of campaign, though Al Wycliffe is the putative campaign manager. Al showed up one night and was making fun of BJ's statements for LWV - in BJ's presence. "Curtis" are almost as bad." This pooh-poohing of LWV type statements showed some sense that primary constituency was not suburban ladies.

"State Senator Barbara Jordan Wins Her Battles Through the System" - Charlotte Phelan, Houston Post, Sunday, Mary 24, 1970.

Opening paragraph - "Barbara Jordan would easily have chosen permanent emancipation from her Fifth Ward heritage. She had that almost irresistible opportunity and was, indeed, nudged by temptation. But in the end, she came back to what can only be described as one of Houston's better known colored sections back to the same social structures and economic limitations she had left a few years before-home."

In Boston, said BJ "the air was freer, that old battles had already been fought and won."

BJ - "All blacks are militant in their guts; but militancy is expressed in various ways. Some do it quite overtly while others try to work their way through 'the system' trying to bring about changes in race and human relations. That's the way I like to work. Descriptive or divisive kind of behavior is of no help."

Her attitude in public described as "formal, reserved, somehow guarded, invariably polite." Often the word "dignity" is used in describing her, too, I notice.

"The political, social, ethnic and religious organizations which list her as a member and call on her incessantly as principal

speaker, honored guest, ~~was~~ ^{of} particularly in politics--as a fence-mender, fire extinguisher or pep leader are so numerous it is doubtful that even she knows them all. Yet she responds to every summons, accepts every invitation that she possibly can."

BJ - "I know I don't have to accept all these invitations, but I like to. I enjoy it. Besides, I think it is part of my functions as an elected official to tell the people what they want to know."

As Chairman of Labor and Management Relations Committee in Texas State Senate, she helped get "minimum wage" on the statute books for first time. (She saw it as incremental.)

BJ - ~~words are~~ "Of course, I'm a little embarrassed about the amount, only 1.25 an hour and 1.40 after a year, but now that we have a law we can try to improve it."

She ran for State Representative in 1962 and 1964 and lost - to State Rep. Willis Whatley.

Worked as Administrative Assistant to County Judge Bill Elliott for year, 1965.

Then, as a result of Baker v. Carr, a district opened up that included areas of her greatest strength, politically.

BJ - "Redistricting created a new senatorial district, and no incumbent lived here. I had carried this district when I ran for

State Rep., I kept reading in the newspaper. So I began to ask people what they thought about my running for the Senate. Finally I resigned from the County Judge's office and announced the next day."

Taught at Tuskegee Institute in 1960 summer, save money and opened a law office over a drugstore on Lyons Avenue in 1962.

BJ - "When they asked me to run for the legislature that year, I didn't do it to get business. I did it because I wanted to get into the legislature."

Closing paragraph is a story concerning her meeting an elderly black couple in course of legal proceedings. In somewhat humorous but instructive (I think) view she said (BJ) "They had never heard of me. That was crushing. They live in Houston and they never heard of me. I'd better get busy."

The article starts and ends making point of ID with district.

*not
5/7/69 - H/W*
In Texas Senate, on day sworn in, "I want to represent all the people in my district to the best of my ability--not just the black people."

*white
relation*
On 33rd birthday, February 20, 1969, Texas Senate passed a congratulatory resolution. She said (BJ) "When I came here Jan. 10, 1967 we were all strangers. There were perhaps mutual suspicions, tensions and apprehensions. Now, I believe they have been replaced by mutual respect."

This spring she was elected as Speaker Pro Tem of Texas Legislature. At that time, she said, "When I came here January 10, 1967, we were all strangers. Now I am enjoying the fellowship and friendship of this body. Nothing can happen in my lifetime that can match the feeling I have for my service in the Texas Senate."

She was first black woman to preside over any State Legislature, and, obviously, first in Texas. She was first black person to serve in Texas Legislature since 1883.

We toured the 18th District--Cecile drove and Barbara talked - though she began by saying "Cecile, you be the narrator of the trip."

Re strongest supporters. "My strongest support^{er}s are the workingclass, the blacks and labor, organized labor. And the people who were in my senatorial district of course. The Fifth Ward is low income, workingclass and is my base of support. I grew up there, I have my law office there and I still live there. The White businessmen who are supporting me now are late converts--very late. They support me as the least of the evils. They are not a strong base of support, They know it and I know it."

Re which unions are hers - big supporters - "The AFL-CIO generally, the ILA -- the longshoremen--the steel workers somewhat, the auto workers, communications and (OCAW) Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers ~~(CAOU on something Atomic,~~

~~Chemical, Petroleum workers~~). They gave me support in name only when I ran for representative. But I would say their strong support started in my Senate race in 1966 - in terms of money and votes."

Where is Curtis Graves' support. "I don't know and that's what bothers me. Everyday, he says something and I think the campaign is lost. I guess he has pockets here and pockets there." (Is there any way you could lose it?) "I don't know." When I mentioned the ~~K~~raft Poll showing BJ 50%, CG 10%, 40% undecided, she clammed up. "I don't have much faith in polls." It was supposed to be hush hush. Victor Emmanuel told me. Also they were deathly afraid of over confidence. And publicizing poll might *produce it*.

Image. "They think I get things done. There was a word in an editorial the other day that sums it up. They called me a "job accomplisher." One of the problems I have with my strongest supporters is that they think when I get to Congress everything will change--just because I'm there. I have to tell them that very little will change due to my presence in Congress. If you ask people about me they will say 'She's gotten a lot done in Austin. *She* does things.' But if you ask them what, they wouldn't know. They couldn't name anything specific. But that's the way they think about me."

She ~~talked~~ some about 2 blacks in race, in answer to my question about whether this was her stiffest competition. "It's my most

difficult race. In my Senate race, it was black on white and it wasn't too difficult for black people to vote. I got 30% of the white vote, too. But now it's black on black and people don't want to choose. It has them confused. There are two well known black leaders running, and it's hard for many of them to choose."

Later on, radio interview on "Blacks Only," she said that blacks must vote and now they had to consider the issues not just whether a person was black or white. That is, a "black on black" race required greater maturity.

What was the issue between she and Curtis Graves? "Effectiveness-- who can get the most done.* That's the thing I stress everywhere. Blacks can't vote just on the basis of skin color anymore. They have to vote on the issues. And the issue is effectiveness. I'm not saying what I'm going to do when I get to Congress. I'm talking about what I already have done." She called the district -- a diverse district with extremes of poverty and affluence--from low income to middle-high income. Most affluent group are blacks--the professional group. "All of them are in the district."

Later she said it was about half low income (typified by wards 5) and half middle income (typified by Ward 3)--I asked if she thought these two groups had divergent interests. "No, I don't see why they would have" and Cecile broke in to say she didn't believe the myth of the black bourgeoisie. But at this point, Barbara was more interested

in looking for her campaign signs in store windows as we drove along. "Good for you, Club 500!" (for a sign in the window).

Industry in district - "A great deal of industry but very diversified." No single industry.

Churches important - "Very much so; I speak in one every chance I get. I've been averaging 5 each Sunday--in and out." Earlier she had mentioned that Graves was Catholic (from New Orleans) and had some of those ministers, but that she had most.

As part of description of her strongest supporters, she noted that people who were in her old district were in habit of voting and did so. A key problem (the one Cecile greeted me with) is getting people to vote. In the middle income area (which she splits with Graves) people will vote. In the low income area, they will vote in her old district. "They are in the habit of voting for me and they enjoy doing it," but in the new part they may not.

Another problem she feels is that people keep coming up and telling her she ^{has it} won and is OK, and apathy may be a problem.

District drawn by her and Bob Eckhardt.- "to reflect ^a ~~an~~ community of interest" in representation, i.e., blacks.

In a sense what Curtis Graves was saying at the 4th Ward Civic Improvement Association Meeting was that BJ was not "one of us." "Do you want your leaders picked for you by outsiders or do you want to

pick them for yourselves. Think about it." The same pitch permeates his brochure. That is, he has no issue basis for argument and he tries for style. Cecile said on way out, "You see, he never talks about the issues, just personalities." It was his way of getting around to the identification issue. Barbara thinks it's real phony. On the way out, she said "When he spoke, I kept trying to catch his eye. I tried but he wouldn't look at me. He's shifty-eyed." *→ When is he happy? → DK*

The fact that she sees her hard core always as "working class" is a nice perception--for it binds the black-union ties which she stresses.

Cecile talks a lot about "us poor people" ("Why don't you see how we eat. You're probably on an expense account.") and there's an underlying note of bitterness. But she is very warm-hearted and very nice. We had fun exchanging written notes at the 4th Ward meeting--mostly about Billie Carr who, according to C's first note is an "anglo lady" who is "our great white liberal that is going to save black Houston." She echoed this theme at least ten times during the day--her disgust with white liberals who wanted to rush in and tell the blacks how to save themselves. Her attitude toward college kids was somewhat the same. They weren't reliable, they wouldn't work for you, they just wanted to talk. "White liberals" were anathema to Cecile.

She wants their help, but on the blacks' terms, as toilers in the vineyards--if at all. I think BJ has some of the same feelings - That her allies are people who can "get things done" and not mouth off. My first real rapport came when we were riding along and Cecile was expounding on the white liberals. I said, "The trouble with them is they think they have the truth." And BJ almost shouted (for her) "You're absolutely right. How did you know that?" I said, "I live with them."

Cecile had a running argument along these lines with Craig-- the UH senior who worked all day in the headquarters. Curtis Graves had gone to TSU that day and cut BJ up--saying that she had \$100,000 war chest and that she was a captive of Texas establishment, etc. Craig wanted BJ to go over there and talk to the students and "get their point of view" which, presumably, was more militant and more "back" than BJ's position. Craig likes BJ, obviously, but wanted her "to add another dimension." Cecile (and Alice) argued it would be a total waste of time, that students won't vote, won't work and wouldn't come out ("Curtis Graves had a demonstration and about 15 people showed up. Bill Lawson and about 6 students. There were more newsmen than demonstrators.") Later, on way back from radio program, BJ ^{worried} ~~warned~~ the issue "Do you suppose we should schedule something at TSU, now that Curtis Graves has been in the pit." Cecile said maybe

*Bill Lawson is
the minister Bill
Mayer wrote about*

if all 3 schools had a joint meeting, OK, but otherwise, "I think it will be a big waste of time." This was her constant theme.

From speech to senior assembly at Phyllis Wheatley HS.

"When I was first elected to the State Senate in 1966, do you think that those men wanted me, welcomed me? They did not. They were scared to death that this black woman was going to come in and mess up their playhouse. And I did! (Cheers) One of the most conservative old senators wouldn't even speak to me--not in simple sentences with a subject and predicate. If he had to speak to me, he would come over and grunt--or groan. And I was supposed to make sense out of what he said. That was 1967. Now, two months ago in 1972, I was elected President Pro Tem of the Senate, the highest honor the Senate has in its power to bestow, and third in line for the governorship. If Gov. Preston Smith and Lt. Gov. Barnes were to die tomorrow, Barbara Jordan would ^{become} the Governor of Texas! (Cheers). Who elected me to that high post? The same men--30 members of the Texas Senate--in secret Democratic Caucus. Eight other Senators were eligible, but they chose me, unanimously. And one of them get up, seconding my nomination, spread his arms wide, looked across the chamber and said, "What can I say? Black is beautiful." (Cheers). "That's what happened between 1961 and 1972. And that's why I say, Get out there and work! change their minds, work on their attitudes, on their psyches. Chip away at their minds, little by little."

Her theme was that students needed faith in themselves and confidence in themselves and that life would be very hard but they could succeed, vs. racism, etc. Then, she ended, by saying if they stood up and worked, America would be for them, the land of the free and the home of the brave, that they ^{could} recite pledge of allegiance and mean it, recite Declaration of Independence and have it apply. She ended saying "Don't let me down." On the way out she said, "They were attentive, they listened; but they didn't listen to Harold Jackson" - who was a social worker at Hester House and who had not reached the audience. BJ is a celebrity.

Much questioning on redistricting and why no State Senate seat for blacks now.

"There was some racism involved, but it was mostly economic. The big corporations, the oil and gas and insurance companies were afraid because this year the Texas Senate came within one vote of passing a corporation tax--a tax on their big profits. So these big men, these big businesses were so frightened, they decided to redistrict the Senate, to make it more conservative. The reason was money, the green folding stuff. That's why the blacks got redistricted out of a seat in the Senate."

She also mentioned that Curtis Graves came to her office in Austin and told her to draw the district lines any way she wanted, that he

wasn't interested in the seat. There was the same set of questions showing that people were worried about voting between 2 blacks. She replied again that "Black people have to grow up. You can't cop out on the race issue anymore. White people have been running against each other for a hundred years. Black people can expect to do it more and more. And this means we will have to confront the issues and talk about the issues."

Wednesday evening BJ and I went to two meetings--Harris County AFL-CIO Council and a community meeting in Settegast.

later
I asked her if she knew many members of Congress--No. Many members of Black Caucus? Yes, most, and she said she had been to some of their workshops. She went to the one they excluded Shirley Chisholm from and said they "muffed that one badly," that Shirley was right and should have been on the panel--which was Strategy in the 70's. But she said the slight was deliberate to keep presidential politics out of the session.

in
I then asked if she went to the Gary Convention. "I went to Gary all right. It was an experience I'll never forget. It took me two weeks to recover from it. I was chairman of the Resolutions Committee. But Imamu Baraka and his family had clearly set out to control that convention. And they did a good job, inserting people here and there. You didn't know how they did it or where these people were until you tried to put forth a resolution. I would lose

a resolution, win it again, lose it. If was ~~an~~ absolute chaos. The black caucus lost control of that convention before it even started. And once they saw what was happening, they tried to make the best of a very bad situation. Did you see some of the resolutions that were passed--abolish Israel, cut it up and give it away! When people asked me what I thought of it, I said the fact that 5,000 black people came together in one place was an accomplishment. And it was. But unity?"

She asked me about Curtis Graves last night and again noted that he was "milder than usual" and that "I tried to catch his eyes but they shifted back and forth." I then gave my thesis that he's trying to paint her as an outsider. "That's one of the things he's trying to do. But it's ridiculous. Anybody can see that. I don't have to answer that. Maybe I'm giving people too much credit. Maybe I'll be sorry. But I don't think so."

Later, on the way home from Settegast, she said "When you see people that enthusiastic and that devoted to you, you know how wrong Curtis Graves is when he goes around saying I'm not with the folks. Of course I am. I can feel it in a meeting like that."

Have you been interested in politics long? "Yes, always--as long as I can remember. Judge Andrew Jefferson sometimes says, when we are together on a speaking engagement, that he was responsible

for my first political defeat. People sit up and listen. And he says that he defeated me for president of the freshman class at TSU. Actually I wanted to run for Student Council but I found that a freshman wasn't eligible. I was 16, so that was pretty early. And I've been running for something ever since."

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Later she said. "You just keep running. You just keep running. I don't know how you ever get it out of your blood."

Why does she like it? "It's people and the response you can get from them. You can get people excited. That makes you feel good. Then when you get elected and try to deliver on all the promises, you made, it's a little frightening" (last sentence not completely accurate but that was the sense of it.)

I asked if her splendid speaking ability came naturally and she said "yes, I was in declamation contests, oratorical contests, debates-- all of them, all through school."

I asked about shopping center campaigning. "I do some. But that kind of campaigning does not come easy to me...just walking up and shaking hands. I always feel I'm interfering. But I did some on Monday. I sponsor a little league team and 15 of them with their shirts saying 'Barbara Jordan' on them--they went with me. People will take things from children. They would ask a person if they

could put a bumper sticker on his car. Then I would go up and shake hands." When I noted that people leave the stuff 100 yards down the street in the gutter, she said, "Yes, and it hurts my feelings." "I'm going to do some of that though." But she's definitely not a walker-of-the-streets kind of campaigner.

The Settegast meeting ranked highest on the "at homeness" index. To begin with, she drove all across the city--for nearly 3/4 of an hour to get there, even though she felt sure the meeting would be over when she got there. They, for their part, kept the meeting going just to hear her. When she arrived, the moderator said something like "We knew she would come; she said she would and that's why we've been keeping the meeting going." On the way over, she said, "Settegast is a low income black community and has some of my very strongest supporters. And they vote out here. I hated to lose them. But I let Bob Eckhardt have whatever he wanted."

When she spoke, she said that the worst thing about the redistricting was that she would not represent Settegast anymore. There was a murmur of surprise (which she and I both commented on) but she then said that "I'll still be your representative. And I want you to think of me, always, as your representative. I belong to you." And, later, she said to me "Did you see their faces light up when I said I would still be their representative?" And that's when she went on to say how ridiculous Curtis Graves' outsider charges are.

I asked re campaign strategy.

"We don't have any. I just run. At first we tried to plan a grand strategy, Cecile and Alice and the rest, but it doesn't work out that way. I'm not that organized. And the campaign isn't that predictable either. Things just happen day by day."

Re choosing which speaking appointments to accept. "Numbers count for a lot of it. But if you have some of your very strongest supporters who ask you to come, well you just have to make that-- like the people in Settegast. Or if it's organized labor, which is so helpful and important financially, you have to make that. If there's time, you try to make them all."

I expounded my idea of reenforcement, trust, talking to same people over and over again and she nodded throughout the entire bit-- saying that she talked to "the same people over and over again."

Her 1962 State Representative race was not her idea, but rather the idea of Harris County Democrats organization. She worked in 1960 with Harris County Dems for Kennedy-Johnson; and was working for Dems and AFL-CIO in Ray Roberts' district in 1962 when she got the call and was asked to run.

"I had a financial problem. I was only 1 1/2 years out of law school and that wasn't time enough to get much business or make much

money. The filing fee was \$500 and at times it was like \$5000-- or more--today. I was just too poor to run. When the Harris County Democrats said they had decided I was the one to run, I told them I had no money. They said they would take care of it and they did." I then said 'and then it just seemed natural to run in 1964,' and that's when she made remark about running--"you just keep running." Earlier she had noted that in the 1962 race "We all ran county-wide and I had a big name recognition problem." Doesn't have one now.

After AFL-CIO Meeting, she said "Well, now you've seen organized labor--all of it." She said they were big help to her. In the beginning they were less than enthusiastic, in 1962. But since then they have been fine supporters, strong supporters."

At the AFL-CIO meeting, where all the COPE endorsed candidates spoke, she stressed two themes: 1) I'll work for you and your interests. I'll be your voice. I'll work for your interests." "You know from my record, that I support labor. I am your friend." "94% of the time you are right. On the 1% when I think you're wrong, I'll tell you." Blasts at the Connally-Nixon economic policy--bad for you--corporations are making it a little guy's expense. 2) "Send me to Washington. You've got to get me there," work hard, etc. (At Settegast, she said this plus "I'm in the fight of my life.") "I'm asking you for a promotion."

One thing she said that[†] drew big applause in AFL-CIO meeting and Settegast was "The Texas delegates[¶] need Barbara Jordan. And I'll be a Congressman you can be proud of." Or "I'll be the best Congressman in the Texas delegation." She compares herself to the other Texas Congressmen. "You have to like campaigning."[¶]

→ "I think people know whether you like to campaign or not. Probably it can be cultivated. But some people come on too much like politicians and that turns people off."

A man running for judge spoke to me after Barbara's brief Settegast talk. "I could listen to her talk all night on the subject of mumbledypeg. She speaks so beautifully; and the thing is that whatever she says--it's believable. She's believable."

In the evening when we had returned and were sitting around the headquarters, she said, in a context I don't recall, "We don't want to expose Dick to any of these knee jerk liberals." And it seems to me that these aren't her kind of liberals. She probably shares all of Cecile's antipathy toward "the white liberals who are going to save the blacks in Houston."

After the labor meeting--when one of the candidates spoke enthusiastically about how the Dirty Thirty opposed him. I asked BJ about the context. Speaker of Texas House was indicted, sentenced

and given a probated sentence for complicity in the Sharpstown bank scandals. A resolution (by Rep. Gus Mutchler) was introduced to investigate the Speaker. About 30 Reps supported it--Sissy Farenthold was a leader. "The newspapers called them the dirty thirty and they were proud of it. They took it as an honor and got together and endorsed candidates of their own--candidates who promised reform and, who, if elected would eliminate all scandal from Texas forever, and so forth." There was a note of disdain in her voice when she said that. I doubt that they endorsed her.

After the AFL-CIO meeting, she said, "The State Chairman was there and asked if I would be a member of the local welcoming committee for Hubert Humphrey when he comes to Texas. I don't want to commit myself. I don't have a candidate. But labor loves Hubert Humphrey. Oh, how they love him. I shudder to think of a rerun of Humphrey and Nixon. But if he gets it, I'll be in there with all the rest. I'm going to be at the Convention, and I'm a member of the credentials committee. I want to be free in making decisions there. Once you commit yourself, people put you in a slot and you're isolated. You lose your freedom to move in the party. I want to keep that freedom."

Precinct Meeting in Precinct 193, 3rd Ward on Thursday evening--
about 20 old people. Barbara in good form and people responding as

she talked. Some of it educational in terms of telling them they can vote for her--since some felt they couldn't. The district lines changes have confused many of the voters. But she tells us how important it is for Texas and blacks. "This can be a real breakthrough for Texas. Not in over 100 years has a black person from the South sat in the House of Representatives "...whereupon a woman up front said "and never a black woman" and everyone nodded and said, "yes, never a black woman."

When Barbara said "I want you to help me," they kept nodding and saying, "we'll help you." "I'll ~~do~~ a good job for you. I'll make you proud of me. I'll work hard. You know me, I don't have to lay out my record. You know I've worked for you. I might have not always been right. But I've done my best. And I've spoken out for what I thought was right." Lots of nodding and agreeing.

"You don't want someone who just talks, you want someone who will get the job done."

"I'm not going to go to Washington and turn things upside down in a day. I'll only be one of 435. But the other 434 will know I'm there."

"Mrs. _____, do you remember how we sang in 1966, "I'm glad I made it." "Well, it's been a long time since we've sung that song. But with your help we'll sing it again on May 6th."

"I know a lot of people want to help me and want me to win. But they don't count ideas and thoughts--they count votes. So work this

precinct and do the block work and motivate the lazy folks, the people who don't want to vote, who can't come to the precinct meetings. "Motivate them."

Her talk was a good rousing pep talk to Dem precinct working^{en}. Something like the Sattegast speech--a bit more pep talk and a little less sentimental--but still--evoking ties of sentiment and asking for hard work for future.

"I could lay out my record but I know I don't have to. You know I've worked hard. (yes, yes) You know I've gotten the job done (yes, yes). You know the bills I've gotten passed (yes, yes). You know I've done my best for you (yes, yes)."

This meeting was held in a large, old, ramshackled house that once was an elegant mansion. We sat in what probably was the living-room--broken venetian blinds on the windows, high ceilings with flaking paint. The front door was nearly alldown to bare wood. Yet the brick building sat on a large lot, had a large porch.

The meeting ended with the Chairman of the meeting asking BJ what she was doing Sunday because he wanted to get her out to his church. She had already had a call to that effect from someone and they talked back and forth about whether the offer had gone through proper channels or not. She said she'd be there anyway. Then they started talking about when the best time to put up lawn signs was so that people would see them and they wouldn't get stolen.

A lot of lawn signs had been pulled out in this area. People get sense of participation. They were very solicitous and told BJ she didn't have to stay for this part of discussion.

She left, shaking hands and having one or two discussions out in the hall with individuals. These were her people clearly.

When we left the Meeting, we delivered some material to Cecile's mother. Her family lives in a very peaceful middle-class neighborhood with nice lawns, high pine trees, and brick ranch style homes, well paved, well lighted. Her driveway had 3 cars in it. It was an affluent black neighborhood something like Ros~~es~~brook.

We then went looking for the Black Arts Center Meeting--which never came off. But in looking for it, (on Lyons Avenue), we drove through the neighborhoods of the 5th Ward. Tiny wooden homes for the most part, many one-story wooden on brick pilings, sometimes packed two and three deep in a block so that the house on the street has one or two more houses in its back yard. The streets were--many of them--unpaved with deep, deep holes in which your axle touched as you rode along. We were not too far from Campbell Street where Barbara lives. The main thoroughfares--Waco, Lyons, Campbell, Lockwood--are paved. But off the main streets, the side street are not. They are very, very poor people and their poverty is more visible than it

link this
to the
meeting
to make
my point

would be if you rode down a street of tenement houses in, say, Harlem. Their streets are not paved because they have no power. They cannot put the squeeze on anyone and don't know how. No one in suburban Rochester, say, would put up with these kinds of conditions for a minute. But these people do not know how or in what direction to scream. They are the people BJ wants to get out to vote, the people she worries about not voting and the people for whom she keeps saying she will work and speak.

In the largest view, it's obvious that the blacks constitute her primary constituency. They make up 42% of the population, (whites are about 35 and Mexican Americans about 10-15%). That doesn't add to 100% but they are the figures that kept being thrown around. They are unsure about the Mexican Americans and never seemed to have any special feel for them. They spoke about the fact that Curtis Graves was Catholic, was from Louisiana, spoke creole and was being helped by the Catholic Church in the 25th precinct. Alice said she thought it was the only precinct Curtis would win. Cecile, in looking for a precinct that would be close, in which she could conduct some Ph.D. research on voter perceptions of candidates, also said this was the only precinct she could find that might be close. But they also noted that the precinct judge there was ^{an} enemy of Barbara's--turned against her by the "white liberals."

What is most significant, in retrospect, is that when Barbara and Cecile showed me the district ("I suppose you'd like to see the district"), they showed me only the black areas and some Mexican American. We saw, basically, the 3rd and 5th Wards. (Which, incidentally, are not wards anymore.) Also, the mailings on which we worked were all in the black precincts. Out of 100 precincts, 67 are black and it was those 67 that the campaign leaders wanted to get out, first and at all costs. The "Anglo" precincts, they finally turned over to a mailing service firm. They mail out ~~anti~~-Curtis Graves letters, plus a sample ballot with voting places listed to blacks. They mail Houston Chronicle endorsement to whites. Thus, in terms of campaign strategy, the whites were sort of left over-- just as they are in BJ's view of the district. But I think she knows that she will get most of the white vote anyway. Jerry--in the headquarters--called her "the universal candidate--she's not anti-white and I've never heard her say anything bad about the whites." Curtis Graves is really trying to make her the white candidate by indicating he is blacker than she. It's black votes and identification, she wants and I think she feels she doesn't need to go after white votes because they'll come to her anyway. Certainly the whites in organized labor seem to like her. And, Cecile said, Barbara would think the affluent whites around Rice University were "important" (as Cecile did not),

so she values her white connections all along the line. And, of course, her whole pitch really is that she can work with whites. Only the liberals want her to be more white. As my two dinners with academics indicate, white liberals need the black vote to elect Sissy Farenthold and their view of Barbara is that she is not cooperative because she's not running around advocating Sissy Farenthold. These people could care less about BJ. They are dependent on the black vote and they fear that BJ's lukewarm support (and it is!) will hurt Sissy at the polls. But Barbara has her own fish to fry. Besides, Joe C. describes Texas liberals as "pure as the driven snow" and that style is not BJ's. Indeed, Curtis Graves is more the academic liberals' kind of candidate. A third example of whites being "left over" in Barbara's view came on the radio debate where in her last wrap-up, she mentioned whites for first time. She noted that "black people have more serious problems than white people, and that's why we have been talking more about the needs of black people" but white people need help too, and she had always spoken for everyone. On the way out, a well-dressed white man came up to her, wished her well, said he like her speeches, and--wished he could vote for her, but he lived outside the district, (in the affluent suburbs.) I think, paradoxically, she has more solid support in the white community than in the black community. But in the campaign

Robert

context, and always, she seeks identification with the blacks because to lose that will cost her her core support. Curtis Graves' strategy is not a winning strategy but it has a logic to it. He will paint her as controlled by whites, thereby drawing support from the more militant blacks (people at HQ kept saying he would do well at TSU and UHouston with the students). And he will slice into her black strength. But he will never get white votes--not labor or affluent (non-white liberal) whites. Because he will cut her black votes, she needs white votes. But she will fight her fight vs. Curtis in the black community so as to hold the bulk of black support. That's the primary constituency which, if she loses, she will lose all. The district is set up to elect a black--but a black with good white support, i.e. BJ. It was set up by her just that way. Thus Curtis' charge that she rigged the district, that she should have included 17,000 more blacks and made it a majority black district, is valid. That's why he voted ^{vs} ~~in~~ the districts. In an overwhelmingly black district a somewhat militant and symbolic black like Curtis might make it. In the Texas 18th--never. Curtis is the militant, expressive, symbolic candidate--as he himself implied--the Adam Powell. BJ is the pragmatic, labor-oriented, problem solving candidate--not the William Dawson, but the Jim O'Hara kind of candidate. (Cecile even talked about her going on

A man had called in, Mr. Martinez, asking about help in dealing with unemployment agencies--state was doing nothing--private ones charged him two weeks pay. At end he said he would lay down his life for her. Outside she said, "What was that man's name? Mr. Martinez. He said he would lay down his life for me. Let's find Mr. Martinez. We've got to find Mr. Martinez." He called himself Mexican-American, not Chicano. Latter point seemed to identify him as friendly. Cecile made a crack about how "long hairs" who ran the station didn't know what to do with themselves.

man. The shop was piled with papers and litter. The equipment was ancient. And an old toothless crony was sitting in there gossiping with Mr. Nelson. It was the exact antithesis of any barbershop I had ever been in. BJ asked Mr. Nelson what he'd heard, how things were going, etc. The creaky elevator was operated by some relative of Mr. Nelson's. It turned out that George Nelson is a member of her Finance Committee. He was at headquarters twice--once stuffing envelopes, and once conferring with the Committee. He's the source of her strength--black, independent, loyal, elderly and community-minded. His barbershop sits in the shadow of the high gleaming new Holcombe Civic Center of Houston, just as the old Atlanta Life Building (owned by blacks) sits in the shadow of the towering Gulf, Shell and Tenneco and other buildings of modern Houston. George Nelson is one of the people to whom the city is left when the people who work in the Shell Building go home to the suburbs. And none of them know he is there. Barbara Jordan knows. If I ever wrote a story about Houston, I'd write it about the highest ranking native-born Texan in the Shell Building, about George Nelson and about Barbara Jordan and a white politician who is also working to bridge the gap.

"What's your first name? Dick? Mine's Barbara. Barbara, Dick--now that's settled."

First radio interview was in Atlanta Life Insurance Building--an old 4-story brick building. Pacifica, the underground radio station was on fourth floor and BJ was interviewed by Lionel Taylor, proprietor

of Afro American clothes store. He wore a dashiki and talked a lot about community control and militancy and BJ expected that "I'll get cut up." But she didn't. And afterwards she was in good spirits. "I couldn't understand where he was coming from. I couldn't figure him out. Of course, nobody is listening. I could have advocated communism on that program."

BJ's special greeting--especially to low income blacks is "Are you all right?" The equivalent of Jack Flynt's "Hey, how ~~are~~ you" or Barber Conable's "How ~~are~~ things?"

When Cecile and Barbara were talking about transporting high school kids to HQ to work, Barbara said, "Let's call the Teamsters. They've always been a big help. When I think of transportation, I always think of the Teamsters." Sure enough, that p.m. two teamsters showed up and for the next couple of days they were in and out of the HQ stuffing envelopes and working hard. It was interesting to see two black men with blue workshirts with "Teamsters" on the back working at the same table with Garnet, the LWV type. But it said something about Barbara's coalition.

The night we left AFL-CIO meeting and after all the COPE endorsed candidates had spoken, I asked her if any of the other candidates running could help her. "None of them can help me; but I can help some of them. I'm more help to them than they are to me."

At the Wednesday evening Finance Committee meeting there were: A black M.D. (Dr. Bacon, Chairman), a white lawyer, a black pharmacy owner, a black barbershop owner, a black woman beautician, a black woman schoolteacher--a black retired woman, and a black representative of the ILA. BJ said she had chosen them "for the most part." But it just grew, someone says "we need to have so and so" and we add him to the group."

Going out Lyons Avenue the first day -- after we passed BJ's law office (a 2-story wooden house--like building where Lestine's sister(?) now mans the phones), we kept going and BJ suddenly said, "Why are you leaving the district?" She was a little indignant and irritated at leaving the district! Point was that she knew exactly where the boundary was and Cecile didn't. Cecile's life doesn't depend on it.

In radio interview, which was most issue-oriented of her performances, she said there were 3 issues in district: (1) economy (inflation, prices, taxes), (2) health care (delivery of health care), (3) jobs. Lionel kept pushing her on community control and she was cautious. He wanted local vigilante police force; she favored Julian Bond's idea that local blacks have to work together to get criminals off their streets. He wanted local control of schools; she said, "Where is the money going to come from? I'm going to take

a good hard look around to make sure we have the financial resources before I endorse community control of the schools." (Afterwards, she or Cecile said, "People wouldn't know what to do with the money.")

As far as community control was concerned, she was really eloquent in praise of black cultural activities--pride, beauty. "Nobody else can control black culture because nobody else has it. Only we have it. It's uniquely ours and a source of our pride. Only we can produce its beauty and only we know its substance."

April 22nd issue of Forward Times, p. 12A discusses the Jordan-Graves race. "Forward Times refuses to endorse either." They talk about the endorsements and counter endorsements. "The voters of the district have come under pressure from proponents of antágonists of either Graves or Jordan. In some instances, there have been near fights because a man or woman was supporting one or the other." Idea is to ignore endorsements and make up own minds. At end, it presents the two candidates in one sentence descriptions.

"Curtis Graves--dashing, flamboyant, outspoken, and willing to climb the steps of the capitol to decry some injustice."

"Barbara Jordan--articulate, job-accomplisher, demanding and a proven disciple of change and progress."