

**BUSINESS**

# City employees accuse Fort Lauderdale of bias

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — At least 22 people have filed court complaints or federal grievances against the city for alleged discrimination.

A firefighter said he had to put up with racial slurs from coworkers. Another firefighter said she was subject to sexually explicit jokes and suggestions from her male supervisor.

The city's affirmative action specialist, Deborah Lamar, said she was fired because she accused the city of ignoring racial tension among employees and criticized minority hiring and promotion practices.

But the city, which recently hired a black fire chief and city manager, said

the high number of discrimination grievances were due to a few disgruntled bad apples.

Floyd Johnson, the city's first black city manager, doesn't think the number of cases is high. He will report to commissioners at the end of the month on the cases, which have already cost the city almost \$400,000 in attorney's fees, according to city attorney's reports.

Lamar's federal suit claims she was discriminated against and also blames the city for the deaths of five city employees shot by a former coworker who also killed himself.

Clifton McCree's suicide note said he was upset about not being able to support his

family because he had been fired about a year earlier.

"I also wanted to punish some of the cowardly, racist devils that help bring this about," McCree wrote.

Filed in August 1997, Lamar's suit says the city could have prevented the shooting by addressing racial discrimination in its work force.

Though her case has not gone to trial yet, it has had significant influence at City Hall, her lawyer said.

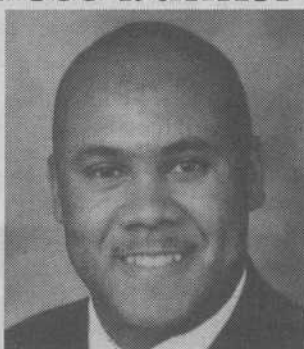
"You didn't have any blacks in senior management five or six years ago," said Lamar's lawyer Reginald Clyne. "Since my lawsuit, they've hired (Fire Chief) Otis Latin and Floyd Johnson. The timing is peculiar."

## Turner named small business banker

U.S. Bank has named Anthony Turner small business banker at its Summerlin Branch. In this role, Turner will be responsible for developing and managing lending and non-credit relationships with local businesses whose annual sales are \$250,000 or less. He will also work with businesses to help them

access bank products and services designed to meet the needs of Nevada's small businesses.

Prior to joining U.S. Bank Turner was an account executive and operations manager for RPS/FDX Corporation. A graduate of UNLV, Turner lives in Las Vegas with his wife Alicia and two children.



ANTHONY TURNER

## Economics

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through black collectives in savings and investments and starting and building businesses.

Wage labor is not enough. The vast majority of jobs simply do not pay enough to guarantee financial security. To capture a greater share of the billions of dollars being spent in this country every day, you must either own a business or invest in one.

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William Reed is publisher of Who's Who in Black Corporate America.

## Wealth

(Continued from Page 8)

Hispanics," he said. The tight labor market also helped increase income for other workers, too, though they worked for it, according to an analysis by the labor-backed Economic Policy Institute.

These researchers found middle-income families increased work hours by 4 percentage points between 1989 and 1997, while income remained about the same.

Rep. Clay Shaw, R-Fla., chief author of the 1996 welfare reform law, noted that incomes were up for female-

headed households and said many of them have left welfare for work.

Families headed by single black moms — a group particularly likely to live in poverty — saw a dramatic one-year drop in poverty, with their rates falling by nearly 4 percent — though four in 10 remained poor.

"Poverty is down, welfare rolls are down, and incomes are up, which is just great news," Shaw said.

The Census Bureau also reported:

— No change in the income gap between the rich

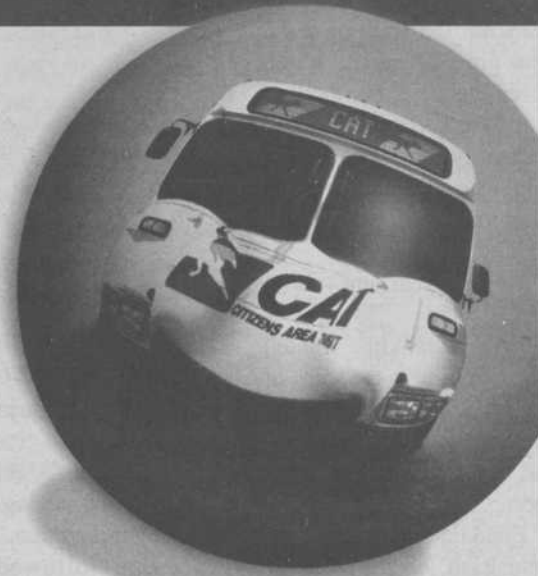
and poor.

— An increase in median household income in the Midwest, South and West but no statistically significant change in the Northeast.

— Children remained the most likely to be poor, with one in five living in poverty compared with about 11 percent of the elderly and 10.5 percent of working-age adults.

— The income gap between men and women remained the same, with women earning 74 cents for every \$1 a man makes — a record high.

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