

## Summer Washington Internship awarded Third College student

**June 11, 1971**

What could have been a rather routine summer has suddenly become a very busy one for Percy L. Myers, a 25-year-old Third College undergraduate at the University of California, San Diego.

Myers, a native of Jacksonville, Florida, and a veteran of four years in the Navy, was notified by mail Friday, June 4, that the Joint Center for Political Studies has awarded him a 1971 Summer Internship grant for ten weeks of work and study in Washington, D.C.

In addition, he was notified just a week earlier of his election to the 16-member Board of Directors of the San Diego Urban League.

"The internship in Washington means I've had to make a lot of decisions in a hurry," Myers said, "including arrangements for my apartment in San Diego. I don't want to lose it because I'll be back next fall to go to school."

The internship program, less than a year old, is sponsored by the Joint Center for Political Studies under a grant from the Ford Foundation. It is co-sponsored by Howard University and the Metropolitan Applied Research Center of New York. It was established to give students the experience of working within the government and to give assistance to the Black elected officials in Washington, D.C.

According to Mrs. Gloria Silvera, Western Regional Director for JCPS, the students most likely will work for several office holders and will receive a full range of political experiences including dealing with the public and governmental agencies.

Myers, the only summer intern from San Diego and one of only five from the entire western regional section of the United States, is scheduled to begin work in the nation's capitol on June 19. Between now and then he has to complete his finals at UCSD and square away his apartment. In addition, he hopes to make a quick side trip to Jacksonville to see his mother, father and two sisters for the first time in three years.

Myers was recommended for the internship program by Dr. Joseph Watson, Provost of Third College, and by Dr. Nolan Penn, Professor of Psychiatry in the UCSD School of Medicine and head of the Third College Urban and Rural Studies program. Myers was required to submit a detailed application for the program expressing why he wanted to get involved in governmental work and how it would benefit his education and career.

"I told them that as a result of being exposed to the governmental system I would have a much better idea of how to make the system more effective," Myers said. he said he went through a screening process at the regional level and then had to wait it out while his application went to Washington for final selection.

His election as the youngest member, and only student, on the Board of Directors of the San Diego Urban League came about much the same way. He was nominated for the position by a selection committee after submitting his resume. He then had to wait out the results of the election to see if he would serve on the board.

"The Urban League is anxious to get some youthful input on the problems that they are currently dealing with," Myers said. "I think they recognize the ferment of youth is really a positive thing and can be channeled in a positive direction."

Myers graduated from Stanton Senior High School in Jacksonville, an all black school, in 1964 and joined the Navy shortly after.

"I wasn't much of a student in high school because I really didn't have any motivation to go along with my school work," he said. "There were 500 graduates in my class and only two counselors. There was really only time for the best students."

He said he was planning to make a career out of the Navy but was encouraged by several people he met in the service to get as much education as he could.

"I did a lot of growing up in the Navy and I really felt for the first time that if I got out and went back to school I could make it on my own." Myers said.

After a tour in San Diego and another in Viet Nam onboard a helicopter carrier, Myers was separated and enrolled in San Diego City College. Two years later he entered UCSD as a sophomore and one of the first students in UCSD's Third College. He was selected to give the student address at the College's opening convocation and was also elected to the College's Board of Directors. He later resigned his position on the board to concentrate on his studies, a move which paid off when he was named to the Dean's Honor List during the winter quarter.

Myers is working toward a B.A. degree in sociology with the aim of going on to law school when he graduates. He is hoping to complete his undergraduate work in one more year but his extracurricular work may force him to stay longer.

"Then I'm shooting for Harvard Law School" he said, "but I know I'll have to submit applications at many schools. Eventually I want to return to the black community to help expand the economic base of the community," he said. "I want to help make it an independent economy rather than a dependent economy. I want to help the small businessmen grow and become more able to encompass and serve the entire community," he said.

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