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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

San Diego Urban League
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As part of its "New Thrust" movement, the San Diego Urban League has named a 25-year-old college student to its Board of Directors.

Percy L. Myers, a Third College undergraduate at the University of California, San Diego, was named to the Board in May and is the youngest of the Urban League's 33 Board members. But he doesn't let his youth become an issue.

"Age in the past has served to separate people. But if you don't acknowledge it in the first place, you can concentrate on the work at hand. We're all concerned with eradicating social problems," said Myers, who has had a tour with the Navy and two years at San Diego City College in addition to his one (1) year at UCSD under his belt.

The idea that established organizations should utilize the heretofore untapped resource of concerned youth in bringing about social change is relatively new. "I think it is significant that the National Urban League directed its local affiliates to ensure that 25 percent of their Board members are under 30, rather than appointing one or two token youths," said Myers. He estimated the average age of the Urban League Board member to be 45.

Myers said he hopes his youth will help the Urban League look toward the future. "Unlike most of the Board members, who have already made their place in the community, I have my entire life ahead of me. So perhaps I'm more concerned with the way things will be 20 years from now."

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"You know, the adage that 'the future belongs to our youth' is very real," he continued. As a young black, I don't want to address myself to the same problems in 1980 that I'm addressing myself to in 1971."

Myers said that more young blacks are working within the "system" because "they realize that if we are going to change the conditions under which we exist--and the majority of Blacks merely exist--then we have to build up organizations already present in the community to the point where they are responsive to our community."

He added that Blacks across the nation are talking about Nation Building, "although there is a vocal cry of a cultural return to Africa, which is needed in terms of psychological orientation, but the real nation building must begin here."

Myers plans to be part of that Nation Building. After completing his B.A. in Sociology at UCSD, he plans to go on to law school. "Eventually, I want to return to San Diego's Black Community to help expand its economic base." Myers explained that he has found through his studies that the most frequent way minority groups gained any degree of equality was through a strong economic base."

"The problems of minorities are so dispersed over all areas, that if we address ourselves to all of them, we will spread ourselves too thin and will not be effective in any one area," he said. "Thus, we must establish priorties."

Myers added that the areas of housing, employment and education are very crucial to self-improvement in the minority community. "These three areas can serve as a spring-board toward dealing with other problems."

Percy Myers is a young man on the go. A Dean's Honor-List student at UCSD, he was awarded a 1971 Summer Internship grant for 10 weeks of work and study in Washington, D.C. Only 23 students in the nation were honored with the internship, sponsored by the Joint Center for Political Studies under a grant from the Ford Foundation.

"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," said Myers, who graduated from Stanton Senior High School in Jacksonville, an all-Black senior high school, in 1964. Myers joined the Navy after graduation and served a tour in San Diego and one in Viet Nam onboard a helicopter carrier. He was planning to make a career out of the Navy, but was encouraged by several people he met in the service, to get more education.

He enrolled in San Diego City College, and two (2) years later 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 Third College's opening convocation and was also elected to the College's Board of Directors. He later resigned his position to concentrate on his studies.