

Plu Tribble

Youths Ready To Help If Adults Will Listen



To the older generation, he is acceptable in dress and appearance. The dark hair of this handsome young man is longer than the white shirt and tie boys would prefer, but it doesn't run down his neck and curl back up. It doesn't come down over his ears and the sideburns are reasonable in length.

His clothing, though fashionably modern, is not mod. And his steady eyes clear and blue compell respect; by his mere presence this 24-year-old man compells respect.

He's Sam Williams, director of the Atlanta Urban Corps.

Sam is an electrical engineering graduate of Georgia Tech. He was student body president there and "Time" magazine selected him as one of the nation's 12 outstanding college leaders at that time.

So, what's he doing heading up the Atlanta Urban Corps? What has organizing youth activities, city planning, developing community programs, working in head start, teaching prisoners, listening to citizen complaints, making films for the city to do with electricity?

Nothing, Sam told the West End Kiwanians last week at their meeting in the Braves Stadium Club. He freely admitted urbanology is a field in which he has no business in the light of his major.

But, he also freely stated that this nation's most pressing problems are in the cities. And that's why he's in Atlanta, along with 224 other college graduates, trying to do something to correct some of the city's ills, trying to correct from within!

That's significant about this young man and his colleagues and that's one reason older people should listen to and try to help and support their efforts.

They are not destroying. They aren't running wild through the streets rioting and dissenting merely for the sake of dissent. From the point of view of "racial students" these young people

have copped out, joined the establishment. In a sense, they no longer belong to their own.

And Sam asked, even pleaded, that the successful businessmen of the West End Kiwanis Club LISTEN to what "the most highly skilled minority in the nation has to say.

"Help us bridge the gap between generations. So far, we have made all the efforts in this direction. It's important for you to make an effort also.

"Young people aren't motivated by the same things which motivated you," he told the audience of men, most of whom lived through the agony of a depression. "We aren't motivated by money, amassing material possessions, building up power. Young people want to correct the ills they see in their country."

Sam was quick to add he loves America and if he didn't think it good and great he wouldn't be here. But he's not blind to its imperfections. Neither are other young people. Nor are they afraid to speak up and say America is not perfect. This is one of the nation's strengths—it can allow dissenting voices, Sam said.

As a consequence of their beliefs Sam and 224 others have involved themselves in this city and its problems. They have put to use their classroom skills and talents and abilities in the real world and Atlanta is benefitting from their fresh ideas.

Soon the aldermen and the mayor will have to decide if the Urban Corps should continue. They will have to decide if they are willing to continue with a bold experimentation, at a cost of less than \$40 per student per week.

The time is right for action and experimentation, with its inherent possibility of failure, Sam told the Kiwanians.

He said "It doesn't matter if we can send a rocket to Mars if we can't do something about the problems of our city, some of which exist within the shadow of this stadium."

Sam's right.