

# Warren Forest Community Ready to Move on WSU

## Fifth Estate Collective

1970

Wayne State University is about to be confronted by an angry Warren Forest community.

The University, which has been in the process of destroying the community surrounding it for the last five years, is trying to keep community people from using its gym facilities at Matthaei Building.

The gym complex, on Warren across from the Fifth Estate office, was built on land that previously housed 4,000 local residents. It now includes large areas for indoor and outdoor recreation that is denied to the very people that were removed to allow it to be built.

According to James Brown, who is active with People Concerned About Urban Renewal (PCAUR), the gym was open during the summer for eight weeks this summer to school aged children only, but the community consists of more than children. "There are many drop-outs and many adults who could benefit from use of these facilities, not for eight weeks, but 52 weeks of the year," he said.

Matthaei is generally virtually deserted with often no more than a handful in a full size olympic pool and a few people on the basketball courts that can handle five games at once. The same holds true for the tennis courts, hand ball courts and baseball diamonds.

Some nights are reserved for use by student and faculty relatives. "Why should the brother of a student from Birmingham have more right to use Matthaei than the people who have had to move out to make way for the place?" asks Brown.

"People in the area are paying for Matthaei through the payment of taxes, real estate, city income tax, etc. All taxes, to some extent, go directly or indirectly for the payment of Matthaei. Why hasn't the community got the unquestioned right to use these facilities when they are being wasted?" he asked.

PCAUR, through its network of block clubs, agrees this is not just and is planning to put an end to it. At an as of yet undetermined date at the end of this month PCAUR is planning a direct action confrontation with the University over its policy of exclusion.

According to Kae Halonen, PCAUR activist, the strategy is to build a core of community people who will enter the building and use the pool while a support demonstration of students and those from outside the community marches outside.

"It's simple," says Halonen, "We are just going to go swimming because we have the right to and we will return each day until Wayne changes its policy of discrimination."

PCAUR feels that WSU President William Keast will be hesitant about allowing mass arrests to occur because of his general strategy of keeping the campus "cool" by never engaging activists in head-on confrontations. Still, PCAUR sees arrests as a possibility and is providing for a legal and bail fund.

The anti-expansion is preparing mass community support by distributing literature on the issue and on Wayne's attempts to destroy the neighborhood. Its block club structure will be the main vehicle through which the work in the neighborhoods will be done and much help is needed to assist in bringing off the action. If you are interested in joining the effort call PCAUR at 831-5664 or drop by their office on Third between Prentis and Forest across the street from Sharkey's Market.



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