

'Never caddies for bigots....'

# Few local clubs have blacks

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Black caddies and bartenders can find a job at most private country clubs in Northern Virginia, but a recent Sentinel survey shows that only a few private clubs have accepted black members.

Chantilly, Fairfax, International Town and Country, Springfield and Westwood Country Club officials have confirmed that they have no black members.

A SIXTH CLUB, River Bend Country Club, refused to cooperate but indicated that it too had no black members.

Of the three clubs that do have black members, Reston and Sterling Park are associated with a particular housing development and the Army-Navy Club serves military officers.

The Country Club of Fairfax represents a typical case of all-white membership. Although there is now no firm segregationist policy at Fairfax, attorney E. A. Prichard, who is a club member, confirms that in the past blacks have been barred from the club's tennis courts and dining rooms.

Today, guests of any race are allowed to use club facilities, several club members told the Sentinel.

To become a member of the Fairfax Club, applicants are investigated and judged by the 15-member board of directors. Only two "no" votes are needed to reject an applicant.

SEVERAL CLUB MEMBERS who were interviewed agreed that it would be exceedingly difficult for a black man to get past the membership committee and the board of directors.

"There are a lot of very conservative people in this club," observed a pipe-smoking CIA agent just in from a round of golf. "It will take a long time before a Negro is accepted by the board of directors."

James Covington, chairman of the Fairfax club's membership committee, sees nothing wrong with the Club's membership policy, arguing "A private club is like a private home and we will accept only those people that we want." Covington claimed that applicants are judged as individuals and not by race.

Club managers defend their all-white

status by noting that few blacks apply. The cost of belonging to country clubs is high. The initiation fee at the Springfield Club, for example, is \$1300. The 1970 census shows that in Fairfax County the median average annual salary for a black family is \$8004, or about half that of the white community.

ONE AREA CLUB MANAGER explains another reason for the dearth of black country club members: "The prime purpose of country clubs is to play golf and very few Negroes play golf." In addition, he noted that less than 4 percent of Fairfax County's population is black, and concluded that the relative proportion of black golfers in the area is quite small.

But a black caddie working on the Fairfax Course had another explanation: "Even if I had the money and applied, I know I would not be admitted, so why should I bother!"

ANOTHER CADDIE, Sam Randall, agreed with his colleague, adding: "I would not join because there are too many red necks here." Randall noted that he is choosy about whom he works for and never caddies for bigots.

Over the years, local institutions have protested the racial policies of the Fairfax Country Club.

Several years ago, for example, George Mason University severed its relationship with the club because the club would not allow the University's black athletes to play on club tennis courts.

MORE RECENTLY, several members of the Board of Supervisors refused to attend a dinner held at the club because they felt the club discriminated against blacks. After that incident, the Supervisors passed a resolution, suggested by Sup. James Scott (D-Providence), which forbids officials from holding County functions in any place that discriminates according to race.

"We could care less whether or not the Board of Supervisors has lunch at the club," Covington said in a recent interview.

The Fairfax Community Action Program has recently expressed interest in helping integrate local country clubs but as yet has had no complaints, so is unable to act.

Fairfax Club members reacted in various ways to the Sentinel survey. Many agreed with Covington that a private club is like a private home. Some members showed indifference, while a few, like young Jack Lynch, were surprised that the club had no Black members.

"I am glad it is being brought out into the open," Lynch said.