

SANDERS TELLS OF RESIGNATION

1-9-69
Acted Before Getting Job
in Mayor's Office

Bernel Sanders said Wednesday that he resigned as president of the Black Political Action Council, a Negro organization which endorsed the candidacy of David Gertler for mayor, before being appointed Mayor Victor H. Schiro's aide.

"Sunday night by telephone I talked to members of the executive committee and told them I was going to apply for the job in the mayor's office," Sanders related when questioned about his affiliation with the BPAC.

"Monday I told them that I had applied and that I was in serious contention, and I gave them a letter of resignation," he stated.

Asked if he was a member of the executive committee, Sanders replied: "I was president."

Asked if he resigned both as president and as a member, Sanders replied that he did.

"This is an unclassified job," Sanders explained. "You serve at the pleasure of the mayor, and Mayor Schiro has not endorsed any candidate for mayor."

Sanders was appointed to the post Tuesday to replace Philip M. Baptiste as Schiro's only Negro aide. Schiro fired Baptiste because he said Baptiste presented a mayor's certificate of merit to a candidate for public office without his authority. He referred to Harry Connick, a candidate for District Attorney against incumbent Jim Garrison.

Prior to Sanders' statement Wednesday, Mayor Schiro at a news conference said that he did not know anything about Sanders' political affiliations. He said that he did not question Sanders about them.

The mayor asserted that the city has about 8,000 employes and that he can not account for their preferences for various candidates for mayor. He added that he is concerned only that they not embarrass him in his position.

Sanders was employed as a City Hall porter in 1965 and 1966 while he was a student at Dillard University, from which he has since graduated.