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Panther Sues to Leave Prison for Harvard

Special to The Washington Post

HARTFORD, Conn., June 7—Convicted murderer Warren Kimbro, a central figure in the 1970-71 New Haven Black Panther trials, today sued the State of Connecticut to let him out of prison so he can go to Harvard this fall.

The suit charges that Connecticut correction officials improperly denied Kimbro parole last month. Kimbro has been accepted by Harvard and given a working scholarship for the fall semester at the university, where he wants to study social sciences, according to his lawyer.

The lawyer said Kimbro, a former antipoverty program youth counselor, wants to work with youngsters again.

Kimbro, former head of the New Haven Black Panther chapter, admitted killing fellow Panther Alex Rackley in May 1969 and testified for the prosecution. In June 1971, over objections of the prosecution, he was given a life sentence for second-degree murder.

Four months later, however, the state pardons board, at the urging of the prosecution, reduced his sentence to four years.

Kimbro, according to the suit, now contends he should be given credit for time he spent awaiting sentence plus earned "good time" after sentencing. Correction officials claim that Kimbro, as a lifer, is in a special category and must serve the full four years until June 1975 without any time credit before he can be paroled.

Kimbro was one of 14 Black Panthers, including national Chairman Bobby G. Seale, charged in Rackley's murder. Charges against Seale were dismissed after a six-month trial ended in a deadlocked jury and the presiding judge ruled that massive publicity made a second fair trial impossible.