



Fisher tells Chamber he will champion small business

by Sonya M. Toler

Courier Staff Writer

Although the Mike Fisher campaign admitted to dropping the ball with regard to reaching out to and mobilizing Black voters to support the Republican ticket, the mayoral candidate made time in his schedule to address a breakfast meeting of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania Power Breakfast.

During the session, Fisher discussed his track record as the state attorney general and some points in his platform for the governor's race. But when asked to respond to the article that ran in the Oct. 5 issue of the New Pittsburgh Courier, he said, "I don't know of what article you're referring."

Fisher reiterated what his southwestern Pennsylvania coordinator, David Rice, said in the article: the person hired did not do his job effectively and has since been released from the campaign staff.

"But that's not to say that we just gave up," Fisher said, adding that he was working with Black community leaders.

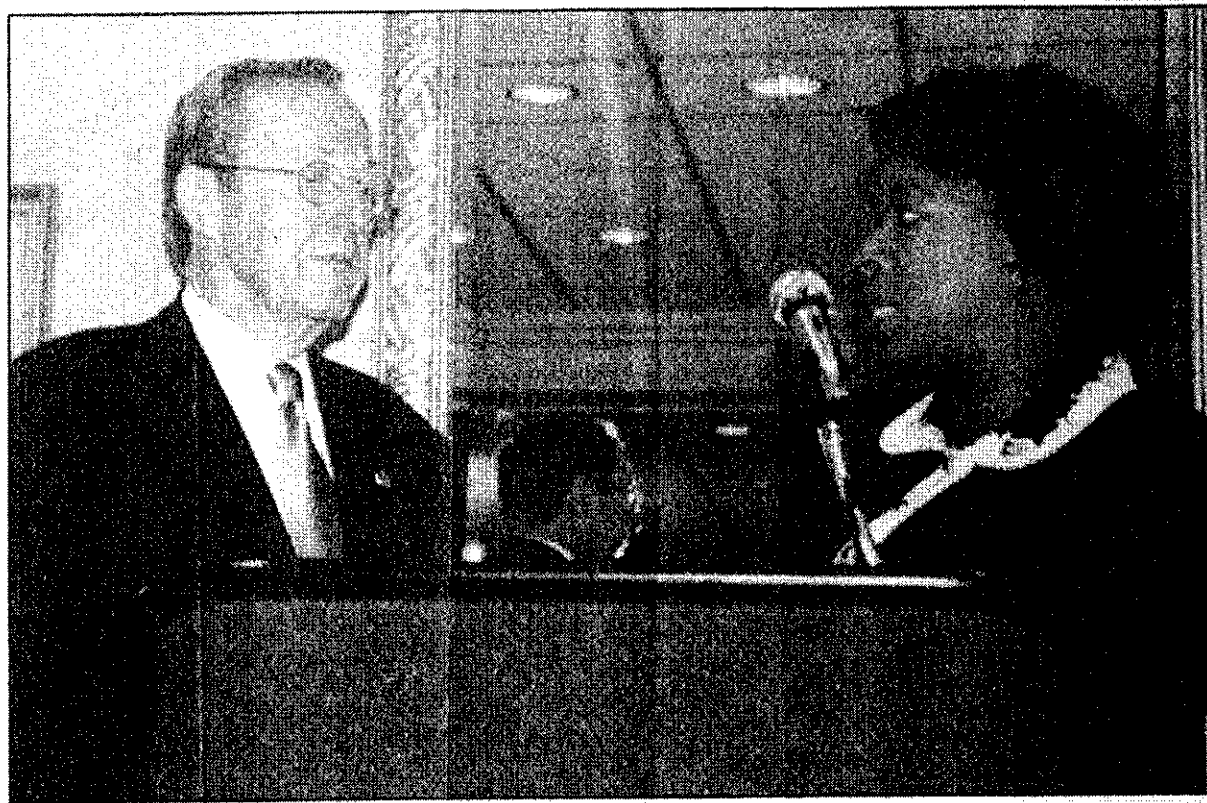


PHOTO BY RICHENA B. BROCKINSON

GOVERNOR FISHER?—Mike Fisher is introduced by African American Chamber of Commerce President Doris Carson Williams during a recent power breakfast.

When asked which ones, his only reply was Bob Pipkin, a North Hills businessman who earlier called Fisher's African-American initiative a "bitter disappointment."

Fisher maintained that, if elected, he would champion the cause of small business and improve the business tax structure to the point "where we are competitive with other

states."

Particularly, Fisher wants to eliminate the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax. The tax is currently on a course to be phased out by 2009.

Fisher also said there is "an education funding crisis" in the state that has pushed property taxes too high.

"I think what we need to do is learn how to spend our money smarter and demand results," he said, adding that he would

enact a plan to increase the number of in-school mentors across the state.

Democratic challenger Ed Rendell addressed the membership of the African American Chamber of Commerce at an earlier function.