

# NAACP unit told racism still alive

JUN 24 1990

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**EASTON** — A prominent black leader told members of the local branch of the NAACP that blacks must work together if they are going to survive the next decade.

Martin Fields, past secretary of revenue in Pennsylvania, said diversity and pluralism have replaced words and concepts like integration in this country. Speaking to a crowd of about 250 at the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's 46th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Fields said that the inequities blacks have faced over the past several decades have not changed that much.

"As we enter the last decade of this century, despite heroic efforts, the nagging question of race and color has not been solved," said Fields, who characterized himself as a child of the NAACP.

He said today blacks control no Fortune 500 companies, receive the death penalty more often than whites and are most affected by budget cuts.

He said if people listen to the leaders in the "Reagan-Bush climate" they would think racism no longer exists. He said, however, quoting a Temple University study, the most recently reported incidents of tension are between blacks and whites.

"We are two separate societies, one white and one black," Fields said. "We both fear what we don't know and we certainly don't know each other."

Blacks are much worse off



Former Pennsylvania Secretary of Revenue Barton Fields talks with Thomas Bright, president of the Easton Branch

of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, at the organization's awards banquet Saturday.

than whites in this country, Fields said.

"My friends, we all have to face up to the fact that we live in a racist world," he said. "We will have to become more self-reliant and believe in ourselves."

He said the survival of blacks within this country has to come from within the African-American community.

Local NAACP members also

were honored at the banquet.

Thomas W. Bright, president of the Easton branch of the NAACP, received a commendation from the city council for his guidance and direction as president since 1982.

Bright, who said he will retire in December, reminded the group that more work needs to be done to better this community for blacks. He raised issues

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of education, employment and affordable housing for blacks in the area.

Also receiving honors Saturday night were Rev. Clyde McRae and Carlton Ketchen. McRae received the President's Award for his work in the community. Ketchen received an honor as the highest ranking black employee in Easton Mayor Sal Panto's administration.