

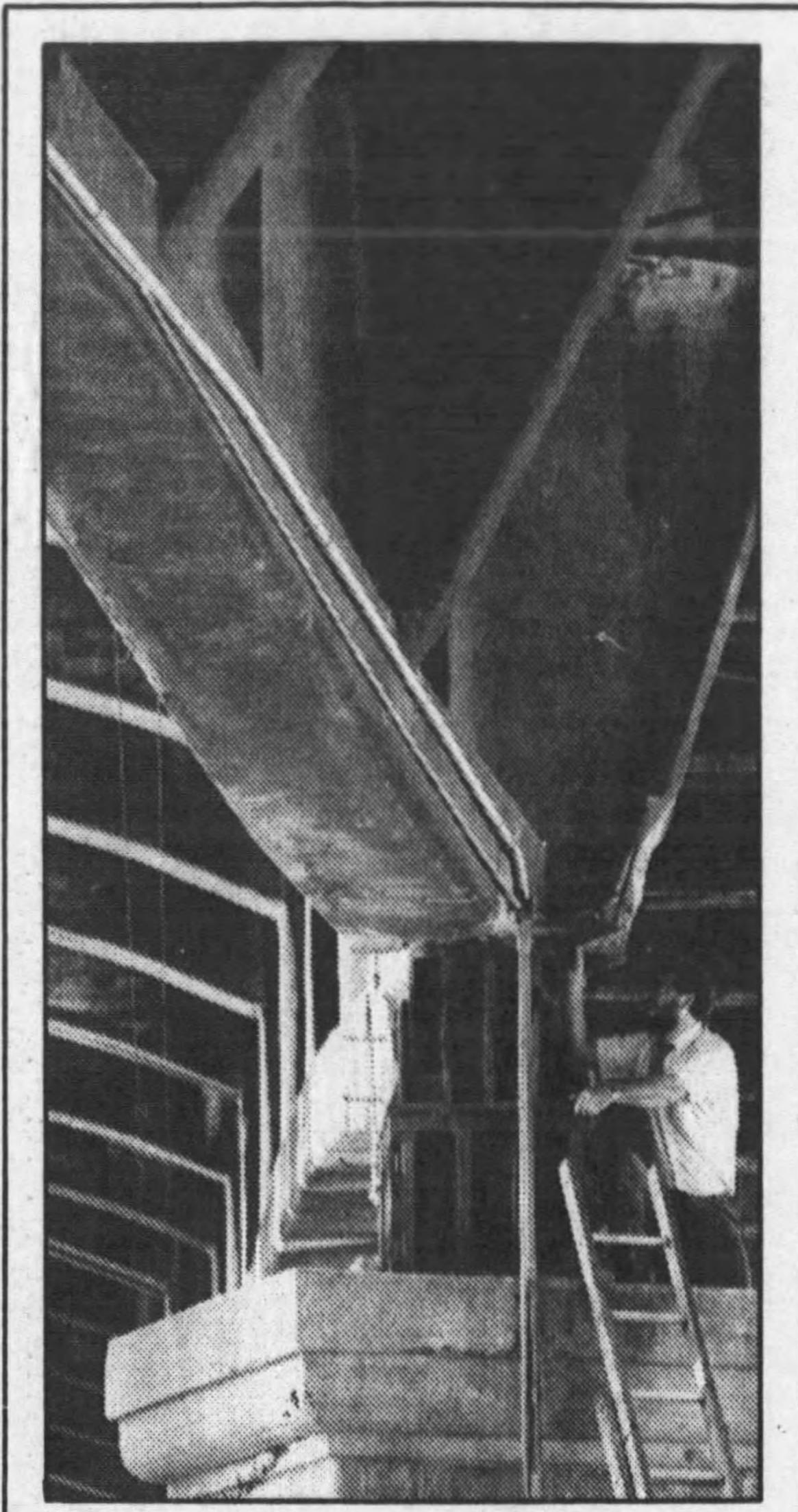
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SPORTS FINAL

25 CENTS



WALTER STRICKLIN/Staff

Charles Howard inspects a pillar of the Spring Street Viaduct, which was built in 1923. On a safety scale of 1 to 10 — with 10 the safest — he gives the bridge a 4.

# 'Worst bridge' in Atlanta faces shaky finances

By Raad Cawthon Staff Writer

Charles Howard squatted 18 feet above the ground on a concrete pillar just beneath the Spring Street Viaduct and, as cars rumbled along the roadbed above, easily peeled a layer of heavily rusted steel from one of the viaduct's major supports.

"Delaminated," Howard said as he inspected the viaduct Friday. He rolled the metal between his fingers and watched it turn into a red dust the wind blew away. For Howard, bridge maintenance coordinator for Atlanta's Public Works Department, delamination — the layer-by-layer deterioration of steel plates — means trouble.

Howard said the deterioration is taking place at major structural points beneath the 1,550-footlong viaduct, which carries Spring Street 40 feet in the air from Marietta Street to Martin Luther King Drive. The eventual result, he said, can only be one thing — the 65-year-old bridge's destruc-

"This is the worst major bridge in the city," Howard said. "There are older bridges. The Forsyth Street bridge over there is about 100 years old and it's in pretty good shape. But the magnitude of the problems with this bridge are overwhelming."

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# Major mall to change Midtown landscape

By Sallye Salter Staff Writer

Predicting that Midtown Atlanta "will have the same appeal and sophistication of midtown Manhattan," developers unveiled long-awaited plans Friday for a major shopping mall and office towers at Peachtree and 10th streets.

The plan by LJ Hooker Developments includes a three-level, 1.2 millionsquare-foot shopping center and two of-fice buildings of 21 and 49 stories on Another Portman tower planned 14A

either side. The developer is hoping to lure First Atlanta Corp., whose downtown lease expires in 1992, to the taller

The complex, to be called Gateway Center, marks a dramatic change for the Midtown landscape and a major excep-

tion to Atlanta's retail construction

It would accelerate Midtown's already rapid transformation from an older, intown residential neighborhood to a much higher-density urban center. And after years of developers reaching ever

farther into Atlanta's suburbs to construct shopping malls, the Midtown complex would mark the first time a large shopping mall has been built so close to Atlanta's downtown.

It certainly will be large. The upscale mall is designed to house four to six anchor stores, 150 other shops, restaurants and theaters. To be called Gateway Fashion Mall, it would be compara-

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# State bank chief urges lending law

Protesters march through lobby of downtown bank

> By Bill Dedman Staff Writer

Georgia legislators should approve a law requiring banks and savings and loans to lend in all segments of their communities, the state banking commissioner said Friday.

Local leaders tell House panel redlining has handicapped the Sweet Auburn district. Page 1C.

"The state is going to have to do more," said Commissioner Jack Dunn. "I don't think there's any question we're going to have to pass a community reinvestment law in the state. I've talked to a number of the legislators. Without any question, we'll do that."

Dunn was responding to articles this week in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The articles described how deposit-gathering institutions rarely make home loans in black or integrated areas, and rarely make Small Business Administration loans to minority- and womenowned businesses in metro Atlanta.

Also Friday, 40 protesters marched through the downtown lobby of Trust Company Bank, shouting, chanting and praying to protest bank lending practices. Most were members of the Association of Communities Organized for Reform Now (ACORN).

"If you got any money in here, get it out," Martina Barnes shouted into a megaphone. The 72-year-old black retired schoolteacher jabbed her cane in the air as she led a chorus of "We Shall Not Be Moved."

The demonstrators marched in the front door, through the teller lobby, back to the front hall and out. They demanded a federal inves-

tigation by bank regulators of lending practices in Atlanta, a 90-day freeze on acquisitions or mergers

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Light of her life

A sunny summer day pales in comparison to the brightest light in Sheila Sosebee's life — her new daughter, Mallory Celeste. Mrs. Sosebee holds up her

3-month-old at a lake behind their Grayson home. Moms of all ages can look forward to a very floral Mother's Day Sunday. See article, Page 1C.

## Hatch shutdown prompts safety reappraisal

Ga. Power admits procedures 'not up to industry standards'

> By David K. Secrest and Charles Seabrook Staff Writers

Flashing lights and blaring alarms in the control room of the Plant Hatch nuclear power unit warned operators that safety systems had "scrammed," starting an automatic shutdown of the reactor.

Within seconds, the senior shift supervisor took the controls of the Unit 2 reac-

tor, discovered that he had trouble following the written directions for such episodes, lay the procedures aside and, in the words of one person familiar with the incident, "just started winging it."

The episode, triggered by a minor problem at 10:21 a.m. on Friday, March 18, lasted only a few minutes — but it had farreaching consequences.

So far, the incident has helped bring about a monthlong shutdown of the plant's two reactors and spurred a reappraisal of operating procedures and control room behavior that the utility itself now says were "not up to industry professional standards."

Georgia Power Chairman Robert Scherer acknowledged Friday that the control room incident did take place, but he said it showed that the supervisor knew how to run the plant and took the correct action.

The plant was eventually brought to a safe shutdown. But Hatch employees and Georgia Power executives both agree that the incident, which occurred when the reactor was operating at only 5 per cent of full power, shows that the plant's emergency operating procedures were cumbersome and poorly written. The company re-

**HATCH** Continued on Page 17A

### Unions blast Eastern, say suit frivolous

By Marilyn Geewax Staff Writer

Union officials reacted angrily to Friday's announcement that Eastern Airlines and its parent company, Texas Air Corp., have filed a \$1.5-billion lawsuit charging the pilots and Machinists unions

"This is like the lions suing the Christians for animal abuse," said Capt. John J. Bavis, chairman of the Eastern chapter of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA).

In its complaint, Eastern accuses the employees of trying "to destroy" the company "through coordinated fraudulent and extortionate means." The suit goes on to allege that the unions are engaged in "an all-out effort to injure Eastern's business ... by means of a pattern of prohibited racketeering activity."

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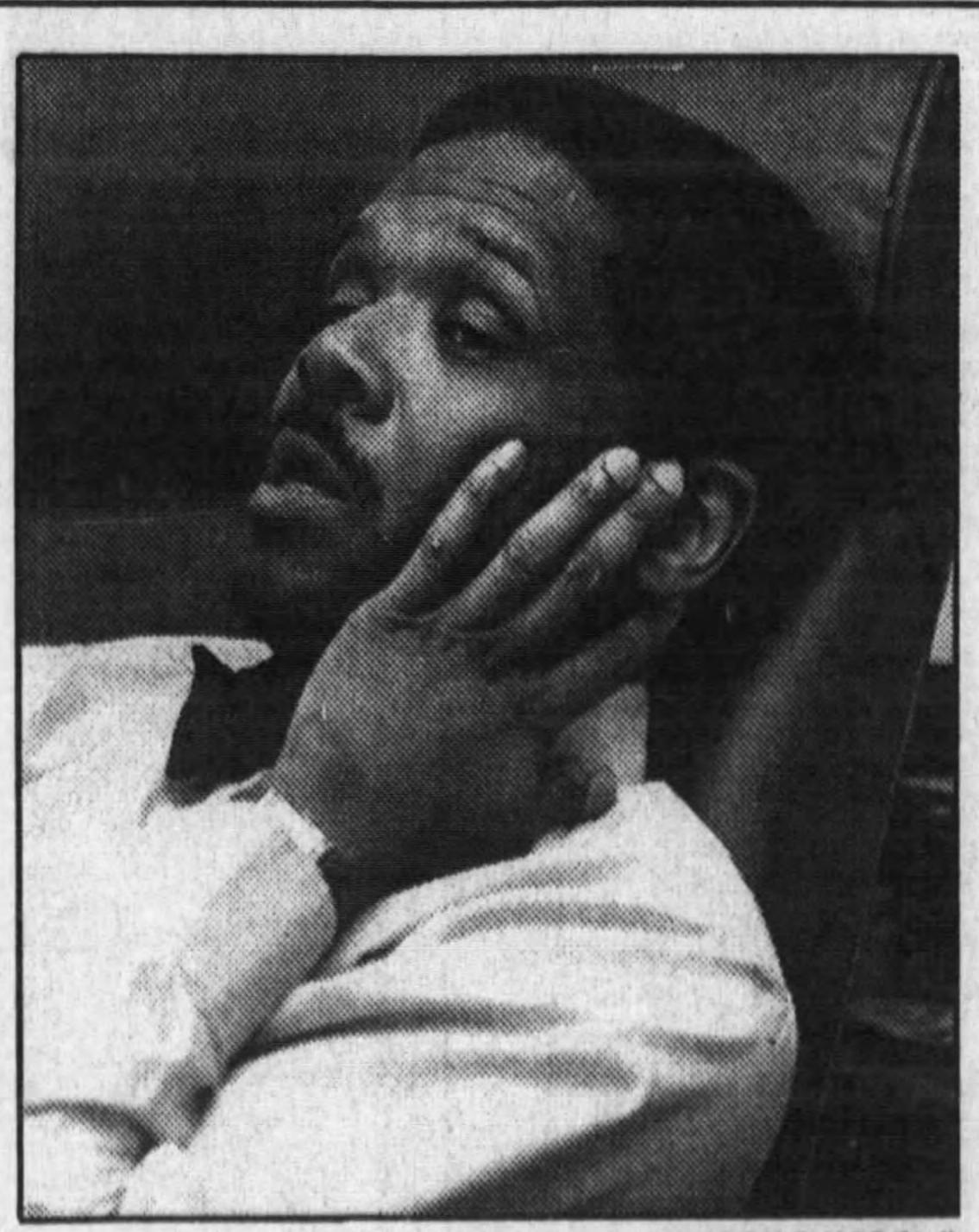
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Sunny and Warmer It will be sunny and warmer today, with a high near 85. Details, Page 1E.

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ANDY SHARP/Staff

Clinton Deveaux (above), other judges describe dangers in Atlanta Municipal Court. Page 1C.

### 'Nightmare' of debt crushes dream to be pro sports agent

Former Hawk exec lost \$400,000 trying to sign 40 to 50 college athletes

> By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

JACKSON, Miss. — Joel Bobo may lose his house, but he is more worried about losing his family and his job. He already has lost \$400,000 as a sports agent, much of it in payments he says were made to 40 to 50 college athletes in 1986 and 1987.

Bobo, a former Atlanta Hawks business manager, says he was "sucked into a vacuum" by the lure of representing athletes.

He borrowed \$400,000 from a local bank co-founded by his father, he says, and handed over money and credit cards to a pair of "recruiters" who disbursed payments to athletes all over the country in attempts to land them as clients.

Bobo says he has recouped only \$2,250 of the money he paid. He never represented an athlete in contract negotiations.

When he entered a high-stakes profession in which others have struck it rich, he says, he tried to

play by their rules and was burned. "I'm supposed to be smarter than this," said Bobo, a certified public accountant (CPA). "I stay awake at night sometimes wonder-

ing if it was temporary insanity." Two of the athletes he acknowledged paying are former University of Alabama basketball players Derrick McKey and Terry Coner. Bobo

said he gave \$800 to each in the fall of 1986, a few months before McKey and Coner signed contracts with and received money from New York-based agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom. Bobo's payments, which he says

he considered loans instead of gifts,

**AGENT** Continued on Page 14A



#### From Page 1A

ble in size to Cumberland and Perimeter malls in the northern suburbs.

Construction on the \$250 million mall is expected to start late this summer. Work on the office buildings would begin later, unless major tenants are signed within the next few months.

The mall is scheduled to open in the fall of 1990. The completed 19-acre complex will be bounded roughly by Peachtree, West Peachtree, 10th and 11th

No specifics were given on the mall's possible anchor tenants. But Australia-based Hooker Corp., parent of Hooker Developments, is the owner of retail chains including Bonwit Teller, B. Altman's, Sakowitz, Parisian and Merksamer Jewelers.

A. Boyd Simpson, president of Hooker Developments, said one or more of those five chains could be tenants in the mall.

He also said four stores already operating in metro Atlanta are considering locations in the mall.

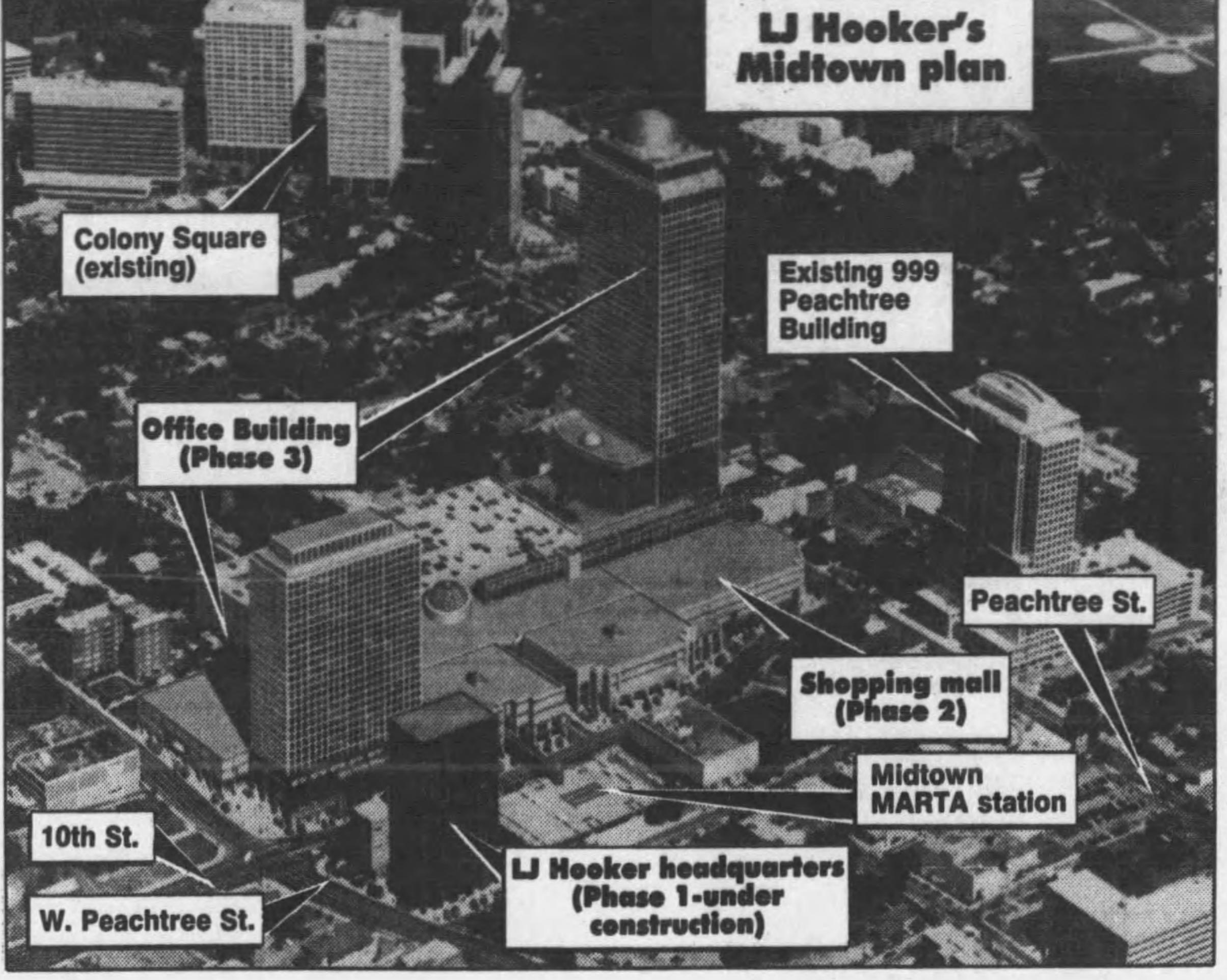
Rich's was interested in a Gateway location before its recent acquisition by the Campeau Corp., Simpson said. He added that he did not know if that interest would change under the new ownership.

However, Campeau chief Robert Campeau said during an Atlanta visit last month that he plans to move ahead with Rich's expansion into urban fill-in markets.

While Simpson did not name other interested stores, the fashion orientation of the center indicates they would include Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord &

Taylor or Neiman-Marcus. The mall would actually mark the second phase of Gateway Center. The first — a post-modern office tower designed by Michael Graves — already is under construction at West Peachtree and Peachtree Place. The building will become the headquarters for Hooker.

The firm began assembling land for its Midtown complex in the early 1970s. Hooker, the U.S. commercial development arm of Australia-based Hooker Corp.,



It would accelerate Midtown's already rapid transformation from an older, intown residential neighborhood to a much higherdensity urban center. And after years of developers reaching ever farther into Atlanta's suburbs to construct shopping malls, the Midtown complex would mark the first time a large shopping mall has been built so close to Atlanta's downtown.

also owns most of the land south of the mall to 8th Street. The complex eventually could include hotel and residential structures.

Simpson said the Bank of Nova Scotia, which recently made a \$100 million loan to Hooker on land holdings including the Midtown site, is interested in financing the mall.

The 21-story office building in the complex would contain 500,000 square feet of space and would be located at West Peachtree and 10th streets. The 49-story tower would be built at Peachtree and 11th streets.

In addition to the anchors and other shops, the company said the mall would include a food court, restaurants, a movie theater and a 10,000-square-foot legitimate theater "in keeping with Midtown's focus on the arts." The center will have 6,600 parking spaces -

again comparable to suburban malls.

The design by the Atlanta architectural firm of Thompson, Ventulett Stainback & Associates may be modified, Simpson said, but "the concept for the mall's style and ambiance is set."

The focal point of the glass-covered mall will be a glass dome atop a rotunda with a grand staircase. The mall's interior also will include sculptured columns and chandeliers.

Simpson said the style was "a blend of the best elements of contemporary and classical architecture."

Hooker's market studies show the mall's customers would primarily be intown residents. It also would attract people who work in the downtown and Midtown areas, as well as conventioneers, Simpson said.

Lenox Square, Gateway's only non-suburban competitor, would not be close enough to significantly overlap markets, according to Simpson, who added, "We expect to be distinct from Lenox, particularly in tenant

Both Lenox and the Gateway site are adjacent to MARTA rail stations.

Architect-developer John Portman, who has long planned to include a retailing center within his Peachtree Center complex, said last year his studies indicated the market was sufficient to support a downtown

Simpson said Gateway's plans "would not be impacted" by Portman's downtown venture.

# Portman about to unveil plans for new tower

By Sallye Salter

Architect-developer John Portman is on the verge of announcing plans to build an office tower close to 60 stories tall in a proposed expansion of his Peachtree Center complex.

Portman Properties Inc. isn't ready to talk about the long-awaited plans, but Mayor Andrew Young slipped the news — minus Portman's name — into a speech he made Friday to a gathering of prestigious developers from across the country.

Touting the city's ongoing surge of development, as evidenced by Underground Atlanta and another 50-story downtown tower unveiled Thursday, Young confided to members of the Urban Land Institute attending a spring conference here that there is "another one to be announced next week . . . bigger than 57 stories."

A source close to the Portman firm confirmed that Portman is nearing an announcement of the building.

Portman bought his 9.5-acre site along the east side of Peachtree, just north of the existing Peachtree Center, for \$47.5 million in late 1987 from Southmark Corp. At the time, a spokesman for the firm called it "a natural extension of Peachtree Center."

The land is also bounded by Baker and Courtland streets and the Downtown Connector, but excludes the Sacred Heart Church property.

Portman recently proposed the project to First Atlanta Corp. as a relocation site from the downtown building where the bank's lease expires in 1992. However, he apparently has decided to go forward without waiting for a decision by First Atlanta, which also is being courted by several other developers.

One of those developers is LJ Hooker Developments, which unveiled plans Friday for a retail and office complex in Midtown.

Portman's building is one of several skyscrapers that have been proposed downtown by developers anxious to take advantage of the expiration of several large downtown leases within a two-year period. The developers want to relocate these tenants to more luxurious new buildings.

Portman proposed the same site and a dramatic 60story building to the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. in 1986 when it was evaluating alternatives for a regional headquarters complex. The company subsequently elected to stay on the Midtown property it already owned and is now developing the Promenade complex with the Landmarks Group.

And in 1984, the Portman site was pitched to International Business Machines when it was shopping for a "signature" building. Its choice was also Midtown, where it is now ensconced in the IBM Tower.

Staff writer Tom Walker also contributed to this report.

### Viaduct

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City officials estimate that replacing the bridge would cost \$15 million over five years. The \$308 million bond referendum that voters overwhelmingly defeated Tuesday included \$10 million earmarked for replacing the bridge. City officials now say they don't know from where money for repairs will come.

On a scale of one-to-10, with a

10 representing the highest level of safety, Howard rates the Spring Street Viaduct a four. "I wouldn't drive on a three," he says. "I wouldn't walk on a three, either."

Spring Street is one of about 453 bridges in Atlanta, most of which belong to the city, the state or various railroads. Of that number, 152 are maintained by the city, Howard says. But the city is responsible for inspecting all the bridges at least every other year.

The extent of the deterioration along the the Spring Street Viaduct

was discovered last month when city crews began minor repair and cosmetic work in preparation for the Democratic National Convention in July.

"Their problem here is there is no feasible solution to the problem," Howard said. "Any meaningful rehabilitation is probably more expensive then replacement."

Next week engineers from the city and the Georgia Department of Transportation will inspect the viaduct to determine what stop-gap measures can be taken to slow its deterioration. Among the options,

Howard said, are closing the outside lanes to traffic and setting load restrictions which would allow only automobiles and light trucks to use the bridge.

The viaduct was built in three sections between 1923 and 1925. When several spans of the bridge transversed Union Station, its underside carried heavy metal blast plates to deflect the exhausts of steam locomotives, a corrosive, sulphuric blend that destroys concrete.

"The concrete encasement was designed to preserve the bridge, but now it is one of the cause of its de-

terioration," Howard said. Cracks in the concrete allow moisture to reach the steel, and a concrete-destroying chemical reaction begins. Adding to the bridge's woes is

the fact that when the viaduct was built, the flow and weight of Atlanta's traffic was lighter.

"These bridges were never designed to carry the weight they carry now," said Jack Moreland, the city's bridge superintendent. "When they were built the heaviest thing to cross them was a beer truck and that was a Model-T Ford."

"Nobody ever thought of buses

and dual-axle concrete trucks," Howard added.

City engineers explored the option of tearing the viaduct down and re-routing traffic through a series of ramps. However, Howard said, any realignment of the bridge would strand the Richard B. Russell Federal Building and cause hardships on Rich's Department Store, which has its primary loading

"There is no feasible solution to the problem except for a new bridge," Howard said.

facilities under the viaduct.

## Agent

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have caused personal strife. To fund a sports agency operation called Pro Star Management in Jackson, he said, he talked his father-in-law and his current employer into co-signing for a personal loan.

He said he has taken a second mortgage of \$40,000 on his home to help repay the loan and is considering selling the house to help with the balance due: more than \$150,000. He has repaid about \$250,000, with the aid of his employer and his father-in-law.

"You can imagine what type of situation I'm in," said Bobo, 30, who is married and the father of a 19-month-old girl. "I worry about losing my house; I worry about losing my job. ... I worry about losing my family, and that scares me. This has been a

He now works for an accounting firm in Jackson. He is concerned that he has strained relations with his employer for having gotten the company involved, and he said his marriage is suffering "10 times the stress any marriage would suffer."

### Failed sports agent not under investigation

Walters is scheduled to stand trial Monday in Tuscaloosa, Ala., charged with violating three state laws in dealing with McKey and Coner on Feb. 12, 1987. Bobo has not been charged, and he has not been the target of any investigation.

"I know I broke NCAA rules, but I don't feel like I broke any laws," Bobo said, adding that he, unlike Walters and Bloom, did not sign the players to representation contracts. "If anything, I broke myself."

Alabama Assistant Attorney General Don Valeska said revelations of Bobo's brief involvement with McKey and Coner will not affect the state's prosecution of Walters.

"The action that caused McKey to lose his eligibility and that caused the University of Alabama to lose \$250,000 in NCAA revenues was the action caused by Norby Walters," Valeska said. "This news doesn't faze me."

A link between Bobo and Walters and several former college athletes are two "recruiters" — Terry Bolar and Ron Jessie, a former NFL wide receiver — who worked for both agents. They met Bobo through Jim Evans, who founded Pro Star Management.

Bolar, a former football standout from Fairhope, Ala., who has worked for several agents in re-

'It really made sense to me then. With the Hawks, I saw so many bad agents, so many guys misrepresent themselves, that I figured I was as qualified as anybody. I just didn't know what I was getting into. Naive? You can say that.'

> Joel Bobo, Former Hawks business manager and former sports agent

cent years, confirmed he delivered the \$800 from Bobo to McKey and Coner in the fall of 1986.

McKey and Coner have been unavailable for comment. Both are to testify for the state in next week's trial.

"I can remember bumping into Coner at a hamburger stand and him begging me to set him up with an agent," Bolar said. "I told him he should stay clean, but he kept after me. And then he told me that Derrick needed money, too, because his family was so poor. I finally got them a little money from

Bolar said he joined Walters' World Sports and Entertainment after severing ties with Bobo. He left Bobo, he said, because Walters promised him a base salary of \$4,000 a month, plus commission and expenses, to recruit players. Bolar said he worked solely on commission and expenses for Evans and

Bolar and Bloom signed McKey and Coner on behalf of Walters' agency Feb. 12, 1987, according to copies of the contracts. The players signed a promissory note for \$2,000 and agreed to accept \$300 monthly payments and a car, the contracts show.

### Agent: Pair ran up \$200,000 in expenses

Bobo says Bolar and Jessie cost him \$200,000 in expenses they accumulated while working for him from the spring of 1986 until the winter of 1987. Bolar admitted "incurring" expenses, but disputed the \$200,000 figure.

Attempts to contact Jessie were unsuccessful. Bobo was the Hawks' business manager from Aug. 12, 1983, until July 12, 1985, when he left the NBA team to settle down in Jackson, his hometown, as a CPA.

"Joel was, and I still believe is, an outstanding young man," Hawks President Stan Kasten said. "If he got caught in something like this, it's hard to believe. He was very competent."

Bobo, as vice president of Pro Star, said Evans convinced him that his background with the Hawks and as a CPA would make him successful in representing and managing athletes.

"It really made sense to me then," Bobo said. "With the Hawks, I saw so many bad agents, so many guys misrepresent themselves, that I figured I was as qualified as anybody. I just didn't know what I was getting into. Naive? You can say that."

Bobo said he has been unable to reach Evans for several months. Evans was registered as an agent with the National Football League Players Association, but the players union said all of Pro Star Management's mail has been returned this year. Its telephone has been disconnected, and Evans has been unavailable for comment.

### 'The athletes ripped him off,' recruiter says

Bolar said he, Evans and Jessie talked Bobo into making payments to college athletes. Bobo said he argued against paying the athletes but that Evans, Bolar and Jessie told him it was protocol in the agent business.

"I swear, I even had an NCAA rule book that I took off my shelf right there and opened to the page where it says college players are not allowed to accept money from an agent," Bobo said. "They laughed at me."

Bolar said, "I personally don't approve of athletes taking money, but at that time if you wanted to compete in the sports agent business, that's what you had to do. What happened to Joel Bobo shouldn't happen to anybody. The athletes ripped him off."

Bobo said, "I got conned by a bunch of athletes. When are the athletes going to be held accountable for their actions?"

Bolar said he told Bobo last year he would appeal to the athletes to repay the money. Bobo declined, he said, because of concern that Bolar would incur further expenses.

When Bolar and Jessie went to work for Walters in "October or November" of 1986, they took several of Pro Star's clients with them. Walters signed many of them to contracts, Bolar said. Bobo met with Wa ters last year in hopes of recovering money he "loaned" to players.

"I met with Mr. Bobo; we had a discussion

about some accounts receivable he had, but nothing was resolved," Walters said. "He was not a good businessman. He did not sign the athletes to contracts."

Bobo agreed with Walters that he made "foolish decisions as a businessman.

"What happened to me is embarrassing," Bobo said. "I never thought I could have done these stupid things. But I did it, and I'm paying for it."

### Only 2 athletes repaid some of the money

Bobo said that of the 40 to 50 players he sent money, only two have tried to pay him back. They are Tim McDonald of Southern California, now with the Phoenix Cardinals, and Stephen Baker of the New York Giants.

McDonald has paid back \$2,000 of \$13,000, Bobo said, and Baker has repaid the \$250 he received. Neither player could be reached for comment.

Former University of Washington defensive end Reggie Rogers, Bobo said, accepted \$16,000 while he was in college. Bobo said he has tried numerous times to recover the money from Rogers, who signed a \$1.7 million contract with the Detroit Lions in 1987. Rogers could not be reached for comment.

Rogers' current agent, Steve Zucker of Chicago, acknowledged receiving a copy of a letter Bobo sent Rogers a month ago asking for repayment of the

Zucker said Rogers has testified about receiving money from Bobo before a federal grand jury in Chicago investigating the practices of Walters and Bloom. Bolar and Jessie also have appeared before the grand jury, Bolar said, adding, "They wanted to know about Norby and Lloyd."

Bobo said he has not sued any players, primarily because he cannot afford the legal fees. He also said that without signed contracts, some of his transactions may be impossible to pursue in court.

"I wired money everywhere, but to keep it as secretive as possible, a lot of times I'd wire it to a girlfriend, or a mother, or Bolar or Jessie," Bobo said, "and then they would give it to the players."

Rogers also received \$5,000 and signed a representation contract with Walters in December 1986. prompting a lawsuit by Walters. Rogers had one bowl game remaining in his career at the time. Bobo declined to name other players who re-

ceived money from him. "What I've done is send letters to all of these guys, and I have asked them to repay the loans,' Bobo said. "Some of the money is really small, just a few hundred dollars, but a loan is a loan. I'm hop-

ing these guys show some honor."