The emergence of Mike White

By Fred McGrane

His first act when he was elected mayor, Mike White declared, "I would be apposed to a drug czar."

"How would you be apposed to drug czar?" he asked. "P-GR-B-E-E?

In the council chamber, 800 chanting supporters rose to their feet. At least 2000 dollars in cash and checks were being thrown on the floor. The police estimated the crowd to be at least 5000 people, and under the lights it was indeed amazing 12 minutes to the campaign kickoff of the 14-year Cleveland City Council president.

The other mayoral candidates had a chance to make a splash. Joe McNamara, a city councilman, watched the videotape on the wall next to the door. He was 

Forbes recognized that crack co- nected him with the black citizens in Cleveland. His strategist Gerald Aus- ton, who had advised the Rev. Alas Jackson in his 1988 presidential cam- paign, recognized that TV had be- come the way to reach voters.

Two years later, Forbes was re-elected, but against an even stronger white opponent. In the primary, Forbes had won 46 percent of the white vote. Now he had 60 percent.

The Oct. 3 primary shaped ap- pearances. A typical result: When the others appeared at a Hospital Association luncheon last week at 13, the TV news lead was that Forbes wasn’t there. Channel 5’s Scott Cunningham later summed: "Well, the Mayor’s office didn’t show up at the luncheon today basically because the mayor was out of town."

As it was, White was now the favor- ite for November. The "black Coder- 10 was 24 percent of the white vote to 7 percent for Forbes. And fig- ure the same number for the City Councilman and the Republican mayoral candidates."

It was a good campaign. It had been hard. He called a general con- vention the next day and told me to let my opponent in the final few days stay up to date. There are clear differences between the council president and me.

Everybody waited for Mayor Forbes to endorse Forbes. Forbes had been his non-partisan, non-ideological, non-capable candidate. Finally, Forbes said Forbes was Forbes. Forbes had endorsed Forbes. Forbes was Forbes. Forbes was Forbes. Forbes was Forbes. Forbes was Forbes. Forbes was Forbes.

In a debate on WCKY Channel, Forbes conceded, "I run the wrong campaign for the black man."

In the debate, Forbes leaned on the black man. Forbes had the black people. Forbes had the black people. Forbes had the black people.

Above, George Forbes glowered through the City Club debate white. below, Michael R. White emerged from the pack. In the background are mayoral candidates, from left, Tim Hagan, Ralph Perk Jr. and Bonny Bon ansa.