

Lone Black Congressman Gave Early Support To Ford

A quiet stillness swept the House of Representatives chamber the instant the Black man from Georgia rose from his seat.

The man was Andrew Young, the freshman congressman from Atlanta, and he was about to endorse the nomination of Gerald R. Ford as Vice President.

The time was wintry December when Black and liberal critics of Ford's ascendancy were harsh, claiming Ford not to be the proper man of mind or morality for such a coveted role. But Young was to courageously disagree.

"Mr. Chairman, in voting for the confirmation of Gerald Ford as Vice President of the United States," Young began, "I am casting a vote of faith, and hope that he will be a uniting and stabilizing force in a nation beset by division and crisis."

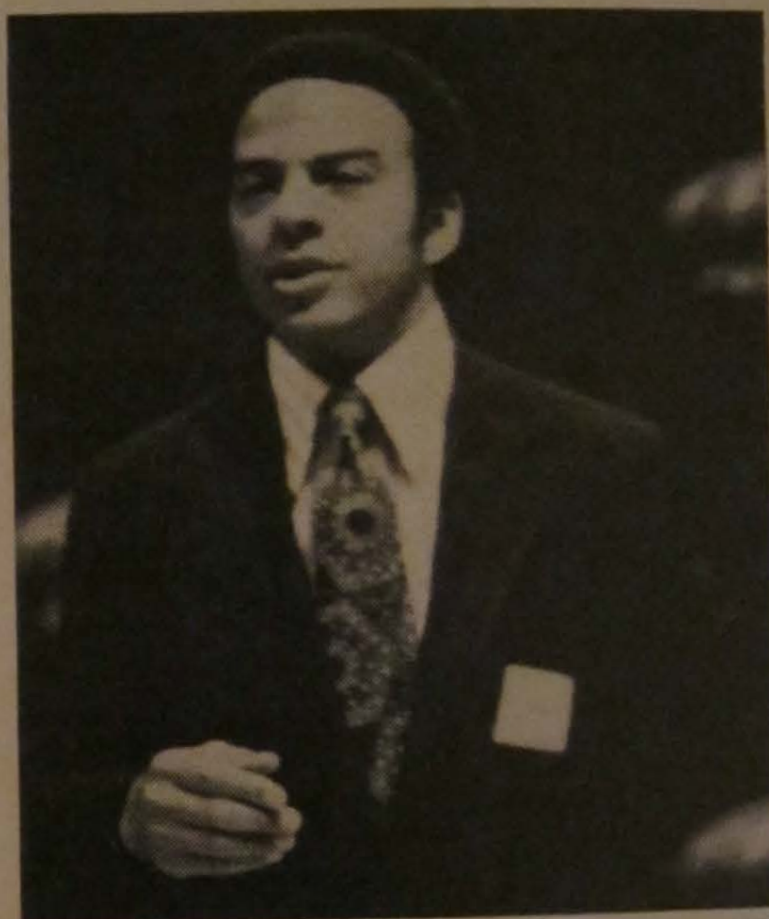
Eloquently, Young spoke with compassion and Biblical belief in the good in every man like the Baptist minister he is.

"I look to our colleague, Gerald Ford, to rise to occasion of assuming this high office to grow to that position as many have in the past. Out of my Southern experience," said Young, "I have confidence that people can overcome past parochial views, and develop a broader perspective which takes into account the interest of all the people.

"Decent men placed in positions of trust will serve decently. I believe that Mr. Ford is a de-

cent man.

"I am therefore willing to extend this opportunity to Mr. Ford to give him a mandate to unite an entire nation. I will be the first to criticize any unwarrant-



Rep. Young believes that Ford will serve the interests of all Americans.

ed actions and policies coming from him just as today I oppose in the strongest sense the philosophy reflected in his record of public office.

"Let us hope that Mr. Ford will respect and abide by his own mandate, which we as representatives of the people are giving him one fateful and possibly final act of trust."

With that, Young strode to his seat and waited to cast a vote of "yea" for Gerald Ford, the only Black member of Congress among 16 to do so.

—GRAYSON MITCHELL