

# Farrell blasts boycott, firebombing

By **Richard Reyes Fruto**  
Korea Times

Former city councilman Robert Farrell has criticized the African American community for its selective outrage in the deaths of Koreans and a black man in recent liquor store robberies.

The community stayed silent when two Korean merchants were shot to death on Memorial Day weekend, but many blacks voiced outrage after Lee Arthur Mitchell was killed when he tried to rob the store, Farrell said.

"I was just appalled by the sense in our community that human life is not valued in the same way," Farrell said.

Some people are treating Mitchell like he's a hero, forgetting that police said he tried to intimidate the store owners and the district attorney's office has determined that the shooting was a justifiable homicide, he said.

Farrell spoke June 22 in front of a predominantly black audience at a church



Robert Farrell

during the Eighth Council District Assembly, a monthly community forum in south Los Angeles. Farrell recently retired after not seeking re-election.

Several African American community groups launched a boycott two weeks ago against the liquor store where Mitchell was killed. Someone tossed a Molotov cocktail on its roof the day after the boycott started.

"We have never had that kind of hate



Farrell addresses audience at community forum in south Los Angeles.

crime in this community. Something is bubbling out there," Farrell said.

Farrell also responded to black resentment that Koreans are buying businesses in south Los Angeles and complaints that some Korean merchants treat customers rudely.

People who knew the sting of segregation must remember that the Civil Rights movement opened up economic

opportunities for blacks and Asians alike in the 1960s.

"Please keep that in mind, people, and please share these observations," he said.

Korean merchants will learn eventually how to get along the longer they live in the United States, and perhaps residents in south Los Angeles have an "affirmative obligation" to say what they want from merchants, he said.

"They're going to learn from other Americans how to be American," he said.

Before he left office, Farrell, along with Mayor Tom Bradley, asked the city Human Relations Commission to report on the causes of black-Korean tensions.

Ron Wakabayashi, executive director of

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the commission, also spoke at the assembly and criticized the mainstream media for focusing on tensions between the two ethnic communities.

"The real story is that the majority of the black and Korean leadership is talking together," Wakabayashi said.

Wakabayashi also praised Farrell's cultural literacy. "Can you think of elected officials who can frame human relations in the way that Bob just did?" he said.

Community leaders showered accolades on Farrell for his 17-year tenure on the council. Steve Lee, vice president of the Vermont Manchester Merchants Association, presented him with a plaque of appreciation.