

Contract Buyers League

RUTH WELLS, WHO BECAME A LEADER OF THE CONTRACT BUYERS' LEAGUE,
TALKING ABOUT ITS BEGINNINGS IN MEETINGS AT PRESENTATION CHURCH IN
LAWNDALE, ON CHICAGO'S WEST SIDE, SPRING 1968

The firm filed two cases in federal district court in Chicago, one for the West Side buyers and the other for the South Side buyers. We also brought suit against the federal lending agencies, alleging illegal racial discrimination in refusing to provide mortgage financing.

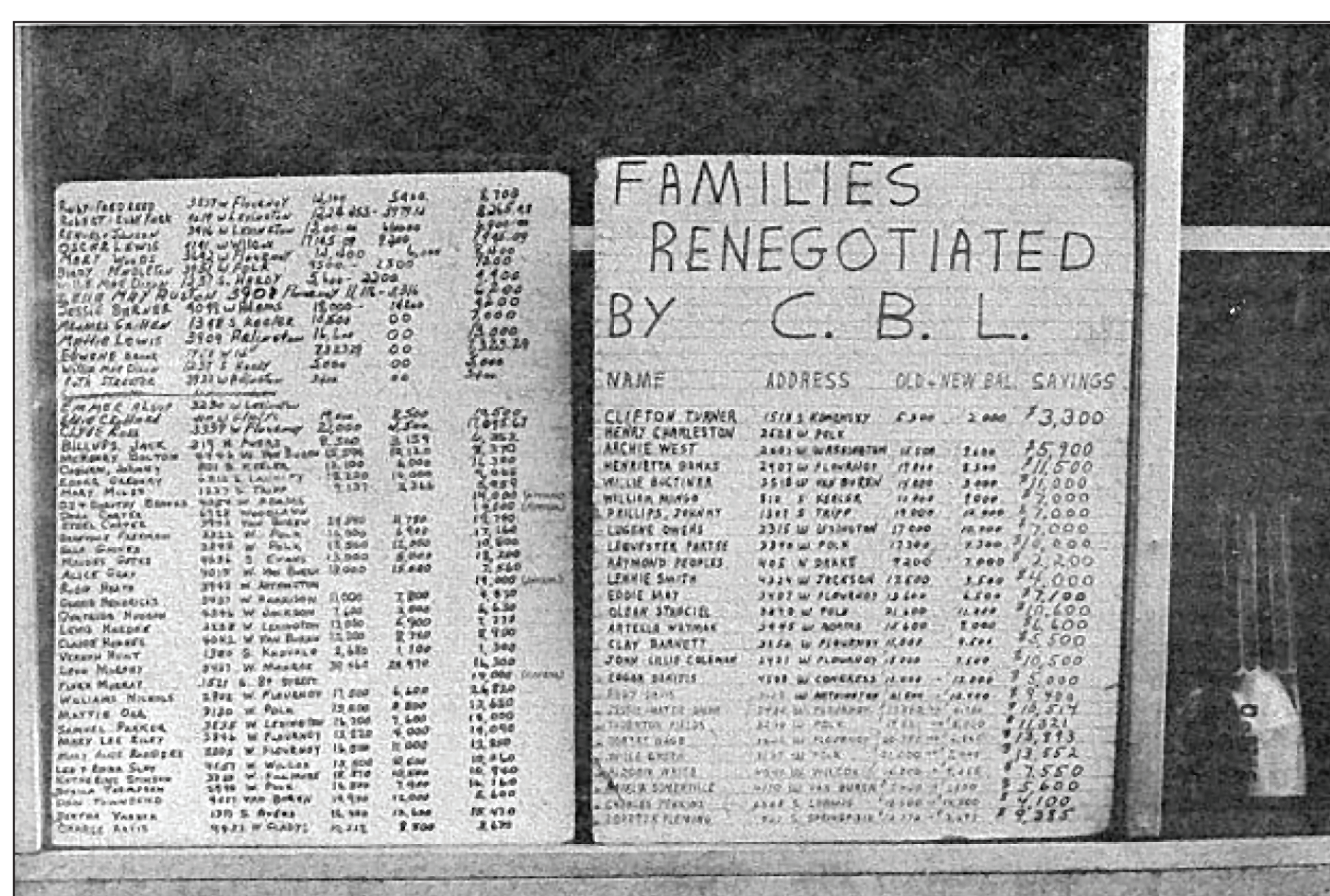
To prepare the cases for trial, we held countless weekly meetings at West and South Side churches. The lawyers included Tom Sullivan, John Tucker, Dick Franch, John Stifler, Carol Thigpen, Jeff Colman and many others, including paralegals who served without fee. We were assisted by several Jesuit seminarians, including Jack Macnamara, the instigator of the CBL movement; the young lady who later became his wife; and two of the finest lawyers in Chicago, William (Bob) Ming and Thomas Boodell, Jr.

The CBL cases, which resulted in two jury trials and a bench trial in federal court, have been the subject of numerous news and magazine articles, several books, and master and doctoral theses. The publicity they engendered, including that related to the holdouts, contributed to the end of exploitive contract sales, the availability of mortgage financing for African-American home buyers, and significant restrictions on racial profiling in the housing market. Specifically, in addition to the savings obtained by our CBL clients, these cases were a major influence in bringing about a number of major reforms such as:

ILLINOIS STATUTE
*Passage of an Illinois statute
requiring contracts to be treated like
mortgages;*

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT

Passage of the federal Community Reinvestment Act, which by the early 1990s was responsible for the reinvestment of \$18 billion dollars in more than 70 U.S. cities.



A black and white photograph showing a row of historic, multi-story brick row houses. The houses are built in a traditional style with ornate architectural details, including bay windows, decorative cornices, and small porches. The street in front of the houses is covered in snow, and a person is walking on the sidewalk in the foreground. The sky is overcast.

A West Side Neighborhood of Chicago

