

Arson Blamed in UW Blaze



Crime Lab Will Check on Evidence

By JUNE DIECKMANN
(Of The State Journal Staff)

Police and fire investigators were searching for one or more arsonists who started nine fires which badly damaged the University of Wisconsin Afro-American Studies office, 929 University Ave., about 4 a.m. Wednesday.

Fire Inspection Capt. John Tappen said a flammable liquid was used to start the fires. Samples of liquid-soaked debris were taken to the State Crime Laboratory for possible identification of the liquid, Tappen reported Wednesday night.

HANS LINGSON, 925 University Ave., called firemen at 3:56 a.m. when he saw flames shooting from windows of the Afro-American office, on the top floor of a three-story frame building converted by the University from residence to offices.

Capt. Tappen said most of the purposely-set fires "did not take hold," but one in a center office had spread to walls and up through the roof by the time firemen arrived. There was also heat, water and smoke damage to the lower two floors, he reported.

Gerald M. Surfus, insurance risk manager for University property, estimated the damage at about \$2,000. Forrest A. Todd, head of University space management, said the Afro-American office and other student-aid offices on the lower floors will be housed temporarily at 935 University Ave.

THIS WAS the ninth unsolved arson-started fire which caused structural damage to University buildings since the Oct. 17, 1967, riotous Dow Chemical Co. recruiting protest, Capt Tappen said.

During the Dow demonstrations, fires were set in North Hall; at the student affairs office, 935 University Ave., and inside Bascom Hall at the office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

Last May, while anti-war protesters staged a sit-in at the University Administration Building, fires were started in South Hall and at an outside door to Bascom Hall.

THE SELECTIVE Service office section, with student draft records at 1220 Capitol Ct., was ignited last October during more student anti-war demonstrations.

Last May, fires were set in North Hall and Birge Hall Zoology Laboratory.

Capt. Tappen said there have been at least 18 other "small nature" fires set in dormitories during protest demonstrations in the past year and a half.

There also have been scores of false fire alarms turned in, most of which have been checked out by University and city police without fire equipment having to be sent to the campus, Tappen said.

Lt. Arthur Kaltenberg and Capt. John Tappen of Fire Prevention Bureau Inspect Damage at Afro-American Studies Office Wednesday
—State Journal Photo by L. Roger Turner