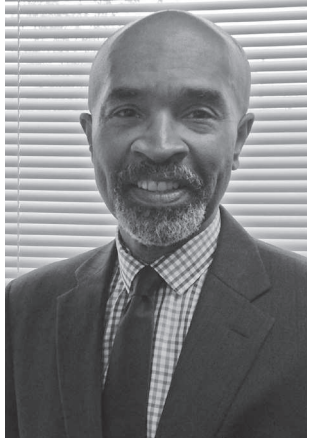


Poe cont'd from pg 1

nity Partnerships. He also co-chaired the Urban League of Portland Board of Directors.

From 2002 to 2005, he sat on the board at PPS, before beginning his career there some four years later.



Lorenzo Poe

When Poe joined PPS as Director of Strategic Partnerships, he launched partnerships that supported the educational mission of the district, raised money from the corporate sector, and built a network of community based programs – particularly with people of color,

on the achievement gap between white students and those of color.

With a mission to help minority students achieve their academic potential, the plan worked to boost PPS's plundering high school graduation rates, curb its exclusionary discipline, improve access to high level courses, and encourage a culturally responsive workforce, along with family and community engagement.

The results have been staggeringly effective. In 2016, 84 percent of Jefferson High School's 123 seniors received diplomas, a giant leap from a 58 percent graduation rate back in 2012. Moreover, all Black students enrolled in Jefferson's SEI Whole School Model graduated at an 88 percent rate, outpacing Oregon's 76 percent graduation rate for White students.

While the plan's trajectory is targeted for success, Poe explained that it's difficult to talk about growth when you have

“I came through this system, and I understand what it feels like when you tell kids they can't achieve

which had historically lacked access to the district's decision-makers.

His work ignited courageous conversations about race, helping connect those isolated communities to the school district. By the end of his first year at PPS, Poe joined forces with then-superintendent Carole Smith to move the discussions into verifiable change for the district – one that was more equitable.

The result was the five-year Racial Equity Plan, passed by the PPS board in the 2010-2011 school year. It called out race-based disparities in schools – among policies, practices and personnel – and tackled head-

a long way to go from where you started.

“I'm not going to undo educational and institutional racism in five years,” he said. “But we are headed in the right direction and our data shows us that.”

From 2010 – 2016, graduation rates for male students of color increased from 45 to 60 percent. The percent of students experiencing exclusionary discipline decreased from 5.7 to 2.6 percent, while the percent of students enrolled in advanced courses increased from 27.8 to 44.7 percent – that's an additional 2,114 students.

Read the rest of this story at
TheSkanner.com

Tracy K. Smith Becomes Poet Laureate

Tracy K. Smith, 45, was named the country's new poet laureate last week by the Library of Congress. Smith won the Pulitzer in 2012 for her poetry collection “Life on Mars” and was a National Book Award finalist for nonfiction three years later for her memoir “Ordinary Light.” The job's official title is the lofty “Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry,” and the recipient also gets a stipend of \$35,000. The laureate “serves as the nation's official lightning rod for the poetic impulse of Americans,” according to the library, and “seeks to raise the national consciousness to a greater appreciation of the reading and writing of poetry.” Smith is also the organizer of a “Resistance” poetry series in conjunction with Mother Jones. Smith received her bachelor's degree at Harvard and her master of fine arts at Columbia; she is now a professor of creative writing at Princeton.



PHOTO BY RACHELELIZA GRIFFITHS

Settlement cont'd from pg 1

of the Clark County corrections department was fired from his job in June 2009. The termination came after a female employee of Pennsylvania-based Wexford Health Solutions Inc. – which was contracted by the Sheriff's Department in 2007 to provide medical services to inmates – filed a complaint that Evelyn had made “lewd, inappropriate, and discriminatory” remarks towards her, prompting an investigation into the allegations.

According to court records, prior to terminating the commander, “the county offered him the opportunity to voluntarily separate from service via a retirement agreement. Evelyn declined the offer.”

The reason, said Evelyn, is that he's innocent. He asserts that the evidence against him was the product of a number of biased interviews with both Wexford and sheriff's department employees.

Moreover, Evelyn believes that “there was a coordinated effort to get rid of me” due to his potentially damaging findings on Wexford Health Solutions Inc.

Wexford violations

For two years, the Commander Evelyn had been detailing a laundry list of violations on the part of Wexford, including inadequate staffing, medical supplies, training and oversight for medical employees; delays in providing medicine and services to chronically-ill inmates; and the promotion of workers into positions where they were not properly licensed.

According to Evelyn, when he

pushed the County to file a breach of contract against Wexford, he lost his job. He was 58-years-old and it was the middle of a recession. “I didn't go along with the program, so I became the enemy,” he said.

Evelyn's allegations were, in fact, backed by an outside audit of Wexford, requested by Clark County shortly before his termination. Conducted by the Institute for Law and Policy Planning, the report found Wexford “has systematically failed to comply

“There was a coordinated effort to get rid of me

with the many complex undertakings included in its contract with the county.”

It its conclusion, ILPP wrote “We find that Wexford is in breach of contract, and its current services saddle the County with unacceptable costs and liability.”

Even so, Clark County did not terminate its contact with Wexford following the audit.

According to an article from Modern Healthcare, between 2004 and 2009, 463 claims were brought against Wexford nationwide. The healthcare provider settled 38 of the claims, totaling \$3.1 million. Nine claims were tried, with Wexford winning five.

Discrimination lawsuits

Six months after his termination, on Dec. 11, 2009, Evelyn filed a suit against the Clark County Sheriff's department. He alleged

that during the 20 years of his employment, the department had subjected him to both a hostile work environment and disparate treatment because of his race.

According to Evelyn, he was subjected to racist and discriminatory comments, notes and emails over the course of two decades – one email coming directly from Sheriff Garry Lucas.

The trial court granted summary judgment in favor of the County, ruling that Evelyn lacked the evidence to go to trial. He petitioned to the court of appeals, which supported one of his claims, but not the disparate treatment, and remanded the case.

The Skanner reached out to Clark County for a comment regarding Evelyn's recent settlement. Emily A. Sheldrick, attorney for the Clark County Prosecutor's Office, Civil Division, sent the following statement via email: “Clark County learned on Monday, June 12 that Clark County's liability carrier reached a settlement with Clifford Evelyn to resolve and dismiss his claims against the County.”

Evelyn's was one of three racial discrimination tort claims filed against the Sheriff's department in 2009.

Former jail employee Britt Easterly – who since found employment with the U.S. Secret Service in Washington D.C – won his discrimination suit in August 2016 and received \$500,000 from Clark County, reported *The Columbian*.

Read more at **TheSkanner.com**

Memory cont'd from pg 1

light and work on projects together that mattered,” Portland writer and musician S. Renee Mitchell wrote on Facebook Saturday night.

“He's going to be very missed,” Portland restaurateur Frank Taylor told *The Skanner*.

“Thara Memory was our 2012 Portland Jazz Master,” Don Lucoff, executive artistic director of the Portland Jazz Festival, told *The Skanner*. “We honored him for his service to the music and what he's brought to Portland in particular.”

Lucoff said Memory “put Portland on the map nationally from an education standpoint,” with former students go-

ing on to study at The Julliard School and Berklee College of Music. In 2015 Memory's high school band won the Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially El-

“We honored him for his service to the music and what he's brought to Portland in particular

lington competition in New York.

Memory was born in Tampa, Fla., raised in Eatonville and educated at Alabama State University. He started

teaching at Portland State University in 1971 and formed the university's first jazz band.

Memory played with Dizzie Gillespie, James Brown, Stanley Turrentine, Eddie Henderson, Natalie Cole, The Four Tops, Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Harris and The Commodores. In 1991, Memory recorded his first CD, “Juke Music,” following with a second, “Chronicle,” in 2006. He also played locally with Mel Brown and the late Leroy Vinnegar and led his own Thara Memory Superband.

Best known for his contributions to the jazz scene, Memory also composed and conducted classical music. He also collaborated with Mitchell on

“Sherman,” a historical jazz operetta based on the life of Sherman Thomas, a saxophonist active in Northeast Portland active in the 1960s and '70s, when Williams Avenue was known as “Black Broadway.”

Members of Memory's family could not be reached for comment, and no memorial service has yet been announced.

In February Memory was arraigned on eight counts of third-degree sex abuse, two of attempted sexual abuse and one count of harassment, all stemming from allegations made by former students.