

# A media spotlight shines

on Weston's biology work and Bell's controversies

By Debbie Howlett  
of the Emerald

James Weston calls it the "cascade effect." Weston, a biology professor at the University who was featured a few weeks ago in *Newsweek*, says his sudden popularity is something of a fluke.

Holding a copy of *Mosaic*, a research magazine, Weston says that the *Newsweek* Science Editor probably ran across an article about his work in that magazine and decided Weston might be a good source.

Derrick Bell, dean of the University law school has a similar explanation of his new-found "notoriety."

*Oregon* magazine named Bell one of Oregon's "rising stars," a title Bell laughs at and compares to the ten "worst dressed" women list.

"Those women are not necessarily the worst dressed," Bell says.

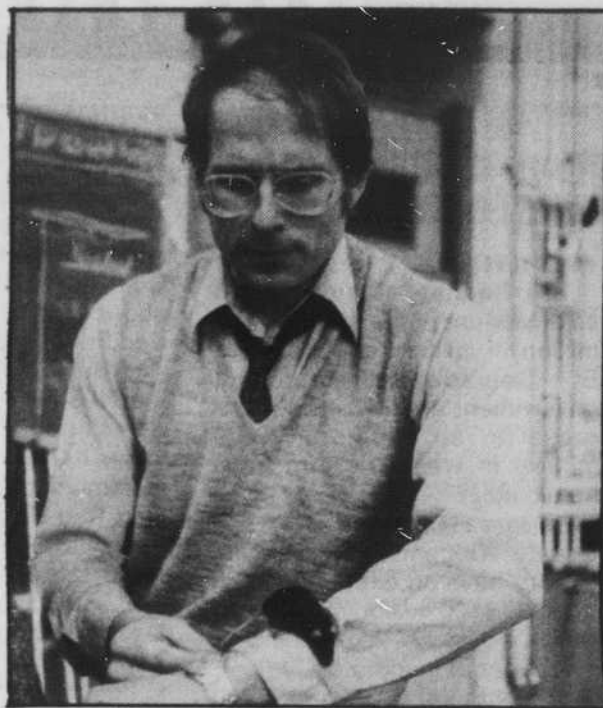
He adds that the brouhaha surrounding the Pacific Northwest Resource Center reported in most of the Oregon newspapers, added to the attention.

Media men. Both seem to wear the title with more than a little modesty and disdain.

In his cubicle office, shelves jammed with books, Weston, whose hair is slightly mussed, looks through his thick, frameless glasses. Asked if he would consider himself a "leader" in his field of embryonic biology, Weston says "I wouldn't."

He adds that he doesn't consider himself to be an exceptionally modest man but he's not sure why he was singled out from his lab.

"I was involved, certainly. But my major role is to act as coordinator and supply an idea or two."



James Weston

His work is often too complex for the layman, but Weston explains his ideas and theories easily with a good measure of patience. In fact, Weston seems more interested in explaining his work than in talking about the *Newsweek* article.

Weston's lab researches cells and extracellular materials, which he explains as "the neighborhood." In his lab, Weston tries to find out if one cell will transform into another, similar type of cell, if given the proper extracellular situation.

To both Weston and Bell, their media exposure is secondary to their work.

Bell says he didn't even know of the article until one of his son's teachers sent it home with him.

"My positions in civil rights tends to be controversial. . . I'm a black man in a mostly white situation," Bell says, in an effort to explain the *Oregon* article.

Bell, a Harvard law professor for 11 years before coming to the University, is an easy media mark.

The *Oregon* article mentions that Bell occupies the position once held by Wayne Morris, but Bell says he isn't trying for anything more than what he has now.

"That's dangerous," he says, "you can become trapped."

Bell's work at the law school has been a chain of controversy and tough times, first came the PNRC and charges that the University was responding more to private timber interests instead of students.

Then came complaints that FBI recruiters at the law school discriminated against homosexuals.

Bell's sent a letter to the FBI informing them that if the complaint were true, they wouldn't be permitted to recruit at the law school. To date, the FBI hasn't recruited at the law school.

But does he deserve the title "rising star?" Bell says "I don't think so. . . not really."



Derrick Bell

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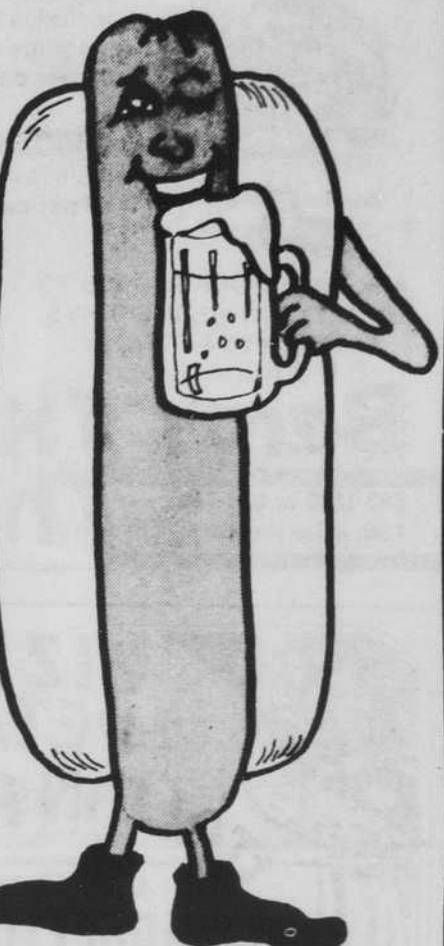
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