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A New Dental Research Study at Russell Street Clinic

Are You HIV POSITIVE?

Do You Have Tooth Pain?

Do You Have These Symptoms?

Do you have a persistent tooth ache, intermittent tooth pain, or swelling in your mouth or face? Have you been told your tooth needs a root canal?

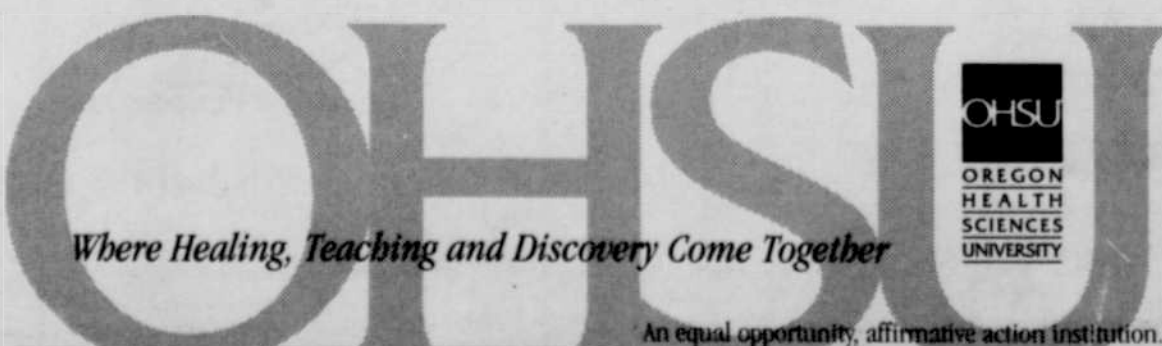
Participate In A New Free Research Study

You may qualify to participate in the *Oral Health Enhancement Study* being conducted by the Russell Street Dental Clinic, a part of OHSU. Volunteers must be HIV positive, 18 to 65 years of age and have at least 20 teeth.

Benefits

Participants will receive free root canal treatment, free CD4 counts and viral load blood tests, free check-ups, and \$125 for participation. Participants will also be helping to improve the quality of life for people with HIV.

For more information, call: **(503) 494-6300**



THEATER

Maiden ladies

Having Our Say is a tribute to family histories and victory over oppression

BY FLORA SUSSELY

We are visitors. Guests of two remarkable women, both more than a century old, at home preparing a birthday dinner for their father. This is the set and premise of *Having Our Say*, presented this season by Artists Repertory Theatre.

As we listen to these two sisters recall the lives of their grandparents, parents and themselves, we are made aware of the drama in all lives, the quiet victory of love and the strength of character that takes some families from oppression and poverty to triumph and dignity.

material. They are riveting. "Brava!" to each of them.

In the program under Director's Notes, Michelle Blackmon writes: "We all have Delany sister stories in our families. History is nothing more than the stories of our lives written down. So learn them. Share them. It will open up a world of amazement, and realizing the similarities will hopefully bring us all closer together."

This is the great truth about this play: While it deals with slavery and segregation and

lynchings, it also deals with family and theology, devotion and other common denominators in all cultures. In many ways, it is reminiscent of the writings in Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, in which he outlines how he survived a Nazi concentration camp.

These two women—and all their siblings—survived a hostile, racist world and succeeded in ways unheard of in their time. All eight went to college, Bessie becoming a dentist and Sadie a home economics teacher. Bessie was the activist, almost getting herself lynched, according to Sadie. On the other hand, Sadie was a mama's child, always smoothing things over, doing the right thing.

And, much to the dismay of one of Bessie's amorous suitors, years and years and years ago, Sadie declared that "You can't miss something you haven't had!" In fact, the Delany sisters think they've lived this long because they never married. But don't call them old maids, they're "maiden ladies!"

Throughout this engaging, interesting and moving play, we hear truths common to all people of color in a white world. Says

Bessie: "You can't be as good as them, you've got to be better. Because if you screw up just once, they'll say: 'What did I tell you!!' Why, if Dan Quayle was colored, he'd be doing dishes somewhere!"

Having Our Say is a social and political accounting of a century filled with oppression but also full of victories. It is also a warm, intimate evening spent cooking and drinking tea with two bright and funny women. Time flies and by the end of the evening, when they invite us to join them for dinner, we are full of affection and respect, ready to help clear the table and listen a bit longer.

During this season of family dynamics and obligations to our family relationships, this show puts a larger perspective on things. It will help you look at life in retrospect, remember and cherish what we might otherwise take for granted. This is a great show to share with family.

■ Artists Repertory Theatre presents *HAVING OUR SAY* through Dec. 20. Shows are 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday at the Reiersgaard Theatre, 1516 S.W. Alder St. in Portland. For tickets, which cost \$13.50-\$25, call 241-1ART.

PHOTO BY OWEN CAREY



Brenda Phillips (standing) and Demene E. Hall

The funny thing is, this is not a heavy-handed play that delivers the message in melodrama. *Having Our Say* is a touching and humorously delivered dialogue. Indeed, in one of the many mirthful moments, the line "Oppressed people have a great sense of humor" summarizes these wise women.

The tale was originally presented as an interview in *The New York Times* in 1991; in September of that year, Amy Hill Hearth wrote "Two Maiden Ladies with Centuries Old Stories to Tell." Out of that came a book in 1993: *Having Our Say, The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years*. By 1995, the theatrical version had opened on Broadway.

Demene E. Hall (Dr. Bessie Delany) and Brenda Phillips (Miss Sadie Delany) deliver honest performances, rich in individual personality and intelligence. They are so natural together, so literally at home on the stage that we hang on their every word and gesture. As photo album pictures are projected in the background, we follow their stories. As they cook and set the table, we feel like we're at our Great Aunt's house. There is something about this work, and their interpretation of it, that pulls us into their family as if it were our own. Hall and Phillips are absolute masters of this