

SKPS hosting community learning sessions celebrating Black history

Salem-Keizer Public Schools is partnering with members in the community to provide a series of learning sessions throughout the 2021-22 school year. These sessions are currently held online and are open to the public.

The second Community Learning Session is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 31 and will be hosted by Salem-Keizer School Board Chair Osvaldo Avila and SKPS Director of Student Equity, Access and Advancement Cynthia Richardson.

The event will be hosted on Zoom and will run from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with time for questions from attendees.

The online-only session includes an interactive presentation celebrating Black history in our state. Panelists include McKay Senior Grace Caldwell, who also serves as the student advisor to the school board, Oregon State Senator Lew Frederick, Oregon Black Pioneers President Willie Richardson and Gwen Carr, who served on the board of the Oregon Black Pioneers for close to 20 years — panelist bios are featured below.

GRACE CALDWELL

Caldwell is currently a senior at McKay High School and serves as

Salem-Keizer's second student advisor to the school board. She represents the voices of nearly 40,000 students. Outside of her district responsibilities, she is active in her school's community. She enjoys competing in tennis, singing in the McKay Concert Choir and a cappella group and drawing cartoons. She has plans to attend a four-year university and study political science.



Caldwell



Richardson

WILLIE RICHARDSON

Richardson and her spouse of 50 years, Thomas, moved with their family to Salem in 1978. She was employed

with the State of Oregon from 1978-1991 where she held several positions. In 1993 she opened Willie's Fashion Hats and More and in 2003 the store became A Time for Elegance, a retail shop for women's formal wear. She retired from the retail business in 2010 to pursue her love and passion of sharing the rich history of African-American contributions and culture with Oregon.

Since 2004, Richardson has served as chairperson of Oregon Black Pioneers where she actively researches and documents the history of African Americans and their contributions to the development of the State of Oregon. Their contributions are recognized, honored and shared with the broader community in a variety of ways.

She is the first and only African-American who has served on the Salem-Keizer School Board.



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