



# PORTLAND OBSERVER

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## Linguist ask 'language' rights

Language differences result in a form of discrimination that should be dealt with by civil rights laws, according to Dr. Orlando L. Taylor, Speech teacher at Howard University and Senior Researcher for the Center for Applied Linguistics.

Taylor explained that persons who use basic English properly as far as grammar is concerned, are often denied employment because of regional differences in pronunciation. An example is that of teachers trained at Marshall University in West Virginia who are not eligible for positions with the Cleveland Public Schools because their accents are not acceptable.

There is no standard national idiom or form of pronunciation, but the standard used by most employers is the mid-west or northern white pronunciation. Employers often will select those applicants that speak most nearly like that pronunciation. Some companies do hire minority people but hire only those with the desired speech pattern, discriminating against those with southern or other speech patterns.

Research has shown that when confronted by equally qualified applicants employers will choose the person with the more acceptable accent.

Taylor emphasized that regional differences in speech should not be allowed to hinder individual's opportunity for employment. He believes that employers do have the right to expect proper use of grammar if it is job related - for example for a secretary or receptionist, but that even proper grammar should not be a deterrent in many jobs.

Blacks, many of whom use what is commonly called Black English, and use variations in pronunciation and grammar, should learn to use standard English, Taylor said. Regardless of the form of speech they wish to use off the job, Black students should learn standard English as a route to better jobs. There is a language of education, which transcends other forms and gives a

standard of grammar and meaning, although regional differences still affect pronunciation. Employers can expect the command of the language of education if it applies to the position.

Those who achieve this standard, and learn to use the language of Education as is expected of them should not be punished when they move to another area where pronunciation expectations are different.

The discrimination against language is cultural, Taylor maintains, since the type of speech considered desirable is usually that of the status group. Although Chicanos, Appalachian whites, southern Blacks, Puerto Rican's and others are not employed because of their speech patterns, individuals with German, French, or European Spanish dialects are considered desirable.

Taylor believes that language and speech patterns should become one of the criteria covered in civil rights legislation, since other cultural factors - national origin and religion - are covered and set a precedent.



A fall day in the woods

Photo by Dan Long

## L. C. Ellison: He cares about people

by Martha Anderson



L.C. ELLISON

Caring about other people has been a way of life for L.C. Ellison throughout his seventy years. Asked how he first got involved, he says: "It all started in Warren, Arkansas many years ago where I saw the methods used by white policemen against some Negro people. At that time the least little thing someone did, they'd shove them around like they weren't human. When they caught them they didn't arrest them. They just 'peeled' them with a blackjack, sent them home and told them when to come back to the courthouse and pay the bill. Then, there was the case of Jim McClendon who killed a white man who had invaded his home. He was sentenced to life but Dr. White, president of the local NAACP and I worked hard securing good legal aid for McClendon which resulted in his spending only one year in prison. We weren't able to help everyone that got in trouble as some brought it on themselves."

Mr. Ellison feels strongly about the approach used toward a wrongdoer. He belongs to the auxiliary police force, a

group composed of 75-80 volunteer concerned citizens, who function at all big events and in emergencies of all kinds. For several years the group worked closely with the schools and park bureau. "The first year," Ellison said, "that our department was organized we saved nine thousand dollars worth of equipment from being vandalized at Irvington Park. That's quite a savings to the taxpayers and that's just one park."

Sometimes according to Ellison, it was necessary for the auxiliary force to make person-to-person contact. "That happened at Sellwood Park, when we learned the caretaker and his wife had been shoved in the pool. By just talking with the young people the trouble ceased. This method worked well at Irvington: to we didn't have to make any arrests. Just a calm quiet talk and a little kindness was all it took. You don't have to go after them like they're a lion or something. And you get results quicker." (Please turn to p. 2 col. 1)

## Conference supports HR Commission

The National Association of Human Rights Workers, made up of professionals in the fields of human relations and civil rights, voted to support the continuation of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission in Portland.

The organization resolved:

- That the National Association of Human Rights Workers call upon the total citizenry of Portland, and especially all community-based organizations and social agencies, to express their concern and support for the continuance of the Human Relations Commission and for the restoration of the Commission's original functions and responsibilities;
- That the elected officials of Portland be called upon to provide adequate budget and staff for the Human Relations Commission, to enable it to carry

on its essential services in the cause of human rights in Portland;

- And that we express our profound conviction that the cause of human rights in Oregon would be severely hurt by the abolition of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission of Portland.

The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission has been funded for only six months to allow for a study of its goals and effectiveness. The City Council will determine whether it should continue or be abolished and either another agency be formed or its duties transferred to an existing agency.

James Blair, Assistant Secretary for Equal Opportunity and Fair Housing, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, told some two hundred delegates at the conference that one of the major areas of crisis in education is in the area of human relations.

"If you find a school district that has problems in human relations - between students, between students and teachers, between the administration and the community - you will find that it has other problems as well. A school district that is working toward solving its human relations problems is a district that is doing well in other areas."

Asked about the discrimination in HUD financial housing, Blair explained that the Office of Equal Opportunity has always been understaffed and that former directors have been unable to function properly. Blair has only been on the job for three months, but predicted that there will be improvements after he has had time to assess the problems and set priorities. He said Equal Opportunity has not been a priority item in HUD and that staff limitations still hinder effective enforcement of fair housing laws.

## Wilds heads Forest Service EEO

Jettie B. Wilds, Jr., Region 6's first Civil Rights director, has left Portland for the Forest Service's Washington Office to head the Civil Rights program for the entire Forest Service.

Wilds, thirty-five, said he would be instituting a Civil Rights effort closely patterned after that of Region 6. He reports directly to Jack W. Deinema, United States Forest Service deputy chief for Administration.

Wilds said his number one priority in the new job will be to identify various Civil Rights areas in addition to Equal Employment Opportunity which the Forest Service should be dealing with.

He said his objective would be to achieve "an affirmative action posture over the whole Civil Rights field." This, he continued, includes Equal Employ-

ment Opportunity, but is not limited to Equal Employment Opportunity. The program would include such concerns as gaining greater minority use of National Forest recreation areas, cooperative involvement with minority landowners and contractors, greater minority representation on advisory committees, and greater attention to Civil Rights in special uses on the National Forests.

"We should institute the whole notion of Civil Rights into everything we do," he declared.

Looking back over Civil Rights accomplishments in Region 6, Wilds pointed out that "we have increased the number of minorities on board. More minority persons are in the field in all areas than ever before. More women are in non-traditional jobs, and we're

just beginning to see women in the upper level managerial jobs," he recounted.

But, he added, there have been frustrations. The greatest one, he continued, has been an "inability to keep pace with expectations. We have built (minority) expectations to an all time high, but haven't always been able to deliver in a timely fashion when those expectations were at their highest."

Wilds has been in Region 6 since 1969 after serving as assistant director of the Anthony Civilian Conservation Center on the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. He first worked in the RO Division of I&E, and then went to the Mt. Hood National Forest as a personnel specialist. He was assigned

to the RO Division of Personnel Management before being named to fill the new position of director of Civil Rights a year ago.

A native of Tampa, Florida, Jettie Wilds graduated from Morehouse College, Atlanta, with a BA in mathematics, and taught math in Tampa secondary schools before entering the Job Corps program in 1966. He earned a Master's degree in social study from Portland State University in 1972, and has since been working toward a Ph.D. in urban studies.

His wife, Ozepher, and daughters, Jemelle, nine, and Jeria, seven, are moving with him to the new assignment.

His successor in Region 6 has not yet been announced.

## Commission seeks new members

Vernon Summers, Director of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, announced that the Commission will have vacancies on December 31st and from time to time during the year. Organizations wishing to suggest a person to be appointed to the Commission should send a resume to 410 City Hall.

The Commission is also seeking members to serve on committees including: Education, Employment, Housing, Police Community Relations, Nominating, Evaluation, Russell A. Peyton Human Relations Award, Legislative, and Personnel. Persons interested in serving on these committees should send their

name, address and telephone number to the Commission office.

Nominations are being accepted for the Russell Peyton Human Relations Award. The award is presented to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to human services or intergroup relations, and is made in honor of Russell Peyton, the first director of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission.

In 1973, the first award was presented to John A. Mills, a Vice President of the U. S. National Bank. The 1974 award was presented to a former MHRC Chairman, Thomas J. Sloan, Personnel Manager of Tektronix, Inc.

## Customer representative sells power conservation



CHARLES WHITE

Take a man who likes people...blend it with a knowledge of the why of rising electric rates...add a desire to help customers keep bills down...and you have the recipe for Charles White, Pacific Power and Light Company's new customer representative.

One of the seven PP&L customer representatives in Portland, White has responsibility for customer relations in an area running from Northeast Prescott to Northeast Sandy and from Northeast 15th to Northeast 72nd.

Although he's been on the job as a customer representative for just a month, the utility business isn't new to him. White worked for PP&L in the engineering department from 1969 until he left for a job as a ticket agent for Continental Airlines in 1971.

Coming back to PP&L as a customer representative, with his utility experience and interest in meeting the public, was a natural for him.

"I don't meet as many people as I did on a daily basis at the airport," he says, "but the challenges are greater. The issues facing an electric utility such as PP&L are difficult to explain to customers - but their understanding is the vital component to energy development

in this country."

White firmly believes that if energy development isn't allowed to continue in this country, it will be the poor and disadvantaged who will suffer.

Adequate energy supplies and a rising standard of living go hand in hand, according to White. "If we stop building new power plants, who will be hurt?", he asks. "It won't be the fellow who already has the freezer, the color TV or dishwasher but the guy who hasn't gotten them yet."

Part of White's job is answering customer inquiries about their electric bills.

"I'm available to go into customer's homes at their request to explain which appliances are using what amounts of electricity and to give them some ideas on how to conserve," he says.

He has a list of several suggestions to make homes more "energy efficient."

- Install adequate insulation in floors, ceilings, walls. If this is economically impossible, check around doors and windows for air leaks and correct with weather stripping.

- Inexpensive plastic storm windows can cut heat loss through glass surface by as much as fifty percent.

- Draw drapes to reduce heat loss through window surfaces in winter - it can stop up to sixteen percent of heat loss through windows.

- When fireplace is not in use, close damper - a good chimney can draw as much as twenty percent of the heat out of the house in one hour.

- Keep thermostat set at lowest comfortable level. Each degree over seventy costs about five percent more on the electric bill.

- Check for leaky faucets - a leak of sixty drops a minute will send 192 gallons of water down the drain in a month.

- Lower temperature on hot water heat. Water heaters use almost four times more energy than any appliance in your home so watch hot water consumption.

- Be sure furnace is in good working condition. Furnace filters should be cleaned or replaced regularly.

With rates rising, these and other conservation efforts can help lessen the impact, says White, who is also concerned that customers in his area understand the reason behind increased rates.

"It boils down to three main reasons

- the tremendous amount of dollars being invested by utilities in new generating plants, general inflation and a shift in the Northwest from lower cost hydro power to more expensive power generated at nuclear and coal-fired plants," explains White.

"We've virtually exhausted sites on the Northwest's rivers on which to build new hydro dams. Now we've got to move into other forms of generation - more costly because fuel is required now in place of the water."

White isn't out to convince customers that rising rates are good for them but "maybe if people really understand what's happening, they won't be so apt to jump to wrong conclusions."

White, thirty-two, is a native Portlander and graduated from Benson High School. He's close to completing a degree in speech from Portland State University, which he'll continue working towards at night. Spare time is reserved for his wife, and three sons.

As a customer representative, White is also available to civic, social, church and community groups for program presentations on energy conservation or industry-related topics.