

Portland Profile

by Linda Thompson

It has been my belief for many years that each individual has a certain area that he/she performs best in professionally. For humanitarians cannot be bookkeepers and bookkeepers cannot be humanitarians. To be truly successful, one should not work out of his "calling".

Our role model for this week, James Mason, is indeed working within his professional calling. His mild manner and very basic attitude gives his clients a feeling of comfort and "at ease" -- a very necessary quality for his type of counseling.

Mason is a probation officer for the State of Oregon, Portland Branch, North.

A native of Houston, Texas, Mason attended high school in various parts of the U.S. including the states of Texas, Oregon and California. He received his high school diploma from Burrough High School in Burrough, California. From high school he went into the Marine Corps. He then decided to further his education in Longview, Washington at Lower Columbia College where he majored in pre-nursing. This major was short lived because of school rules -- at least two males had to be enrolled in a class

and males were not allowed to demonstrate procedures on women. Being the only man enrolled in the course, the idea of being a nurse had to be abandoned.

In 1960, he did on-the-job training as a Histological Technician at Emanuel Hospital and took required courses at the University of Oregon Health Science Center. He remained at Emanuel for nine years.

Education and the need for it is a reality that Mason knew. In 1969, he returned to school at Oregon College of Education in Monmouth, where he received a BS in Social Science Education.

James is a humanitarian in his own right. His entire professional career exemplifies the above statement. In 1972 he became a Corrections Counselor for Oregon State Penitentiary. During this time he was also working on his master's degree at OCE, majoring in Correctional Administration. From OSP, he transferred to his present position.

Approximately two terms a year James uses his talent and expertise to teach a course in Probation and Parole or Corrections at Portland Community College.

The very quiet mannered Mr. Mason enjoys jogging, basketball, baseball, remodeling and yard work.

A family man, James is the father of four children: Silvia, Calvin, Angela and Jermaine. He is married to Ella Ann Mason, an RN at Emanuel.

One of the many reasons why I have admired and respected Mason as a professional over the years is the fact that he projects a sense of security about himself. He can mingle with his clients in almost any area and still maintain their respect.

Mason has this to say about success:

"Life has not always been easy for me, especially in high school. I credit much of my adjustment to my family and the people who really cared for me. In any field you decide to go into, there is a certain amount of dedication and sacrifice on your part and your family members' parts. To be able to deal in any behavioral type profession, one must possess a certain amount of humanitarianism. You must use the golden rule theory. I treat all my clients as I would like to be treated if I were in their position instead of mine.

"If you have any idea of what profession you are interested in, familiarize yourself with key persons in these professions. The reason for depend on those institutions to do their responsibilities in giving a



JAMES MASON

this is that you cannot in all cases minority student the necessary career counseling.

"Education is the backbone to all of it. There is a discriminatory way of eliminating and screening out persons for certain positions. If you have it, you can demand certain things. If you don't, what can you do?"

Until next week remember: First comprehend and remember that consistency is the key to success in any relationship."

Black Repertory Theatre presents 'For Colored Girls . . .

Excitement and anticipation have already begun to permeate those who have heard that the Portland Black Repertory Theatre will present Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls . . ."

"For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf" will run August 16 through September 22nd, Thursday through Saturday, at 9:00 p.m. (7:30 for dinner) at Opening Night Cabaret, 2229 S.E. Hawthorne. Rosemary Allen directs and Thara Memory and the Portland Jazz Allstars, which include Sonny King, Janice Scroggins, Andre St. James and Don Redmond, will play an original score arranged by Memory.

Ntozake Shange (pronounced Entow-Zok-aye and Shawn-gay) is one of the brightest stars now rising in the literary and theatrical world. Shange's choreopoem is a life's statement as to what Shange herself is all about. The work is an orchestrated, choreographed presentation of poems and prose pieces for seven Black actresses.

Ms. Allen has cast a talented group of professional and amateur local Black actresses. From ages 25 to 38, all have personally experienced many of the triumphs and errors of

the women in "For Colored Girls . . ."

The seven women, who are simply named colors of the rainbow are: Antoinette Edwards (yellow), Debra Hicks (blue), Omenka Nnadi (purple), Carolyn Easterly (orange), Cheryl Wilson (brown), Laverne Springer (red), and Ruby Burns (green), who is also choreographer. Understudy is Rose Washington (lavendar).

The play is designed to "Sing a Black girl's song." And it does with sadness, pain, humor and hope. Shange writes, "sing a Black girl's song. . .sing a song of life, she's been dead so long." Studying the mythology of women from antiquity to the present day helped Shange develop her sense of the world, her new and liberated sense of herself and also her penetrating insight into what she calls "women's language". Women, for Shange, speak in a kind of tribal symbolism; for women have been made into what is most often a cruel world apart.

Portland Black Repertory Theatre was founded in 1975 as an alternative in a city which abounds in "industry showcase theatres" which traditionally offer little or no opportunities for artists of color. PBRT has already become a strong force in

introducing to Portland audiences talented Black artists and plays about the Black experience.

Although the Repertory is inadequately financed, it has continued to produce at least two productions yearly. PBRT operates with a core group of ten actors, technicians and other artists. Auditions are open to professionals and amateur community talent, who are also encouraged to participate in all areas of production.

PBRT prides itself with a talented and experienced production staff for "For Colored Girls . . ." Musical Director is the widely known and highly acclaimed trumpet player and band leader, Thara Memory. Ruby Burns, a recent addition to the Portland dance community from New York and instructor at Dancers Workshop, is choreographer. Choanitia Henderson is costume designer. Henderson designed costumes for Portland's national touring soul-rock band, Pleasure, and was a CETA artist with teh Albina Mural Project.

Lighting Designer is Killeh Dura Suma, who will have earned an M.A. in theater arts from PSU this fall. Technical Director is Ken Berry, musician and vocalist. Director,

Rosemary Allen is one of Portland's major advocates of Black theater. Miss Allen has been an actress since 1971, has been producing Black theater since 1974 and in 1976 started directing. She is co-founder and producing director of PBRT.

The production of "For Colored Girls . . ." is sponsored by the Portland Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women and a grant from the MacKenzie River Gathering Foundation.

Tickets are \$5.00 and can be purchased now at Opening Night Cabaret. Call 231-1760 for reservations.

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