

# Affirmative Action officer tours China

by Kathryn H. Bogle

With her thoughts still swirling with memories of a friendly people, exciting excursions into beautiful country landscapes and a rare experience for her historian self to feel the sweep of an ancient historic past, Pearl Spears Gray has but recently returned to her post in Corvallis, Oregon. Here, as its Director of Affirmative Action, she picks up the well known avenues of her place in the academic world of Oregon State University.

Pearl Spears Gray is at home from Beijing, China.

But then, Ms. Spears Gray is often returning home from some interesting far-off place.

Born, not long ago, in Selma, Alabama, Ms. Spears Gray was brought up in Washington, D.C. where she was graduated from the Spingarn Senior High School and was quickly enrolled at Wilberforce where she won her B.A. degree, majoring in Sociology.

Her interest in history, American History and Afro-American History, and her pursuit of a teaching career led her next to Antioch-Putney Graduate School of Education, and here Pearl Spears Gray was awarded the M.A.T. Degree in June of 1970. She is now at the dissertation stage towards acquiring her Ph.D. from Oregon State University.

For five years, with apparent joy, Pearl Spears Gray taught History, Black History, Afro-American History, Race and Racism, and Political Problems in Black Communities as well as Government and Sociology to high school students of Washington, D.C.



Foo Dog at the Summer Palace in Peking.

Always there had been an abiding interest in Africa and in 1969 and 1970, in the company of other educators, she visited Africa. She traveled to Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Dahomey. She studied at the University College of Cape Coast in Ghana and at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Here, she drank in the culture and the history, and learned the geography and economics of Africa first hand.

The year of 1971 found Spears Gray in Rhode Island as Executive L.E.A. Assistant Coordinator of the Teacher Corps Project, and in 1973 she came to Portland as Associate Director in the Portland Urban Teacher Education Program (PUTEP).

From Portland to Corvallis, it was a short, but important step -- to Oregon State University and to her present position.

Pearl Spears Gray now advises the University president and the executive officers of that institution regarding University policies and procedures concerning affirmative action. Among other duties she has is the charge to provide liaison with Corvallis community organizations regarding employment and educational opportunities for women and minorities. Perhaps one of the most important functions of her office is to coordinate and monitor University affirmative action recruitment and placement efforts.

The trip to China was in a tour with the U.S.-China Friendship Study Tour program with, principally, educators. There were 48 people in the party, five of whom were Black and one Chicano member. The Friendship Hotel, the modern section of this huge complex, was the headquarters for their party in Peijung.

Although the party had been briefed carefully in Los Angeles (or maybe, because they had been) the Chinese national guide assigned to them left ample free time for the individuals in the group to shop or go walking alone. With their guides they saw the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Mao's Museum. Small shops offered supplies of jades and silks and small artifacts to those tourists with sufficient purchasing power.

The party moved on to Changsha, the beautiful city that was the birthplace of Chairman Mao and the site of his early revolutionary period, but Spears Gray was stricken by a bacteria that she had harbored in her system before leaving home.

She had to be hospitalized and isolated in a foreign hospital where she did not know the language. The prospect was frightening but Pearl says of her experience now: "If I were to become ill here and now, I could not think of a better place to be ill!"

The care was modern, efficient, attentive -- and inexpensive. The patient saw her room washed down every day, had excellent nursing, medication prescribed and agreed upon by a battery of physicians assigned to her case and who visited her individually and as a team each day. Many of the doctors spoke English and the Chief of Staff had been trained in Minnesota!

Socialized medicine as practiced in Changsha took care of the bill and left only medication and x-rays for Ms. Spears Gray to pay.

Ms. Spears Gray is enthusiastic about the eight-hour train ride from Changsha to Kiveilin, where the very modern train glided through beautiful green mountainous areas to reach their destination. The tour group was assigned in this city to an air conditioned floor of a modernized hotel, and, for sightseeing they rode in air-conditioned busses.

A visit to Guangzhou (Canton) gave the touring party an opportunity to get acquainted with families

## Notice

Local news commentator, Floyd McKay, will moderate a lively discussion of the Northwest Regional Energy Bill, Thursday, October 25, 7:30 p.m. at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 N.E. Hancock, Portland.

Panel members for the two-hour program will be: Jim Lazar, Economist on utility rate structures, representing FERN (Fair Electric Rates Now); John Lobdell, Public Utility Commissioner of Oregon, recently appointed by Governor Atiyeh; Robert Marritz, the Coordinator for the Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee, and Doug Scott, Northwest representative of the Sierra Club.

living in communes. Here they heard lectures on the history of peasants before and following the revolution and heard a great deal about Mao.

Lasting impressions of China come quickly to Ms. Spears Gray. The great friendliness of the Chinese people, their happiness over their improved level of living, the non-existent crime are evident.

Hong Kong now has as commercial a flavor as New York. Hong Kong will be remembered now by Ms. Spears Gray as the city where Mercedes cars and Jaguars are at nearly every corner, where there is not only a Hilton to house you, but a McDonalds to feed you. But, by the way, too, a hamburger just might cost \$5.00 American!

On the trip Pearl took few pictures but relied on the camera and expertise of a friend, Dorothy Ehrichs, a photo-journalist in the party. Ms. Ehrichs gave us permission to print two from her portfolio.

What is next on the agenda for Pearl Spears Gray? Well, first the Doctoral degree -- and then who knows? Probably college teaching -- or a college presidency? who knows? Where? An educated guess might be -- Africa.

Photos: Dorothy Ehrichs



Pearl Spears Gray, Director of Affirmative Action, Oregon State University.



Embroidered panel in Summer Palace of Empress Tsu Hsi in Peking

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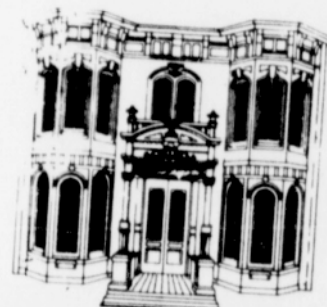
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The best time to call us, or any attorney, is before you are embroiled in a legal problem. This is called preventative law and it makes a lot of sense.

Regardless, when you call us we will arrange for an initial consultation at your convenience. Cost: \$20. We probably can't solve anything in this meeting, but it is a chance for you to explain your particular problem and for us to give you some idea of what it'll take to reach a solution. If you want us to proceed, we'll give you an estimate of the fees you should plan on. In writing.

