

Portland Profile

by Linda Thompson

RIVERS: "Nothing comes easy"

Judge not until you walk in my shoes. Many of us tend to criticize and prejudge those persons who unfortunately seem to be overwhelmed with some facet of life and turn to drugs/alcohol for consolation. Little do we realize that for the Love of God there goes I.

Our role model for this week recognizes the above and decided to do something about these two popular societal pitfalls.

One shouldn't be deceived by his casual, wide glittering smile and happy-go-lucky appearance. For Mr. Al Rivers, Director/Supervisor of Day Treatment/Resident Center, is a very deep, warm, dedicated, organized and sincere person who gives his all to any endeavor that he decides to get involved in.

When he is not busying himself at the House of Exodus—a rehabilitation program for drugs/alcohol funded by state legislation with money from beer and wine tax—he is busy doing what comes naturally—entertaining.

An alumni of Washington High School and the University of Portland, Rivers' home base has always been the City of Roses and he has always returned after doing many tours nationally.

His entertainment career began in 1944, when he won a citywide talent



contest. From there he went on to take engagements at Portland Dude Ranch, the Clover Club and eventually at Amato's Supper Club where he joined the nationally known "ink Spots" and he has been "doing my thing" ever since.

Rivers is too versatile and talented to limit himself to any one area.

Realizing this, he has worked as a counselor with Portland School District, Area One, and also served as an announcer on the now gone KOIN Radio. One cannot dare mention "Exodus" without hearing the name "Al Rivers".

His detour into his present position has lasted longer than usual because of his deep feeling for this increasingly deadly social problem.

He doesn't stop singing because he is tired or because his audience is tired of him, but because he says there are other things in life he wants to pursue.

"After I feel I have accomplished the goals I set out to and that is to awaken the whole community to the fact that drug and alcohol abuse can be controlled through therapy and counseling... and the victims can be channeled back into the mainstream of the economy. Then it will be time for me to move back to the microphone full time," says Mr. Rivers.

His work with the clients at Exodus is as natural as his singing is with his audience on stage. He enjoys working with people who were not as lucky as he has been in avoiding the "pitfalls" of drugs and alcohol.

His formula for success is reflected

in his lifestyle and his success. However, he states:

"The best advice I have to give to any young person regarding success is always to strive to be the very best in all circumstances. Anyone can be mediocre.

"Nothing comes easy—things haven't always been easy for me. If one quits after setting his goal that's accepting defeat. It is definitely true that only the strong survive.

"Many people are multi-talented and never discover it. This is sometimes due to the fact that you are not in the right place at the right time—therefore they are never discovered. However, if you have been falling in the above category, don't give up. Just keep on "doing your thing", states the very in depth, modest Mr. Rivers, "and someone will eventually recognize it."

"All of us have God-given talents and you should develop them. Have a style of your own and imitate no one, because each person is unique in his own right."

When I completed the interview with the very very "modest" Mr. Rivers, I had not only enjoyed it, but I had dealt with a man who is definitely "one of a kind".

Until next time remember: We need to look more and realize that we are not so different from one another.



STUDENT MEETS CARTER

President Jimmy Carter and Dr. Benjamin Mays watch Sherry Brophy, a fourth grade student at Brent Elementary School in Washington, D.C. before the President's signing of a bill creating the Department of Education.

During the bill-signing ceremony the President praised the president of the Atlanta Board of Education, saying he "personifies the dedication of educators." Dr. Mays is also president emeritus of Morehouse College.

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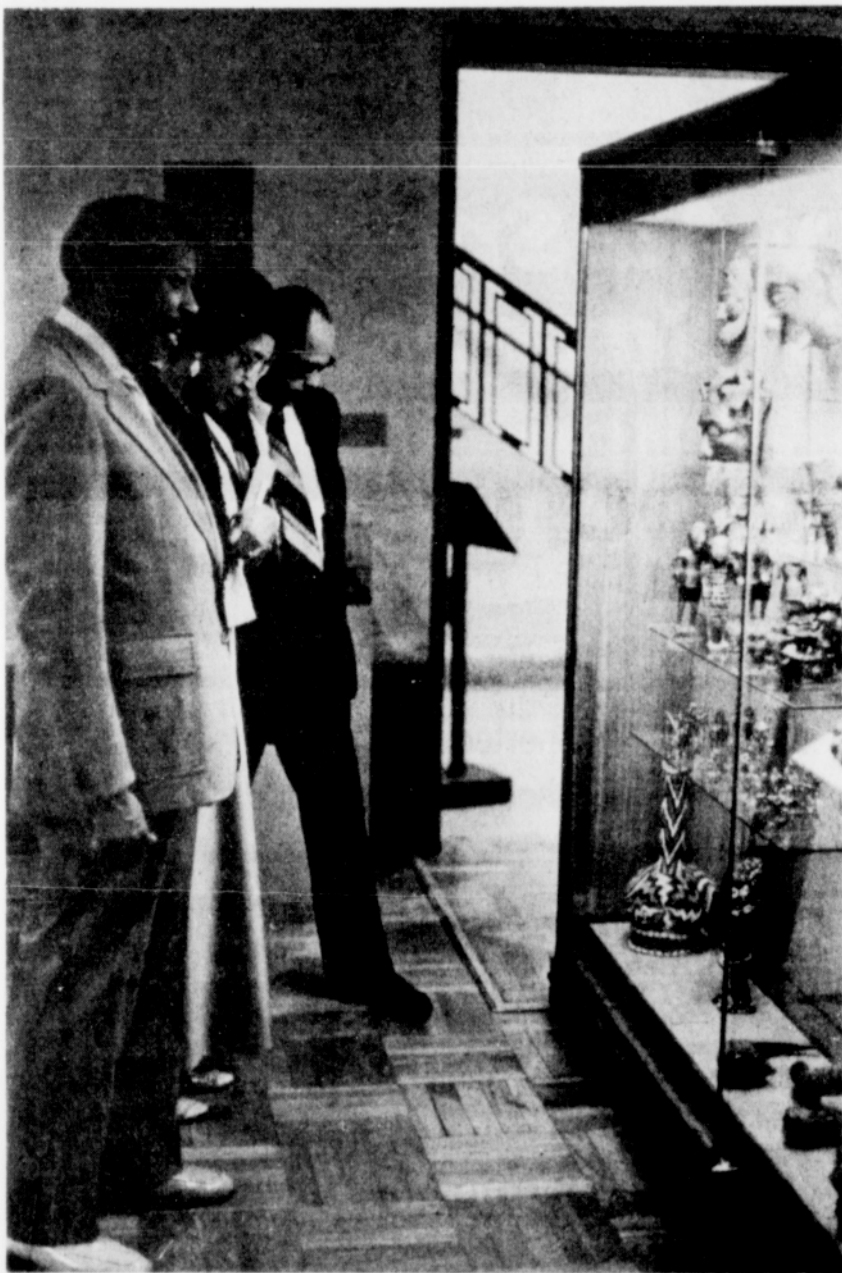
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Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Walker, and Dr. George Guy view objects in the Portland Art Museum's Gebauer's Collection of Cameroon Art during the reception to celebrate the publication of Paul Gebauer's book Art of Cameroon. The piece in the lower left side of the case was donated by the Links. (Photo: Richard Brown)

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