

Community rejects new Eliot school principal

The appointment of Mildred Wait as principal of the new Eliot middle school is being questioned in the community. Dr. Robert Blanchard announced the appointment following an executive meeting of the School Board Thursday evening.

Ron Herndon and Reverend John Jackson, co-chairman of the Black United Front hit the appointment. "This is another slap in the face of the Black community," Herndon said. "We fought to have a middle school for our children, the community fought to have the school named after a Black person, then Mr. Blanchard and the board decide there is no Black person capable enough to be principal. This is another example of the racism and insensitivity that are so charac-

teristic of the board and Dr. Blanchard's administration."

"A school's success is primarily due to the principal," Herndon said. "There is no white administrator in the system that has successfully educated Black children. No white principal in the district has been able to get meaningful participation of Black parents. It is racist to say not one Black in the system is capable; and it is stupid."

On May 6th a meeting was held with public members to receive input on the qualities desired in the new principal. Among those present, in addition to approximately twenty school district administrators, were: Freddy Petit, Norm Monroe, Urban League;

Eddie Edmonson; Ed Peterson; Al Jamison, ESSA Committee; Sherrin Hagger-Warren, Area I Advisory Committee; Isadore Maney; Rosie Lovings; Julie Sterling, Schools for the City; Ada Kelsow; Carmilla Joseph; Bonny Acker; Caroline Rundoff from possible Area I feeder schools. The Black United Front declined to attend.

Among the criterion suggested by the community representatives were that the principal be Black, preferably a man to present a male role model, that he have enough knowledge of school district politics to insure proper budgeting and staffing, and be responsive to the community.

Sherrin Hagger-Warren said she feels that she had been used. "It is strange that they bothered to get us together, then didn't pay attention to what we said. They wrote down a lot of things, but they couldn't have listened and come up with the person they did."

"I think they appeased and petted us. But that kind of thing gets you nowhere. I don't like to be patted on the head."

Norm Monroe said he thought the request for advice was sincere. "But when I asked about a Black principal, McElroy went into a discussion of equal opportunity and discrimination, saying you can't say you want a Black. But he never really said why they think they have no Blacks who could or would take

the position."

In response to questioning by the ESAA Advisory Committee, which has federally mandated responsibility to advise the Board on desegregation, Dr. Don McElroy said the selection was made with an effort to consider the desire of the Black United Front for community input, professional requirements and the personnel contract.

In response to ESAA Committee Chairman Al Jamison's question, "were we heard," McElroy responded, "Yes, one - half page of your statements were presented."

McElroy said that other than the standard professional requirements, the administration wanted a "quality individual who will be successful."

McElroy said the administrators involved - area superintendents and administrators, central office personnel and Dr. Ernie Hartzog's office - agreed that the person "know how to run a school." He said a prioritized list of several suggested persons were presented to Superintendent Blanchard.

McElroy said the administrative groups considered Mrs. Wait the most qualified candidate for the position and the most likely to succeed. He expects her to begin immediately to work with the community regarding programs.

McElroy said several persons were considered including persons who requested consideration and some who were asked to apply. One (Please turn to page 4 col 1)

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Boycott just a first step

Called a success by everyone involved including school Superintendent Blanchard, the school boycott called by the Black United Front took over 70 percent of the Black students out of school Monday.

The one-day boycott is the first step in a series of actions to protest racism in the Portland Public Schools. Ron Herndon, co-chairman of the BUF said, "The overwhelming support was a scoring indictment and mass Black vote of no confidence in the school board's integrity and policies. The community has also decisively demonstrated that it is fed up with Dr. Blanchard's practices and programs. His departure is long overdue."

According to school district statistics, 71.7 percent of the district's Black students were out of school Monday.

Absences were most noticeable in schools with high concentration of Black students. In all, 4954 of the district's 6913 Black students were absent.

Black absences: Boise, 93 percent; Eliot, 65 percent; Faubion, 61 percent; Fernwood, 97 percent; Humboldt, 68 percent; Irvington, 72 percent; Vernon, 81 percent; Woodlawn, 83 percent; Jefferson, 91 percent; Washington/Monroe, 83 percent.

White students joined the boycott, with 5455 non-Blacks out, 1300 more than the previous two Mondays.

The district kept an attendance count of Black children's absences on the preceding two Mondays (rumored to be an effort to discount the boycott absences). On May 5th, 1003 Black students were absent and on May 12th 1032 were absent - approximately 14.5 percent. About 9 1/2 percent of white students were absent on those Mondays.

Calling that absentee rate disgraceful, Herndon challenged the district to make an effort to solve this problem. "We haven't heard of any effort to solve this. Nothing was said until we decided to pull the children out."

Another interesting statistic was the drop of Black students between May 12th and May 19th. On May 5th the district had 1949 Black high school students; on May 12th there were 1941 and on May 19th there were only 1880. Porter Sexton, of the district, had no explanation except that students missing for ten consecutive days are considered no longer enrolled. He said maybe they were there but the teachers just hadn't seen them around.

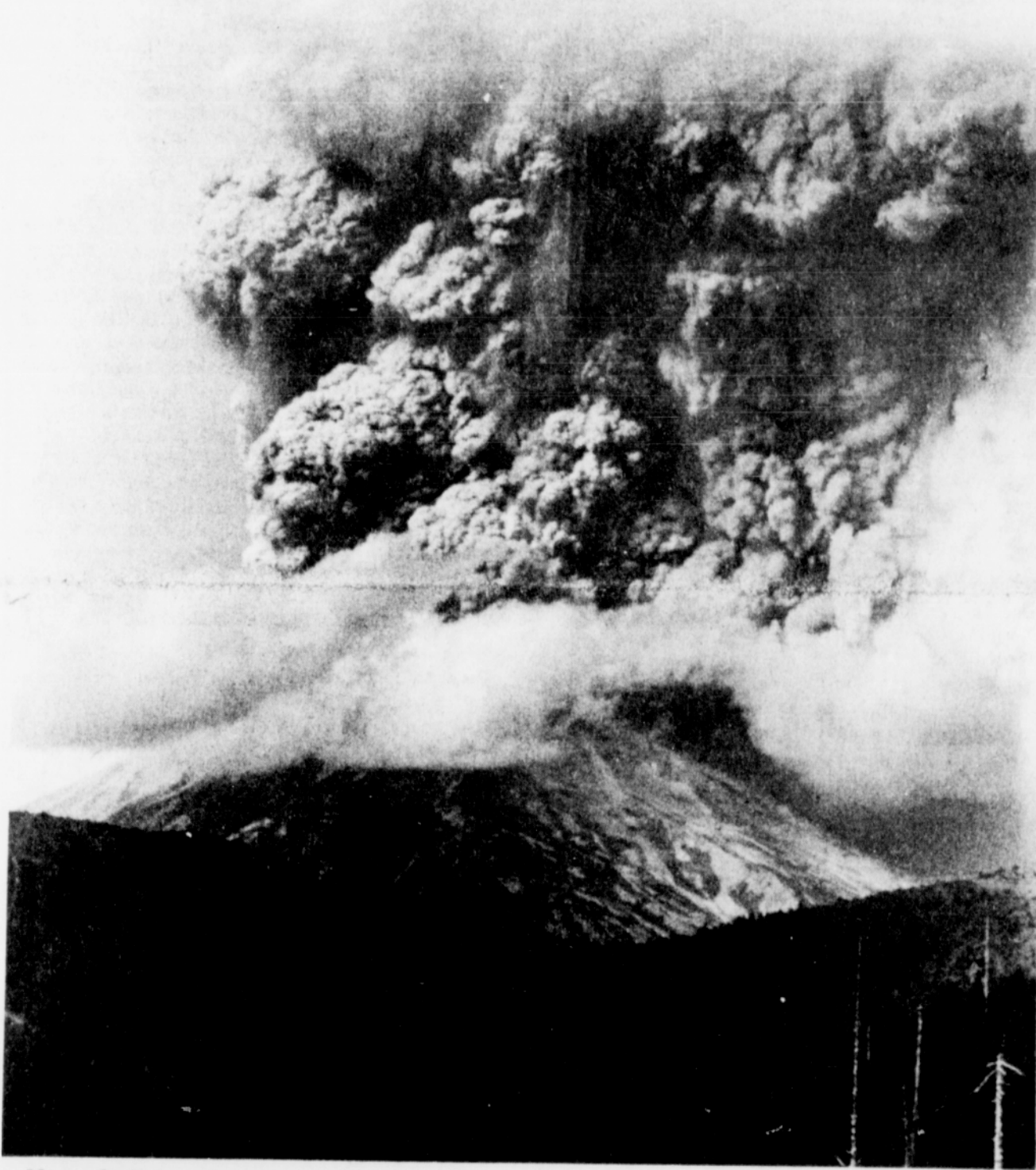
In response to Blanchard and School Board Chairman Bill Scott's statements that the boycott would

probably not effect the Board's refusal to involve parents in teacher and principal selection, Herndon said considering Blanchard's statements last summer that responsible Black people would not support the BUF, his remarks would not seem very reliable.

Reverend John Jackson said a group of Black ministers had been invited to lunch with Dr. Blanchard but he had not been invited. "It's the old divide and conquer strategy. Reverend Garlington told them the brethren would not attend."

Not participating in the boycott were the white pre-school children attending Early Childhood Education Centers in Albina. These children are sent to Black schools to benefit from enriched programs and from the multi-racial environment, however, when Black parents boycotted to demonstrate dissatisfaction with the education provided Black children, these white parents failed to join them. White absences at ESE's were: Humboldt, 5 percent; King, 23 percent; Sabin, 14 percent; Vernon, 14 percent; Woodlawn, 18 percent.

The School Board will meet next week to evaluate the Superintendent and consider his tenure.



Mount St. Helens blew its top on a quiet Sunday morning, a spectacular sight visible from Portland. Above, a view of the South side from a distant of twelve miles.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Hill advocates minority coalitions

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

"We're absent from politics, like many other things," said James A. Hill, Jr., candidate for the democratic nomination to the House of Representatives, from Salem.

At the time of Hill's statement, he was speaking to a small group of students and professors at Willamette University several weeks ago. Hill believes that minorities have the power to make themselves visible in areas where they have been invisible in the past.

"Nationally, the impact of the minority voter was felt during this country's last presidential election. President Jimmy Carter was able to reap the benefits after we went to the polls," said Hill.

Hill, a native of Atlanta, feels that it is time for all minorities to join forces for a collective effort.

"Whenever there's a conflict between minorities, the media blows it out of proportion. There will always be a difference in interest no matter which group it is. We minorities must realize one fact that

we have in common, we are all on the bottom," he said.

Hill has been an attorney with the state's Justice Department for five years - in the Appellate Division handling criminal and civil appeals, in the Antitrust Division and the Public Utilities Section.

Hill went on to say that the gate is open for minorities in politics, it's just a matter of taking advantage. "We have very few minority politicians -- it shouldn't be. Power is something that you have to go out and earn," said Hill.

"As long as we are absent from the political arena, conditions facing minorities will remain the same. We have to be heard."

Hill attributes most of the problems confronting minorities to apathy. "We can not afford to be apathetic towards government because that power turns into money," he said.

"Everyone must be involved politically as our communities continue to grow," Hill continued.

How many of those reading this article voted this week?

(James Hill was elected nominee of the Democratic Party for House District #31 in Salem)



Ms. Erma Hepburn joins Mayor - elect Frank Ivancie in news conference announcement of her appointment to head the City's Bureau of Human Resources. (Photo by: Richard J. Brown)

Hepburn heads Resource Bureau

Commissioner Frank Ivancie announced the appointment of Erma E. Hepburn as Executive Director of the Bureau of Human Resources. She is the first Black woman to head a major City bureau. "She brings to the job an excellent background and impressive credentials," Commissioner Ivancie said.

Ms. Hepburn began her employment with the City of Portland as Manager of the Administrative Services Division of the Bureau of

Human Resources in 1973. Previously she was Assistant Director of Community Programs for the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee. She has served on the Review Panel of the Portland Public Schools, the Board of the YWCA, the Governor's Advisory Council on Vocational Education, the Planned Parenthood Board, and the Model City's Youth Affairs Council.

Ms. Hepburn is currently the Manger of the Social Services Division of the Human Resources

Bureau. The Social Service Division is responsible for the Area Agency on Aging and the Youth Service Center Programs.

The bureau's current Executive Director, Janice Wilson, has been on loan from the First National Bank since June 1978 when she was brought in to head the bureau. She will be returning to the bank. "She has done an outstanding job and I have enjoyed working with her," Commissioner Ivancie said.



JAMES HILL