

Next week: Special Edition

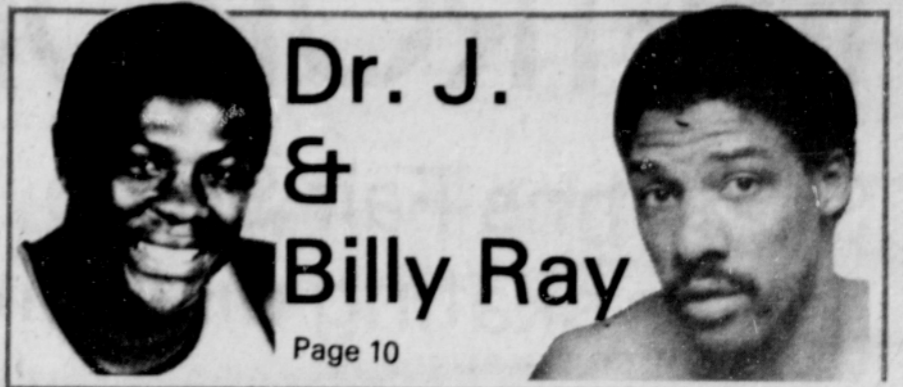
# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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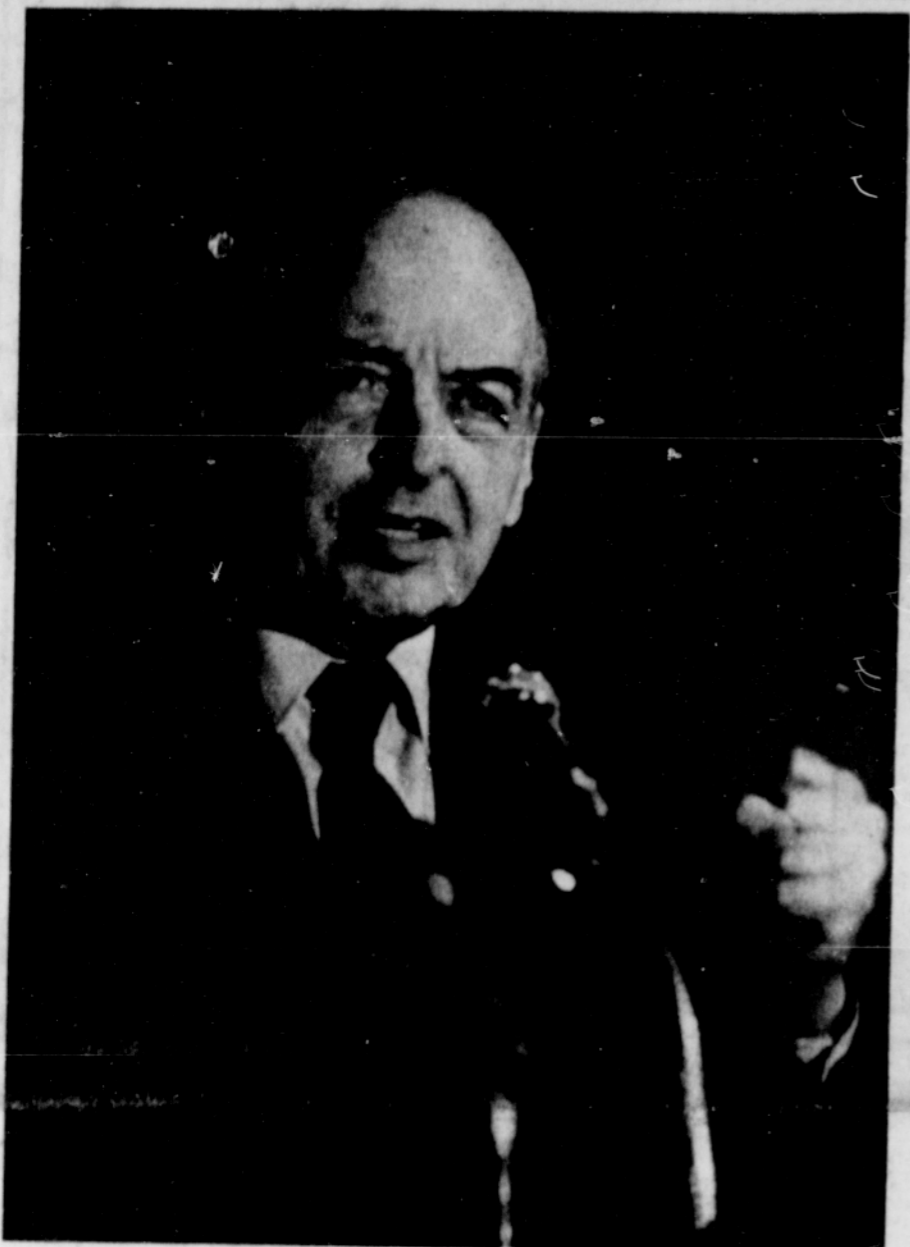
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Two Sections



DR. ARTHUR J. FLEMMING

## Dr. King's dream fading

"I believe we can, we must succeed, we must continue to replace despair with hope in those who have been and continue to be the victims of discrimination," Civil Rights Commission Chairman Arthur J. Flemming told a Portland audience Monday.

The chairman, who was recently fired by President Reagan for his strong support of civil rights, said the nation is at the crossroads with respect to the human rights and civil rights movements. We are "confronted with a regressive movement in the era of civil rights."

Following the Civil War and the adoption of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, Congress passed laws that recognized the responsibility and obligation of the federal government to take the lead in implementing these rights. Soon after—during the post-reconstruction period—the government turned its back on its responsibilities and obligations and the nation accepted "separate but equal."

This period lasted until the 1954 Brown decision, which was followed by a series of civil rights legislation including the 1964 Civil Rights Act. "The nation has reasonably good laws and very good court decisions, but now is engaged in implementing those laws and court decisions."

"You can't implement civil rights

laws and decisions without disturbing the status quo," Flemming explained. "When you disturb the status quo you create opposition because some persons have a stake in preserving the status quo. They want to preserve it at all costs."

It is out of this opposition that regressive movements develop. The opposition has a well-defined strategy that involves identifying the methods needed to implement civil rights laws and then to do everything possible to weaken or eliminate those methods.

The strategy of the regressive movement includes placing riders on appropriations bills. For example, "anti-busing" riders are attached to education bills to prevent courts from ordering busing—one of the necessary moves to providing for desegregation.

In past years this strategy has been unsuccessful because it was opposed by the administration. In 1980, President Carter vetoed an anti-busing measure. The Reagan administration supports anti-desegregation and anti-affirmative action legislation.

Evidence of the Reagan administration leadership in the regressive movement is a recent decision by the Internal Revenue Service that will allow non-profit tax-exempt status to schools that discriminate for rea-

sons of race or religion. "Taxpayers who support the federal government will be supporting discriminatory policy in private schools. . . . Now if a private school wants to follow a policy of segregation it can enjoy a tax-exempt status."

The executive board also has indicated it is considering a suit to reverse the Weber decision—an important Supreme Court decision that supports voluntary affirmative action plans. The administration has expressed its opposition to affirmative action as a tool to achieve equal employment opportunity."

Flemming emphasized that the people do not have to accept the idea that the nation is going into a "post-reconstruction" era again. "There is a tremendous opportunity to generate grass-roots support and Washington will listen." This support should come from the thousands of citizens who have experienced the benefits of school desegregation and from employers who have successfully and affirmatively acted.

Flemming, who continues as Chairman of the Civil Rights Commission until his successor is named and approved by the Senate, has accepted a position as director of the Coalition for Quality Integrated Education—a broadly based organization that will organize opposition to anti-desegregation moves.

Flemming was informed by telephone that he was to be removed from the Commission. All Commissioners serve at the pleasure of the President. He was originally appointed by Richard Nixon and served during the Ford and Carter administrations.

This summer, under his direction, the Commission published a study of the effects of Reagan's proposed budget on civil rights and programs designed to implement equal opportunity. The report included the impact on personnel costs in the enforcement agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Labor Bureau; the impact of budget cuts on programs related to opening opportunities for minorities such as CETA, Legal Services Corporation, Community Health Centers, education, federally subsidized housing, etc., and the impact of block grants. "Institution of block grants to states without strict federal guidelines will have a serious impact on Title VI which makes it illegal to discriminate in the delivery of services."

Flemming spoke to approximately 300 persons who gathered to honor the 1981 Peyton Award Winner, Father Bertram Griffin of St. Andrew Catholic Church. The annual award is sponsored by the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission.

## Observer Annual Citizen Achievement Awards

Woman of the Year

Man of the Year

Long Service



Linda Williams



Ronnie Herndon



Ruth Haefner

When Linda Williams came to Portland from Mississippi in 1979 for a reporting job at the *Oregonian*, "I'd heard it was a progressive city and a progressive state." Since then she's changed her mind.

"I have been unpleasantly surprised by some things. Portland is more conservative on social things, like racial relations, than it likes to admit," she says. "And I did not

expect to be called names on the street."

Williams has also run up against criticism of her professional work in Portland. As the *Oregonian's* City Hall reporter, she was smack in the middle of the mayor's reaction to the 'possum incident and the resultant reinstatement of two policemen temporarily fired for their involvement. *Please turn to page 9*

Ronnie Herndon, 36, was raised in Coffeyville, Kansas by his grandparents. After high school he spent three years as a Vista volunteer in East Harlem. While considering plans to complete his college education, an older sister advised Herndon to attend the best school he could find—perhaps a small college.

At that time Reed College had scholarships for Black students so

Herndon applied and was accepted. "I was quickly disappointed. They glorified Europeans, saw no need to study anyone but Europeans, and then there was the usual institutional racism."

Herndon, with others, fought to have a Black Studies program at Reed. Their efforts included a building takeover.

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At 88, Ruth Haefner is supposed to be retired. But she's too busy. A founding member of the Oregon Gray Panthers, she joined national president Maggie Kuhn and others in picketing the White House Conference on Aging last fall in Washington, D.C., charging the Reagan administration with stacking the delegation.

"They weren't doing anything

and the administration isn't doing anything. In fact they're going to take things away," she succinctly declares.

Attacking Reagan's policies toward seniors is only the most recent in Ms. Haefner's long lifetime of social activism. Starting with her 1937 move to Oregon from Iowa (her birthplace), she was a home

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