



OBSERVATIONS

FROM THE SIDELINES

by Kathryn Hall Bogle

The four lives of Ira Daniel Mumford flow together in one great stream of energy in his powerful six-foot-two body. He's a busy man, that Mumford. And yet he can take time for a personal touch.

The kids call him the "4-H Man," parishioners at the C.M.E. Smith missionary chapel call him "the Rev. Mumford," music aficionados know him as one of the original "Mills Brothers," Mrs. Lydia Mumford calls him husband and 17-year-old Iretta calls him "Dad."

In a day he is here, he is there, always in demand, working with people for people, helping and encouraging the young, inspiring the not-so-young.

Born in North Carolina, the middle child in a family of eight, Ira has always been in the middle of "things going on" and in the middle of music. Both mother and father played piano and several brothers and sisters played piano. Ira was elected to play the drums and sing. They, as a group, were in demand to sing and play in churches and at social gatherings and, said Ira, "We were the first black group to sing over Durham's WDNC radio station."

Good musical performance requires a certain amount of self-discipline and the Mumford children apparently had impetus supplied in the right direction for this. Mumford chuckles as he says, "I was the best Mother had. She gave me plenty of discipline—orders to stay in my own backyard and not to play with all the other kids playing out front, or whippings (I got lots of them) until I learned how to discipline myself. Mother did most of the chastising as our father was usually away at work. He was the chef for 41 years at the hospital in town."

"We always ate well, and I learned to cook from my dad. No strict recipes, but just good wholesome food with good seasonings. I cook for my family quite often now and am mindful of the salt to keep it at a minimum. My specialties are Southern fried chicken and a real good potato salad."

"Later I spent several years singing with the original Mills Brothers and with the original Ink Spots too. I sang all the parts—whichever ones were needed."

"I came to the Northwest first in 1952 as an entertainer with the Rival Brothers. We landed in Walla Walla and wound up in Eugene and came to Portland from there. I was growing tired of the travel involved and settled myself with a singing group we called the Carmenaires. We were featured for several years at Carmen's restaurant."

"Later on I worked as Chief Counsellor for David M. Nero, Jr., when his company, Nero and Associates, Inc., had 25 employees. I helped the jobless men fit into their new employment patterns and kept in touch with management to help smooth out labor problems as they arose."

"For nine years I was a consumer educational specialist for PMSC—and, since 1974, I have been with the Oregon State Extension Service as an extension agent."

"I'm enthused over the 4-H program located over at King Neighborhood Center. We offer classes in arts and crafts, cooking, sewing, the martial arts, and yes, we have a 4-H Choral Ensemble. The ensemble will sing a *cappella* again this year. We have travelled all over Oregon with the choir and into California. I started with 26 children who had never sung together, most of them were strangers to each other, their ages varied from 11 years to 19 years and they came from various races and sectors of the community. They were thrilled to hear the first of their tapes I made of their performance and now they have learned to be critical and really appreciate their performance and their progress."

"We started a tutoring class for reading back in November '81 with the help of Dr. Bill Gerald of the Portland Public Schools. This was my class, a small class with kids out of the 5th grade who could read only at the 2nd grade level. Now in May those same kids have raised their reading level to the 6th grade. I'm so proud of them."



IRA MUMFORD

Mumford's face glowed with pleasure thinking of those happy confident children who had applied themselves and accomplished so much for themselves in a few short months. "We need volunteers who will give their time to teach crafts, or anything worthwhile that we can fit into our programs," Mumford said.

The ministry of this tireless man also reaches out from the pulpit at Smith Chapel, a small mission Mumford opened three years ago in N.E. Portland. The mission is affiliated with Allen Temple of the C.M.E. Church. At Smith Chapel, Iretta Mumford is pianist and also sings soprano in the choir. Mrs. Mumford is president of the Ladies Missionary Society, rounding out the participation of the total family in Sunday Service.

The 4-H man surfaced again as Mumford thought of "his kids" and the coming summer vacation period looming nearer. He recalled that "last year I had 161 kids in the

program and I didn't have one nickel to work with. The budget crunch for us was early and complete."

"I went to City Commissioner Charles Jordan," Mumford said, "and I begged his help. Jordan gave me a van to transport the kids from place to place. The use of the van had council approval, and then I went to the Downtown Kiwanis and they gave me money for arts and crafts supplies. A number of merchants and business people in the N.E. section of Portland gave me miscellaneous supplies. We used the school's cafeteria and the gymnasium and we had a program after all."

"The kids always enjoy the summer program and a lot of them cry when at the end of the season they have to part. This year we will have three bilingual students to help us in our program. It's free and all are welcome."

"June 28 is registration time, King Neighborhood Center is the place," reminds Mumford, the 4-H man.

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The oldest person ever to win the Academy Award for acting was George Burns for his performance in "Sunshine Boys"—at the age of 80.

Strangely, the brother of a man who shot a U.S. President is in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans. Edwin Booth, a great actor, is in the Hall of Fame. His brother, John Wilkes booth, was the man who shot Abraham Lincoln.

The 17-year locust is not a locust at all, but a cicada.

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PSU holds African Cultural Night

The Association of African Students at Portland State University is holding its Third Annual African Cultural Night. The African Cultural Night is an annual event held in honor of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963.

All independent African countries are members of the OAU, with the exception of the racist regime of South Africa. The main objective of the OAU is the total liberation of African countries from the yoke of colonialism. Moreover, it is deter-

mined to accelerate the economic integration and the unification of the continent of Africa.

The Association of African Students at PSU is taking this opportunity to bring closer contact between the continent of Africa and the people of the Northwest, and at the same time to educate the people of Oregon about the role of Africa in world affairs today. To accomplish these objectives they are presenting the African Cultural Night.

The event will take place on Friday evening, May 28, 1982 at the

Portland State University Ballroom (Smith Memorial Center, Room 355). The programme will start at 7 p.m. Admission is \$3; \$2.50 for students. The programme will feature the following: Dinner (food from various African countries); Speakers (Ambassador Legwaila, Botswana Ambassador to the UN, and Ronnie Herndon, co-chairman of the Black United Front); Cultural dances and music (OCHEAMI, Obo Addy). Also included in the program will be a fashion show, poetry reading and lots more.

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