

Elise Reynolds dies

Long life reflects Portland history

by Kathryn Hall Bogle

Elise A Reynolds, a well-known Portland matriarch, died Friday, October 29th after a long illness. Mrs. Reynolds, who had been a patient at the Parkview Nursing Home, was the widow of the late Phil Reynolds. They were the parents of four surviving children. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, on July 28, 1894, Mrs. Reynolds had made Oregon her home since 1915. With her passing, the door closes a little more on receiving living documentation on how life for blacks was in Portland when the century was young.

The life of Elise Reynolds was characterized by her love of family, her love of humanity and her championship of the participation of women in the affairs of the community. Many adults, as well as children not her own, called Mrs. Reynolds "Mother," for her door was always open for a bit of counseling and a cup of tea for a visitor.

Habits of introspective thought occupied much of Mrs. Reynolds' days and out of this "taking inward" to herself, came her outward giving to others, and her tireless quest in the search for spiritual truths.

Her friendship with Oregon's first black female attorney, Beatrice Morrow Cannady, led Mrs. Reynolds into the chilly waters of interracial activities in a time when the Ku Klux Klan was getting a foothold in Oregon. She and Mrs. Cannady held inter-racial teas in their homes, inviting other women on an equal basis with themselves to participate. In this way she became life-long friends with many women of many religious faiths. Of these was Mrs. Robert Hungerford, a staunch Quaker who remained a faithful friend for many years. Bahai members also formed lasting friendships.

Without funds for an auditorium and a stage to perform, Mrs. Cannady and Mrs. Reynolds sometimes used their front porches to offer educational and inspirational programs to the neighborhood families and passers-by.

Children of both families were reared with books and music in the

home and with a high regard for the dignity of honest work to reach goals.

In the early twenties Mrs. Reynolds began the life of a club-woman, which she maintained as long as her health permitted. One of her first organizational efforts was to form a Mothers' Club guided by the Rev. Daniel Hill, Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church. The purpose of the club was to afford members a practical and spiritual pattern for child rearing through the formal study of family life. A little time was spent on reviewing current events to round out the meetings. Mrs. Letitia Brock enjoyed and profited from those meetings and recalled, for us, other members, among them: Estelle Gregg, Abbie Cantrell and Ellen Mae Dancey.

Rachel Belard Green, whose children were playmates of the Reynolds' children, recalls that Mrs. Reynolds organized a mortgage benefit club, a cooperative effort for a number of women who banked \$10 each every month for four years to go into a business together. They didn't go into business but each woman had a tidy little sum when they divided their savings.

Another long-time friend, Pollyanna Reed, recalls Mrs. Reynolds as a gracious personality, as a faithful wife and a devoted mother.

Mrs. Reynolds was a charter member of the Literary Research Club founded by Bonnie Bogle in the latter twenties and thirties. Other clubs and organizations claiming Mrs. Reynolds' time as her family grew were: the Daffodil Birthday club, YWCA activities, the NAACP, where her husband, Phil, worked so tirelessly, the Oregon Federation of Women's Clubs, the Portland Urban League when it established in the early forties, and the Order of the Eastern Star, Enterprise Chapter, No. 6 of the Prince Hall Masonic Temple.

Never one to neglect her home and family, Mrs. Reynolds entered many items at the annual exhibits and meetings of the Oregon Association of Colored Womens Clubs. She has found time to do all the crafty things like needlework, crochet, canning, ceramics, table



Mrs. Elise A. Reynolds was greeted by her family—Phil, Walter and Phyllis—following award as 1967 Oregon Mother of the Year.

setting and china painting, and garnered her share of blue ribbons.

In 1947 to 1957 Mrs. Reynolds had a fling at work outside her home, when she took a job at the Northern Pacific Terminal Co.

It was in 1957 that the Multnomah Club of the OACWC became sponsor organization for the candidacy of Mrs. Reynolds to be named Oregon Mother of the Year. The American Mothers' Committee, Inc., agreed that Mrs. Reynolds deserved the title and she became the first Afro-American woman to become the state of Oregon's "Mother of the Year."

To celebrate their long marriage, the Reynolds took a leisurely trip to Africa in 1957. They brought home many mementoes, but one of Mrs. Reynolds' favorites was a list of new friends with whom to correspond.

Led by her faith, Mrs. Reynolds shared many of Bahai teachings; she was a former member of St. Philip Episcopal Church and had been a faithful student at the Unity Center since 1974.

This dauntless lady is survived by three sons—Jack, a career mathematician in ballistics with the U.S. Navy and a credit counsellor in re-

tirement in Pasadena; Robert, attached to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in cooperative work with U.C.L.A.; Walter, a Portland physician and surgeon practicing at the Phil Reynolds Medical Clinic named for his father, and a daughter, Phyllis Smith, a medical secretary. Also surviving are 13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Funeral services, conducted on Wednesday, November 3 at 2:00 p.m., were in charge of Caldwell's Colonial Mortuary. The Order of Eastern Star participated in the final services. Officiating were the Rev. John Jackson of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church and Deacon Alcena Boozer of St. Philip Episcopal Church. A representative group of "Oregon Mothers of the Year" attended the services in company with the current president of Oregon Mothers, Inc., County Commissioner Gladys McCoy.

The family suggested that in lieu of flowers contributions might be sent to the Phil Reynolds Scholarship Fund established several years ago, or to a youth organization of the donor's choice.

Private interment was at Portland Memorial, Inc.

Bits and Pieces

by Ruth Spencer

Dr. William Little, associate professor at Portland State University, visited Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to gather information about the Arab-African for a research project. Also, to get first-hand experience with the African culture.

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, sent a statement to the United Nations objecting to the approval of a \$1.1. billion loan to South Africa by the International Monetary Fund.

"Approval of the loan implies international affirmation of the racist policies of the South African government," said Dr. Lowery.

Mr. Earl Chase has retired from the Portland Public Schools after 12 years of service. He was a classroom teacher at Sabin, Beach, Arleta, and King Schools.

Mr. Chase plans to enjoy his retirement and return to his work as a real estate broker.

Tony Brown journalist, commenting on *Black TV Month*, said the chief TV abuser and exploiter of the image of black people is Norman Lear.

"Lear's comedies are credited with the re-birth of the old minstrel characters: the shuffling Uncle Toms, the rascally picaninies, the fat mummies and the dim-witted coons. Instead of the old names like Buckwheat, Amos, Andy, Sapphire, Kingfish and Stepin Fetchit, Norman Lear's 'social satire' produced names like J.J. Sanford, Aunt Es-



DR. JOSEPH LOWERY

ther, and George Jefferson. The names change, but the game's the same," Tony Brown commented.

Messrs. Curtis Williams, Venerable Booker, and Dr. Booker Lewis attended the National Bankers Association in Atlanta, Ga. The NBA comprises about one hundred bankers representing major cities in the United States.

Dr. Masizi Kunene, professor of African Literature and Linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles, Dr. Carleen Young, president of the National Council for Black Studies, and Dr. Matthew Prophet, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, are the main speakers for the Northwest Regional Conference of the National Council for Black Studies, Nov. 5, 6, at Chemeketa Community College, 400 Lancaster Drive, N.E., in Salem.

The conference is held in conjunction with the Willamette Valley Racial Minorities Consortium Conference and is sponsored by the P.S. Black Studies Department.

Mrs. Geneva Jones attended an Electrical Womens Round Table

Convention at Knoxville, Tennessee. Three hundred women in the electrical and allied fields attended the convention. The World's Fair was a part of the Convention agenda.

The 1983 Electrical Womens Round Table Convention is scheduled to be in Portland. Mrs. Jones is the Program Chairman for the 1983 Convention.

Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta is the third predominantly black medical school in the country today (Howard and Meharry are the other two). Morehouse is the first major one founded in this country.

It was established to train minority primary care physicians in medically underserved inner-city and rural areas.

The President and Dean of the Morehouse School of Medicine is Dr. Louis Sullivan. Dr. Sullivan said, "We need black doctors in all areas (only two percent of the physicians in the U.S. are black). But the greatest need is in primary care. We have to get physicians out there taking care of people who are not getting the medical care they need."

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in a recent report warned that the roles of blacks in television situation comedy largely fixes an image in the public mind as a ridiculous and non-serious people.



MRS. GENEVA JONES



DR. WILLIAM LITTLE

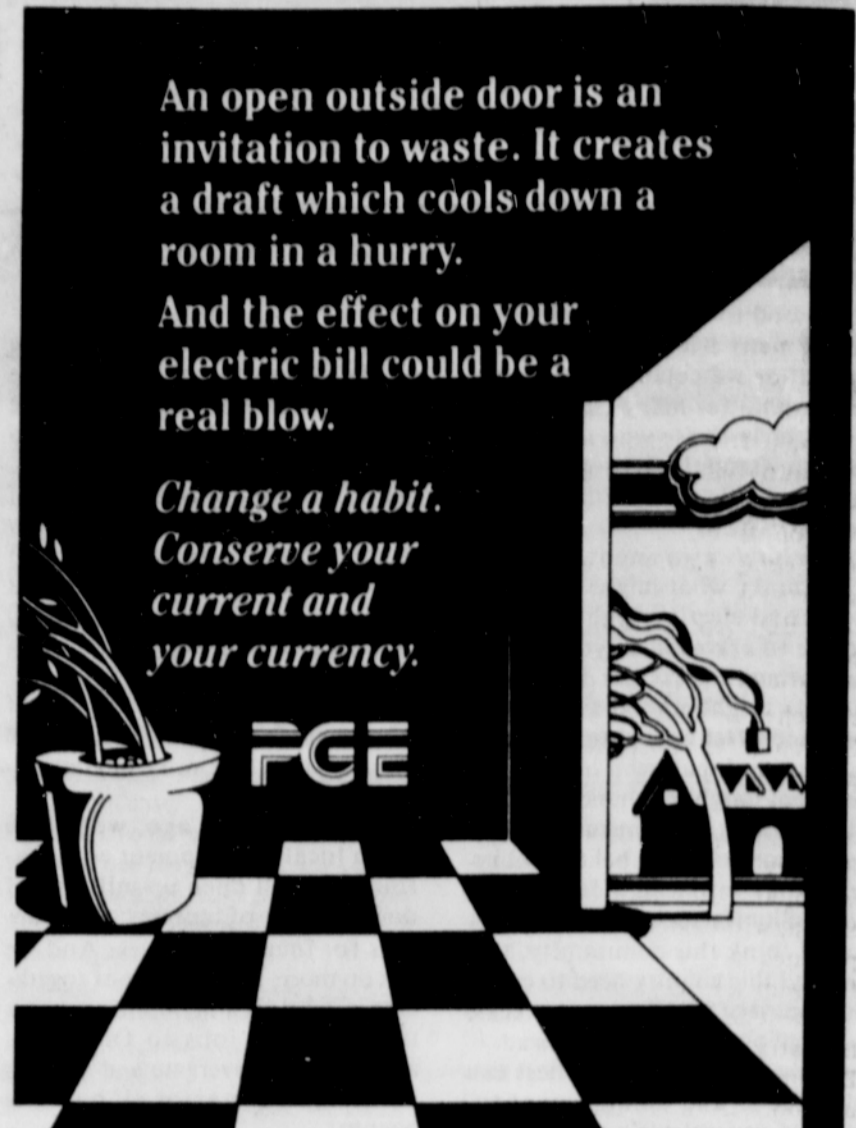
Condolences to Dr. Walter Reynolds and family over the death of his mother Mrs. Elise Reynolds.

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