

# METROPOLITAN

## Education is beauty of the world

by Nathaniel Scott

Portland State University's twenty-six year old blind African student earned both bachelor's and masters' degrees in three-and-a-half years.

Twenty-two years ago, the sight of Elijah Andrew Akinyemi, a native of Abeokuta, Ogun, in Southeastern Nigeria, began to rapidly deteriorate after a violent bout of scarlet fever, he said. "According to my mom, the fever lasted two or three days, then my sight dwindled very fast." And from that day, it seems, Akinyemi has sought "the beauty of the world" through education.

"Life has really gone very well with me," he said. "I don't have much to cry over but, I still wish I had my sight to see the beauty of the world."

Akinyemi's world grew dark before he had a chance to learn about difference of a sort: to see and understand the beauty of a red rose, a purple lily, or the dark brown bark on an aged tree.

"I've been so fortunate to get my education," he said. "When I lost my sight I got into Pacelli School for the Blind."

Pacelli School for the Blind is in Lagos, Nigeria; it is run by Catholic missionaries and Akinyemi credits the nuns with being the "backbone"

to his education.

"(At the school) I learned how to survive and became independent," he said. "The nuns taught me basic skills: reading and writing. But, they also taught me that independence was necessary."

Throughout his blind life, Akinyemi has maintained a policy of going it alone. As a child, he romped and played with other children, some blind, some not, with the abandonment of childhood adventure. Since coming to America, and around the campus of PSU, he could be seen navigating with, and without the aid of a cane. He walked close to walls, entered classrooms and found his seat without disturbing the class or interrupting the lecture; he moves in his world of "dim shadows" with utmost grace.

However, Akinyemi's independently navigated world will soon come to an end.

This summer, through a guide-dog program in Los Angeles, California, he will be getting his first guide-dog. "I should begin training July 25th," he said.

And one might ask why, after so many years of independent navigation, the need for a guide-dog becomes necessary.

Necessity, to begin with, is a need

derived from a source. And a source is a ability to do, when defined an Akinyemian way.

Akinyemi now stands on the cross roads of his life. He has walked, no galloped, at a fast pace through 22 years of "dim shadows." And now, when the vision of his dreams are within his grasp, it is time to chart the rest of his life.

Akinyemi's dream is to continue his schooling at Florida State University to obtain a Ph.D. in rehabilitation so his work with the "visually impaired," will be enhanced. His dream is to run the last leg of the trilogy race. But Akinyemi is realistic. He knows that his financial dependency has yet to be broken. He knows that nothing is gotten cheap; that taking notes and exams in classrooms have to be paid for. And he realizes that his state and national scholarships are not enough to sponsor two more years of education. (Who knows? He may do it in one). In the meantime, he has asked his home land, state and national, for the necessary amount needed to continue his education. However, the wheels of bureaucracy grind ever so slow. He can attest to that:

"I think PSU is a nice school, but I am distressed with the administration," he said, as he rehashed the way finances were handled during his stay: on a quarterly basis.

Not only Akinyemi, but some other foreign students as well, are "dissatisfied with the amount of red tape; the amount of bureaucracy involved in clearing checks" from their governments. And in Akinyemi's case, he said, he was "penalized" the amount of "\$10", on a quarterly basis, because the school did not process the paper work in an efficient manner. Nevertheless, he feels the school fulfilled its function: it provided him with an education. Now, he waits eagerly for word from his homeland; fervently hoping it will provide him with the finances necessary to complete the trilogy. And while the wheels grind ever so slowly, Akinyemi finds solace in the comfort of music, reading romantic, detective, and mystery novels, and contemplating the possibility of becoming an attorney.

"If I had my sight, I am not sure it would help me," he said, as he turned the music up.



ELIJAH ANDREW AKINYEMI

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## Teens win traffic safety awards

City Commissioner Mike Lindberg presented checks and certificates to three Portland high school students at the Portland City Council meeting this week. The students were winners of the Portland Traffic Safety Commission's High School Journalism Contest on Drinking and Driving that was conducted during April and May.

First place award of \$500 goes

to Mike Gorsline of Benson. Mike is an electronics major, member of the school newspaper staff, and graduated with a 3.26. He will attend Portland State in the fall and plans to join the ministry after college.

Second place award of \$250.00 goes to Ben McCullar of Benson. Ben was editor of the school paper "Tech Pep". He is a health occupations major and graduated

with a 3.29. He will attend University of Portland in the fall.

Third place winner is Joan Hoffman of Marshall. Joan has been elected president of the incoming junior class. She served as sophomore class activities chairman and was a member of the school's academic honors program, research scholars. Her ambition is to pursue a career in journalism or news broadcasting.

## King fund seeks community help

by Helen Pittman

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Scholarship Fund of Oregon was established in 1968 by the Black Student Union at Portland State University. In 1971, the scholarship fund was incorporated as a non-profit educational corporation within the State of Oregon.

The scholarship's purpose is to provide financial assistance and supportive services to academically qualified and highly motivated minority/disadvantaged students to enable them to obtain a college education.

The fund has provided over 2000 scholarships to date. Presently, the scholarship fund is experiencing a financial crisis and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Scholarship Alumni Association are raising funds to eliminate this crisis and to maintain a strong financial base for the coming years.

The 1984-85 academic year goal is to raise \$100,000 and we are asking all concerned citizens, businesses, organizations, and groups to assist us in fund-raising activities or contributions for this worthy cause.

The alumni's first fund raiser for 1984 was a benefit dinner on June



Martin Luther King, Jr., Alumni Scholarship Fund-raising Committee. Front row (l-r) Cottrell White, Maria Mitchell, Edna Pittman, Veronica Alberti, Helen Pittman, Michelle Mitchell. Back row (l-r) O.B. Hill, Michael Hill, Bruce Posey, Charles Crews; not pictured, Roosevelt Carter and Betty Jones. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

24th, at Geneva's Lounge which raised approximately \$1,500. Additional fund-raising activities will be conducted throughout the year and we would like everyone's continued support.

Tax deductible contributions can

be made by writing a check to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Scholarship Fund of Oregon, P.O. Box 751, Portland State University, Portland OR 97207 or calling 229-4475 for pledge cards and additional information.

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## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Scholarship Fund of Oregon Alumni Association

Would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the following individuals and sponsors who made contributions to the benefit dinner, our first fund raising effort in 1984, on behalf of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Scholarship Fund of Oregon.

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We would also like to acknowledge and give special thanks to the following individuals:

Angela Crews, Delores Crews, Al Graham, Bessie Fields of Anchorage, Alaska, Reverend Garlington, Jessie Jackson, Wendy Daniel Jackson, Franklin Jenkins, Coordinator of the N/NE Community Mental Health Minority Ethnic Conference, Pearl Kelly, Gracie Kennedy, Tom Kennedy, Gloria McMurtry, Maria Mitchell, Michell Mitchell, Barbara Pittman, Eleanor Pittman, Floyd Pittman, Stephanie Pittman, Consuelo Reeves, Elnora Smiley, Deanna Smith, Merthene White, Yvonne White, A.D. Williams, Al Williams, Gina Wood.

And finally a special thanks to all the people who supported this endeavor.

# GRAND OPENING

This is your invitation to "Rediscover Union Avenue." That is the theme for the grand opening at Union Square, N.E. Union at Morris, Friday evening and Saturday, July 6 and 7. All of us hope you'll be able to join us 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Friday night and noon to 6 p.m. Saturday for break dance demonstrations (Friday night) and gospel music and jazz, sports celebrities, a free throw contest, balloons and fun (Saturday).

We're proud to be part of Union Square. We're proud to be part of this neighborhood. And we hope you'll be proud of us.

So come join us for our grand opening of special events - and special discounts. We'll see you here.

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