

Oregonian intern ponders Portland Blacks

by Nathaniel Scott

The furor over Vanessa Williams' ordeal—the first Black to wear the title "Miss America" and the first Miss America to have to relinquish that title, has caused Black dreams to be "deferred, again," wrote Bridgette Lacy, in an open letter published in the *Oregonian*.

Lacy's letter was published during the final week of her summer internship with the paper. And while the hoopla of the "sexually explicit pictures" have died down, the hurt, according to Lacy, lives on.

Lacy's letter maintained that at one of the nation's leading Black universities—Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she is a graduating senior, "an all-woman dormitory—Bethune Hall, had displayed" all of Miss America's articles. She wrote, "These women know the meaning of struggle and survival. They believed that a Black Miss America could show the world the true beauty and integrity of Black women, a beauty and integrity that white America had ignored for so long."

Furthermore, Lacy maintained in her letter, Miss America—Vanessa Williams, "had been put in the ranks with Black women who had given their very best: Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Marian Anderson, Patricia Harris, Althea Gibson, Gwendolyn Brooks, and many more."

Lacy is 22. She is a broadcast journalism major and her minor is political science. She professes "an interest in religion and religious writing." And likewise, she professes "political aspirations."

However, she said, the Black dream, not the one "deferred", but the one made possible because of the struggle during the 50's and 60's, are of paramount concern to her.

"People have died for you to do these things: eat at lunch counters, ride in the front of buses, vote, attend schools of your choice, live where you wish, run for Miss America, and even run for President of the United States—don't forget Shirley Chisholm. How can you let them down?" she asked, as she referred to Vanessa Williams, "She totally disgraced us!"

"When you are raised in Washington, D.C., Blackness is fed to you from the day you are born," Lacy said.

"Washington, D.C., reflects what Blacks should be about," she said. "When you come to Portland, you (Blacks) are not reflected."

She admitted that her limited stay in Portland, from the last of May until August 11th, had not afforded her the opportunity to become aware of the Black community.

Lacy's internship with the *Oregonian* utilized her many skills, including interviewing and writing articles, some of which were printed. But invariably, she said, when she mentioned that she wrote for the




Bridgette Lacy (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Oregonian, people didn't believe her. She surmized that it was because she is Black. And that fact, being Black, caused her to wonder why "there is only one Black reporter in this (*The Oregonian's*) newsroom?"

Judson Randall, the metropolitan editor with the paper, confirmed Lacy's observation that the paper had only one Black staff writer. He added, "We are constantly on the lookout to expand the minorities on our staff."

In addition, Randall said, the summer intern program, with 12 individuals, had three minorities: two Blacks and a person of Asian descent.




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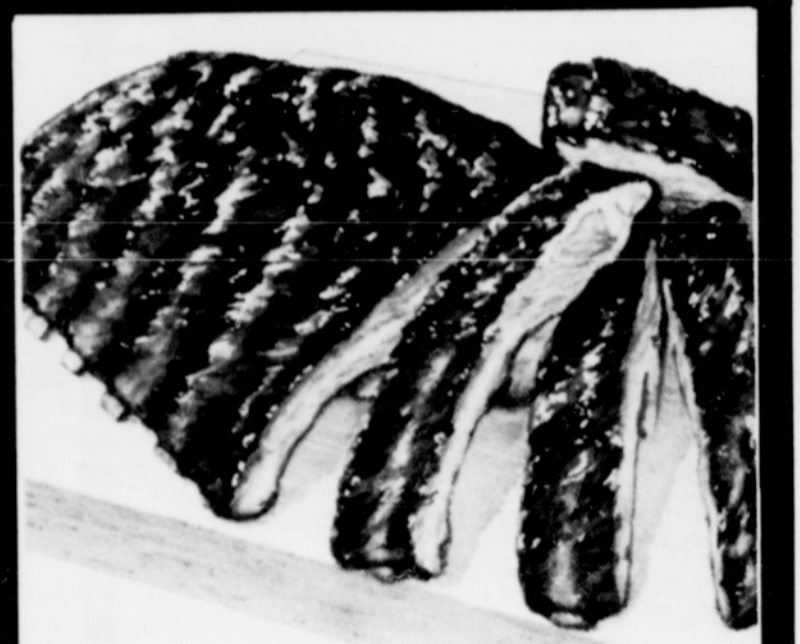
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Black cable station nominated for ACE Award

For the second year in a row, Black Community Television (BCTV) Channel 23, on Rogers Cablesystems, has been nominated for an ACE Award, the cable industry's equivalent to an Emmy. Programmed by Channel Coordinator/Producer Art Alexander, BCTV Channel 23 has been nominated for "Overall Commitment To A Special Audience." This nomination was based on the variety, depth, and quality of programming offered on BCTV. The winners will be announced on September 6th, in a nationally televised awards ceremony from Washington, D.C., which can be seen on Rogers Cablesystems Channel 46, C-SPAN. Also on Liberty Channel 31. The program begins at 5:00 p.m.

Channel Coordinator Art Alexander believes that, "...credit goes in all directions, particularly to the volunteers and production technicians who helped put the programs together. Portland's Black Community should also take credit for supporting and participating in Black Community Television." BCTV is one of three finalists out of submissions from all over the U.S. The other two finalists are Connection Communications Systems of Newark, New Jersey, for Black Community Programming, and Viacom Cablevision, of San Francisco, for Gay Community Programming.