

First Black woman sworn in Legislature

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — Oregon's 63rd legislative session started January 14th with the swearing in of its members. Among them was Oregon's first Afro-American female representative — Margaret Carter (D-Dist. 18).

Rep. Carter said being the first was inconsequential to her, but she expected great scrutiny from her colleagues. "I'm not trying to hide from it, but my train of thought is on doing a job," she added.

Carter's top priority this session is to find solutions to alleviate high property taxes, which she feels disproportionately impact her district. "We have a high concentration of senior citizens and fixed-income families. They can barely afford to stay in their own home. This is unfair," she said.

Rep. Carter is a member of the Joint Trade and Economic Development Commission as well as the Education and Human Resources Committees, and went on to explain, "I will follow the money from the state lottery very closely to see that economic development gets targeted



Margaret Carter, Democrat, District 18, takes her place as Oregon's first Black woman legislator. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

cure welfare funding for two-parent families. "Again, it is unfair for a system to deny support to those who paid into a system all their lives. We must maintain the dignity of the family and I plan to do this in Salem."

Rep. Carter plans to question why Black students score one to three grades behind whites (in the Portland Public Schools). "As a member of the Education Committee, I will ask how and why this came about. Also, I will ask why money allocated to education from the Joint Trade and Economic Development Commission did not wind up in the community colleges," she noted. She campaigned strongly for the creation of the Citizen Utility Board and plans to overcome any and all pressure from utility lobbyists.

Rep. Carter said she will introduce a bill to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday an Oregon State holiday, and a bill to divest state funds from South Africa.

As soon as she is unpacked, Rep. Carter plans to hold monthly community meetings to listen, answer and discuss concerns from her constituents.

"Please, consider my door open and I will always return your calls. If you have any concerns or problems, call me at 378-8018. Let's enter this legislative session together," she concluded.

for businesses employing 20 people or less. These small businesses have been ignored by Economic Devel-

opment and I will champion their cause. She plans to join the fight to se-

Cultural center offers variety

by Robert Lothian

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center is offering the community some unique cultural opportunities this winter.

Foremost is the award-winning play, "Children of a Lesser God," playing through January 27th in the center's 100-seat playhouse.

This unique play depicts romance, marriage and conflicts in the life of a deaf woman. Rollie Wulff directs, in collaboration with Henry Stack of Vancouver's Northwest Theatre for the Deaf and Mark Azure of the Deaf Arts Council of Oregon. Timothy Gero is assistant director/interpreter.

Much of the dialogue is both signed and spoken by the characters, three



SUE BUSBY (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

out of seven of whom are hearing impaired, and interpreters sign all dialogue that is spoken only. All performances are accessible to both hearing and deaf audiences.

"Portland has a huge hearing impaired community," said IFCC director Sue Busby. "They consider themselves a subculture. But there's been no history of professional acting for the hearing impaired in Portland."

By offering the play, she said, the center is fulfilling its role as a place where artists of all cultures can express themselves. Busby said the center staff underwent sign language training so as to better accommodate hearing impaired artists and audiences.

The center is also currently hosting a display of opera costumes and set designs by Chinese artist Carey Wong, formerly with the Portland opera.

Coming up in February, from the 1st through the 23rd, is South African Black playwright Athol Fugard's drama "Master Harold... and the Boys," directed by Rick Jones. Sunday evening, February 3rd, the center will host "Keith Martin Ballet in Concert," a benefit performance for the IFCC.

From Feb. 3 - 27, the Members gallery, a group of Black artists, will exhibit their work in the center gallery — photos, painting, ceramics and needlecrafts. Artists represented will include Richard J. Brown, Samuel Bryant, Sherrian Haggard-Warren, Bobby Jackson-Brown, Janice Ingersoll-Williamson, Judy Madden, P. C. Peri, Carol Probasco, Phil Reid, Bill Rutherford, and Thomas Unthank. The exhibit will open with a reception for the artists on Sunday, Feb. 3rd from 2 to 5 p.m.

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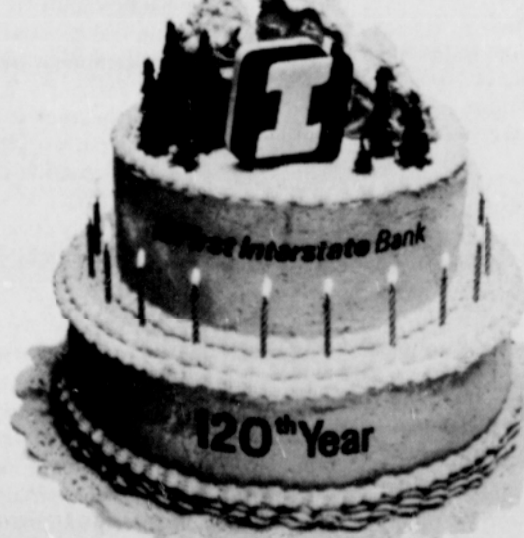
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