

# METROPOLITAN

## King Center wing named for Robert Ford

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—An example that there is still some hope in the world, former students of Robert G. Ford, Oregon's first Black secondary and elementary teacher, organized and dedicated a portion of the King Neighborhood facility to Ford.

Ford, hired by the Portland Public School district, spent 26 years teaching in Holladay, Eliot and Roosevelt High School. His students said Ford instilled in them those intangible elements called pride, self-worth and character.

Tom Mason, a Portland area business man and a former student, said, "Ford left us with a feel that we were someone. He never let you believe that you couldn't accomplish or achieve certain things. You might be poor or in some other way underprivileged. But if you put forth an effort you can achieve your goals. You just can't learn that in a book."

Reading the inscription, Peggy White said, "We, his former students, thank Mr. Ford for his inspiration and many of the basic things he taught us — a sense of pride."

The wing at the King Neighborhood Facility is just a chapter in the book of appreciation his former students have written praising their former instructor. Last year a dance of appreciation drew more than 400 former students and well-wishers. "The reason we care so much about him is because he cared so much for his students," Mason added.

Originally, Ford's students wanted a park named after him, but after a consultation with former Commissioner Charles Jordan, the students adopted the suggestion to have a building named for Ford. King Facility director James Loving said former students approached him after the building was dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "If our Board ap-



Robert G. Ford (center) is flanked by some of his former students who dedicated a wing of the King Center in his name last week. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

proved, I thought a wing of the facility could be named after him." The Board agreed.

The Robert G. Ford wing is located where the Urban League's Youth Service Center was housed. A modest Mr. Ford said he was elated that his students thought enough of him to continue their appreciation. "You must remember, it has been over 40 years since I taught these folks. Now, when I have a depressing moment I think of my students."

Ford was reluctant to pinpoint the change in classroom education. "But the teacher today has a problem I did not have — drugs. This has created a different situation."

Ford also felt there was too much sex on television during prime time. "This represents a change in the attitude of teachers and adults. During my day sex was a boo boo."

Ford came to Portland during World War II and worked as a welder in the shipyards in Vancouver, Washington. He received his Bachelor's

degree at Morgan State College in Baltimore, Maryland. While working on his Masters, his thesis was washed away in the VanPort Flood of 1949.

"If more teachers were like Mr. Ford, the school district and students would be a lot different," commented Mrs. G. Phillips, a former student.

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SCHOOLREEL anchors (l-r) Sara Hathaway of Beaumont Middle School, Jeff Harris of Roosevelt High School and Stephanie Martinez of Madison High School.

## Kids anchor weekly Television show

The Portland School District and KOIN-TV (Channel 6) launch a new weekly magazine-format program beginning Jan. 20.

Called "SCHOOLREEL," the 30-minute, 13-week series will feature education and community story segments on Sundays at 4:30 p.m.

Reporting and anchor duties are handled by 12 Portland public high school and middle school students selected after auditions involving more than 300 applicants.

Story assignments and editing, studio scripting, field direction and technical production were provided by the school district's public information and television services departments.

KOIN-TV provided the studio set, direction and production of the finished videotaped programs.

"SCHOOLREEL provides realistic work experience for the student reporters and anchors and a unique opportunity for the school district to inform patrons about its exciting education programs," according to Bill Garbett, director, Department of Public Information and Communica-

tion for the school district.

Garbett and the Fresno School District successfully produced a similar show for three years on a commercial TV station in that Central California community.

SCHOOLREEL each week profiles a Portland public school, interviews a Northwest celebrity and features story segments ranging from teenage night clubs to motion picture sets to unique school programs to achieving students and educators.

Anchor-reporters are Sara Hathaway of Beaumont Middle, Jeff Harris of Roosevelt High and Stephanie Martinez of Madison High.

Reporters are Jennifer Borrelli of Wilson High, Laurel Brooks of Grant High, Emily Harris and Amanda Lowthian of Lincoln High, Michelle Morris of Jefferson High, Cyndi Reck of Marshall High, Dana Rosenthal of Wilson, Phil Sherburne of Markham Middle and Greg Spencer of West Sylvan Middle.

For further information, please contact Bill Garbett, public information director, Portland Public Schools 249-3304 or Karen Lee Rice, public affairs director, KOIN-TV, 243-6661.

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