

METROPOLITAN

Civil Rights activists honored

by Jerry Garner

Last Saturday, a reception for Haywood Burns was held in the home of Halim Rahsaan. Burns is a well-noted Black lawyer, activist, poet and scholar. Mr. Burns was in Portland as the honored guest speaker at the 1985 Annual Fund Raising Dinner of the National Lawyers Guild which was held at the Cosmopolitan Hotel.

Burns participated in the Civil Rights Movement in the South where he joined the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee to register voters and teach in a Freedom School. In 1967, he joined the staff of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., and became Chief Counsel to the Poor People's Campaign. As National Director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, Burns defended the Black Panthers and Angela Davis. While a Visiting Professor at Sunny School of Law, he became chief counsel for the Attica Defense.

Burns has written two books, *The Voices of Negro Protest in America and Racism and American Law*. Burns currently directs the Center for Legal Education and Urban Policy at City College of New York and serves as National Vice President of the National Lawyers Guild.

Burns said that racism can be

found throughout the entire criminal justice system, and Blacks and other minorities are the victims of this racism. When asked if there is a relationship between the disproportionate number of Blacks in prisons across the nation and the small number of Black lawyers, Burns replied, "as far as my knowledge, there hasn't been a study to show if there is a relationship between the lack of Black attorneys and the over-imprisonment of Blacks."

Burns did mention that although there is a surplus of lawyers in the United States, there is a shortage of Black lawyers. Burns pointed out that Blacks make up 12 percent of the population, however, they represent only 3 percent of the Nation's lawyers. "If there were more Black attorneys, I am sure more Black defendants would choose them," says Burns, "whether this would reduce the number of Blacks receiving prison sentencing is doubtful."

While the goal of the American system of justice is fairness, it is far from realized, stated Burns. The law itself, the administration of the law by the police and judges, and the prisons, all express bias against Blacks and certain categories of people.

When asked to comment about the merit of having civilian review boards to monitor the investigation of com-



Haywood Burns (left), Kathleen Herron (right), and Ron Herndon (not shown) were honored by the National Lawyers Guild. (Photo: Richard Brown)

plaints against police departments because the police, in most cases, will not handle them objectively, Burns replied that less than one percent of all complaints registered against the police nationwide are sustained by the internal investigation division of police departments. To have the police investigate themselves is ludicrous, says Burns.

The theme of Burns' keynote address was "Fight Racism; A Celebration of Struggle and Progress in the 80's." Burns spoke about Reaganism and the surge of racism and social decay in America. Burns also said that the Reagan Administration has done great damage to progress made during the civil rights era. He criticized the Administration's attacks on affirmative action programs and the lack of concern for the poor.

Besides honoring Burns, the National Lawyers Guild honored two local civil rights activists, Kathleen Herron and Ron Herndon, for their work in fighting racism. Herron is co-founder of the Community Law Project, a feminist neighborhood law clinic. She has represented battered women and juveniles. Herron also directed the Portland Black United Front legal clinic.

Herndon was co-founder and directed the Portland Black Educational Center from 1970-80 and currently serves as Director of the Albina Ministerial Alliance Head Start Program. Herndon also co-founded the Portland Chapter of the Black United Front. The Front was instrumental in the establishment of the Portland Citizens Police Audit Committee.



Head Start Center Director Elaine Harrison

Headstart goes to college, or Ms. PMSC weds Mr. Model Cities

The Albina Ministerial Alliance's Hughes Memorial Head Start Center (a former Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee (PMSC) program) has just been re-located to the Portland Community College Cascade campus (a former Model Cities project). Mr. Bud Emery, the Executive Dean of the Cascade campus, said, the college is very proud of this joint effort which will allow the college and the Head Start program to mutually address both community and student needs for child care by sharing resources. Emery further states that this represented the Cascade campus' continuing commitment to being a relevant resource to the local community.

Model Cities can take pleasure in noting that the Hughes Head Start Center (which was one of the best programs from PMSC) and the Cascade campus (which was originated as one of the finest projects Model Cities undertook) have joined hands in order to better serve the community.

Mrs. Elaine Harrison, the head teacher for the Center expressed her enthusiasm for the new venture, "It seems so appropriate to have our children's earliest school experience to be located on a college campus. The facilities are great; and I'm especially looking forward to developing relationships between our Head Start staff and the staff and students of the Cascade campus."

"Child care services in the Center will begin with the fall term," according to Art Byrd, Director of Student Services. He said that all 21 slots are filled at this time, with over half of them being occupied by children of Portland Community College students. He added that a waiting list is being kept by the Head Start Center for future openings. (For information, call 283-2541, ext. 366.)

Byrd indicated that in this joint college/community effort, PCC is providing the facility, utilities, custodial and other maintenance, and meals. Children between the ages of three and five attend six hours a day, five days a week, at no charge to parents who meet the federal low income guidelines. Ten percent of the slots are open to families whose income is above the guidelines.

The campus Coordinator for Community Relations, Nick Barnett, reflected that local community residents who remember PMSC and

Strachan announces funding for programs offering emergency basic needs

Portland City Commissioner Margaret Strachan has announced that \$80,500 of City money is available for programs designed to meet emergency basic needs.

The Bureau of Human Resources is funding the programs which are for such needs as food, shelter, fuel, medications, transportation, other financial crisis assistance and related financial counseling. Last year, five programs were funded. The grants ranged in size from \$2,000 to \$33,000.

Applications can be obtained from the Bureau of Human Resources at the Portland Building, 1120 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Room 402. Deadline for applying is 5 p.m., October 7. Decisions on grants will be made by the Bureau's Citizen Advisory Committee.

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