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Advocates for the homeless Mitch Snyder and Michael Stoops meet at Baloney Joe's. Photo by Richard J. Brown

Christian Activist Mitch Snyder Speaks on Behalf of the Homeless

by Bob Lothian

Mitch Snyder's strong belief in the rights of the homeless has led him to take direct action.

In 1980, the former Madison Avenue management consultant lived on the streets of Washington, D.C. for four months. When a Washington church closed its doors to the homeless, he threw blood on its altar. With other members of his group, the Community for Creative Non-Violence, Snyder has occupied buildings and fasted on behalf of the homeless.

During fasts, "He was almost near death on several occasions," said Michael Stoops, head of the Burnside Community Council.

Stoops introduced Snyder's appearance Friday at St. Francis Church in Southeast Portland.

According to Snyder, who is described as a "radical Christian activist," militant action is needed to draw attention to the growing crisis of homelessness.

"Time has run out for a moderate response," Snyder said.

His civil disobedience for the homeless stemmed from similar protest action during the Vietnam War, Snyder said. As he protested the war in the early 70s, he began to see the homeless problem as the "domestic counterpart" to the violence in Vietnam, "within

blocks of the White House is the very epicenter of the world," he said. Snyder has worked on behalf of the homeless in Washington since 1973.

He said the numbers of homeless people have grown steadily since he began his work, especially since 1980, when the problem began to reach crisis proportions.

Estimates of 2-3 million homeless in America are probably low, according to Snyder. New York City alone has 50,000 homeless, including 10,000 children, he said. The Community for Creative Non-violence in Washington runs a soup kitchen that feeds 2,000 people a day, also a clinic, shelter and free food store, he said.

Snyder attacked the stereotypes of homeless people that only make the problem worse, he said.

"These are not dirty, lazy, drunken bums," he said.

On the contrary, according to Snyder, the homeless today are the disabled, elderly, unemployed and veterans. They are plagued by illness, frostbite, gangrene, injuries and needless deaths, he said.

Snyder expressed sadness at the deaths on Mt. Hood. "But everyday, probably 5-10 times that number die on the streets."

He urged those present to drop what

they were doing and help.

"We have to live and walk with the oppressed," he said. "We have to walk with the lepers of the world."

"We can't make it just a part-time endeavor and we can't just give a part of ourselves."

Meanwhile, Rodney Page, executive director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, announced that he had learned from a reliable source that major lending institutions were denying loans for rehabilitation of the Beaver and State Hotels.

The two old hotels in the Burnside area are part of Mayor Bud Clark's 12-point plan for the homeless. Under the plan, the city would purchase and remodel the hotels for low cost housing for the homeless, but that can't happen without the loans, said Page.

He described the action by lending institutions as "almost unconscionable," and probably politically motivated. "If this is true, I think it's a terrible statement about the business leaders of our community," Page said.

Snyder said that Portland is viewed as progressive for its programs for the homeless.

"That's real strange, isn't it," he said, "that someone would say the mayor isn't doing his job for wanting to help the homeless?"

Black Endangered Species, says Speaker

by Jerry Garner

"Unless Blacks focus on the problems that are destroying our communities, we as a race are an endangered species," said Josie R. Johnson. Johnson made this statement as part of her keynote address during the Eight Women of Excellence Awards, sponsored by the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Portland Chapter.

More than 200 guests attended the awards ceremony at the Columbia River Red Lion Inn. The Women of Excellence Awards were presented to individuals in six different categories: Community Service, Harrie Belle Paris; Education, Virginia O. Phillips; Professional Achievement, Margaret Carter; Religion, E. Jean Dillard; Senior Citizen, Jewel White; Youth, Victoria Rose Hariston.

Scholarships were also given to local young women for their academic achievements. Receiving scholarships for \$500 were Cynthia Renfro of

Reynolds; Tonya Negil Canada of Jefferson; and Zonya Watts of Beaverton. Victoria Rose Hairston of Grant received a \$1000 scholarship.

Johnson, who is currently residing in Houston, Texas, is an Educational Consultant, Director of Alumni Affairs Office, Fisk University. She has a B.A. from Fisk, while earning a M.Ed. and Ed.D. in Education Administration from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Johnson is also past President of the Minneapolis, Minnesota Urban League.

Johnson told those in attendance that Black parents, community leaders, and religious leaders must focus on the problems which are destroying Black America. Problems such as quality education, Black on Black crime, poverty, teen pregnancies, and economic equality. "The key in solving these problems is quality education," said Johnson. Johnson said she was sad-

Local Youth Wants to be a Doctor

by Bob Lothian

Derrick Butler wants to be a doctor. If his success in high school is any indication, he should have no problem attaining his goal.

The 17 year-old Northeast Portland youth will graduate from Catlin Gabel School June 7. At Catlin, an exclusive and academically demanding Southwest Portland private school, Derrick maintained a 3.4 grade point average, he was elected student body president, and he was active in sports, including soccer, basketball and track.

His excellent record allowed Derrick to have his pick of colleges.

"He got accepted everywhere," said his mother, Rose Butler.

After considering Oregon Health Sciences University, and Ivy League schools like Colgate and Brown, Derrick picked Morehouse College in Atlanta.

"It's all black, and I thought I'd have a better educational experience," he said.

At Morehouse, Derrick won't have to worry about tuition and expenses — he received a full scholarship. He also received a \$2,000 National Achievement Scholarship for Outstanding Negro Students in recognition of his excellent scholastic aptitude test scores.

Derrick will leave for Morehouse and his pre-med studies in August. This summer, he will get an introduction to his medical career with an eight-week apprenticeship at the Oregon Health Sciences University. Derrick will perform lab research under the supervision of a biochemist at OHSU.

Derrick said his ambition to become a doctor combines an interest in people with his love for science, especially biology.

"I haven't decided exactly what kind of doctor I want to be," he said.

One thing he was sure of, though: "I'm proud of what I've done. I've worked hard for it."

"He's done really, really well," said his mother, who works in the computer center at Pacific Northwest Bell.

Rose Butler said Derrick was an only child. His father died several years ago, she said, leaving the two of them to fend for themselves.

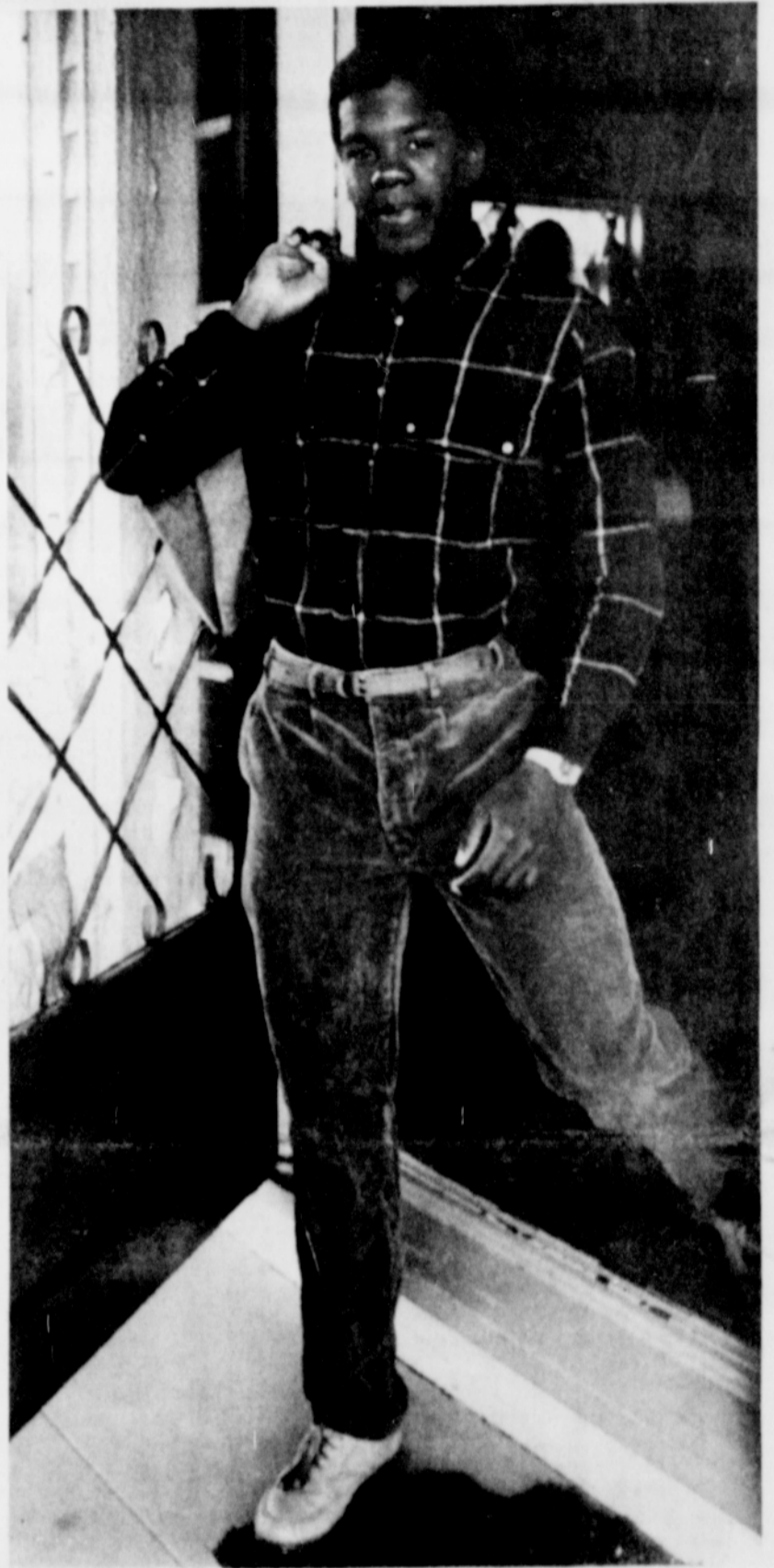
As Derrick excelled in elementary school, she decided he needed a more demanding academic environment. He enrolled at Catlin six years ago, and received scholarships for all but one of those years, she said.

While at Catlin, Derrick traveled to Europe for five weeks with 11 students and a teacher, and practiced his French.

"He wants to go back," said his mother.

His years at the private school were good for Derrick, she said.

"It's afforded him the opportunity to meet a lot of people and have experiences that a normal child growing up in Northeast Portland wouldn't have access to," she said.



Derrick Butler leaves home for Catlin Gabel where he attends school. Photo by Richard J. Brown

But Derrick said it was difficult being one of only three black students at the school, which has a student body of 600.

"It's like I live in two worlds," he said.

Derrick said he is looking forward to attending Morehouse even though it

means living clear across the country from home.

He will miss Portland, Derrick said, but "I won't miss the rain, I know that."

Note: Derrick's is not the only success story in his family: His cousin, Tonya Canada, is the Rose Festival princess at Jefferson High School.



Keynote speaker for the "Women of Excellence" awards luncheon Josie S. Johnson and Delta Sigma Theta sorority president Lillian Cunningham. Photo by Richard J. Brown

dened by the lack of emphasis which is placed on education in many Black communities.

Historically Blacks have always been interested in education, said Johnson. In the past, White scholars denied this interest in education on the part of Blacks. Johnson told the audience that during slavery, Whites denied Blacks the right to education because

they knew that an educated slave was a threat to the cruel system of slavery. "Those who taught slaves to read and write were punished as severely as those who helped slaves escape," said Johnson.

Johnson said despite those obstacles, Blacks did learn to read and write. After the emancipation Proclamation, one-fifth of the Blacks in the South could

read and write. Johnson said during the reconstruction period, Black families stressed the importance of an education, work, and the role of mother and father. "Today we need a surgent of those emphasis," said Johnson.

Johnson urged those present to get busy rebuilding the collapsed value system in the Black communities.

Junior Court at Festival

Albina Rotary will sponsor the Greater Albina Spring Festival on May 31, 1986 at Peninsula Park in conjunction with the Junior Rose Festival Court's Fiftieth Annual Rose Planting and Knighting Ceremony. The hours will be 10:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

The Festival will honor the Junior Court and grade school students who attend schools in and around the Albina area and who have excelled either in academics or in service to their schools or community.

The Portland Public Schools is co-sponsoring the event and will present certificates of achievement to the honored students. The students will be hosted to a hamburger luncheon at the Festival immediately after the Junior Court completes its portion of the event. Entertainment will include: storytelling at the North Portland branch of the Library at 10:30, a parade to the park led by the Jazmin' Band, orchestral and band music, cultural dancing and singing, a drill team, and a presentation by the Junior Court princesses.

The public is invited to attend.