

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volume XVI, Number 45

September 17, 1986

25¢

USPS 885-820-888
Cover Publishing Co., Inc. 1986



(Left to Right) OBL African-American Economic Dinner participants: Al Williams, General Manager Portland Observer and President/Founder of JOBS Magazine and Portland Publishing, Co.; Grover Strickland of Brofam Oil; Nya Turner,

MBE/FBE Specialist for JOBS Trade Magazine; Art Teele, Jr., President, National OBL; Joyce Brown, Brofam Oil; John Brown, President of Brofam Oil; and Jerry Garner, Staff Reporter, Portland Observer Newspaper.

Photo by Richard J. Brown



(Left to Right) Carl Talton of Pacific Power & Light received the Excaliber Award; Matt Chavis, The Chairman Award; Lenora Allison of Tri-Met; Bernie Foster of the Skanner, received the Summit

Award; Jim Cowen of Tri-Met; OBL National President, Art Teele, Jr.; Dr. E.C. Ogbuobiri received the Booker T. Washington Award; and Willie Harris received the Nova Award.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

Judge Diez Urges Blacks to Prepare for Career on the Bench

by Jerry Garner

Oregon's first African-American female Circuit Court Judge urges Black attorneys to get the training that will enable them to qualify for a judgeship position.

"Although the number of African-American men and women attending law school and passing the bar has been on the increase in the last 15 years, there are still only two African-American judges on the Circuit Court; myself and Judge Aaron Brown. I am 68 years old. It is time for some younger man or woman, (smiling) I would prefer a younger woman, to replace me on the bench when I decide to retire."

Judge Diez said, although there are some Black attorneys in the community who are qualified for the job, she only sees one who is trying to become a judge. "The only African-American I see at this time who is actively seeking a judgeship position is Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Roosevelt Robinson. In my opinion, he would make an excellent judge."

Judge Diez said African-American attorneys seeking a judgeship position should prepare for it by practicing law and getting valuable trial experience. She also encourages them to become advocates for the community and strive to attain what she terms as judicial "temperament". "By this, I mean one must stop being an advocate, to stop being an adversary (something one must be in order to be an effective lawyer), and figure out a way to sit there and be recognized for his or her impartiality, ability to follow the law and explain the law to everyone," said Judge Diez.

Judge Diez was asked why there are only two African-American Circuit Court Judges in Multnomah County. She replied, "There are two main reasons for this. First of all, in order to become a judge, one must be an attorney and have trial experience. Unless one goes into partnership with a law firm or becomes a public defender, they must start their own law practice; this can be expensive. Secondly, there is an abundance of lawyers in Portland. Therefore, many minority lawyers especially African-Americans, leave the state to earn a better living elsewhere, or they go to work for the state, county, city or federal government."

Not only would Judge Diez like to see more Blacks as judges, she thinks females of all races are under-represented on the bench. "When I

became a judge in 1970, there was only one other woman jurist (Judge Jean Lewis) in the entire state of Oregon. "It took a very long period before any more females were appointed to the bench. Today there are still only 10 women judges in the entire state. This is nothing to sing home about."

She said, "By increasing the number of ethnic minorities and women judges, we'll keep a balance in the state of not letting only White males sit on the bench."

Although, Judge Diez stated, she would like to see a Black prepare him or herself to sit on the bench before she retires, she has no intention of retiring in the near future.

Photo by Richard J. Brown



Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Mercedes Diez.

OBL Holds 1st African-American Economic Development Dinner

by Jerry Garner

More than 200 people attended the Oregon Business League's (OBL) first annual "African-American Economic Development Dinner" Tuesday at Shenanigan's Restaurant at Ports of Call.

Almost every African-American business person in the Portland area attended the inaugural dinner sponsored by the OBL. City Commissioner Dick Bogel; District 18 Representative Margaret Carter; Senator Bill McCoy; former Multnomah County Commissioner Gladys McCoy; and Kenny Carr of the Portland Trailblazers were among those in attendance.

The keynote address entitled, "African-American Prospect for Progress, Free Enterprise or Dependency" was given by Arthur Teele, Jr., President of the National Business League.

Teele told the mostly Black audience that African-Americans must stop depending on White America for help and do more for themselves.

"Many Blacks complain about what President Reagan is doing to African-Americans in this country. It shouldn't matter what the President is doing. We as Black people have the resources to determine our own destiny. African-Americans spend over \$160 billion a year in this country, yet they spend only 6 cents of each dollar with Black-owned businesses." Teele said this results in jobs leaving the Black community and a weak economic base within the community.

Teele also voiced his concerns about the lack of commitment by lending institutions in providing financial assistance to small business. "If I can issue one plea tonight, I urge this great community here tonight to re-examine the commitment of our financial institutions in this great state. Banking and interstate banking regulations that are opening the state borders to other institutions necessitates whether you as entrepreneurs survive in a financial environment. We cannot afford to be discriminated against in the market place."

Teele is the 12th President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Business League. He is a partner in the Sparber, Shevin, Shapo and Heilbronner, P.A., a Miami-based law firm.

City Commissioner Dick Bogel urged the Black business leaders to contact his office if they are interested in doing business with the city of Portland. "I am trying to correct the city's dismal performance in utilizing minority and female business enterprises for professional, technical and expert services."

Bogel said this is the first year in which the city has come close in meeting its goals in utilizing minority- and female-owned businesses. He said the time for commiserating over these figures when they come out twice a year is over. "No longer will it be simply enough to say what a shame when we read them and continue with business as usual. It's time for actions, responsible actions involving both leadership and team work."

The National Business League (formerly the National Negro Business League) was founded by Booker T. Washington in 1900. The objective of the National Business League is to eliminate the exclusion of African-Americans and other minorities from the fabric of America's free enterprise system and to serve as an advocate for business development and expansion in the Black community.

Today, the National Business League is a national federation of individuals, firms, and associations engaged in business enterprises. With a growing membership in 37 states and the District of Columbia, the National Business League's national network includes 127 chartered local chapters and a national coalition of association affiliates through its national council for policy review.

The National Business League's national office is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Oregon Chapter of the National Business League was chartered in April of 1980. Presently, Chad Debnam is president of the Oregon Chapter.