

# PORTLAND OBSERVER

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## Publisher Appoints Top Executives

Dr. A. Lee Henderson, President, Exie Publishing Company and Publisher of the Portland Observer, named Al Williams as 2nd Vice President and Leon L. Harris as General Manager and Controller for Exie Publishing Company.



Al Williams  
Vice President



Leon L. Harris  
General Manager

"The Observer has made remarkable gains under Mr. Williams as General Manager," Dr. Henderson stated. "The appointment of Leon will strengthen the team and enable us to realize our long range goals much faster, while maintaining our reputation as a respected community voice and community advocate."

The Portland Observer is one of Oregon's largest weekly publications and is the oldest African American publication in the state.

## Why We Can't Wait

by Nyewusi Askari

After reading Fran Gardner's article "Educators say, 'Give system a chance to help minority students,'" (The Oregonian, Oct. 18, 1987), and, after soliciting some opinions from African-American parents, I am convinced that the Black community will not wait any longer for Portland Public Schools to get its act together. I am also convinced that a growing number of African-Americans are furious about the "bashing" of Ron Herndon by Portland Public Schools' representatives.

The fact that the article appeared in the Sunday's Oregonian is not as significant as some of the precarious, pragmatic, and sarcastic statements that were made, especially those made by Marcia Douglas, the city of Portland's school liaison.

Disparagingly, Ms. Douglas weaved a noxious web of onus assertions. In one breath she asserts, "The disparity in the achievement levels (according to race) is not something to be tolerated . . . but, Herndon is bringing his wonderful ideas to the table in a confrontational way."

Like so many others in the past and present, Ms. Douglas is confusing the issue. Ron Herndon is not the issue. The voice of Ron Herndon, confrontational as it may sound, is the homogeneous voice of thousands of African-American parents who live in this community. Those so-called wonderful ideas Ms. Douglas spoke of as actually ideals that have grown out of the African-American quest for equal and quality education.

Sounding like an intermediary, Ms. Douglas defended Dr. Matthew Prophet's (Portland Public Schools' Superintendent) role in boosting programs for minority students. While stressing that his role should be acknowledged, she commenced to scold the community and Mr. Ron Herndon: "The community that needs to be behind him (Dr. Prophet) is not behind him . . . I think that's a little shortsighted of Ron . . ."

Ask Black parents, and they'll tell you that Ms. Douglas doesn't know where the community stands. Ask these same Black parents, and they'll tell you that the Black community stands where it has always stood when it comes to the education of their children: committed to action.

This commitment to action has been, and still is, the motivating force behind African-Americans' quest for equal and quality education. In 1803, it motivated George Bell, Nicholas Franklin and Moses Liverpool to open the first school for African-American students in Washington, D.C. Neither of them could read or write. It motivated Prince Hall, founder of Masonry for African-Americans, to open a school in his home. It motivated the First Conventions of Colored Peoples, in 1817 and in 1830, to adopt resolutions urging education for African-Americans.

Douglas' description of Mr. Herndon as "shortsighted" was derogatory and despicable. Mr. Herndon, because of hard work, sincerity, perseverance, dedication, and heritage, is one of this community's most respected leaders. His courage is beyond reproach. Often, he is the man in the trenches; shot at from the hip and renounced from the hilltop. Ms. Douglas is a poor shot. Perhaps it's because she has poor vision. In this community the issue is the fact, and the fact is: in spite of Portland Public Schools excellent programs, in spite of its excellent teachers, in spite of its excellent Superintendent, in spite of the system in place, African-American students are not receiving quality education.

These students, thousands of them, live in this community; and it's easy to know what's happening to their academic development. When their parents ask them to read and discover that they can't, when their parents ask them to scribble a note and discover that they can't write, when their parents ask them to count the correct change and discover that they can't calculate, when their parents ask them to explain what they have been taught about African-American history and culture and discover that they haven't learned; when their parents look into their young eyes and see nothing but blank spaces, they are made aware of just how serious the crisis is.

These parents are not willing to wait thirty years for this crisis to end.

Continued on Page 7



Amina Anderson discusses the Black United Fund with Fareeda Muhammad of the Community Development Cooperation.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

## Black United Fund of Oregon A Self-Help Concept For the Black Community

by Leon Harris

According to Amina Anderson, President of the Oregon Chapter of the Black United Fund, local programs which do not meet the funding criteria under the guidelines of United Way may soon find some relief if the BUF fundraising campaign is successful.

The Fund raises money to support minority-controlled institutions outside the realm of interest of traditional charities. The mechanism used by the BUF to solicit Black dollars is the payroll deduction system, the most convenient and least costly method of raising funds.

Described as a "social movement that is designed to improve the quality of life for African Americans through reliance on self-help at the local community level," the organization grew out of the realization that African Americans as a people have a responsibility to assist their own growth and development, that they could not forever go to the larger white community for support without doing something themselves.

"The overall goal of BUF," explains Amina, "is to promote self-sufficiency and self-determination within Portland's African American community by building a relationship between African American employees and organizations in the community."

Created by Walter Bremond, who died of a stroke in New York in 1982, the National Black United Fund claims some fifteen affiliates throughout the country. Each affiliate is independent and autonomous; assuring the survival of the Black United Fund at the community level and establishing accountability locally. The national organization serves as a coordinating and planning body providing technical assistance to local affiliates as well as groups interested in forming BUF organizations. Technical assistance provided includes: fundraising techniques, fiscal management, community organizing strategies, program evaluation and allocating contributions to local groups outside affiliate areas.

"The BUF is a self-help mechanism for the Black Community," claims Amina, who states that the self-help concept "has been utilized effectively by other groups such as Catholic Charities, United Jewish Appeal, and Protestant Welfare."

Amina explains that the BUF differs from United Way in that the Fund

would provide some financial assistance for projects that are not funded by its counterpart (United Way). Economic development and arts and culture are but two areas that would receive funding consideration under the BUF plan.

The local affiliate is negotiating with IBM, PPS and other major businesses in the state in an attempt to gain identity and equal access through the payroll deduction system. However, like its parent organization, the Portland Chapter has encountered some opposition from the businesses and United Way alike.

The BUF would like to run its campaign simultaneously with United Way of Oregon, as most businesses prefer one fundraising event yearly, citing other fundraisers as too time consuming and costly.

This was proposed to Tri-Met by the BUF; but the plan met stiff opposition from United Way, who wanted the Fund, instead, to solicit through the Donor Option System.

"The Donor Option System does not work," claims Amina, "because United Way does not allow other charities to advertise in organizations which they (United Way) have an agreement with."

The national chapter won a federal court suit allowing it to join the Combined Federal Campaign for charities in 1980, but had to withstand an appeal by both the Federal Government and United Way.

"Also, through the Donor Option System, 9% of all dollars contributed to the BUF would go to United Way. This is an unfair deduction of dollars that could be utilized by some needy agency," state Anderson.

According to Jim Cowen, General Manager, Tri-Met, an agreement has been reached that would allow the BUF and United Way to conduct separate campaigns at Tri-Met. "We feel that our employees should have an option as to how they would like their contribution dollars earmarked, as some do have a favorite charity," Cowen explained.

Amina Anderson believes the problems are not insurmountable and that continuing discussions will result in an amicable resolution.

Information regarding the BUF can be obtained by writing to P.O. Box 12406, Portland, Oregon 97212, or calling 503-282-7973.



At a press conference in the King Neighborhood Facility, members of the Portland Chapter of the Rainbow Coalition, labor unions and Black and Asian communities affirmed their support for Democratic Presidential front-runner Jesse Jackson. A formal organizational campaign committee will soon be announced, said Maceo Pettis

(2nd from L), Chairman of the Oregon Rainbow Coalition, Portland Chapter, with a strong emphasis on voter registration. Pettis also gave a report from the National Rainbow Coalition meeting held in Raleigh, N.C.

Photo by Richard J. Brown