

# Affirmative Action In Oregon

by Ian MacCrae

When it comes to affirmative action, accomplishments are usually measured in terms of the numbers of minorities hired. But sometimes the commitment of a leader to an ideal is measured less by numbers than by the degree to which his convictions carry over to those around him. Does Gov. Neil Goldschmidt have that kind of commitment to affirmative action? If Oregon's director of affirmative action is to be believed, the answer is a resounding yes.

Kathleen Saadat became affirmative action director of Oregon in July 1987 after serving as executive director of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs since 1986. In an interview with **The Portland Observer**, Saadat, along with Greg Kantor, the governor's communications director, and Ruth Dodson, assistant to the Governor for executive appointments, stressed their belief that this governor is strongly committed to fairness in hiring practices. "I do feel the [influence of] the leadership of the governor. There's no doubt in my mind [that he is committed to affirmative action.] When I go places around the state, I can feel that influence . . . even in the state Forestry Department and State Police, both of which have historically been resistant to the hiring of minorities and women . . . I've been really happy with the response I've gotten from these agencies," Saadat said.

Kantor said one sign of the governor's commitment to equality is his concern over the recent events in Roseburg, where Grant High School athletes were subjected to racial slurs. Goldschmidt's own experience has convinced him that the problem of racism is not a serious one throughout the state, Kantor

said. Saadat added that threats by racist organizations like the Aryan Nations to "move into the state" are being taken seriously, and that "positive approaches" are under consideration to counter such threats. One approach would be to create a commission of public relations to promote Oregon as a state which takes pride in its racial, religious and ethnic diversity, she said, noting that Lincoln County has already taken a step in that direction by declaring itself a "colorful county."

The picture for minorities in state government is one of both problems and progress, according to Dodson and Saadat. Employment statistics reveal slight improvements in most categories of minorities from 1986 to 1987. The number of Blacks employed in state agencies, for example, rose from 513 in 1986 to 587 in 1987.

Of employees on the governor's own staff, nine percent are minorities and 87 percent are women, a fact which has led to expressions of concern that Goldschmidt may be overlooking male minorities. But Dodson said the Governor "picked the best people he could find." Those people just happened to be women.

When it comes to appointments to commissions, Dodson said efforts to improve minority representation — which now stands at 10 percent — are not limited to publicity in the Black community. She is also in the process of creating a pool of persons who have been recommended by others for appointment, she said. Improving public awareness of the 2,000-odd boards and commissions in Oregon is central to getting more minority partici-

pation, however.

In response to a question about whether appointments reflected community views on the best possible candidates for appointment, Saadat responded that appointments are made from a pool of people willing to serve on a voluntary basis. Geographic requirements are also a factor in making appointments to statewide boards, she said. Again, many people in the Black community "aren't aware of what boards and commissions do. I do know that this office works hard [to find qualified minorities]," she said.

As for hiring practices in state government, Saadat said the goal is not simply for government employees to reflect the percentage of minorities in the general population. "The problem is more complicated than that," she said. "You could fill the system up with people on the bottom [of the pay scale] . . . Accordingly, she said, she is looking at ways to improve the distribution of minorities at higher levels of government.

Saadat said the position of affirmative action director under Goldschmidt "has been defined differently than in the past. The approach is systemic as opposed to just counting numbers, receiving complaints and matching jobs to applicants . . ." The impact of testing on the hiring of minority applicants is one of the systemic factors Saadat is now looking into.

Saadat stressed the importance of changing the system now to give people better access to jobs in government, saying, "if your next governor doesn't have the same kind of commitment [to affirmative action], you won't have the system in place."

## Parents: Is Your Child Going to Kindergarten Next Year?

Now is the time to begin the kindergarten enrollment at your neighborhood school.

Here are a few things for you to do between now and the end of February:

- Obtain a copy of the Kindergarten Handbook for parents by calling PPS Public Information Department at 249-3304.

Identify the school where your child will attend kindergarten.

- Make an appointment to visit the principal at the school where you would like your child to attend.

Make an appointment to visit the kindergarten classroom where you think your child will attend school.

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## CALENDAR

### Black History Month at PCC February 1-26, 1988 Cascade Campus

705 N. Killingsworth. 283-2541. Portland Community College is proud to share in the 1988 observance of Afro-American history.

**Friday, Feb. 5** — Dr. Brenda Lockett, Admin. Assit., Oregon Employment Division, DHR, "Acculturation and Assimilation", 12:00-1:00 p.m., CH B44.

**Monday, Feb. 8** — Leon Harris, Manager, Portland Observer Newspaper, "The Black Press", 12:00-1:00 p.m., CH B43.

**Tuesday, Feb. 9** — Charlotte Easley, "Pop" Vocalist and Pianist, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Cafeteria

**Wednesday, Feb. 10** — The Honorable Mercedes Deiz, Judge, Circuit Court, Multnomah County, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Jackson Hall, 201.

**Thursday, Feb. 11** — Goldie Irby, Vocalist, 12:00-1:00 p.m. Auditorium.

**Friday, Feb. 12** — Sharon Mitchell, Anchorperson, KGW-TV, Channel 8, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., PB 2.

### Community College Month at Mount Hood Comm. College

**Feb 2-29:** John Henry Nichols Art Exhibits — Noted black artist from Hawaii will be featured in free exhibit as part of Black Heritage Month activities. College Center. Viewing hours 7:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Fridays and 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturdays. FREE. Call 667-7260.

**Feb. 8-12** Black Heritage Week Activities are planned throughout the week, including speakers and films, to address the issue of black awareness. Main campus. Call 667-7260.

**Feb. 9** Reggae All-Stars Concert. Popular four-piece band will give a concert in the Vista Dining Center as part of Black Heritage Week. FREE. Call 667-7260.

**Feb. 10** Lounge Concert. The Cover Boys will give a one-hour concert of Black funk music in the College Center Fireplace Lounge. Noon. FREE. Call 667-7210.

### Albina Branch Library Celebrates Grand Re-Opening

A celebration to mark the re-opening of the newly refurbished Albina Branch Library will be held from noon to 4 p.m. on **Saturday, February 6.** Gladys McCoy, chairperson of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, will be the featured speaker. She will also preside over a cake cutting ceremony.

The celebration will also feature the mandoline music of Ken Culver and the keyboard music of Denny Osborne. The New Rag Bag Theater will present "Silly Stories for All Ages."

**"Africa Revisted" Slide Lecture**  
Ronna Neuenschwander will present "Africa Revisted" — a slide lecture and gallery talk — **Saturday, February 6th** at 11 a.m. in The Lawrence Gallery, 842 S.W. First Avenue, Portland, OR 97204. Gallery hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### Transportation Training

Basic training for neighborhood volunteers on Transportation: Streets, Traffic, Parking & Maintenance, **Thursday, Feb. 11, 6:45 p.m.**, Portland Building, Room C, 1120 SW 5th. Come meet staff from the Bureau of Transportation who will explain what the bureau does and why. Learn how to get action on neighborhood need requests. Emphasis will be on transportation planning, traffic management, parking and street maintenance.

### Art Museum Presents "Clay Revisions: Plate Cup, Vase"

The Portland Art Museum presents "Clay Revisions: Plate, Cup, Vase **February 10 through April 3.** Vicki Halper, Curator of the exhibition and Assistant Curator of Modern Art at the Seattle Art Museum will give a slide lecture of **February 9** from 7-8 p.m. An opening reception for Oregon Art Institute members will follow from 8-10 p.m.

### Volunteer Orientation

N.E. Elderly need you. Volunteer for transportation, visiting, chores, weatherization, respite or escort. Project Linkage Volunteer Orientation: **Feb. 10, 7:30-9:00, 249-8215.**

### The Tax Man Cometh — And So Does Free Help

**Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 NE Knott.** Program begins **mid-February.** Call 282-1460 for information & appointment.

**Ockley Green Community School, 6031 N. Montana.** Program begins **mid-February.** Call 280-5663 for information & appointment.

**Peninsula Park Community Center, 6400 N. Albina.** Assistance from trained AARP volunteers. **Tuesdays and Thursday, 2-1 through 4-15, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Call 285-4222 to make a half-hour appointment.

**University Park Community Center, 9009 N. Foss.** For low income, senior, or handicapped citizens. Presented by AARP. **Wednesdays, 2-3 through 4-13, 10 am to 2 pm.** Walk-ins welcome, or call 289-2414 for an appointment.

### Have a Heart — Kids' Valentine Parties

Let your children mark Valentine's Day with party activities designed just for them. Portland Parks and Recreation offers several chances to celebrate.

**Sweetheart's Valentine Party,** Peninsula Park Community Center, 6400 N. Albina. Bring your favorite stuffed animal or doll and join in on heartfelt crafts, treats, and games. Wear red, white, or pink. Ages 3-5. **Wednesday, February 10, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.** The fee is \$2.50.

### "Prison Ministry Seminar"

Christian ministry to prisoners, ex-offenders, and their families, will be the focus of the "Prison Ministry Seminar" on **Saturday, February 6,** at Allen Temple C.M.E. Church, 4214 N.E. 8th, Portland.

This timely seminar will meet from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is sponsored by the North Portland Bible College. Registration is \$15, including lunch; advance registration before **February 3** is \$10. Call NPBC at 288-2919 for further information.

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