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"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

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## AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY OF THE WEEK

African-American mother and Discovery Space volunteer Beryl McNair and her daughter Cicely Oaks has been chosen as the Portland Observer's "Family of the Week."

Ms. McNair was also chosen for special recognition as OMSI's "Volunteer of the Month." McNair has been volunteering for over 14 months in OMSI's Discovery Space, an educational play area for children, ages two through seven and accompanying adults.

In the Discovery space, McNair greets people, answers parents' questions and acquaints them with what is available to explore and discover.

Discovery Space assistant Shirley Lewton says, "McNair takes initiative, is highly organized and is very friendly."

Cicely, McNair's three-year-old daughter, accompanies her to Discovery Space. At times, Cicely helps by explaining the exhibits to other children.

Besides volunteering in the Discovery Space, McNair also volunteered for OMSI Auction, the Alberta Science Center for Kids (A.S.K.), OMSI Fund Raiser and an OMSI teacher training program.



In addition to taking care of her daughter and volunteering for OMSI, McNair is active with her daughter's preschool. She is also involved with the Trinity Episcopal Church, the Oregon Symphony Women's Association and the Portland Heights Wilcox Auxiliary.

When asked why she volunteers, McNair said, "If I didn't, I would just be another person not doing anything. If I can make somebody's day, that just keeps the smile on my face and the joy in my heart that I accomplish this goal."

About her daughter, McNair said, "Cicely represents tomorrow's future. And, in spite of all the negative press and talk concerning African-American children, we parents are doing all we can to provide positive images, positive role models and all the love and caring we can muster. Our children will be a part of tomorrow's growth and development, and I want to make sure that Cicely experiences that growth and development in a most positive way."

In Celebration of the African-American family, the Portland Observer is proud to salute Ms. McNair and her daughter Cicely as its "Family of the Week." Keep up the positive work, Beryl and Cicely!

Heidi Freytag, OMSI  
Nyewusi Askari - Portland Observer

## Series I: A Celebration Of A Black

by Marcus C. White

Despite the social-economic pressures that affect the many institutions in today's society, the strength of the Black family continues to prevail in a world of change.

For years adverse social forces has created tension, stress, and strain within the Afro-American family unit. Much emphasis has been made towards the breakdown of the family, but little attention is given about the strength and progress it has provided over the years.

The Robinson family is one of many black families in the Portland area who seek to live a happy life despite the world's conditions. Manford and Genevieve Robinson have devoted much time to the development of their family across the years. Much of their strength lies in their two sons, Wendell and Corey, who are young men aspiring to become the best at what they do.

Wendell and Corey Robinson, both former students of Grant High School, are pursuing different fields of interests. Currently in New York City, Corey is devoting much time striving to become a top performer in singing and dance. Wendell, who was a track star for the Grant Generals, recently graduated from San Diego State University receiving a degree in Psychology.

In New York, Corey is diligently working on a record album which is expected to be released sometime this summer. Wendell attests that Corey wants to be in New York because that is where "things actually take place." Despite the distance between he and his family, Genevieve claims she still sends care packages to Corey so things will be a lot easier away from home.

Realizing the need of a strong family, Manford Robinson explains that strength within the family is very important. "I think, concerning the things that are going on nowadays," says Manford, "Most kids growing up are going to have to have guidance on how to combat and how to face what the world has become." He emphasizes that if you do not have a strong family background or relationship with the entire family, it makes

Wendell believes the family is the base from which you operate. Says Wendell, "You have to be grounded. It [the family] is a very strong base, and if you have that it makes confrontations in society a lot easier."



Corey Robinson (top left), Manford Robinson (top right), Wendell Robinson (lower left), Genevieve Robinson (lower right).

### RAISING A FAMILY

Manford expresses the importance young fathers and mothers who should give strict attention to children in the process of raising a family. "Try to steer them (kids) in the direction in which you think is good for them at the time, though they may not think so," Manford said.

Moral support is important in every family according to most experienced parents. Genevieve Robinson admits, "So many young people do not have positive feelings about themselves and they often reach out to their peers for help." She says that it is significant for every family member to feel loved.

Adds Genevieve, "It's really important that children are involved in something." She says that kids should always be occupied doing something.

Though today's world is pressurized with people running to and fro, the Robinsons emphasize the importance of taking time out. They express that strength within the family stems from the quality time spent with one another.

"As kids we were always involved in fairytales and fantasies," says Wendell, explaining the important role that stories and booklearning played in his life as a youth. He claims fishing became a memorable experience as well, it was something he and his dad often did on the weekends.

Manford and Genevieve emphatically explain that they raised their children in an area that was idea for most kids. Says Wendell, "While

growing up here there were always a lot of kids."

Manford said that the kids in their area were never a bother because most of them were fairly good kids. Because of the changes made in their neighborhood, the Robinsons claim that most of the children in their area grew up and went different ways.

## Memorial Scrolls Sent To King Center In Atlanta

On Tuesday, Jan. 31, 1988, at 1 p.m. Red Cross directors and members of the Executive Committee of the Albina Ministerial Alliance met at the Red Cross Blood Center to review the memorial scrolls signed by blood donors during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Blood Drive. The blood drive was sponsored by the Albina Ministerial Alliance. The scrolls were signed by 561 blood donors in the Portland-Metro area during Martin Luther King commemoration week, Jan. 16-21, 1989.

The memorial scrolls will be sent to Coretta Scott King at the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta. Mrs. King has endorsed the movement encouraging people to donate blood as a gift of life in memory of Dr. King.

Present at this meeting will be Rev. Joe S. Hardie, Albina Ministerial Alliance president; Bishop A.A. Wells, vice president; and Cornetta Smith, CEO; Dennis Bailey, Donor Resources Director; and Sharon Ritter, Executive Director of the Red Cross.

## Minority Business Enterprise In Oregon Part I: Black Business Participation Strangled

by Stephen E. McPherson

A recent decision by the U.S. District Court invalidated the rules Multnomah county used to subcontract work to minorities and women in the business world. It could have a domino effect in other areas of participation. That was the opinion of Lina Garcia-Seaboard, state advocate for women and minorities.

Last November Judge James Redden ruled in favor of the L. D. Mattson company and the Associated General Contractors of Oregon. He found the 10 per cent set aside for minority subcontractors illegal because previous discrimination in the bidding of subcontracts had not been proven.

Kevin Harden writing in the Daily Journal of Commerce reported how the members of the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs suggested an eight point program to increase minority participation in state contracts. According to Sam Brooks, their discretionary power to award contracts to minority business. Private groups would waive the bond requirement. The "good faith" requirement of the law should be enhanced.

Following the Redden decision, the Supreme Court ruled against the City of Richmond, Virginia in a similar case. The 6-3 vote reflected strict political views.

It has been established with convincing accuracy that the civil rights gains of the last three decades represent a hollow victory in the absence of solid economic progress. The recent court decisions underscore the fact that as far as the Black community is concerned, economic parity is more a long term goal rather than a reality.

Perhaps the most significant contribution President Lyndon B. Johnson made to the American democratic process was to pursue a moral leadership which acknowledged and addressed the grievances Black Americans were forced to endure for three centuries. Under his administration the innovative process of affirmative action was created. The Reagan years appear to have been dedicated to the dismantling of that entire endeavor.

Further to the reduction of its effect, a number of factors have come

into play which diminished the impact of its original intention. Initially, affirmative action programs were established to remediate the economic disparity of only the Black population, period. It was expanded to include the problems of women and then further diluted to cover all persons who could be classified as a minority.

Even with the creation of the Minority Business Enterprise and the rulemaking that purportedly would increase opportunities for subcontracting, participation for the black contractor has been dismal. The strict bonding requirement together with other subtle factors have conspired effectively to reduce and often eliminate the number of Black contractors who can even participate in the bidding process. The statistics further are obscured by inclusion of women and four categories of others minorities in their annual goals for affirmative action.

The American Contractor frequently publishes a breakdown of minority and gender participation among sub-contractors. A good case in point is the Oregon Department of Transportation. During the latest reporting period for subcontracts let to minorities, Black participation was only 14.7%, compared with 13.08% for Hispanics, 3.53% for Pacific Asians and a striking 68.66% for American Indians.

Clearly, there is a pressing need for the governor and the legislators to address these disparities. Certainly those elected officials who have assumed the responsibility for monitoring such things should reexamine the effect that the current rules have, not only on increased opportunities in the area of subcontracting but especially with regard to Black participation at a significant level in the abundant market place.

## Sugar Ray Visits Oregon



Sugar Ray whoops it up with local family (above), and Sugar poses with Erika Henderson, a student at Ockley Green Middle School (below).



## STUDENT OF THE WEEK



Tova Joanna Johnson was born 7 October 1977 in Portland, Oregon. During the last two years, Tova has earned not only the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission's Harriet Tubman Essay Contest Award but also several other awards and honors. Included among them are the Youth Appreciation Week Citation and Award presented by the Optimist Club of Lloyd Center on 18 November 1987 and the Theme Excellence Award in depicting Affirmative Action, the Dream of Equality, presented 11 May 1988.

Tova is an eleven-year-old sixth grade Honor Roll student at Beaumont Middle School in Portland. She previously attended Sabin Elementary School. Tova has two sisters. Her sister, Tara, is a seventh grade Honor Roll student also at Beaumont. Her sister, Kelva, is a third grader at Sabin.

Tova was asked to give one quality in adults that she admired the most. Her response was "Adults who like children is a quality I like." She stated further "Adults who try to push you into talking when you're quiet or adults who say rude things because you don't talk a lot is a quality I like the least." Tova's views on friendship included helping each other and caring what happens to one another. She went on to explain that in moments of danger, a person doesn't just leave his or her friend to be hurt while he or she escapes. To do so, according to Tova, meant that the person did not have the qualities necessary in a real friend.

Tova says that school is educational and sometimes fun. Her favorite school subjects include P.E., Science, Math, Reading, Language and Typing. She enjoys reading, writing and playing her violin. Tova states that she is content with herself and sees herself playing the violin and planning for college in the next five years.

Tova is less talkative than some and more talkative than others and engages in a form of nonverbal communication at times. She listens with more than her physical self and sees beyond her eyes. She is both unspoiled and unpretentious and a genuinely "nice" person.