

## St. Andrews: Legal Guardian to the Poor

ST. ANDREWS, LEGAL GUARDIAN TO THE POOR

by Etienne de la Plume

It frequently has been observed that those persons who become entangled with the laws of this nation have a better chance for survival in a litigation process if they are male, white and rich. The blind-folded statue of justice that often adorns many a court house frequently is more a symbol of blind man's bluff. Inside those edifices justice is meted out to the impecunious and the unlettered with a vengeance that rivals that familiar childhood game. A visit to any state or federal prison confirms the fact that the poor, the minorities and the unsophisticated are represented by a factor which is far in excess of the proportion of their demographic representation within their own community.

With regard to legal representation, frequently persons so affected are saddled with legal representation by ambulance chasers, incompetent charlatans and overworked public defenders. In the latter case, Portland is fortunate to have an excellent public defender's office.

There is, however, another legal resource situated in the midst of the problematic lower Northeast sector of the city that is largely underutilized by the very people it was created to serve.

decimated anti-poverty programs. It is pitifully ironic that even though the St. Andrews Legal Clinic was established initially to give the people of the lower Northeast community better legal services only a small proportion of their clients come from that source. The clinic is anxious to let that target population know that they are still in business and willing to serve them when legal problems arise.

They are staffed by four young lawyers from very good schools and solid family BACKGROUNDS who approach the practice of law for their clients with missionary zeal William Stegemeyer, Jr. probably summed it up best when he described his reason for entering the practice of poverty law. Following periods as a student both in North Carolina and in Oregon he did a clerkship in one of the Oregon courts. He became so involved in untangling the legal complications of persons who filtered through the system that he decided to devote his profession to that process.

The St. Andrews Legal Clinic located at 807 Northeast Alberta came on line almost 10 years ago. Even though it was first spearheaded by the St. Andrews Roman Catholic Parish just across the street, their present affiliation is in name only. The clinic is a public interest private group dedicated to OTHER principle that poor people deserve adequate legal representation.

Especially are such services needed in that funding for litigation was tremendously diminished during the eight years that the Reagan administration

Kathie Osborn comes from New Jersey, but succumbed to the urge to go West. She had never been to Oregon prior to deciding to settle here. Her inspiration to practice poverty law came from her law professors at the University of Oregon. An internship with the Benton County district attorney convinced her that was a good choice.

Keith Raines is the director of the clinic and one of its founders. He received his law degree from the University of Oregon and practiced in the neighborhood before joining the St. Andrews Legal Clinic at its inception in 1979. Diminutive in stature but magnanimous in purpose he is a very fitting mentor to the other lawyers on his staff who are dedicated to providing good law services to people with an embarrassment for funds.

On the other hand Kate Earley comes from a New York family that always was service oriented toward helping those who are less fortunate within our society. It was her intention from the very outset to practice this type of law. After receiving a degree in sociology, she studied law at American University in Washington, D.C. She has worked with many social action groups.

The firm charges a sliding scale for its services beginning at \$35 per hour.. Patricia Dawson, director of development, claims that most client charges hover around that benchmark.

In addition to its day time services a night clinic operates every Thursday between 6 and 9:30 p.m. where volunteer lawyers give new clients a 30 minute consultation for the reduced fee of \$15. The telephone number at the clinic is 281-1500.

## Minority Business Enterprise In Oregon (Continued From Front Page)

sufficient evidence to prove that contention.

Even the majority opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court does not rule out such efforts to remedy discrimination in the construction industry when such a practice can be documented and proven. In that case, the City of Richmond had enacted an ordinance which made it mandatory for all contracts let by the city to require a 30% participation of African-Americans, Hispanics, Indians, Orientals, Eskimoes and Aleuts. Even though discrimination against Blacks could be proven, the inclusion of the other groups in the Richmond ordinance without sufficient proof in their favor tainted the entire remedy. Justice O'Connor pointed out that the composition of the city council itself which enacted the rule was suspect since its majority was Black.

Justice O'Connor further questioned the Richmond plan's rigid quota system since it gave no consideration as to the availability, financial stability and bonding ability.

She also stated that even in the absence of an affirmative ACTION program the state has at its disposal other race neutral remedies which could correct discrimination in the market place. Among these she listed simplification of bidding procedures, relaxation of bonding requirements, financial aid and the prohibition of discrimination in the provision of credit or bonding by local suppliers and banks.

Justice O'Connor also recognized that a carefully tailored plan with certain strict guidelines for remedial purposes would not violate the constitutional guarantees of equal protection in the 14th amendment.

All of these factors would appear to support the position that certain state agencies might have acted prematurely and perhaps inappropriately when they abandoned rather than modified Minority and Women Business Enterprise that already was in place. At this point there is nothing to fill the void and the minority entrepreneurship so affected might be destroyed before some method can be devised to replace the programs that were invalidated by the court.

The governor has convened a committee to review this problem AND to make recommendations to him for replacement programs. Certainly such an approach will be helpful, but this entire effort could be a meaningless and futile exercise if the governor does not come forward immediately with a strong impact statement which would address this problem and underscore the devastating effect that the two court rulings could have upon numerous emerging small businesses within the state. Instead, heavy emphasis is being placed on developing guidelines which are both race and gender neutral. Since both members of Minority Business Enterprises and their protagonist, the Associated General Contractors of America, are involved in this process it will be interesting to observe how far reaching their formal recommendation to the governor will be.

One other approach for redress still remains. The state legislature which is now in session could enact new guidelines which could survive the acid test of litigation. It is appalling that no adequate survey has been commissioned which would properly document discrimination in the construction which is known to have been entrenched within the industry for years.

Lina Garcia-Seabold, the governor's advocate for women and minorities, is preparing such a proposal for Margaret Carter to present to the legislature. Here is a case where the small entrepreneur, including women and minorities needs to petition their representatives, senators and the governor and impress them with the emergency of this dilemma.

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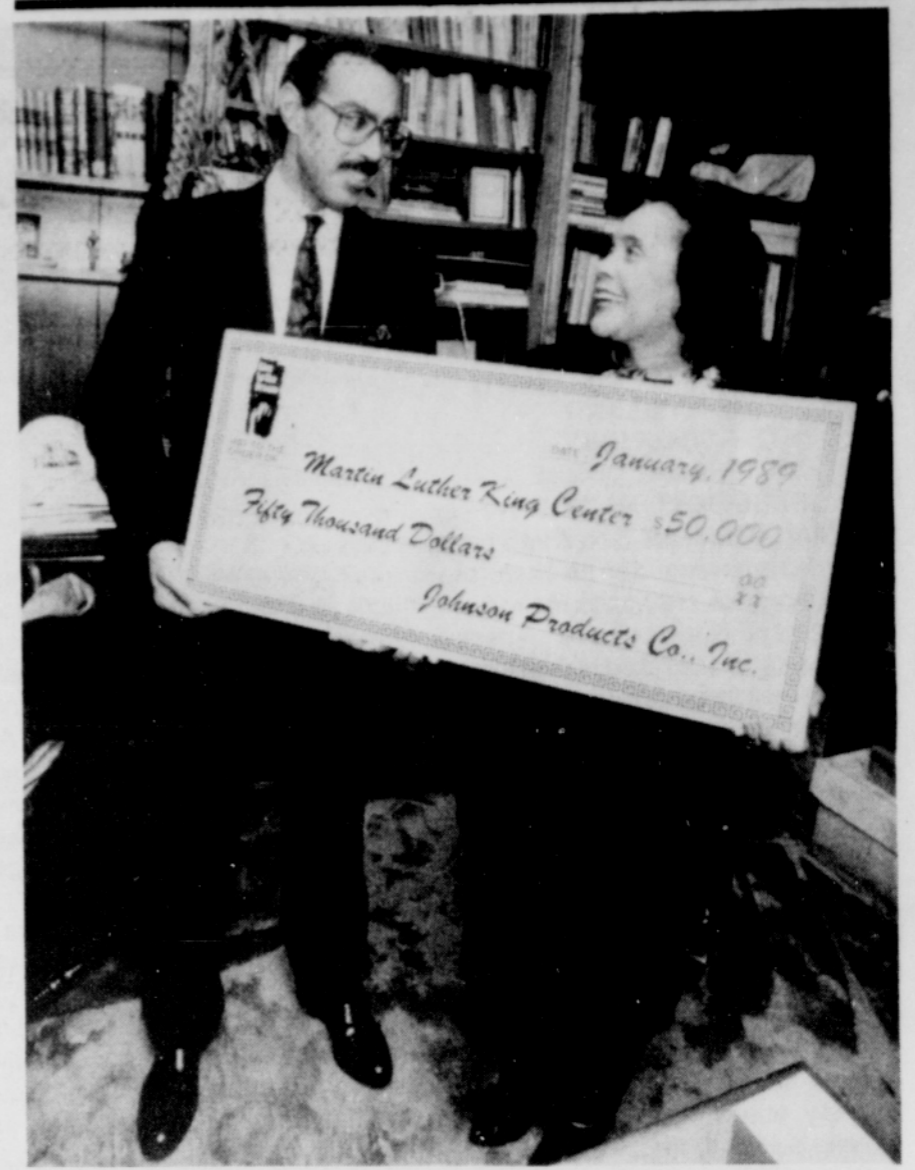
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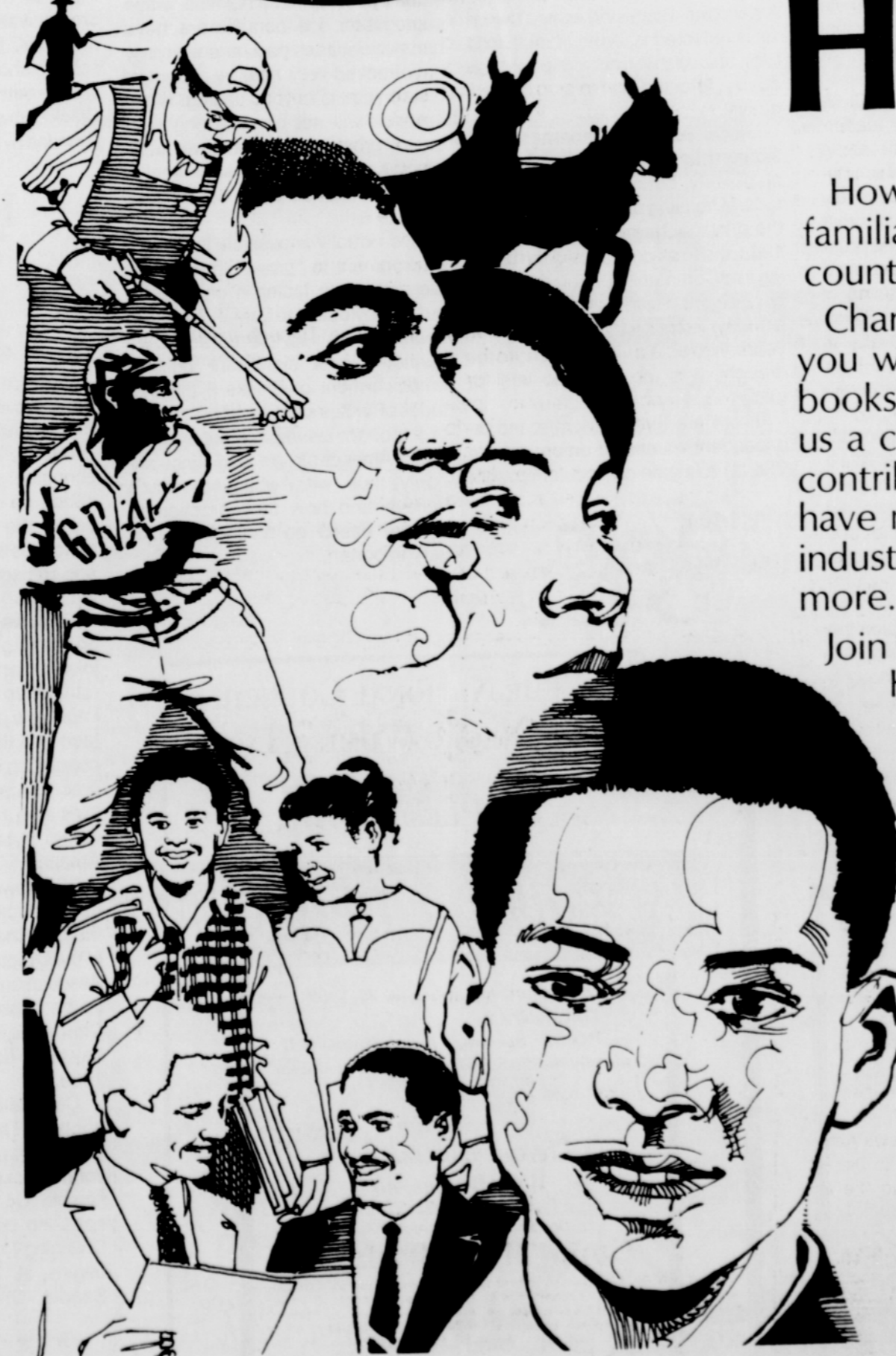


The first airplane purchased by the U.S. government was called the *Miss Columbia* and bought from the Wright brothers in 1909.



THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CENTER for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc. is the 1989 honoree of the Give to the Dream, Johnson Products salutes Black organizations program. Eric Johnson, president of Johnson Products Co., Inc., presented Coretta Scott King with a \$50,000 check to launch the year-long program. Johnson Products announced the Give to the Dream program at the annual assembly "State of the Dream" address on Sunday, January 15 at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

# SAFEWAY



# A Salute to Black Heritage

How many Black Americans are you familiar with in the history of our country?

Chances are, not that many because you won't find them in most history books. But Black History Month gives us a chance to become aware of the contributions many Black Americans have made in science, medicine, industry, agriculture, literature and more.

Join us in the observation of Black History Month and broaden your knowledge of how we, as a people have made this country what it is today.

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