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## Business Profile: Lonnie Jenkins

BY CYNTHIA BROWN

**"Y**ou can do anything you want to but you have to work at it. Set goals," advises Lonnie Jenkins of Unity of Love Beauty Salon. She has followed her own advice. She has been a beautician for 27 years and has owned her own salon for 8 years.

Jenkins is originally from Bastrop, Louisiana and moved to the Northwest when she was 18 years old. "I graduated from high school and wanted to get out of my small home town. I think everyone from a small town should venture out," commented Jenkins. She went to Seattle first to care for an ailing aunt and then moved to Portland because her brother, Saul Kelly, was living here. Her first job was at Joseph Plastics, Co., folding drapes and shower curtains for \$1.25 an hour, but she knew she didn't want to do that for the rest of her life. She soon married and started a family, but when the marriage didn't work out, she found herself a single mother with two young daughters and needed to find a way to support them. "At that time the only professions open to black women were as maids, teachers, nurses or hair dressers. Even as a young child I wanted to be a nurse or a cosmetologist," recalled Jenkins. "I signed up for nursing training at Emanuel Hospital but I couldn't stand to see the suffering of the patients in the Burn Center here, so I decided to go to cosmetology school." Tips from clients who came to the beauty college to get their hair done helped Jenkins pay for the program.

After she received her license she started at Dorothy's in Beaverton and eventually worked at Lovely Ladies Salon and Walnut Park Beauty Salon. "I wanted to venture out on my own. It's every beautician's dream. It's something I always wanted to do and I knew my clientele would follow me," said Jenkins. And when you're working for someone else "no matter what you're doing, there is someone hounding you, and as a black person you have to do twice as good to be there."

Jenkins knows success with owning a small business is a combination of hard work and determination. But her ace in the hole is her attitude. "Hairdressing is very competitive. You always have to be up on the styles and you have to try to please your customers. I treat each one as if I was just starting the day. You must always be warm and kind. I treat people the way I want to be treated. If you keep a smile on your face you draw more people. If you have a chip on your shoulder, all you have is a chip. Each customer is doing you a favor by being there." And, emphasized Jenkins. "I'm good at what I do." She also

knows putting in long hours goes with the territory. "You've got to be there every day; be there hours when no one else is, but I've enjoyed every part of it—except being away from my kids—and it's still a challenge. Just when I think about quitting, God sends someone my way."

Jenkins's thoroughness and attention to detail carries through to her personal appearance. "I'm picky about my own hair. For years I did my own perms, but I've trained a friend and now we exchange. Cosmeticians are the worst customers," she said.

Keeping up on trends and training is also important to Jenkins. So much so that she received training to become an instructor of cosmetology. One of the fashion trends she enjoys the most is hairweaving. "Hairweaving has been on the scene for 25 or 30 years but at first it was big and bulky. Now you can't tell if (the hair) was woven, it looks real. The hair we use is soft and pliable. You can perm it or buy it already permed and colored," she added. "I enjoy it the most because it gives dramatic results. It's a great feeling when I'm finished and the client is pleased."

Jenkins loved Portland when she first moved here and felt, at that time "if you lived in Portland and didn't make it, you were lazy—there were so many programs." She still enjoys living and working here even though things are getting rougher. "I especially like Northeast Portland. It's a central location, not like Beaverton or Lake Oswego and I plan to stay." However, she feels the northeast neighborhood is not treated well by the media. "Other neighborhoods have the same stuff going on. Every neighborhood has crime and violence but it doesn't get into the paper," she said. Jenkins also thinks black businesses are important to the neighborhood. "Small businesses are the heart of this city; we keep things going." And she feels owning a beauty salon is a good way to go. "The first five or six years are not going to bring in a lot of money but it's a comfortable living. And you have to put a lot into it and stop being jealous of your neighbor next door. Think of techniques to try to get the business going better," she commented.

Unity of Love Salon offers cuts, perms and hair weaving. They are located at 6720 N.E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. and are open Monday through Saturday. Lonnie Jenkins is available for appointments Tuesday through Saturday. The telephone number is 283-5440.

## Oregonians For Peace

Oregonians will send President Bush a message that they want peace three days before his deadline for war. On Saturday, January 12, at 12 noon, thousands will gather at Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland for a rally and march for peace in the Middle East. The program will include religious, political, and other community leaders as well as live musical entertainment.

Coalition spokesperson John Linder stated, "Never before have the American people had such a clear opportunity to stop a senseless war before it starts. President Bush needs a certain amount of public support in order to go to war in the gulf, and this rally is the best way to tell him he doesn't have that support in Oregon. We want our soldiers to come home alive, and we want the billions of dollars being wasted in the gulf to be spent meeting human needs at home."

Linder noted that the rally is scheduled not long before the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He said, "This is fitting, as Dr. King would have opposed war in the gulf just as he opposed the Vietnam War. As in Vietnam, a disproportionate number of the combat soldiers in the gulf are African-American and poor, and war will bring death and destruction abroad while preventing progress toward social justice in this country."

## Peter Rabbit's Dream of A Hare-Raising Tale

As scripted by Robin Suttles in collaboration with members of the Carousel Company, this Peter Rabbit's a rebel; he's a cool dude who believes that rules are made to be broken and that bad things only happen to other bunnies. But, while trespassing in Mr. MacGregor's garden one day, Peter discovers himself in a fantasy world where the vegetables spring to life and put him on trial for his misdemeanors. In traditional Carousel Company style, the errant Peter eventually repents and is reunited with his Mom and siblings, Mopsy, Flopsy and Cottontail.

Peter Rabbit's Dream or A Hare-Raising Tale opens January 12 and runs Saturdays at the new showtimes of 11:00am and 1:30pm through February 23. Wednesday performances at 9:30am and 10:45 are scheduled for January 16 and 30, and February 6, 20 and 27. Tickets for Saturday performances are available at the door. Reservations are required for Wednesday shows and can be made by calling 823-3660. Performances are indoors at the Carousel Courtyard, 710 N.E. Holladay, and admission prices are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children aged 12 and under. Group discounts are available.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

January 10, 1991  
Oregon Convention Center  
777 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Tickets \$15.00  
Tables \$150.00 (Seats 10)

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## Black College Graduates A Study of Earnings and Unemployment

In his article "Black College Graduates in the Labor Market, 1979 and 1989," Author Joseph Meisenheimer II examines education and employment trends for black men and women.

Meisenheimer concludes that differences in education do not completely explain labor market disparities between blacks and whites. Among college-educated men, he says, black graduates have substantially higher unemployment rates and lower median earnings than white graduates.

"Black labor force participants have historically been more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be unemployed," Meisenheimer writes. "Although this differential has been attributed in large part to the lower educational attainment of blacks, the rates for blacks are also higher than those for whites at each level of education."

A similar disparity exists in earnings. College-educated black men ages 25 to 64 had median weekly earnings in 1989 of \$544, Meisenheimer says, compared with \$719 for their white counterparts. "This means the median earnings of these black men ranged from 72 to 79 percent of the median for white men. This gap was greater than that 10 years earlier, when college-educated black men earned 80 to 90 percent as their white counterparts."

The picture for black women is a different one. Writes Meisenheimer: "In contrast to the substantial earnings gap between black and white men, college-educated women of each race had nearly equal median weekly earnings in both years studied."

For what reasons do black and white women college graduates have similar median earnings while black men earn less than their white peers? One answer may lie in the type of work they do, according to Meisenheimer.

Black and white women, Meisenheimer writes, work in very similar oc-

cupations. Nearly equal proportions are managers, and roughly half of both groups work in professional speciality occupations. Among these professionals, over two-thirds of blacks and nearly two-thirds of whites work either as teachers or in health professions.

In contrast, black and white college-educated men have different occupations which are consistent with the lower median earnings of blacks. In 1989, 22 percent of employed black men compared with 29 percent of white men were managers. Black men were also less likely than white men to work in professional speciality occupations.

Although black college-educated men suffer in comparison with white, college-educated men in earnings and unemployment, they are better off than black men who have only high school educations.

"College-educated blacks not only are more likely to have a job than blacks with a high school education, but also, among those employed full time, college graduates earn considerably more," Meisenheimer notes. In 1989, black male high school graduates ages 25 to 64 had median weekly earnings of \$353; college graduates earned about one-and-a-half times that amount.

"The notion that a college education can contribute to closing the economic gap between blacks and whites appears to hold true for women," Meisenheimer concludes. "But the theory may be questioned in terms of men because substantial economic differences still exist between college-educated black and white men, and little progress toward narrowing the gap was made during the 1980's."

"Nevertheless, for all blacks, college education does provide considerable economic rewards above those generally received with only a high school education."

## Follow Your Money Continued from front page

Hampton prefers construction.

"The racial tension is greater and the work is harder, but the benefits are better in construction," says Hampton. 80% of the blacks in local 296 work in the shipyards. It was difficult for Blacks to break into construction, according to Hampton. There were racial jokes and remarks to contend with. You started out on the hardest jobs. And it was harder for Blacks to keep jobs. "I'd go in there with the attitude that I know I'm going to have to outwork everybody here to keep the job," says Hampton.

UNION NOW STANDS BEHIND BLACKS

If you are harassed, the union will back you up. You have to have documentation, but the union will be there, says Hampton, Hart and Carr. "If you get run off a job, you can file a grievance and get your job back. There was an incident in the shipyard, where white guys could get their check early but this black guy who wanted his check early was told to take a drug test. He refused and was fired on the spot. The union stood by this guy, went all the way to arbitration, spent \$2,500 to get this guy his job back," says Hampton.

"We had a situation where the white craft workers were taking breaks in the morning and afternoon but the black laborers were denied a break. Even though it wasn't in the contract, the union pressured the employer into giving us a break too," Carr explains.

Although other construction trades (carpenters, electricians, plumbers, sheet-metal workers, pipefitters, etc.) are still largely white, Hampton sees Laborers local 296 as a stepping stone into other

opportunities in the industry. "You get experience. You get to check out the other trades. You could even eventually go into business for yourself, as a contractor."

African Americans have clearly benefitted from the strength of local 296. Blacks are joining in increasing numbers. More Blacks are being elected to official union positions. And despite continuing bigotry and racism in the industry, a new generation of workers is challenging the old ways, according to Hart.

Right now, shipyard work is booming. Oil tankers and mothballed navy ships need work as U.S. involvement escalates in the Persian Gulf. For a seventeen dollar union initiation fee, laborers can be sent out now on union jobs. Old timers urge young Blacks to "pay your dues and follow your money", to stick with the union through the hard times, and get good wages, benefits and quality of life.

Follow your money...your union is where it happens and where you can decide to work for change. The key is money and politics and the A. Philip Randolph Institute is the political base of the Black Trade Unionist.

Listen to the old timers and follow your money and attend your union, labor council, and A. Philip Randolph Institute meetings. The next A. Philip Randolph Institute meeting will be Thursday, January 10, 1991 at 1125 S.E. Madison, Suite 100. Labor Council - Northwest Oregon Labor Council meets 2nd and 4th Mondays, 7:00 pm 3645 S.E. 32nd, 235-9444.

All Meetings begin at 7:00 P.M.

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The Mass will be preceded by a program of exciting area talent "Time To Make A Change" Featuring Northwest Portland Community Youth

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The Mass will be followed a buffet dinner featuring an African - American Dinner

Immaculate Heart Parish Center  
Seven in the Evening

Talent Program and Dinner Sponsored by  
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## Labor Salute to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Keynote speaker APRI National President, Norman Hill, New York, New York

January 18th 1991 Breakfast, Northwest Oregon Labor Council, The Oregon AFL-CLO, LERC State Fed, APRI (Portland Chapter) and other labor organizations