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"The Eyes and Ears of The Community"

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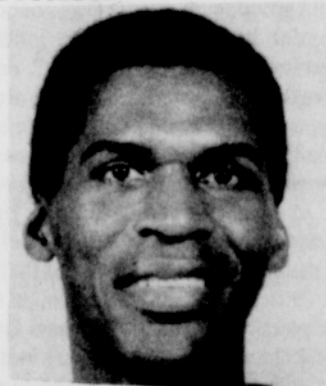
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The staff and
management of the
Portland Observer
wishes you a Happy
Easter

Working Parents Require Our Help And Support

BY MARY WENDY ROBERTS

The dynamics of the American family and the American workplace are undergoing major adjustments. Both the nature of the family and the workplace have changed dramatically.

Forty years ago the stereotypes of the father as the family breadwinner

and mom as homemaker were so ingrained in America's consciousness few were even remotely aware that we were on the threshold of profound change. Today, only 14.2 percent of the nation's families conform to the traditional patterns in which the father works outside the home and the mother stays home to care for the children.



Mary Wendy Roberts

The surge of women into the workplace that began during World War II did not end when Johnny came

home. By 1991, U.S. Labor Department statistics indicate more than 80 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 44 will be working. For the foreseeable future, women will account for three out of five new entrants into the workforce. Beyond dramatic demographic and economic changes, there have been significant social developments over the past two decades which have radically altered the profile of the worker. Today, two-wage-earner families work full-time and face squarely the concern of dependent care for young children and again parents as well as grandparents. Divorced, widowed a single-parent households are increasingly caught by economic pressures and the juggling of work and family responsibilities.

I have long been concerned about these families. In 1985, I appointed a Work and Families Advisory Committee to study the issues of working parents and the conflicts between work and family. I also asked the committee to suggest a possible agenda to deal with the conflicts.

In Oregon, we continued our progressive tradition by addressing a part of the family-work conflict through the passage of a parental leave law,

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Bronze Sculpture of Rosa Parks Presented to National Portrait Gallery

A bronze bust of renowned civil rights leader Rosa L. Parks was unveiled February 28 in ceremonies at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. In commemoration of the event, Washington, D.C. Mayor Sharon Pratt Dixon presented Parks with a key to the District of Columbia.

The Rosa Parks sculpture, according to the artist, embodies the dignity and quiet courage of the woman who is often called the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement." Her refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., bus to a white passenger in 1955 led to a yearlong boycott that sparked national movement for racial justice.

The sculptor, by Artis Lane, is a gift to the National Portrait Gallery from Anheuser-Busch Companies. The artwork is on public display at the gallery.

In accepting the sculpture, gallery Director Alan Fern said, "Rosa Parks' act of courage on a December day in 1955 sparked a revolution of conscience. We honor her today as an American hero, a woman willing to put herself in jeopardy for others."

"The National Portrait Gallery records and celebrates individuals whose actions, words and thoughts have shaped us as a nation. Among them, unquestionably, is Rosa Parks," Fern continued. "Her portrait will remind generations to come that one courageous deed can change the lives of millions."

Also speaking in tribute to Parks were actress Cicely Tyson; civil rights leader Coretta Scott King; Smithsonian Undersecretary Carmen Turner; Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women; Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.); and Hazel Dukes, president, New York Chapter of the National Association for the Advance-



Rosa Parks, "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement."

ment of Colored People.

In presenting the sculpture to the gallery, Wayman F. Smith III, vice president of corporate affairs at Anheuser-Busch Companies, said, "This is a captivating work of art that reflects Mrs. Parks' dignity and commitment to civil rights and human rights. We are very pleased to make this presentation in time for the culmination of Black History Month and a belated celebra-

tion of Mrs. Parks' 78th birthday," which was February 4.

Sculptor Artis Lane is nationally known for her portraits of famous people, including many Hollywood celebrities. Lane has exhibited her sculpture in many countries and her work is included in the collections of President and Mrs. Bush, Oprah Winfrey, Quincy Jones, Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier.

A Lion at Bay, II: School District "Soap" Continued

Did we say last week that Portland's Education Task Force "indicated a serious intent to carry out their mission within a short, but attainable time frame"? Forgive us, we will correct this grievous error immediately following this promised expansion on that HOBSON VERSUS WASHINGTON, D.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION lawsuit.

Again, "Dr. Julius Hobson was the black economist who successfully sued a Portland-type school administration and board (circa 1970-71)...he established malfesance and the deliberate neglect of black children, ranging from texts and lab equipment to history and curriculum--and reclaimed millions of dollars of federal minority program funds diverted to construction, repairs, overhead and other salaries...I failed in my efforts to institute a similar suit here while head of the minority teachers organization in 1974...Portland's system could have been reformed years ago." (I attended his seminar there - later brought a member of his team to Portland.)

This brief account should give pause to those who are ringing my phone off the hook, exclaiming "let's sic the rascals...[you] would get the support now that you couldn't get in 1974...have you still got the 1970 transcripts, documents and other records--media reports? Now, there is something all these hostile, frustrated parents, citizens and

teachers need to know--beside the priorities of yours truly."

First, Dr. Hobson built a machine, one capable of confronting an entrenched, arrogant bureaucracy prepared to fight him to the end with a campaign financed with the taxpayers' own dollars. So the man had to recruit "HIS" educators, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, accountants and auditors, curriculum specialists, industry and criminal justice experts; not to mention concerned parents and citizens at large. A team like that (even with donated staff) has to be financed, coordinated and housed. He had free advocacy lawyers to oppose those of the district, but, then, preparation of briefs and photocopying alone can run many, many thousands of dollars. Had enough? Still game, committed?

Given that scenario, it is not difficult to understand why, in 1974, my announcement to Portland minority teachers of a plan for a similar suit saw the membership fade from 80 to about 10 loyalists. Many were frightened out of their wits (jobs) and other's thought (perhaps correctly) that I had not yet gained enough experience to deal with a racist bureaucracy like the Blanchard machine with its downtown ties and old boys' network throughout the region. I began teaching at Portland State University in 1971, but already was daily made aware of the tragic products of the feeder system. I did have several loyal

mentors among several experienced teachers, but nothing to match the system's resources, Uncle Tom's, Mrs. Tom's and intelligence agents. Even the couple of poverty lawyers procured threw up their hands. Lots of pain, but no gain.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, let us comment on that "grievous error" regarding the timeframe and direction of Portland's Education TASK FORCE. What has proven so confusing to many (within and without the process) has been the sudden introduction of an "IDAHO EDUCATION PROJECT: An Action Plan for Education In the 21st Century". It was described at a meeting as capable of meeting the "INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE" facing the nation's school systems. It was at this point that superintendent Prophet went off on Mr. Ron Herndon of the Black United Front in that widely-publicized exchange: "You should be ashamed...you have bad-mouthed this district all over the country...you owe us all an apology."

Startled parents and teachers have called or stopped by to ask where they could get a copy of this forward-looking document. "Until now, we have assumed that the TWELVE-POINT EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN developed by the Black United Front (and reviewed in depth by the district) was what would be examined, modified

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Census Bureau To Collect Employment Data Here

The Bureau of the Census will collect data on employment, income, and migration from area residents, according to Leo C. Schilling, director of the bureau's Seattle regional office. The local labor force data will contribute to the national employment and unemployment picture to be released April 5 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The additional data on income, work experience, and migration will be used to provide a comprehensive

study of median family income, poverty, and year-to-year mobility of the nation's population.

Information supplied by individuals to the Census Bureau is kept confidential by law. Only statistical totals are published.

The following chart shows the kind of information that comes from this survey. It compares the percentage of families, by race, below the poverty level in 1988 and 1989.

