

Northwest Afrikan American Ballet Company To Perform At The University of Portland

The Northwest Afrikan American Ballet Company will perform at 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23, in the Earle A. Chiles Center at the University of Portland. The 16-member group is one of the oldest traditional African dance companies on the West Coast.

Their appearance is the feature attraction of the annual Black History "Cultural Fest" at the University.

The dancers perform original choreography inspired by the native dances of Senegal, Gambia, Mali and Guinea, West Africa, accompanied by musicians playing African instruments. The company last visited Portland in 1990 performing before 3,600 people at the 1990 Artquake. They have also entertained at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall and the Seattle Center Auditorium.

Lead drummer Bruce Smith founded the group 10 years ago after he visited West Africa. Smith has since returned to that continent to immerse himself in the study of traditional West African drum and dance methods. Smith was formerly with the rhythm and blues band Pleasure.

Ray Leary, executive vice president of Self Enhancement, Inc., will serve as emcee for the event benefiting the University of Portland Association of African American Students. Vocalist Traci Harris will also perform prior to the ballet. Harris sang the national anthem at the Portland Trail Blazers opening game this year. She has also performed for the Seattle Seahawks at the Kingdome and for the "California Raisins" television commercials.

Tickets are \$8.50 general admission, available at TicketMaster outlets.

Cultural Training to Celebrate African American History

The Children's Services Division and One Church, One Child are combining forces to take a "cultural journey" through history.

Story teller Askari, and the Sojourner Truth Dance Theatre will entertain and educate CSD caseworkers, foster parents and community business leaders on Monday, February 24th, from nine o'clock a.m. to noon at the Maranatha Church, 4222 N.E. 12th Street in Portland.

They will take participants on a cultural enrichment journey that will explore the secret language of slaves, the function of language in the African American Community, and the richness of African American Culture.

The training is also a chance to inform the public about the importance of providing racially and culturally compatible foster and adoptive homes for African American children. There are currently 29 African American children available for adoption in the Portland area.

Join us for an exciting and informative morning as Askari and Company share their culture through dance, song and stories.

Black History Month At OSU

February is Black History Month and Oregon State University (OSU) is sponsoring a full calendar of events organized by the Black Student Association. Speakers, panel discussions, workshops and musical entertainment will portray the black experience.

African American literature was the focus for the second week of February. Joy Cross highlighted the week with her talk on "Axiology: Defining The Value Systems of the World," on Wednesday, February 12. Saturday, February 15, Linda Christiansen held a workshop entitled, "Writing in Your Home Language."

A week-long tribute to Lonnie B. Harris began Sunday, February 16. Events will culminate with a dinner on Saturday, Feb. 22, featuring Dr. D. Tukufu as the speaker. Sponsored by Kappa Alpha Psi, the dinner will be held at 6 p.m. in the Memorial Union, Room 109.

African American music is the theme for the last week in February. "An Evening of Legendary Jazz" will be presented by Jerrell Waddell on Monday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. in the Memorial Union Lounge. On Friday, Feb. 28, the Northwest Afrikan American Ballet will perform with "Balafon" at 7 p.m. at the LaSells Stewart Center.

For more information call OSU's United Black Student Association at 737-2101.

Could Black History Repeat Itself In 1992?

Black History Month is "that time of year, again" to consider the increasing importance of Blacks demographically and economically, says Dr. Samuel L. Myers, Sr., president of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO). The association is composed of the presidents of the nation's 117 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Despite the impressive array of bibliographic courses on Black History, views about the subject differ sharply. Dr. Myers states in the February issue of Black Excellence magazine, published by NAFEO. "Afrocentrists condemn Eurocentrists for the overemphasis on the Western experience of Blacks (and) the monotonous recital of the horrors of slavery leaves Blacks demoralized and embittered," he emphasized in the publication's lead editorial.

But, "Extolling the remarkable achievements of the Black Pharaohs of Egypt, the early universities in Africa or possible the original African to who all human beings trace their genetic origins, leaves Blacks proud," the scholar adds. "Theirs is a rich heritage that predates Europe and America".

With this ancient background, Dr. Myers focuses on eleven historical issues still impacting on modern Blacks in America as we approach the close of the 20th Century. One of these most

important issues is the current Ayers versus Mabus case, now before the United States Supreme Court. (Plaintiff Jake Ayers filed suit against former Mississippi Gov. Ray Mabus to demand that the state provide facilities for the majority of black students at Jackson State University equal to higher education programs at historically all-white University of Mississippi in Oxford where now "Separatist" James Meredith first "integrated" law classes in 1961.

In the legal brief, filed in response to the petition of Ayers et al, "Mississippi, though admitting historic underfunding of higher education of Blacks, argues that the state is not required constitutionally to take any remedial action now that Blacks are free to choose any university," Myers writes.

The Ayers side argues that segregation of Blacks--rooted in history--continues and there should be "unfettered choice" of all students to attend any University in the state. Setting a test score for admission to the predominantly White university above that which most Black students achieve effectively (as a result of continued racial disadvantages) excludes them from admission to the University of Mississippi (and) "they do not have unfettered choice", according to Dr. Myers.

"Underfunding historically black

colleges makes them less attractive to Black and White students who otherwise would prefer them and thus "feters their choice," the NAFEO president concludes.

On behalf of the HBCUs, NAFEO engaged Prof. J. Clay Smith, a Howard University Law Professor to submit an amicus brief supporting Ayers, and the Black College presidents "working out of the necessity behind the scenes", mobilized support of for the case heard before the Supreme Court last November.

"We should know the outcome in June," said Myers in referring to a possible court action the may become as historic as the original Plessy vs Ferguson "Separate but Equal" decision about a hundred years ago in 1896.

"Since Blacks are unique, in contrast to other minorities, in arguing before the Supreme Court for remedies based on past legally prescribed segregation, every student should be conversant with this history" says Myers. This month, especially, he suggests that all students become conversant with ten other "Black History" issues, ranging from the "Colonial Codes" prohibiting the education of Blacks before 1789 to the 1954 Supreme Court decision striking down the "Separate but Equal" Doctrine in elementary and secondary education.

Could History repeat itself in 1992?

Portland Observer encourages our readers to write letters to the editor in response to any articles we publish.

READINGS BY WOMEN OF COLOR at POWELL'S BOOKS

Lorene Cary presents **BLACK ICE**

(Vintage)

Sat. February 22
7:30 P.M.



Thulani Davis presents **1959**

(Grove Weidenfeld)

Mon. February 24
7:30 P.M.



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THE FINE ART OF BLACK HISTORY

Civilizations come and go, often leaving their art as the only record of their accomplishments. It has been said that a nation that doesn't express itself in art is a contradiction in terms; like a person without a personality. A nation, like a person, must identify with its past as well as its future.



U.S.A.