

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

A Dropout Makes Medical History

During every Black History Month, I make a point of citing our magnificent African and African American contributors to the field of medicine; both lecture and writings.

This year I pay special and very relevant tribute to them as I recover from a very serious medical emergency. As have millions over the past decades I am eternally grateful for the genius of Dr. Charles Drew, the African American developer of the Blood Bank. Two weeks ago an artery burst in my nose and it was BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS that kept me alive until surgery could seal off the offending vessel.

While lying there, setting a hospital record for length of a nose bleed (7 days), I thought of many things of course, but particularly I reflected upon the careers of two black medical pioneers. Their inspired and ingenious advancements of the healing arts were significantly involved in my trauma. Most of us are familiar with the work of Dr. Drew and the tens of million of lives saved in war and peace through his contributions, (The Red Cross Building/Chapter on N. Vancouver is named after him).

But how many have heard of "Vivien T. Thomas"; a Louisiana HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE WHO BECAME THE TOP SURGICAL TECHNICIAN IN AMERICA? In a 39 year career from 1941 to 1980, this brilliant black man advanced from laboratory cleanup at the Vanderbilt University Medical School to an appointment to

the faculty of the Johns Hopkins University Medical School as INSTRUCTOR IN SURGERY (July 1, 1976). Along the way this pioneer was responsible for some of the most seminal and fundamental advances in heart surgery this century ("Blue Babies," shock, hypertension, blood pressure).

The rather comprehensive title of his autobiography hardly does justice to his career where eventually he trained and assisted all of the top heart surgeons the media has ever acquainted you with. "Pioneering Research in Surgical Shock and Cardiovascular Surgery: Vivien Thomas and His Work with Alfred Blalock", 1985, University of Pennsylvania Press (originally published at \$39.95, I believe it's still on sale for around \$9.00).

Libraries, scholars and Black History buffs should order a companion set, "The Papers of Alfred Blalock, Mark M. Ravitch, ed." currently, the two volumes (2,047 pp.) are available from the Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, for \$17.50 on sale. I recommend this supplemental reading because the material authenticates a phenomena that has constantly occurred in the field of science and technology (as well as the arts). That is a black may innovate or pioneer a process, but the credit will go to others as the "literatur" is developed and HISTORY IS REWRITTEN OR ADJUSTED.

In these "Blalock Papers" you will find several citations for Vivien Thomas in the Name Index, but if you have

read the "Autobiography," you will understand that the work of the gifted Mr. Thomas is integral to most of the pioneering cardiovascular developments described-- the key contributions of this century. We may of course reiterate the comment of Bill Cosby, "Black History; lost, strayed or stolen," but we should attribute another causative. We have noted that Mr. Vivien T. Thomas was only a high school graduate, competing in a field where DEGREES DRIP FROM SHOULDERS LIKE A COLLECTION OF THERMOMETERS. A field where Thomas is responsible for having trained most of the best we have around today.

This fact is especially relevant to the contemporary education process where the educationists and industry have finally admitted to themselves that we are not going to be financially or structurally able to get all those millions of students into universities in time to produce a "Workforce 2000" that can compete with the world in science and technology. Rather, we are scrambling all over the place trying to either upgrade HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES like Vivien T. Thomas or pushing our COMMUNITY COLLEGES to prepare to handle a surge in "Two-Year Technical Degrees" or "Retraining Courses."

I see my research into the backgrounds of so many "nondegreed" minorities who made seminal and significant contributions to science and the Industrial Revolution as a critical and necessary component of the NEW EDUCATION. More next week!

Northwest African American Writers Workshop Host Two-Day Conference



Matthew Prophet

BY MATTIE ANN CALLIER-SPEARS

The month of January, filled with all the events of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s accomplishments, has passed and now the month of February has quickly arrived on the tail of a brightly lit comet. The NW African American Writers Workshop members have long awaited this month. For it is in this month that the writers hosted a gala conference, reception & awards night, and luncheon.

Beginning on the thirty-first day of January at the Red Lion in Lloyd Center, the NWA AWW greeted and mingled with over one hundred citizens of Portland -- all seeking to meet, listen to or just see what the writers had in store for them this year. They turned out in their finery: sparklies, bows and bangles, dark suits and furs. As they stood sipping punch, tea and coffee, it was soon time to begin the program.

The two-day event, co-hosted by the Portland Public Schools and the Oregon Historical Society, began by honoring students from various schools in the North/Northeast Portland Community who have demonstrated the desire to become literary participants. They each read an example of their literary work. Some shy and some with the boldness of an adult. One of the readers was an eight year old named Danny Doncan, the son of NWA AWW member Jennifer Doncan. He was so little, it took two adults to assist him with the reading of his piece behind the very tall podium.

Mr. Joseph Franklin, History teacher at Ockley Green Middle School and Director of the NWA AWW, was the main presenter and facilitator. Assisting Mr. Franklin was the Honorable Judge Roosevelt Robinson, also a member of the Writers Workshop.

The guest speaker of Friday evening was Dr. Colleen McElroy, professor of English at the University of Washington. As she concluded her presentation, Dr. McElroy shared that three young African American females will travel to Paris, France with her this Spring. These young women have each, recently, published their very first books. This trip is being made possible by a Literary Society Grant.

On Saturday, February first, the day began with a no-host breakfast that was opened to the public. Several African American Historians were present and were later featured in the full-day seminar. There were ten different authors and historians from Oregon and Washington, such as: Diane

Robinson, author "Blacks in Bremerton"; Mrs. J.M. Gates, MBA; Dr. Quintard Taylor, professor of African American History University of Oregon; Ralph Hayes, University of Washington; Dr. Darrell Millner, professor of Black Studies Program Portland State University; Esther Hall Mumford, author "Seattle Black Victorians, 1852-1901"; Patricia Thomas, chairman of the Kitsap County Black History Society; Joseph Franklin, author "All Through the Night"; Charles Mutchler, assistant archivist with the Eastern Washington University; Elizabeth McLagen, author "Peculiar Paradise."

The seminar and forum which focused on the history of the Northwest African American Experience was concluded with a luncheon which was held in the elegant Maxi's Dining Room. The guest speaker was none other than the Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, Dr. Matthew Prophet.

The Honorable Margaret Carter opened the program by singing "A Place in the Sun -- Keep Moving Oh," dedicated to Dr. Prophet. She was accompanied by the nimble fingers of "Mr. Music" himself, Danny Osborne.

Dr. Prophet opened by saying that he will, in five more months, be leaving the Portland Public Schools but he will not be leaving the city of Portland. "No, I am not abandoning you," he said. He stated that he will probably be just as busy or even busier after he has retired.

Dr. Prophet stated that while he was sitting and awaiting his turn, he jotted down some notes. From these

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New Fast-Food Outlet Launched with PDC Aid Is Key to Owner's Dream to Help a "Lost Generation"

Continued from front page

Carl Talton, SBA District Director John Gildman and US National Bank MLK Jr. Blvd. Branch Manager Phil Kobberbig.

One who has helped Dunbar the most is John McCuller, owner of the Delicious D's building. McCuller, who for seven years operated Farmer John's Restaurant there before retiring and leasing the site to other operators, turned away a number of willing buyers with up-front cash in favor of a partnership with Dunbar whose promise he wanted to nurture.

Delicious D's is open from 10 am to 10 pm Mondays through Saturdays and from Noon to 8 pm on Sundays. Dunbar employs 11 people, many of them from the neighborhood. Two employees, the head cook and a supervisor, had worked from Dunbar at Arctic Circle and chose to follow him to Delicious D's.

Dunbar, who went to Grant High School and lives not far from the restaurant, has gained the respect of neighborhood youths with his "tough-love" attitude. "I think they're listening to me," he says. "They call me 'Mr. D.'" Dunbar maintains an absolute prohibition against drugs or alcohol on the premises, which has pleased neighborhood residents who were fearful, Dunbar says, that their restaurant might become a magnet for illegal activity.

What motivated Dunbar to do this? "This has been a dream of mine for a couple of years," he says. "I want to be a role model for kids around here, show them you can make it as a legitimate businessman. We have a lost generation, the kids from ages 13 to 21. They need some role models besides the rap artists they listen to who put the idea of violence in their heads."

Dunbar is an old hand at handling crowds and taming sometimes unruly customers. He worked for six years at the old Arctic Circle restaurant in Jackson Tower on Pioneer Square, which was regularly inundated with crowds of customers during Rose Festival and other big downtown events.

Confident of success, Dunbar already has an eye out for other locations in North/Northeast to establish Delicious D's outlets, in part so he can take advantage of economies of scale in ordering food, paper cups, and other supplies. But also because of the message it will send to minority youths.

"When I talk to them about how big I want this to be, they really start paying attention and say, 'Hey, maybe there's something to this' and think maybe this is something they could be a part of."

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

New Jersey: "Still No Justice, Still No Peace"

In Teaneck, New Jersey, there is a certain hostile gloom in the air concerning race relations. This is the situation in the aftermath of the recent acquittal of a white police officer, Gary Spath, on charges of manslaughter in the killing of an African American male teenager, Phillip Pannell.

The news that an African American male teenager has been fatally shot by a white police officer is not, unfortunately, isolated to the state of New Jersey. It is happening all over the nation. In particular, these incidents occur in urban areas where the African American community is concentrated and policed by persons from outside of the community.

This New Jersey case, however, had at one time the potential to send a message to police departments across the nation. That message should have been "Racially motivated police brutality will not be tolerated and officers involved will be prosecuted." But, that is not what eventually happened.

In April of 1990, young Phillip Pannell was shot twice by Officer Spath in Teaneck, New Jersey. Officer Spath claimed that Pannell had made a mo-

tion by putting his hand in his pocket that served as a threat to the police officer. Spath says he killed Pannell in self defense. Yet, after investigating this case, the Attorney General of New Jersey decided to prosecute Officer Spath on charges of manslaughter after witnesses revealed that Pannell was actually shot while holding both of his arms up in the air surrendering to Officer Spath.

The city of Teaneck and the state of New Jersey wanted to see if justice would be done in this case. On February 11, 1992, an all white jury concluded that Officer Spath was not guilty of the charges although the state presented medical and scientific evidence that Pannell was shot twice while his arms were raised.

We have conducted a survey of similar cases in other parts of the country and we have found that all white juries are very reluctant to convict a white police officer in the killing of an African American male, no matter what evidence is presented during the trial. White police officers are more than "presumed innocent" in these type of cases; they are usually found innocent.

Thus, Phillip Pannell's name will be added to the growing list of victims of racially motivated police brutality.

Phillip's mother, Mrs. Thelma Pannell, cried out in the Hackensack, NJ courtroom where the trial was held. When the jury foreman stated the "Not guilty" verdict, Mrs. Pannell shouted, "No! No!...Why, Lord Jesus, why?" The Pannell family, like many other African American families, now will have to live with the knowledge that the justice system "usually does not work for us."

African Americans are about 25% of the approximately 40,000 persons who reside in Teaneck. If racial justice is to be a reality in this community, or in any community in the United States, then acts of wanton racially motivated police violence must be stopped.

There are many religious leaders and other civic leaders in New Jersey who are now trying to secure peace and better race relations in the state after the emotions of many have been disturbed by the Teaneck verdict. We support those efforts for reconciliation, but we know that until there is justice, there will certainly be no peace.

Dear Editor:

I met John and Joyce DeZell last fall and spent much time with them to sound out their ideas, ethics and morals. I like what I observed and we talked about. They are family people, well educated, and have high morals for their children and others.

John is determined to help correct some of the things that need to be done for all of us. To build on what is good, and try to get us back to more help for people problems. He has done his home work well, he knows what hasn't been done and what needs doing.

He is opposing Bob Packwood and has been campaigning for over 9 months. Bob had done very little for Southern Oregon but seems to have helped New York much.

Perry Atkinson is throwing his name in the ring. I would hope he would reconsider and not split the vote like Al Mobley tried for Barbara Roberts and Dave Frommeyer. Give John DeZell a line or call P.O. Box 624 Medford, Oregon 97501, phone 535-90745, or he could use financial help. If you are like a lot of us it cannot be much, but each dollar helps. Send this to his treasurer, Geoffery R. Soencer, 4360 S.W. Dickinson Ave., Portland, OR 97219 Phone: 244-2038.

Sincerely,
Violet Koehn
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