

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

African American Health Providers: From Day One And Before

This is the last of three articles on major black contributors to the medical professions. In fact, documented history tells us that it was Africans who first raised the healing arts to the level of professionalism that characterized the field as a science. We provide the following for our readers, and especially those teachers and students following this series which began during Black History Month.

I have the privilege of citing "Dr. Hallie Tanner Johnson" who before the turn of the century graduated from the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia and shortly thereafter became the Resident Physician at Tuskegee Institute. She passed the Board of Medical Examiners for the State of Alabama and "became the first lady, white or colored, to receive a certificate to practice medicine in the State of Alabama" (p.411-412) Evidences of Progress Among Colored People, G.F. Richings, 8th edit., Philadelphia, 1902).

Her name is incorporated into the title of the non-profit organization I set up to place African American high school and college students in work/study positions in the health sciences; "Drew Johnson Medical Education Project" (now in 4th year). Mr. Riching's book lists (with photographs) many of the very early black female physicians, Dr. Caroline V. Anderson of Philadelphia, Dr. Susan McKinley of New York, and Dr. Alice Woodby McKane "who has lately organized a nurse's training school at Savannah Georgia" (1890's).

I would acquaint the reader, too, with several names of black contributors of whom are do not hear that much any more--but who made vital advances

in the healing arts. "Millions of sufferers from ARTHRITIS owe their comfort and health to the soybean chemist PERCY JULIAN, who brought the healing drug CORTISONE within their reach."

With only one public high school in Birmingham for all the hundreds of thousands of black children in all of Alabama (1912), Julian was sent to the State Normal School for Negroes in Montgomery. Despite a thousand such handicaps he went on to graduate at the top of his class at all-white DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma X: honorary societies, and was the 1920 CLASS VALEDICTORIAN.

"The formation of The Institute of Food Technologists in 1939 officially confirmed the opening of a new branch of industrial chemistry by that pioneering food chemist, DR. LLOYD A. HALL". It is to this pioneering African American genius that we owe so much of our essential knowledge of preserving foods (especially meats) in a safe and efficient manner. His most productive research was performed at the Griffith Laboratories in Chicago, 1922 to 1959. It was Dr. Hall who discovered that contrary to popular opinion, the Vaunted-SPICES such as cloves, cinnamon, ginger, paprika, allspice, sage and others--instead of PRESERVING FOODS--were usually infested with spores of molds, yeasts and bacteria.

We are able to use these substances now because Dr. Hall perfected the method of using the chemical ethylene oxide to not only kill insects, but to KILL GERMS IN FOODSTUFFS by his invention, "flash drying." I could cite much, much more about Messrs.

Julian, Hall and others, like Dr. Ernest Everett Just, the famous zoologist whose pioneering work at the renowned Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratories paved the way for those who have gotten most of the credit for work with the CELL and GENES. To read about these pioneers and others see a copy of Black Pioneers of Science and Invention, Louis Haber, Harcourt Bruce & World Inc. 1970 (Try library if still out of print).

For the documented record of those early and seminal African contributions I mentioned earlier, see "Magic, Myth and Medicine" by the famous British Author and historian D.T. Atkinson; (Premier Pocket Books, Fawcett World Library, 1956, 1958). We see that the first great physicians developed their arts in the Nile Valley; the great IMHOTEP, architect and physician to King Narmer, practiced his art several thousand years before the Greek Hippocrates was born. These African pioneers also left many of their formulas and treatments on papyrus (The Ebers Papyrus University of Leipzig).

Another very interesting and informative book is "The Physicians of Pharaonic Egypt" by Paul Ghalioungui, Al-Ahram Center for Scientific Translations, Cairo, Egypt, 1983. Here we see that 4000 years ago the Africans had already organized medicine into the crafts, disciplines and ranks we have to day." Chief of Physicians, Inspector of Physicians, Regional Societies and Schools, Royal Physician, Surgeons, Coroners, internal medicine, eye doctors, pharmacists, obstetricians and so forth. Simply amazing!

Homeless Families Find Affordable Housing & Support Services at Newly Rehabilitated Cambridge Court Complex - The Result of Rare Joint Venture of Three Public Agencies

Three public agencies, in an unusual joint venture, have transformed the Cambridge Court Apartments into safe, affordable housing for homeless families and have set up a system linking them with on-site counseling and other services to help them rebuild their lives.

The Portland Development Commission (PDC), the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) and Multnomah County's Housing and Community Services Division joined forces to give new life to the Cambridge Court, located at 5224 N. Vancouver Ave. Tenant support services are being financed through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one of only nine given to cities nationwide.

At ceremonies held March 5, officially opening the rehabilitated complex, City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury hailed the project as consistent with the goals and guidelines of the City's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) and as "another step in our plan to combat the cycle of homelessness in Portland."

"The linking of safe, affordable housing with support programs is proving to be the most effective strategy for helping families become self-sufficient," said Commissioner Kafoury, who has been charged by Mayor J.E. Bud Clark with directing the City's housing strategy.

HAP's involvement insures affordable rent for tenants by assisting with Section 8 certificates through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Through this certificate program, rents at the Cambridge Court average \$471 per month. In addition, HAP oversees the management of the property through its agent, Great Northwest Management Company.

In his remarks, Denny West, HAP Executive Director stressed, "As owners of the apartment complex, we saw an opportunity to work with Multnomah County, using the Section 8 Certificate

program. PDC stepped in with the financial assistance. Today, we are pleased with the results of this cooperative effort and are strongly committed to this type of community partnership."

Acting as emcee at the event, Randall Mullen, PDC Housing Director, indicated the Cambridge Court was a project of PDC's Rental Housing Preservation Program (RHP). The RHP program offers low-interest repair loans to owners of substandard rental property in many Portland neighborhoods. Mullen said, "substandard rental properties also contribute to neighborhood deterioration. This rehabilitation loan program has money to lend and we urge rental property owners to look into rehab loans through PDC."

Multnomah County's Housing and Community Services Division administers Portland's Homeless Families Program through a five-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation totaling \$600,000. Cambridge Court is, in essence, a demonstration project showing how the linkage of appropriate services and suitable housing can help families recovering from substance abuse and other difficulties return to product lives. The approach is called "services-enriched permanent housing."

The Multnomah County Homeless Families Program will screen homeless families with dependent children for residency at the Cambridge Court. The basement of the complex has been converted to a meeting hall with offices for counseling services and an indoor play area. The United Way and Metro Portland Chamber of Commerce, through the Homeless Action Fund, provides social service funding for the case management.

Multnomah County Commission Chair Gladys McCoy echoed the need for a tie between affordable housing and support services to provide homeless families the opportunity to move toward self sufficiency. She further

stated, "To twenty families, it will be a cornerstone--uniting two basic human needs: a home and community support."

Present at the opening ceremonies (besides Kafoury, West, McCoy and Mullen) were Dr. Jim O'Connell, director, and Julie Hardin, co-director, of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Homeless Families Program, based in Boston. Also present from HUD headquarters in Washington, D.C. were Jim Forsberg, director of the Special Needs Assistance Program, and Jane Karadbil, program analyst, Office of Policy Development.

Total project cost for rehabilitation of the Cambridge Court was \$451,000. PDC's Rental Housing Preservation program provided an acquisition and rehabilitation loan of \$391,000. PDC's loan utilized funds from a Private Lender Participation Agreement (PLPA) with Security Pacific Bank Oregon as well as Community Development Block Grant dollars from the City.

The PLPA program blends private bank funds with federal grant dollars effectively helping the limited public dollars to go farther. Other financing sources included \$17,300 in energy rebates through the City's Energy Office from Northwest Natural Gas with the remaining balance provided by various sources within HAP.

Exterior rehabilitation at the Cambridge Court included paint, new windows, roof and siding repair, landscaping, parking lot repair, handrails and new playground equipment. Interior improvements included insulation, a complete electrical upgrade, reconstruction of kitchens and baths in all units, new paint and floor coverings, the basement improvements (with a new indoor play area), and wall repairs.

PDC is the City's agency for urban renewal, housing and economic development.

Present MHRC Should Resign

Letter To the Editor:

Over the past few months, a number of very credible individuals in the Human Rights arena have worked diligently studying the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (MHRC), reviewing the charge of the commission and made recommendations that would make MHRC a more integral part of the community.

The United States of America is an advocate for Human Rights all over the world, but the Human Rights of many in our own country are being severely violated. Many politicians in our region verbalize their concerns and support for Human Rights, but for whatever reason, they have (except for a few who have always been on the front line) been reluctant to take a definitive stand. Politics is politics; maybe some are afraid to ruffle the feathers of some of his or her supporters.

The City of Portland, as well as the Tri-county area, needs a Human Rights

entity that will address the violations on a human level void of politics (even though that may be impossible). The present configuration of MHRC will not accomplish that goal.

The task force made numerous recommendations that in my opinion will strengthen MHRC and bring it into the 90's. One of the main bones of contention is the commission itself. The present commission is comprised of (15) members. The new commission would be made up of twenty-one (21) members. The recommendation is that the present commission should resign and it should. The present commission has no executive director. There are only eight (8) seated members, thus facilitating the appointment of seven (7) new members. In order for the commission to have a business meeting, all members would have to be present in order to have a quorum. In essence, the present commission is non-existent.

I know that the governing bodies, The City of Portland and Multnomah County, are under considerable pressure from both sides: the commission and the task force. There are those who want to maintain the status quo and those who want change. Change is hard for many to accept, but when it is clear that a change is needed, the decision should be easy to make.

I, as a citizen of the City of Portland, strongly recommend that a decision be made and soon, so that MHRC can get on with the business of Human Rights advocacy. Both governments have an opportunity before them. Make the change recommended by the task force and ask for the resignation of the present commission. No one is questioning the integrity of the present commission members, but deep down inside, they, too, know a change is needed.

Sincerely Yours,
Oliver (Ollie) Smith, Jr.
Portland, Oregon

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Helping Haitians: The Inspiration of Katherine Dunham

At the wisdom age of 82, Katherine Dunham continues to provide effective leadership and inspiration for millions of persons throughout the world for the cause of justice and human dignity. For more than four weeks, this strong African American woman has sacrificed and risked her own life to protect the human and immoral treatment of Haitian refugees by the government of the United States.

Katherine Dunham has refused to eat until the United States changes its current policy of "forced repatriation" of Haitian refugees from the United States back to the repressive situation in Haiti. The bold determination of Dunham has won the prayerful admiration of millions. She has helped to keep the national and international spotlight on the plight of thousands of Haitian refugees who are still being mistreated terribly by the Bush Administration.

From her hospital bed in St. Mary's Hospital in East St. Louis, Illinois, Dunham wrote to President Bush appealing for an end to the inhumanity toward the Haitian refugees, she stated, "I find the most recent decisions regarding Haitian refugees shocking. Please believe me, Mr. President, those returned will receive no welcome. Having lived in Haiti sporadically for over fifty years, I find Haiti too valuable to ignore or allow to disintegrate."

Dunham, who is a world-renowned dancer and teacher, is a living legend. It seems that Katherine Dunham is now willing to risk death in order to wake up

this nation to confront the ongoing tragedy of our Haitian sisters and brothers. Will the African American community respond to the challenge of one of the "mothers of the freedom movement?" Will the millions of persons of good conscience in this nation stand up with Dunham and others to demand justice for Haitians?

We thank sister Dunham for her courage and for her sacrifice. At a time when there are many who are seeking our leadership models, we thank sister Dunham for her consistent leadership for over six decades. Dunham's life exemplifies the best of African tradition: persistent struggle for the freedom of all.

Several days ago, we visited with Katherine Dunham in St. Mary's Hospital. Although she had not eaten food for many days, her spirit was strong and vibrant. In fact, we were impressed with her keen sense of moral and social responsibility as well as a profound commitment and understanding of African heritage amidst the pressures of protracted struggle. Standing at the side of Dunham's bed was her physician, Dr. Lee Blount, Jr., who has been one of the physicians that has rendered decades of service to the African liberation movement here and abroad.

As we walked in and greeted sister Dunham, she smiled and said, "I hope you are not coming to tell me to stop fasting!" And of course we said, "Oh no.... We are here to support you and to tell you that millions of sisters and

brothers throughout the nation, in Haiti and in other parts of the world are praying for you and stand behind you all the way."

Dick Gregory journeyed to East St. Louis to show support for Dunham's fast and protest. Local and federal authorities, however, did not like the fact that brother Gregory was in town and immediately arrested him for "demonstrating" at a federal building. Once Gregory was released, he was subsequently re-arrested twice to "harass" him out of town.

Katherine Dunham remains a dedicated freedom fighter. The effort to see that justice is done on behalf of Haitian refugees deserves the involvement of millions. Sister Dunham is making her contributions at great personal risk at the age of 82. We must not let Dunham make this important challenge alone. Let us with one united voice and joint action demand justice for Haitian refugees.

We recommend that everyone take the time to do the following immediately: (1) Telegram President Bush calling for stronger action by the United States to help restore the legitimate democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and to stop forced repatriation of Haitian refugees until President Aristide is restored back to office in Haiti; and (2) contact members of the U.S. Congress to authorize support for the Organization of American States (OAS) to oversee activities in Haiti to ensure the return of democracy to Haiti.

Gang Peace

What do gangs, Camp Fire, the Trailblazers, Vera Katz and McDonalds and Nestle have in common?

A celebration of Gang Peace was held Saturday, March 7, at the University Park Community Center in North Portland, a celebration that introduced youth in the community to the project with speakers, music, food and prizes. State Representative Vera Katz and Portland Trailblazer Lamont Strothers talked about alternatives to gang participation. McDonalds provided food and food coupons.

Gang Peace, a new project of The Nestle Very Best in Youth Program provides leadership training and positive group activities for boys and girls

ages 6-12 in the Portland area who are at risk of becoming gang members. The Portland Area Council of Camp Fire will administer Gang Peace with the help of a grant from Nestle. David Jackson, the Gang Peace Coordinator hired by Camp Fire, will assist in the hiring and training of former gang teens to serve as peer leaders for the youth. Activities will include sports, music, science and advanced outdoor living.

The backbone of Gang Peace is communication--the idea that kids listen to other kids.

"Our friends who might get involved in gangs will listen to us because we are closer to their age, and we understand them more than adults," says Rosanna Blain an 11-year old Portland youth leader.

The Nestle Chocolate Very Best in Youth Program was designed to build self-esteem in young people by allowing them to make decisions and by providing the resources to make their choices become a reality.

For more information about Gang Peace, please call David Jackson or Nancy Snodgrass at the Portland Area Council of Camp Fire 224-7800.

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)
OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

Contributing Writers
McKinley Burt
Bill Barber
Sharon Camarda
Mattie Ann Callier-Spears

Publisher
Alfred Henderson
Operations Manager
Joyce Washington
Accounting Manager
Gary Ann Garnett
Public Relations
Chuck Washington
Sales & Promotions
Tony Washington

Production Staff
Dean Babb
Sharon Camarda
Gary Ann Garnett
Jennifer Johnson

The PORTLAND OBSERVER is published weekly by Exle Publishing Company, Inc. 4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Portland, Oregon 97211 503-288-0033 • Fax 288-0015



Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Monday, 5:00 pm--Ads: Tuesday, noon

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland Oregon.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and can not be used in other publications or personal usage, without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1991 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$25.00 per year.

The Portland Observer--Oregon's Oldest African-American Publication--is a member of the National Newspaper Association--Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY.

SUBSCRIBE

The Portland Observer

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR HOME ONLY \$25.00 PER YEAR.

PLEASE FILL OUT, ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, AND MAIL TO:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
PO Box 3137
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Name _____
Address _____
City, State _____
zip-code _____

THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER