

Noel Willis: Graduating With Honors



Noel Willis

Like thousands of college seniors throughout the country, Noel Willis recently basked in the limelight of convocation ceremonies. But unlike most seniors, the journalism major at the University of Missouri graduated with honors—magna cum laude, to be precise.

"It was a very, very, good feeling," Willis, 22, remarked of walking across the auditorium stage to receive his bachelor's degree. "Just having family members clapping made my day."

Willis, who is the grandson of John and Thelma Sylvester of Portland was also named a member of Kappa Tau Alpha, an honor society for a select group of students from among the top ten percent of the graduating class. The honor is a prestigious one indeed, especially when earned at the oldest and most renowned journalism program in the country.

A number of family and friends from across the country shared in the moment, including the graduating senior's "Grandma Syl," Thelma Sylvester. "Your mind tells you that there's no way Grandma Syl should make such a long trip,"

Willis said. "But in my heart and soul I'm as pleased as punch she made it here."

Noel Willis spoke with love and admiration of his grandparents, who he said represented a crucial bridge between the past and present. He also noted that his deceased grandmother on his father's side of the family, Bernice Mayfield, was there in spirit. "They're all great people, no doubt about it."

A number of family members and friends gathered for a post-graduation celebration dinner. The moment was touching for all who were present, but the dinner's honoree said that he was especially overwhelmed.

"I never experienced that type of emotion in all my life that I felt toward every person in that room," he said. The honors graduate offered special praise for his mother, Verlean Sylvester Willis. "She constantly read to me as a child, and I'll always remember our trips to the library," Noel Willis recalled. "She's the one who laid the foundation."

She certainly did. A single working mother for the better part of Noel's childhood, Verlean Sylvester Willis stressed the importance of reading. A stack of library books could often be found in the back seat of her car.

"My advice for young mothers with no money is that the library is the best place to take your family," Ms. Willis suggests. "There are so many worlds to explore. And it doesn't cost anything."

"Besides, if a child can feel free with a book," she said, "it will be much easier for them to learn in school."

Noel Willis will be the first person to point out that his father, Leon Willis, and stepmother, Harriet Palmer-Willis, were there for him, too. Willis recalled that his father helped to erase whatever doubts the journalism student had concerning his abilities. Often,

Leon Willis's letters from home served as a lifeline for his youngest son.

"Dad's a man who does not express his emotions as much as he probably should," Noel Willis said of his father. "Just having him at the graduation ceremony meant a lot to me."

The years of family encouragement obviously paid dividends. But Verlean Sylvester Willis is quick to give ultimate credit where it is due. "We were a support group for Noel. But he did it."

Not long after experiencing the euphoria of graduating, however, Noel Willis said that this is a crossroads period in his young life. "I'm going to have to sit down and take a hard look at who I am," he said. The journalism graduate said that the predicament of many young Blacks has been of concern to him also.

"It just proves how screwed-up this society is. I think of those brothers in jail," he said. "They are people who are as bright as I am—no brighter. There is an Einstein out there."

The honors graduate argued that through our labor and bloodshed in battle, among other contributions, Blacks are "more American" than practically any other group of people in this country. Yet, despite that, he noted that we continue to live in "a system that doesn't recognize what an individual's promise is."

"I thank God that I was able to get through the cracks," he said. Denise LaCour, who made the trip along with her daughter Crystal, has dubbed her nephew "The Magna Man" in recognition of his accomplishments. The specific honors do not mean as much for Verlean Sylvester Willis, however, as she watches "the last child leaving the nest," she said philosophically. "It's the icing on the cake," she said. "But, you know, I've always scraped icing off cake when I eat it anyway. But that's just me."

32 Youth Get Sworn In As Drug Free Marshals



Kids from all around the Portland area were sworn in as Drug Free Marshals and received their marshal badges in a celebration attended by Chuck E. Cheese and the Multnomah County Sheriff Department.

After participating in the Drug Free Marshal contest, creating essays, songs, pictures, etc., on how to create a drug-free community, 32 five to twelve year olds were awarded the official status of Marshal by Deputy Wayne McDonnell, a Multnomah County Sheriff and D.A.R.E. officer. After hearing from Deputy McDonnell on ways to resist drugs, and presentations from some of the contest participants, the youths were asked to raise their right hands and repeat back a drug-free marshal pledge. The pledge had the kids promise to live a drug-free life, show their friends that a drug-free life is more fun, help their

fellow Drug Free Marshals, learn more about how drugs really harm people, tell people the truth about the harmful effects of drugs, help their family and friends be drug-free and set a good example to all children by leading the way to a drug free USA. The kids were then deputized with gold Drug Free Marshal badges by Deputy McDonnell and Chuck E. Cheese, both of whom had become Marshals themselves earlier in the celebration.

Angie Mann, spokesperson for the Church of Scientology's "Lead the Way to a Drug Free USA" program, commented, "The kids were very excited about the award ceremony. They really wanted to do something about drugs and communicate to other kids that living drug free lives is the only way to live." The Church was the coordinator in the Drug Free Marshals contest, getting contributions

from local businesses and setting up the awards ceremony.

In the upcoming months, the top contest entries will be presented as spokesmen Marshals and tour the Portland area promoting the second Drug Free Marshal contest and swearing in local V.I.P.'s as Drug Free Marshals, upholding the drug free pledge.

"Because the purpose of the Drug Free Marshal Program is to get kids being actively and directly responsible for the condition of their environment, the spokesmen will be very key to the program's continued success and the deputizing of future Marshals," stated Mann.

For more information about the contest or how your school or community group can participate in the Drug Free Marshal program, contact Angie Mann at the Church of Scientology Celebrity Centre Portland at 228-0116.

The Oregon Arena Project Makes Major Commitment To Recycling

The Oregon Arena Project is going to recycle the bulk of the waste generated during the demolition and construction phases of the project. It will be one of the first projects of this size in the nation to develop a comprehensive construction site recycling and waste management plan.

"It's encouraging to see just how seriously the Oregon Arena Project is taking recycling," says Jerry Powell, Editor-in-Chief of Resource Recycling magazine and Chairperson for the National Recycling Coalition. "The project has developed and will be implementing one of the most comprehensive recycling and waste management plans yet to be undertaken by any large commercial construction project in the U.S. It will definitely be setting the standard for other construction projects to follow."

All contractors will be required to source-separate and recycle wood waste; concrete and masonry materials; metals; drywall and packaging materials, such as cardboard and plastics, according to Bob Collier, Project Manager of Oregon Arena Corporation. "With over 200,000 tons of construction and demolition debris going to Metro area landfills each year, the Oregon Arena project is committed to add as little to that number as possible," notes Collier.

Working in partnership with the Oregon Arena Project Drake/Turner, Joint Venture, general contractors for the project, contracted with Palermi and Associates, a local environmental consultant, to develop the waste management plan. The plan identifies those waste materials that have the potential to be recycled, where the materials can be recycled and what the potential cost benefits of recycling might be.

In addition, contract specification language was developed and included in all bid packages sent out to prospective subcontractors. The specification very clearly outlined that subcontractors will be required to source-separate materials and place them in the clearly marked recycling bins. Drake/Turner will also provide on-site recycling education to all subcontractors throughout the project.

Drake/Turner invited five local disposal companies to submit proposals for implementing the recycling plan and for collecting the remaining trash. The successful bidders for the project are A.G.G. Enterprises, a local minority-owned company, and Waste Management Company of Oregon. Working closely with Palermi and Associates, the selected haulers will make sure the source-separated materials are taken to

local recycling facilities and processors. Portland is very fortunate to have numerous facilities that take construction and demolition debris and use the materials to create new products. Materials will be tracked by type, tonnage, destination and final end use.

Early estimates indicated that over 10,000 tons of materials will potentially be recycled from the Oregon Arena Project. Materials that traditionally have gone to the landfill. Many of these materials can be recycled into new products such as steel framing, new recycled content drywall and new composite wood products. Concrete and asphalt waste will either be taken to the St. Johns Landfill for use as fill or will be crushed and used as new aggregate base for road construction. Cardboard will be recycled into new cardboard. Taking on a recycling project this large is quite a challenge, but the project owners feel that it is the right thing to do, especially with landfills filling up so rapidly and the need to be more resourceful with natural materials, such as wood.

Basically, everything from the demolition of the old Hanna Building to the mountains of construction debris and office paper produced during the project will find a new life.

Acclaimed Poet Introduces Rosemont Girls In Benefit

On Friday, June 25, at 7pm, Conant & Conant, Booksellers presents acclaimed Oregon writer Sharon Doubiago in a benefit for Rosemont School, the Pacific Northwest's only residential treatment center which specializes in treating adolescent girls.

Doubiago reads from her own works and introduces girls from Rosemont, who will read from their poetry, in Sun's Cafe, next to the bookstore at 1001 SW 10th & Salmon. Admission is free, however donations and proceeds from sale of Art & Poetry. By the Girls at Rosemont School, 1991-1993 will benefit Rosemont School.

Sharon Doubiago was teaching at Rosemont School the week she completed South America Mi Hija, which is a book-length poetic response to her own daughter's query, "Are there any good men?" As many of the girls at Rosemont had been physically, sexually and emotionally abused by men at home and on the streets, they too wondered. Her reply holds hope to "these lonely, deserted, betrayed daughters" in recovery.

When the girls at Rosemont published their own collection, Art & Poetry, Doubiago enthusiastically wrote the introduction, saying:

It is a great pleasure now to introduce this little book... to pay back a little of what I was given that week. It is a great privilege to introduce the work of these daughters, who need us as much as we need them.

you, daughter, so far from yourself

you, daughter, so far from me you, daughter, so far from the world

in every human being

Most of the teenage girls who come to Rosemont are chronic runaways whose myriad problems—personality disorders, depression, severe behavioral problems, alcohol and drug dependency—stem from the abuse they have suffered. No wonder that their poetry reflects the pain, anger and confusion they feel. With the work they do at Rosemont School, no wonder it also contains the love and the hope that they discover there.

Girls become at-risk in much higher numbers than boys, yet the Oregon Children's Service Division devotes 60% of its strained resources to troubled teenage boys. Boys typically act-out their distress in ways which victimize the community—mugging, street fighting, and gang activities—while girls are more likely to endanger themselves through suicide or their own sexual exploitation. Ignoring the problems of seriously disturbed teenage girls potentially endangers two generations—3 out of 10 girls in Oregon become teenage mothers—as abuse and emotional dysfunction cycles through every generation until recovery take place.

Rosemont School works hard to break this cycle and effect individual recovery, specializing in the treatment of adolescent girls. Now located in North Portland, they are completing Phase I of renovating its new home, the former Care Vista Nursing Home site, and plan to move its facility this summer. The School's budget still needs funding to complete this process.

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How Asphalt Improves Board Sailing



The wind has been good for Gorge economics. It's been boom times for Hood River, thanks to 10,000 boardheads and their multitude of fans. Trouble is, where do they all stand when they bring their sails to land?

City officials have a keen interest in the sporting crowd. So they schemed and planned, then called about Oregon Lottery funds for port improvements. Board enthusiasts may not have understood the techni-

cal jargon, but they sure appreciated seeing what it meant. A way bigger parking lot, more beach, and... yes, a new building with excellent rest rooms and food concessions. All told, a \$600,000 project, about a third of it paid for by Lottery dollars.

And why not? Board sailing has brought the big time to a small town. For that they should be rewarded. The Oregon Lottery is just happy that where there was a wind, there was a way.



It Does Good Things