

BLACK HISTORY

The Portland Observer

Portland's Black Ministers Form Union

Association Forms In Early 50s As Beginning To The Albina Ministerial Alliance

In the mid 1950s a group of African-American ministers with churches in North and Northeast Portland established a ministerial association which was to serve as the precursor to the establishment of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, Inc. The purpose of the association was to foster fellowship and goodwill among the pastors and their congregations. Revivals were held at different churches with choir exchanges to help members of the different congregations get acquainted. These revivals which were often held over the period of a week became known as "A Week of Prayer and Preaching". The revivals proved to be quite successful in uniting the congregations around prayer and song.

However, by late 1959, individuals and organizations outside of the church began to address social issues which were adversely impacting the African American community in North and Northeast Portland. Civil Rights concerns began to move to the forefront of the community's agenda. Cox's funeral home which published the local newspaper began to print articles addressing these concerns and Dr. DeNorval Unthank along with Bill Berry of the Urban League emerged as vocal leaders of the community expressing the need for change in the socioeconomic conditions of Portland's African American citizens. It was during this period that Reverend Eugene Boyd approached Reverends Tecumseh Graham and Cortland Cambric with the idea of organizing an interdenominational ministerial alliance which would link ministerial fellowship with the civil rights movement. The intent was to establish a "ministerial voice" along with that of the Urban League and the NAACP in addressing the civil and human rights needs of the community. Several of the ministers had begun to recognize this need since their congregations had migrated from the south and had prior to their arrival in Portland, depended upon their ministers to be involved in the civic and social affairs of the community.

Group Takes Albina Name

Fifteen ministers attended the initial meeting, many drawn from the ministerial association that had emerged in the early 50s. The meeting was held in the annex of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church and Reverend James Clow, Pastor of Mt. Olivet suggested that the new group be named The Albina Ministerial Alliance since the majority of African Americans lived in the Albina District and many of the concerns regarding civil rights were surfacing from the Albina District.

During this time a large percentage of African Americans lived where

the Portland Coliseum is currently located, as well as in the area around Emanuel Hospital. In fact, one of the concerns during that time was the dislocation of African Americans from their homes, and the methods used by the City of Portland to obtain the properties for the development of the Portland Coliseum and Emanuel Hospital.

Reaching Youth

In the early 1960s, the Alliance sought to reach the youth of the com-

munity and engage them in productive civil rights activities. This was at a time when Black Power and Anti-War sentiments were beginning to have a considerable influence on youth throughout the country. "Choir Fests" were held in local parks in order to recruit young people to work on community projects associated with the Urban League and the NAACP. However, the Alliance's first civil rights project that dealt solely with a socioeconomic issue

was the hiring of African American grocery store checkers in the local supermarkets. The Safeway store which was then located at Broadway and Williams streets, along with the Kienow's and Fred Meyers stores were contacted and after considerable negotiations, agreements for the hiring of African American checkers were reached. The ministers proved to be very effective in their negotiations with city officials and local businesses, primarily because they

had the "ear" of the African American community and city administrators could not silence them or their congregations.

The Alliance engaged in many community projects, one of which took place in 1967 and involved raising funds for students in the Jefferson High School choir to participate in a cultural exchange program in Japan. Bishop W.L. McKinney, the Albina Ministerial Alliance President appealed to the Alliance members and

their congregations to raise funds for this effort by stressing the importance of cultural enrichment for the youth, many of whom had not previously been outside the state of Oregon.

Membership Grows

By 1969, the Albina Ministerial Alliance membership had grown considerably, Reverend Wendall Wallace was the President of the AMA and the Alliance which had been exclusively African American, primarily due to defacto segregation prior to 1964, actively sought to embrace all churches and congregations residing in the Albina District. Rev. Dale Stitt and Father Gordon Dickey became the first Caucasian ministers to become members of the Alliance.

Employment Targeted

Having successfully met the challenges of the city and the business community, the Alliance turned to the issues of employment and training for the community. An article appearing in the October 1969 issue of the Reader's Digest entitled, "We Help Ourselves" outlined the formation of Opportunities Industrialization Centers which had great promise as a method in which to train individuals in the community for the job market. Rev. Eugene Boyd visited the national headquarters of this organization at the request of Alliance, and returned with information and materials that lead to the establishment of the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, (POIC). The Alliance filed for incorporation with the State of Oregon during this same time period and then established the first Board of Directors for the POIC.

Model Cities

In 1969, the City of Portland Model Cities Program Action Plan, which was a five year Demonstration Project was initiated. In December of 1970, the Alliance's Family Day and Night Child Care Program was funded and the program which was originally operated by the Metropolitan Area 4-C Council began operation in January of 1971. The program was initially funded to serve 109 children with a staff of six. However, by the next fiscal year the program expanded to serve 161 children with a staff of nine.

The Alliance continued to pursue social and economic development activities through the 1970s. Under the leadership of Rev. John Jackson, the Alliance sponsored Community Clean-up Campaigns

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Vice President Gore And Sen. Braun Join MLK "Living The Dream" Luncheon At Philadelphia King Association.

King's Dream Remembered

In the city of Brotherly and Sisterly Love, the Philadelphia Martin Luther King, Jr. Association for Nonviolence, Inc., kicked off with huge success its 13th Annual benefit "Living The Dream" luncheon to an overflow attendance, marking the 66th King's anniversary.

This historic ceremony marks the 10th anniversary of the National King Holiday, since the Federal King Holiday Act was signed into law three years after the Philadelphia MLK Association for NonViolence, Inc., was commissioned by Mrs. Coretta Scott King. It is the first

and only full-time outreach affiliate of the MLK Jr., Center in Atlanta to have an active program of education in the teachings and life of Dr. King. The Association's Founder President is Dr. C. DeLores Tucker. It is chaired by Waverly Easley, former publisher of the Philadelphia Tribune; Dr. Teta Banks, is executive director.

The luncheon was preceded by a dramatic "Let Freedom Ring" ceremony featuring Vice President Albert Gore sounding the historic Liberty Bell in the Pavilion, Independence Mall. He was joined in the unique ritual by Dr. Tucker.

Gore declared he was moved to be able to attend the historic ceremony which gave him time to reflect on Martin Luther King's remarkable life. By resisting violence, Dr. King moved the heart of America, he said.

In opening remarks, Dr. Tucker declared: "Today is...an historic day because it marks 10th anniversary of the National King Holiday, the first National Holiday commemorating and African American. Today also marks the first national service day which encourages each of us today to help somebody." President Bill Clinton signed the Na-

tional Service Act into law in 1994. It urges that the King Holiday be celebrated as a day of national service as well as a day of inter-racial cooperation and youth anti-violence initiatives, she said. At the very heart of Dr. King's philosophy was exhortation to service. It is fitting that Vice President Gore is a special guest at the ceremonies. We see the presence of the Vice President as a testament to the commitment of the White House to the principles of equality espoused by Dr. King," she said.

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Color Lines Are Broken

The civil rights movement of the 1940s and 50s finally bring integration to Little Rock, Ark. schools.

Black History Highlights at PSU

The Black Cultural Affairs Board has joined with departments throughout Portland State University to present a diverse selection of events in celebration of February as Black History Month.

All events are open to the public and admission is free unless otherwise noted. For more information contact Robyn Harris at 725-5660.

Feb. 3. Noon - 1 p.m. Concert: New World Afrikah. Multicultural Center, room 126, Smith Center, 1825 S.W. Broadway.

Feb. 6. Noon - 1 p.m. Film: Caribbean Freedom Fighters, presented by Kofi Agorsah, associate professor of Black Studies. Smith Center.

Feb. 7. 10 a.m. - noon. Film: Caribbean Freedom Fighters. Smith Center.

Feb. 8. Noon - 1 p.m. Jazz concert: Marilyn Keller, Smith Center's Parkway Commons.

Feb. 10. Forum: Bellcurve Round Table. An open discussion on the controversial new book. Contact: Affirmative Action Office, 725-4432 for time and location.

Feb. 13. Noon - 1:30 p.m. Tribute to Black Men presented by black female students. Room 292, Smith Center.

Feb. 14. Noon to 1:30 p.m. Tribute to Black Women presented by black male students. Contact Black Cultural Affairs Board, 725-5660.

Feb. 15. Noon - 1:30 p.m. Lecture: Black and Jewish Relations, presented by Hubert Locke, dean emeritus and professor in the University of Washington's School of Public Affairs and author of The Black Anti-semitism Controversy, just released by Susquehanna University Press. PSU Multicultural Center, Room 126, Smith Center.

Feb. 16. Noon - 1:30 p.m. Forum: Brothers and Sisters Can We Talk? An open dialogue among African American men and women seeking new methods of communication. room 126 Smith Center

Feb. 17. Noon - 1 p.m. Concert: HeavenBound Gospel Chorus. Smith Center's Parkway Commons.

Feb. 18. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Workshop: Understand Internalized Racism, presented by Allies, a Hillsboro-based educational group which

"strives to educate people to end oppression of any kind." PSU Multicultural Center, room 126, Smith Center.

8 p.m. - 11 p.m. Concert: Legendary jazz drummer Billy Cobham and his band. Smith Center Ballroom. Admission \$10.

Feb. 21. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Concert: Soulfood Luncheon and jazz by drummer Ron Steen and friends. Smith Center's Nordic Room 26. Cost \$5.

Noon - 1 p.m. Concert: PSU Faculty Chorus presents "African Spirituals," room 75 Lincoln Hall basement auditorium, 1620 S.W. Park.

Feb. 22. Noon - 1 p.m. Gospel Concert: The Brown Sisters. Smith Center Parkway Commons.

Feb. 23. Noon - 1 p.m. Lecture: Lawrence Dark, president of the Portland Urban League on African Americans and history. Smith Center Ballroom.

Feb. 24. Noon - 1 p.m. Forum: The Evolution of Malcolm X, a panel discussion. Room 296 Smith Center.

Feb. 28. 7 p.m. Concert: Northwest African American Ballet. Lincoln Performance Hall, room 175.