

DIVERSITY

The Portland Observer

Diversity Vs. Affirmative Action

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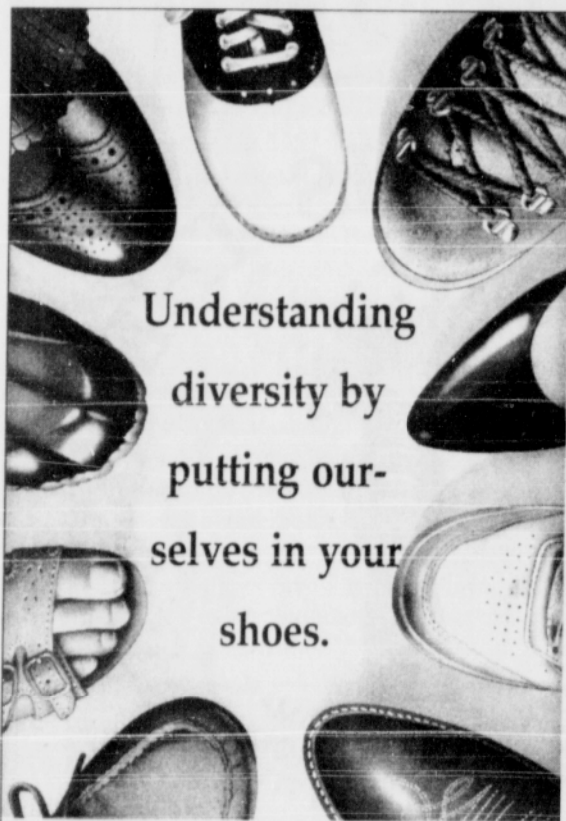
the minorities and women recently hired.

Corporations can avoid the philosophical debate about affirmative action by couching it in terms of self-interest.

"It's good business" is the common refrain. Even skeptics of minority-hiring programs agree this is true, though some black employees question whether there are limits to how far a company can go before white

customers balk. If nothing else, a minority-hiring program can help to defend a company against discrimination lawsuits.

But the case for diversity as genuinely good business is growing. When there were no women in the top ranks of Florida Power Corp., shareholders wanted to know why, said Pat Blizzard, vice president of human resources at the St. Petersburg-based utility. Now there are two female vice presidents and two female board members.



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