

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

## League Birthday Celebrated; Jazz Concert Delights

By CORA SMITH

The Urban League of Portland's "On the Road to Equality," a 50-year anniversary retrospective dinner, was attended by movers and doers - shakers and makers.

The prestigious event was hosted by Ken Bodie of KOIN (6) and Leah Hope of KATU (2). Honorary co-chairs, senior court judge Mercedes F. Deitz shared opening remarks with Sen. Mark O. Hatfield who was unable to attend, but was viewed by videotape which set the pace of the evening, highlighting the league's progress throughout the years.

Other reflections from the past came from Vernon Chatman, Heloise Hill, Alene Grice, Myrtle Carr, judge Belton Hamilton, Bobby Nunn and Joy Pruitt, to name a few.

A book written by Prof. Darrell Miller of the black studies department at Portland State University, titled "On the Road to Equality" was given to each guest.

Barbara O'Hare was featured as a unique and successful product of the Urban League. Chatman as a mentor, assisted O'Hare in completing college and overcoming a speech impediment. Armored with confidence, she ultimately landed her dream career opportunity with United Airlines.

Patricia Doves from Jefferson High School and Thennesse Robertson from Marshall High were awarded the E. Shelton Hill and Vernon Chatman scholarships.

League President Lawrence Dark concluded the annual event held at the Convention Center.

Vessels fine dining ware owner Phylis Gaines drew together friends and clients for her second year in business celebration. Most clients, especially over 40, have enough dishes to fill King Tuk's tomb, however Vessels' supply would even inspire Queen Nefertiti to clear out some cupboard space.

African inspired collections, great colors in black and white, were to "die for". The gathering of minds and spirits included Olga Talley, Angie Davis, Alvena Brown, Toni Hunter, Lois Washington, Pam Phillips and Debra Knapper.

The Northwest African American Writers workshop presented the national Black Poetry Day Reception of Kuumba VII.

This meeting of the minds, with pens in hand, was held in the auditorium of the North Portland Multnomah County branch library. Joe Franklin emceed the workshop and commemorated the writing group's founder Useni Perkins, former president of the Urban League.

Music was provided by novelist/pianist Lillian Whitlow, interludes of African sounds were by flutist/banker Tom Booth.

Members received a poetry book of personal works, an autograph session was held and each speaker recited an African proverb. "Do not say the first thing that comes to mind." - "If you watch your pot, it won't burn."

Participants who also read were Jennifer and Don Duncan, Mario DePriest and Irene Kelly. Jarvis Hall, a student from Ockley Green Middle School, received a youth recognition award. Dr. Steven McPherson was honored for his contribution to the literary field.

The Marriot Hotel Ballroom rocked with jazz Friday during the

to the performance at Produce Row, jamming with Tom Grant, Dennis Springer and Ron Steen in preparation for their Chi-Drummers Challenge. Twelve rounds to determine the knock-out tie.

Brown touted as "the gentleman of Jazz, has traveled and recorded with the Supremes/Diana Ross and

has played all the nation's most noteworthy jazz festivals - such as Mt. Hood and the Monterey Jazz Festivals.

Bernard "Pretty Purdie," termed the smartest working man in show biz, who once belonged exclusively to soul and funk, now weaves jazz, rhythm and blues into one unified feeling.

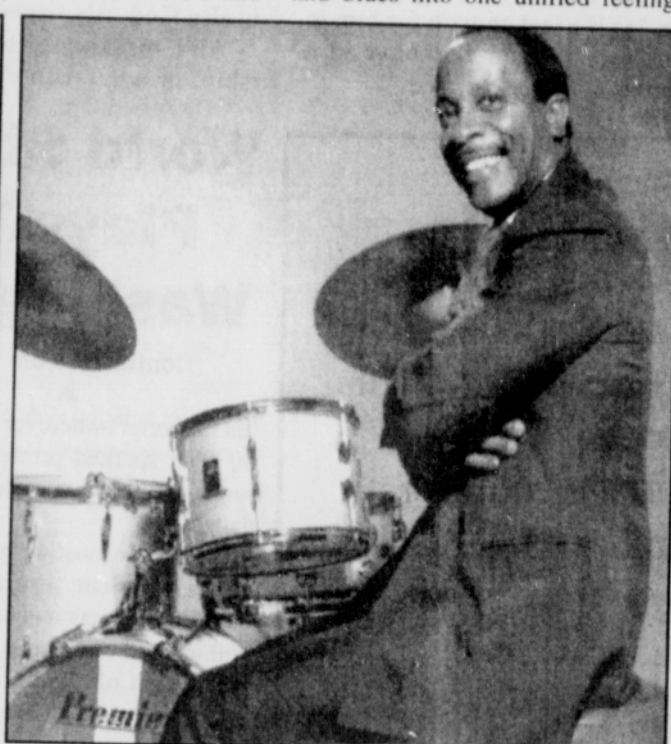
The accomplished technician with 4,000 titles to his credits as an author, recording and performing artist, composer, manager, editor, producer, etc., is currently professor at the New School of Social Research in New York City.

He has performed with legendary Duke Ellington to the likes of modern day Brandford Marsalis. Garnell Brown, Patrick Lamb, Paul Mazzaio, Rob Paparozzi, Ronald Monroe, Pancho Morales and five feet tall and mighty at the keyboards Judy Albano completed the lineup.

Vocalist Carrie Smith of East Coast fame who starred in Broadway production of "Black and Blue" looked radiant in red sequins as she pounded out "What a Little Moonlight Can Do," and in a striking resemblance to Louis Armstrong's voice sang "I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues."

Hobnobbing with the stars was community spirited Paul and Geneva Knauls, Ken Bodie, birthday guy Dick Bogle and his wife Nola, Mt. Hood Jazz Station singer Shirley Nanette, vocalist Mario DePriest and Richard Arnold came out to support the Purdie-Brown thang.

This evening was truly made for music lovers.



Jazz players Bernard "Pretty" Purdie (left) and Mel Brown warmed hearts at Portland's Marriot Hotel.

Purdie-Brown Thang Concert. A diversified star studded cast of musicians were formed around two world class drummers, Mel Brown of Portland and Bernard Purdie who arrived from a stint in London. Pals for 25 years, the two men were sighted prior

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Deborah Cox

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