

EDITORIAL

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The Portland Observer

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Charles Washington
Publisher & Editor

Mark Washington
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Gary Ann Taylor
Business Manager

Sean Cruz
Consultant & Editor
Portland Observador

Danny Bell
Advertising Sales Manager

Paul Neufeldt
Production & Design

Gary Washington
Public Relations

Rovonne Black
Business Assistant

Contributing Writers:

Professor McKinley Burt, Lee Perlman, Fred Hembry

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,
Portland, Oregon 97211
503-288-0033 • Fax 503-288-0015
Email: Pdxobserv@aol.com

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
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To the editor:

On behalf of the Portland Art Museum, I want to thank you for the privilege to include the Portland Observer as a member of the Oregon Committee of Honor for the Discovering Ellis Ruley exhibition. There was a wonderful response to the recent opening celebration, and we were delighted that so many guests joined us for this tribute to Ruley's artistic legacy.

A special Museum Family Sunday, entitled "Discovering the Artist in You", will be held on January 19. A variety of hands-on activities will help children and families explore the techniques that Ruley used

to create his vivid images, and special performances by storytellers and The Jefferson Dancers will celebrate Ruley's African American heritage. We are pleased to offer free admission to the community for this afternoon event, and hope that you and your family will be able to join us.

Thank you again for the Portland Observer's thoughtful participation. We appreciate your support of Discovering Ellis Ruley, and hope that you will have the opportunity to visit this important exhibition during the holiday season.

—John E. Buchanan, Jr.
The Portland Art Museum

Innovative work at The Portland Observer

Dear Mr. Washington,

Thank you for being interviewed on our radio program, KBOO 90.7 FM, 7:30-9:00am. The innovative work that you are doing is exciting. I look forward to reading the Observer in coming months as it continues on this new direction. Often people speak of diversity and coalition building, but few people do it. Thank you for walking your talk. Again, thank you for being a guest on our show. Best wishes for the future.

Sincerely yours,
Cecil Charles Prescod

Touching the community

To the editor:

We are so grateful that your paper has taken an interest in featuring Hispanic children who are waiting to be adopted! There are so many children who are in desperate need of loving families, and it is through the consistent efforts of your paper that they may have a chance to find homes. The Portland Observer is defini-

tely a noteworthy paper that is touching the community in a positive manner.

We commend you on your efforts and greatly appreciate all your help in the area of adoption. Many thanks from our organization and from the children we serve.

—Deborah Barnhart, Boys and Girls Society of Oregon.

Mitsubishi. Texaco. The military. Avis. Circuit City. R.R. Donnelley & Sons. Call the roll—the list grows daily.

What is behind the sudden "surge" in incidents of corporate racism and sexism? JaxFax suspects that the media is finally taking note of long-standing problems, due to the Texaco tapes. Rev. Joseph Lowery, head of the SCLC, says it's "God's answer to Proposition 209"—just when the right wing had many Americans convinced that everyone was being treated equally, so there was no more need for affirmative action programs, along came Texaco to expose that myth.

[Unfortunately, the Texaco scandal came to light right after election day, just a few days too late to change the final outcome of the prop. 209 vote. We applaud the California judge who blocked Prop. 209's implementation, at least temporarily. And we should remember what we did accomplish during that struggle—with far less money, fighting a deliberately mis-labeled initiative which emphasized "civil rights" rather than "rolling back affirmative action,"

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Corporate racism

starting out 40-50% behind in the polls, with a media which had already decided that we were doomed to fail (and thus was not inclined to examine the issue fully), and with the other side receiving \$3 million from the Republican Party, while our side received lukewarm verbal support from the Democrats—despite all that, we still built a coalition that cut across lines of race and sex and class, bringing together Rainbow & NOW & the feminist Majority & Hollywood & the unions & students & Bruce Springsteen, so we could cut the final margin of defeat down to a mere 54-46%. If the Democrats had ever taken this issue as seriously as the GOP

did, we could have won, or if the Texaco mess had come out 2 weeks earlier, we would have won. We should not forget that.]

There's a new corporate outrage, at R.R. Donnelley & Sons, the world's largest printing company (\$6.5 billion in sales in 1994). Despite frigid temperatures in Chicago, Rev. Jesse Jackson met with a multi-racial group of about 150 current and former Donnelley workers, and protested with them outside the plant.

600 African American workers have just filed a \$500 million class action suit against the company, claiming that when Donnelley closed its Chicago plant in 1994, all but 7 of

the African American workers were terminated, while more than 1/3 of the white workers were transferred to other divisions or given full retirement packages and benefits. The suit claims that the plant was referred to as the "black problem" by company executives. The corporation also faces allegations of "ageism," from both white and Black workers who were downsized despite their seniority.

Donnelley prints telephone directories, Sears & J.C. Penney catalogues, TV Guide, Time, the National Enquirer, Reader's Digest, Federal documents and tax forms.

The company employs an estimated 36,000 workers worldwide on every continent but Africa and Antarctica.

Rev. Jackson announced he would call U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, and demand a full investigation of Donnelley's labor practices.

JaxFax congratulates the Circuit City workers who have fought so long and hard for vindication. Shame on Circuit City for threatening to appeal the jury's verdict, and stonewalling justice—their Christmas spirit seems to have short-circuited.

Who Told You That You Were Naked? —Genesis 11:11

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

Just as I said last week, "The More Things Change The More They Stay The Same." and as Carter G. Woodson said in his magna opus, "The Mis-Education Of The Negro", "When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions."

Of the group that met at my office this past Friday, there was a consensus on all three counts. I'm gradually cleaning up enough 'floor files' (and getting the material computer ready) to transfer some important meetings from coffee houses to this more discrete location. Besides, there is the advantage of having such amenities at hand as a comprehensive library, fax machine, copier, and access to a nation-wide WATS line courtesy of a Beaverton electronics firm.

The title of this week's article is in direct reference to a major contention of the very learned and perceptive Dr. Woodson: "Those who have not learned to do for themselves and have to depend solely on others never obtain any more rights or privileges in the end than they had in the beginning."

Friday, our discussion centered around paraphrasing this prescient

observation in terms that define an African American who today is far out on the periphery of the technological tide that surges through our infrastructure and our education systems. One speaker did a caricature of Adam standing in the garden, trying to cover his private parts and rolling his eyes toward heaven, "Ise naked and helpless oh lawd please help this ole 'you-know-what'."

"I don't know how I got in this mess. The woman did it, that's what. Whitey did it. The welfare did it. The school system's responsible. These cheap shoes done wore out and I can't march any more. Our leaders are calling for more 'walk-bys', can't you get Nike to turn out a special series? and another thing, sir, I've looked over Jordan and I don't see a damn thing coming for me but the heat. Also, the library disappeared."

When everyone had finished laughing and assigning a date to refine this act into a skit for an upcoming youth meeting, things got down to serious business. There were far-ranging questions and critical observations concerning local leadership ranging from "who appoints them—

the establishment media?" to "are 'they' still giving away millions of dollars in real estate? What good is a university education?"

This latter query came as the speaker drew back the drapes and pointed at the Umojah complex across the street (the S.W. corner of N.E. 17th and Aberta). The speaker had been a student in my economics class at

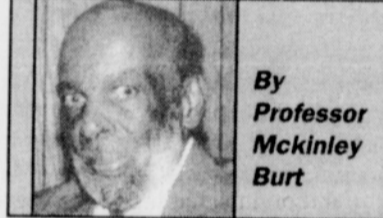
P.S.U. and had been present twenty two years earlier when I outlined my design of the process that secured those valuable buildings and the former public library around on 17th for the "Black Education Center" (the only building they still own).

It was pointed out that several of the whites in the class followed the process and put it into practice, obtaining real property for their own projects, "which they not only still own but have expanded into both housing and commercial rentals. Our well-educated blacks never moved on step further, and the surrounding area is now worth millions. But this is not a phenomena that was confined

to these four corners of Portland; has nothing changed since Dr. Woodson wrote his book in 1933?"

After citing, among others, the example of the former Fred Meyer building at N.E. Killingsworth and MLK we noted the giant economic strides made by African Americans by the turn of last century. I recently cited these here from a book by E. F. Richings, "Evidences of Progress among the Colored People", and at other times I have cited the documentation of the U.S. Congressional Record; at the famed Atlanta Exposition almost a hundred years ago black inventors and engineers were displaying their inventions for railroads, logging and agriculture.

And in further preparation for a seminar for black youth we are holding in the facilities of a Beaverton electronic plant, we selected key inventors from my book "Black Inventors of America" which would demonstrate that even without "mis-education" which would demonstrate that even without "mis-education" blacks have been able to develop some of the most sophisticated technology the world has seen. And you can be sure that a thorough understanding of the urban infrastructure and real estate will be incorporated in the series."



By Professor McKinley Burt

Vantage Point

African America Students On The Frontline In Pittsburgh

BY RON DANIELS

One of the most dramatic and significant protest actions of 1996 received virtually no attention in the national media.

On November 22 in Pittsburgh, PA., at 10:00 AM sharp nearly 4,000 high school and middle school students staged a Walk-Out to protest the acquittal of one of the police officers involved in the infamous police murder of Johnny Gammage. At 12:00 noon more than 2,000 of these students gathered at the Pittsburgh Civic Center for a March for Justice not only to protest the verdict, but to promote "peace amongst the youth" and "mark the beginning of a selective buying campaign." The leaflet distributed to mobilize for the Walk-out and march made it clear that this was to be a disciplined and well executed day of action: "This will be a peaceful & orderly Demonstration by the African Youth of Today - No Weapons, No Drugs, Just Peace."

Though a number of civil rights and community based organizations supported this dramatic day of action, the protest was conceived and executed by young people. I recently had the privilege of interviewing Daud Lane and Knowledge Truth, two youth who were involved in the Walk-Out and March, on a nationwide hook-up on Bob Law's Night Talk on the American Urban Radio

Network. They were joined by veteran social and political activist Rick Adams, who is associated with a number of community based organizations in Pittsburgh. Rick had nothing but praise for the seriousness of purpose, dedication and discipline of the students who planned and executed the bold action on November 22. On the line with the Night Talk audience, Brother Daud and Knowledge Truth made a big impression with callers who joined the conversation from around the country. During the conversation, these two brothers were also careful to give credit to an African American sister, Aisha Taylor, for originally coming up with the idea of the Walk-Out.

What is most impressive about the November 22 day of action, however, is that it was not just a one day event. The students envisioned the Walk-Out and March for Justice as the Kick-off of designed to protest the general lack of respect for Black people in the City of Pittsburgh as reflected in a number of incidents in the past few years. An end to the fratricidal violence between rival street organizations is also a key objective of the overall mobilization for justice. Indeed, the street organizations joined the November 22 day of action and are supporting the follow-up initiatives.

The centerpiece of the mobilization is a youth and student spear-

headed selective buying campaign/boycott of downtown businesses in Pittsburgh. Clearly cognizant of the power of the \$450 billion Black consumer market the students have outlined how Black people can use their dollars to achieve justice in Pittsburgh. The youth are asking Black people not to spend any money in downtown Pittsburgh except with Black owned businesses and to take a brown bag lunch to work rather than buy lunch downtown. Consistent with Dr. Claud Anderson's concept of poweromics, the youth are also asking Black people to take "the money you don't spend and invest in Black-owned Dwelling House Savings and Loan."

In short these African American youth and students have put together a thoughtful and workable plan for protesting against the injustices being heaped upon African people in Pittsburgh. When I talked to young Aisha Taylor by phone, she informed me that the Mobilization of African Students for Justice was planning to open an office and was busy refining the organizations short term and long term goals and objectives.

At a time when so many people are lamenting the tragic state of affairs among African youth in America, it is critically important to highlight and uphold examples of youth engaged in positive actions like the mobilization against injustice in Pitts-

burgh. For a long time I have asserted that African youth can and must come to the forefront to spearhead critical aspects of the struggle for Black liberation in this country; that our young people must be turned around; that rather than venting our anger and frustration as an oppressed people on each other, we must take down the racist-capitalist system of exploitation that is oppressing us.

In the tradition of the Student Non-Violent coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was at the cutting edge of the Black Freedom Struggle in the '60's, and the students who led the rebellion in Soweto in South Africa, African youth in Pittsburgh have taken a major step towards creating this generation's new Freedom Fighters. Along the way they may well make some mistakes. However, I would rather see our youth make mistakes trying to end injustice and oppression than to see them overcome by alienation, apathy and inaction. When young brothers and sisters make the decision to become warriors in the Black Freedom Struggle, it is imperative that the older generation embrace them, advise them, and give them as much support as possible. With African youth accepting the torch, the future of the race is assured.

To contact the Mobilization of African Students for Justice call: 412-361-3719