

Education

High school graduation gap narrows

Study shows minority students are doing better, racial myths exposed

More black Americans are finishing high school but are doing it later in life, according to a report released by the American Council on Education.

In 1995, about 87 percent of both blacks and whites aged 25 to 29 had graduated high school, the report shows.

In 1985, blacks had an 81% high school graduation rate, compared with 87% for whites, the report said.

The gap may have closed because a greater number of black people finished high school requirements

later in life through equivalency examinations, the report said.

Among students aged 18 to 24, African Americans and Hispanics still trail whites in high school completion rates, a trend that has lasted for more than two decades.

But the 1995 data indicated that both African Americans and Hispanics had narrowed that gap.

College completion rates among African Americans and whites aged 25 to 29 reached their highest levels since 1975 — 26 percent of whites and 15% of blacks.

But only 9% of Hispanics of the same age group had completed four years of college, a lower rate than in the 1980s.

An analysis of Census data showed that the rate of increase in college enrollment among black and Hispanic students is slowing, the report said.

Graduate participation up. Both Hispanic men and women contributed to a 2% increase in Hispanic college participation in 1995.

Still, there is a significant gender gap between Hispanic male and fe-

male high school graduates aged 18 to 24 — the college participation rate for Hispanic women was 38.4 percent in 1995, compared with 32.2 percent for Hispanic men.

Students of color made the greatest gains in 1995 at the graduate level, where enrollment increased 6.1%.

At the undergraduate level, enrollment was up by 2.6 percent.

This year the report included a special focus study on educational and demographic trends among Asian-Pacific Americans.

It explored the myth of the "model minority."

The study found Asian-Pacific Americans (APAs) are often left out of the discourse on race and education because they are considered a "model minority" not in need of attention from educators.

College participation in the group ranges from 66% for Chinese Americans to 26 percent for Laotian Americans.

The study says the stereotype of APAs as science and math students does not reflect reality.

APAs have a wide range of academic interests and are involved in a variety of extracurricular activities.

One of the principle authors of the special study, Kenyon Chan of California State University, said that for Asians Americans, education is their economic road out.

Chan recommends language development programs and a focus on high-risk APA groups.

The American Council on Education is an umbrella group for colleges, universities and educational associations.

Grant scholars named

Four Grant High School seniors each received \$2,000 scholarships from AT&T Wireless Services at the AT&T Wireless Academy Awards held last night at the Red Lion Hotel - Lloyd Center.

Scholarship recipients were chosen both by Grant High School teachers and AT&T employee volunteers based on outstanding participation, professionalism and team player commitment to the AT&T Wireless Academy program.

The AT&T Wireless Academy, developed in 1991 with Grant High School and Portland Public Schools, is a series of unique activities, technical workshops and in-depth connect what they are doing in the classroom to life after high school.

"With this program, students learn how to operate within an office environment," said six-year AT&T employee volunteer Kelly Springer. "They are accountable for a real business projects that are taken seriously and are exposed to other students and people they wouldn't normally interact with."

The business education partnership for freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors is a progressive three-year curriculum and takes place at, both the Grant High School campus and the AT&T Wireless offices in downtown Portland.

Each level of the Academy is designed to widen students' perceptions of career and education opportunities, expose them to the wireless industry and to help them make informed choices about their future.

All levels of the academy are co-lead or facilitated by Grant High School teachers and AT&T volunteer employees.

Students also receive additional science credits for completing the courses.

Julie Howland, primary Portland Public Schools coordinator for the Academy since 1991 said, "The AT&T project has served as a model for us in both the region and the district of what school-to-work can look like."

The depth of the program for students, the length of the program, the number of points of involvement, and the way AT&T as a company has committed to this project really makes it stand out."

"Students see the Academy as something valued by the outside community and therefore will put work into it," Howland said.

"It connects students with more role models, and is a way for the community to become a part of education."

"Scholarship recipients include Cameron Bogue who will be attending Portland State University; Jamila Singleton heads to the University of Oregon; Jennifer Creswell at Randolph-Macon Women's College; and Josh Busch who is attending Linnfield College.



United Negro College Fund president William H. Gray III accepts the President's Award from National Conference of Black Mayors President Emanuel Cleaver II.

Physical fitness celebrated

Oregonians are invited to participate in events tied to Physical Fitness Day, May 21 with special activities scheduled at the State Capitol.

Governor John Kitzhaber will proclaim Wednesday as Fitness Day and urge Oregonians of all ages to participate in physical fitness programs and sport activities. He will sign the proclamation on May 20 at 11:30 am in his ceremonial office in the capitol.

Fitness Day is organized by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. "We're doing this to persuade more Oregonians to make fitness a priority," said Rob Ritson, a member of the Council.

Retired officer joins grads

Eric Watkins is living the "be all that you can be" motto. The 48-year-old Army lieutenant colonel will soon receive two advanced degrees from the UO, a law degree on Sunday and a master of business administration degree in June.

Watkins retired from the Army in 1992 and took a year off before deciding he wanted to go back to

school.

"I started working with non-profits when my family and I moved to Oregon and loved the work," says Watkins. "I saw a real need for people with managerial skills and knowledge of the law and decided to educate myself in those areas so I could better serve those organizations."

Watkins plans to be self-employed.

Several activities are scheduled at the Capitol. State Schools Supt. Norma Paulus will be joining legislators, state employees, students and others for a one-mile walk which will begin at noon on the north steps of the Capitol. Participants will walk around the Capitol and on the mall.

Another noon activity is a tug-of-war on the mall between students and the State Police and National Guard.

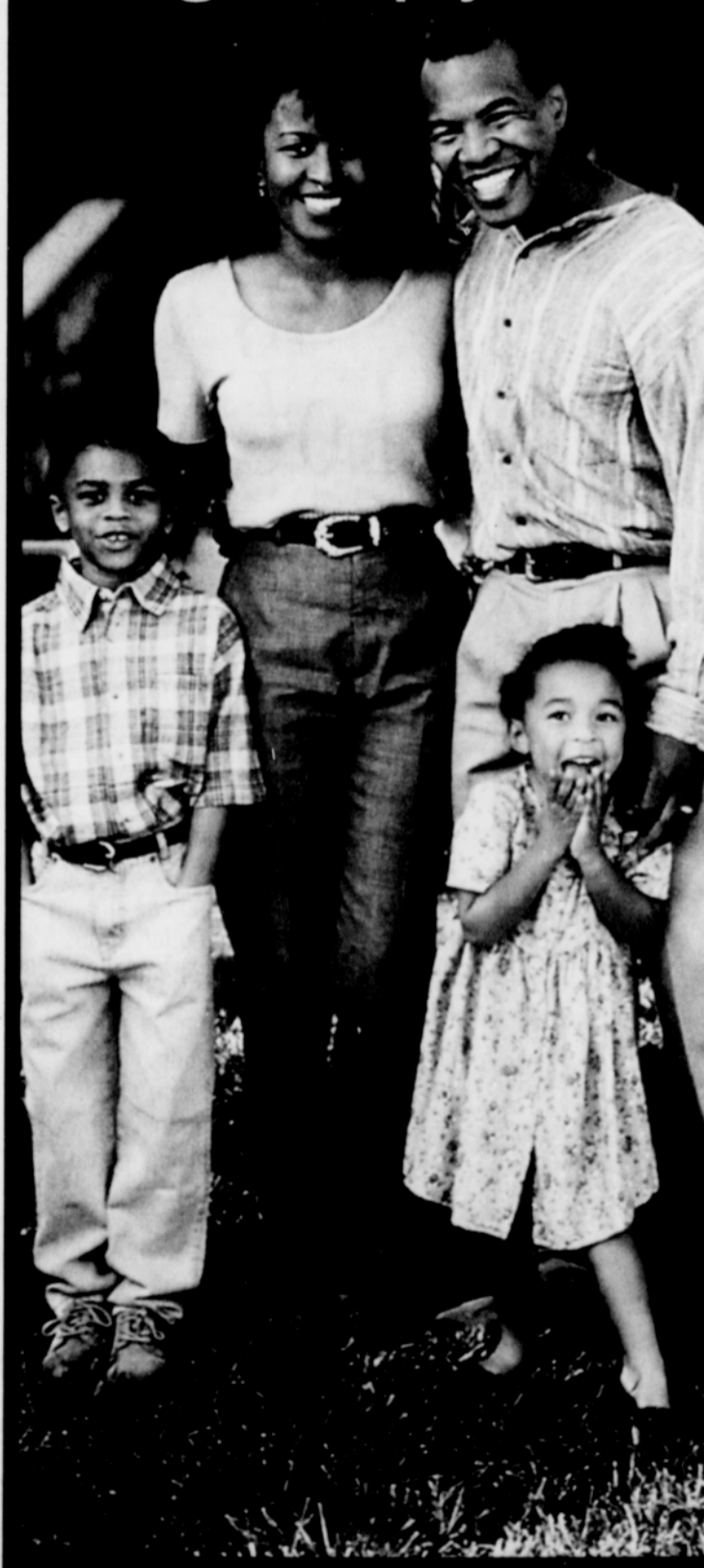
Oregonians can have their fitness assessed from 9 to 4 p.m. at various stations around the Capitol and mall. There will be fitness exhibits at the same time. Fitness demonstrations will take place from 10 a.m. on.

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