

A DIALOGUE ON RACE SERIES

A Day of Acknowledgement

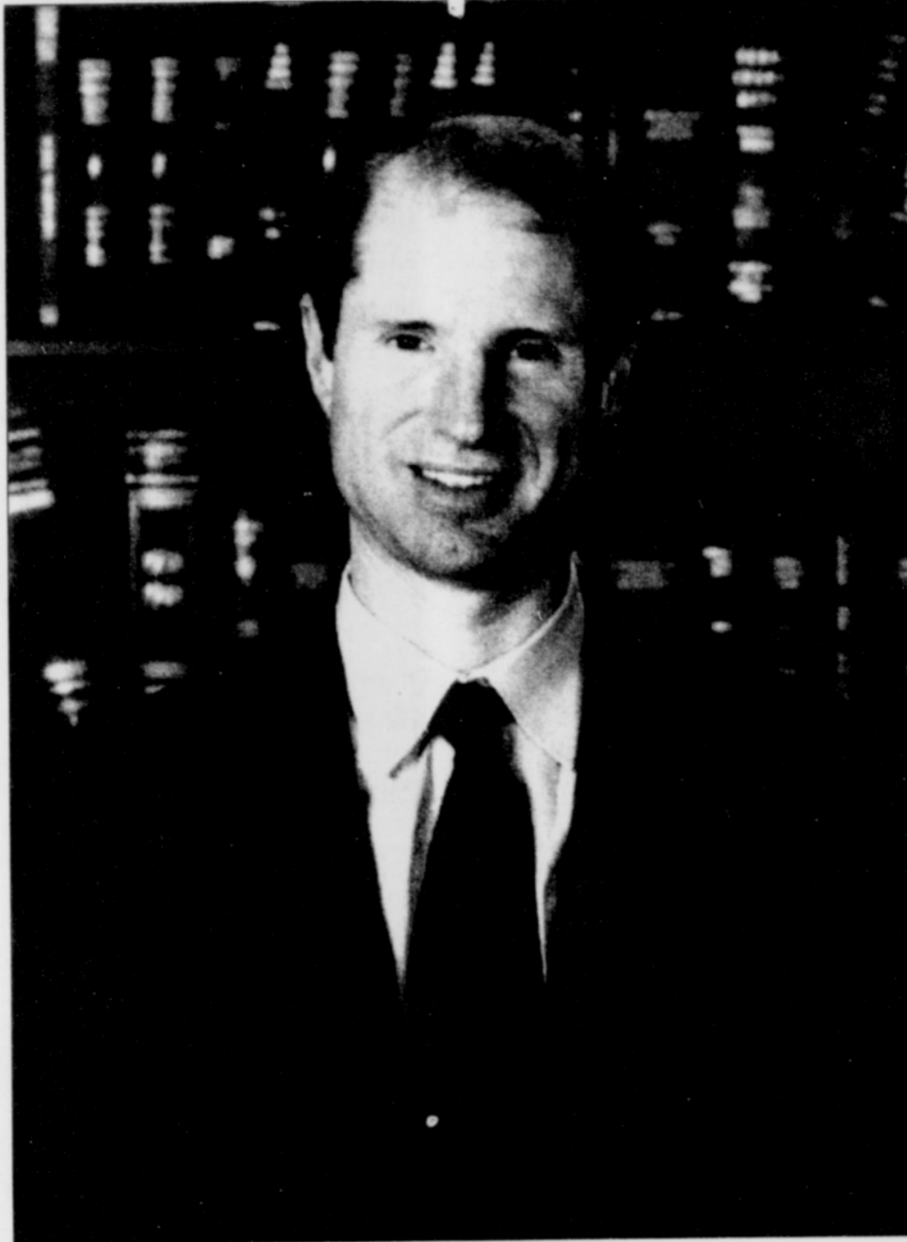
Last week at a White House ceremony, President Clinton issued a full pardon to Army Lt. Henry O. Flipper, the first African American to graduate from West Point. Lt. Flipper was forced out of military service in 1882 after receiving a dishonorable discharge that the Army later ruled was racially motivated. The President's action fully exonerates Lt. Flipper of all wrongdoing, and finally sets right an injustice that lasted for over a century.

Here in Oregon, we have a similar opportunity to address another racial injustice from our nation's past. It was nearly 150 years ago when territorial legislators voted to ban African Americans from living or traveling in Oregon. The law was repealed some eighty years later, but it is still a painful reminder of an ugly period in our

state's history.

Now, lawmakers and community activists have joined together and proposed a bipartisan "Day of Acknowledgement," when state government leaders could come together and officially recognize the state's racial history, condemn discrimination, and celebrate those in history with the courage to bring about change. It is an idea whose time has come.

The proposal, which has been introduced in the state legislature and has the support of the Governor, would play an important role in helping our state come to grips with its racial past. It also would give all Oregonians a chance to think about modern-day issues of race and perhaps produce a few creative



Senator Ron Wyden

approaches about how to deal with those issues.

There's no doubt that our nation has made great strides

in race relations in the 150 years since Oregon passed its exclusionary law, but there is still a ways to go. We as a nation are still struggling with issues of race.

Racism and hate continue to stain our national greatness. The brutal murder of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas, is a painful reminder of that. I plan to introduce in the Senate this week the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would hopefully prevent the horrific crimes like the one in Jasper from happening again. It would put bigots and racists on notice that hate crimes will not be tolerated in America.

I hope to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act

this year to send the clear message that our nation is commit-

ted to the ideal that all men and women are created equal. Laws like this play an important role in dealing with racial issues, but it will by no means solve the nation's racial problems. When it comes to achieving true racial understanding and healing, there is no substitute for an open dialogue. That's the goal behind the "Day of Acknowledgement."

Of course, observing a "Day of Acknowledgement" won't erase past wrongs. And it won't magically wipe out the vestiges of hate and intolerance that still plague our country today. It would encourage people to speak frankly and honestly on an issue that they often find too uncomfortable to discuss. It will be a day to educate. It will be a day without blame. These things alone will make it a productive day.

The Portland Public Schools Celebrate Black History Month

We all
"Stand on the shoulders of Giants"

Learn as much as you can about those giants so that, in the future, others can see clearly



Steve Bradley Band
Thursday, February 11 · 7:00 pm

Valentine's Dance with X Angels
Friday, February 12 · 7:00 pm

Mt. Hood Jazz Festival Concert Series
KKJZ 5th Birthday Bash with Rick Braun
Sunday, February 14 · 7:00 pm · \$20 admission

Arthur Moore Four Blues Band
Thursday, February 18 · 7:00 pm

Paul Delay Trio
Thursday, February 25 · 7:00 pm

Songwriters in the Round · Craig Caruthers
Sunday, February 28 · 7:30 pm · \$7 admission

All ages welcome · No charge except where noted

February Music

McMenamins Kennedy School
For information call: 249-3983
5736 NE 33rd · Portland, Oregon
www.mcmenamins.com