



# Metro/Religion

## Portland Teaching Pioneer Dies at 94

Robert Ford was born Aug. 17, 1906 in Shawnee, Okla. His parents were George Washington Ford and Adaline Gentry, both born into slavery.

After completing high school in 1926, he decided to go to college to become a physician like his older brother, but later decided that teaching was more rewarding. He went to New York City to earn money for his education and held many jobs, including polishing brass at Grand Central Station. He wrote several plays and voluntarily conducted a community theater group.

He graduated cum laude from Morgan State College, Baltimore, Md. in 1934. He returned to Oklahoma to teach in Shawnee and Enid.

Mr. Ford thanked one of his former students for his decision to come to Oregon. A high school student dropped out of school to come to Portland to work for the Kaiser industry. The student returned and showed Mr. Ford one of his employment checks. It was then that Mr. Ford quit teaching and came to Oregon, arriving in 1942. He lived in Vanport and was employed at Kaiser in Vancouver, Wash. until it closed.

He decided to apply for a teaching position in Portland, but was hesitant to do so since there was an absence of minority teachers in the Portland system.

In July 1945, the Portland School Board released the announcement of its first African American male teacher who would be assigned to



Robert Ford was one of the first two black teachers in Portland in 1945. He taught at Eliot and Holladay schools.

Eliot School, the present site of the Matt Dishman Community Center.

Later, he taught at Holladay School. He was the first African American teacher to teach in high school, assigned to Roosevelt High School.

Mr. Ford continued to write plays and featured many students on stage. It was also his first opportunity to teach in a racially inte-

grated system. He became well known for his stage productions and he also had a travelling troupe. He also coached a drama group at Knott Street Center. Mr. Ford devoted 27 years to teaching, retiring in 1972.

He often corresponded with former students as far away as China and Arabia and various cities in United States. They credited him

with their success.

Some of his accomplishments include a 1948 Ebony Magazine article that featured him as a Portland teacher; he received local and national acclaim from 1956-61 for his work on the Yearbook production at Roosevelt High School. He was elected Teacher of the Year by Portland Association of Teachers in 1970; in 1983, former students sponsored a "We Are Somebody" banquet to thank Mr. Ford for the support and inspiration he gave them.

In 1985, outstanding members of the community and citizen's groups dedicated the West Wing at King Facility to honor him as the first male African American teacher.

During his professional career, he was selected to attend seminars sponsored by Mills College, Oakland, Calif. in cultural relations.

He trained at least 25 students to become teachers and was proud to have been a part of the lives of his students. He appreciated the support and encouragement he received from the many parents, the community and all the teachers and administrators he worked with.

Mr. Ford was a member of Phi Beta Psi Fraternity.

Bobbie Jean Nunn of Portland, a stepdaughter, survives him.

He was a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church.

A memorial service will be held Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2001 at 12:30 p.m. at St Phillips Episcopal Church, 120 N.E. Knott St.

## Churches Join Campaign to Raise Awareness

Throughout the month of February, ministers and priests have been spreading the word about diabetes to their congregations, especially African-Americans. The awareness campaign is sponsored by the African-American Diabetes Program Committee, a group supported by the American Diabetes Association.

Last year, more than 50 churches participated in "Diabetes Sabbath." Organizers hope that more of North and Northeast Portland's 125 churches will take time to warn people about the disease and its complications. Oregon State Senator Avel Gordley serves as this year's honorary Chairperson for the campaign. Diabetes is a disease that affects the body's ability to produce or respond to insulin, a hormone that allows blood glucose (blood sugar) to enter the cells of the body and be used for energy. Diabetes falls into two main categories: Type 1, which usually begins during childhood or adolescence, or Type 2, the common form of the disease which can result in amputation, heart attack, and stroke.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S., killing more than 180,000 people each year. There is no

cure. Currently, more than 2.3 million, nearly 11 percent of African American population nationwide suffer from this life-threatening disease, and more than one-third of them do not know it. Blacks are nearly two-times more likely to have diabetes than Whites. One-in-four Black women over age 55 have diabetes. More than 25 percent of African-Americans between the age of 65 and 74 have the disease. In 1999, diabetes in the U.S. increased by nearly 7 percent, with the highest gains among African-Americans and Hispanics. The federal government has called the rise dramatic-evidence of an unfolding epidemic. Symptoms of diabetes include thirst, occasional blurry vision, frequent urination, unusual tiredness or drowsiness, and unexplained weight loss.

Only a doctor can determine if a person has the disease. Diabetes can be controlled by diet and exercise and in some cases, medication. For more information on Diabetes Sabbath, contact Chonitia Smith-Suhailah at (503) 288-5995 and (503) 283-8813. For general information on diabetes, contact Bev Broomfield at the American Diabetes Association, (503) 736-2770, extension 7294.

## Obituaries

### Mae Frances Harris

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2001, in Caldwell's Colonial Chapel for Mae Frances Harris, who died Feb. 8 of cancer at age 72. Mrs. Harris was born Sept. 3, 1928, in Little Rock, Ark.

Her maiden name was Winters. She moved to Portland in 1945 and was a records clerk for the Portland Police Bureau until retiring in 1989.

She was a member of Hughes Memorial United Methodist Church.

In 1948, she married Lonnie B. Harris; he died in 1980. Survivors include her daughters, Barbara and Rita; sister, Jean Massey; brothers, Jackson Winters, Jim Winters, John Winters and Newton Winters; and two grandchildren. Interment is in Rose City Cemetery.

### Clarence L. Webster

A funeral was held Feb. 9, 2001, in Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes for Clarence L. Webster, who died Feb. 1 of congestive heart failure at age 73. Mr. Webster was born Feb. 22, 1927, in LeCompte, La. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps. In 1947, he moved to Portland. He worked for Union Pacific Railroad for more than

40 years, retiring as a commissary manager in 1987. He was also a part-time salesman for H.C. Plummer Real Estate for a few years in the 1970s. In 1949, he married Ella Mae Johnson. Survivors include his wife; and sisters, Constance Jackson and Betty Jo Cotton. Interment will be in Willamette National Cemetery.

### Willie Lee Jones

A funeral was held Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2001, in Mount Olivet Baptist Church in Portland for Willie Lee Jones, who died Feb. 13 at age 79.

Mr. Jones was born Jan. 17, 1922, in Gilmore County, Texas. He was raised in Texas and served in the U.S. Army during World War II in Europe. He moved to Portland in 1950, and was a bus driver for Tri-Met until his retirement in 1984. He

was a member of the church. In the early 1950s, he married Martha Yates; she died in 1997. In February 2000, he married Betty Jean Pierce. Survivors include his wife; daughter, Gwendolyn; sons, Eddie Jones and Henry Rivers; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Interment is in Willamette National Cemetery. Arrangements are by Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes.

### Sylvester A. Paschal Sr.

A funeral was held Friday, Feb. 16, 2001, in Bethel A.M.E. Church for Sylvester A. Paschal Sr., who died Feb. 8 at age 79. Mr. Paschal was born Sept. 5, 1921, in Stephens, Ark. He moved to Portland in 1952 and worked for Rich Manufacturing (later Varicast) for 34 years before retiring in 1987. He was a member of the church. In 1944, he

married Frankie Lee Sanders; she died in 2000. Survivors include his daughters, Doris J. Fair, Florida J. Blake, Rockford A. Paschal and Shirley M. Paschal; sons, Sylvester A. Jr. and Raymond E.; 12 grandchildren; and 21 great-grandchildren. Interment is in Rose City Cemetery. Arrangements are by Rose City Funeral Home.

FULL GOSPEL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH  
INTERNATIONAL

## 13th National Women's Convention

Theme: "Women With A Mountaintop Experience"  
Exodus 25:40 & Hebrews 8:5

Evangelist Mattie R. Wells  
Women's Convention President

Bishop A. A. Wells  
Presiding Bishop F.G.P.C.

Evangelist Cordelia Wallace  
Brooklyn, New York  
Keynote Speaker

Mrs. Rosemary Daniels  
Vice President Women's Convention

**REGISTRATION \$25.00**

**Hotel Accommodations**  
Ramada Inn Airport  
6221 NE 82nd Phone (503) 255-6511  
Nightly Rate \$55.00 Deadline March 5th, 2001

**DAY SESSIONS 9:00 AM - RAMADA HOTEL**  
TOPICS  
• HURTING AND WOUNDED  
"Beyond Every Stone There Is Healing"  
• DEPRESSION  
"Down, But Not Deserted"  
• SINGLES  
"A Special Place With God's Special Touch"

**EVENING SERVICES - 7 PM**  
EMMANUEL TEMPLE CHURCH  
1032 N SUMNER  
MUSICAL - WEDNESDAY MARCH 7TH

**BRUNCH - RAMADA HOTEL**  
SATURDAY, MARCH 10TH - COST \$16.00 Per Person

**MARCH 7-10, 2001**  
**Portland, Oregon**

For more information contact  
Headquarters  
Phone (503) 287-2223  
1032 N. Sumner  
Portland, OR 97217