



# OPINION

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The Portland Observer

The Portland Observer

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### My Community is Disappearing

It is said that things are always changing, for if not, then we are dying.

As a fourth generation black native of this community, I am very angry that my community is disappearing around me.

Suddenly I'm beginning to feel that I'm no longer welcomed in the very community where my history, memories, family and friends reside.

I have no problem with change, but it is how it is changing that is very disturbing. The last time our community changed so dramatically, I was too young to understand its blatant ramifications. Back then I saw only the influx of new playmates from Elliot and Boise neighborhoods moving into my Highland neighborhood. Years passed before I made the connection. Now as a parent, I've realized how damaging that change has been and will continue to be.

This latest wave of "re-development" over the past 15 years is really scary because I truly believe it's the final phase of pushing us out-forever.

Already many of us have been priced out. Those who think that they have arrived, fail to see that this dispersment extends beyond where we live. It determines our children's education, economics, political strength and every other livability issue.

Even more importantly, the displacement is a level of viciousness injected in the injustices we have yet to endure.

As in the past when we were wronged, the priority has always been the same — we must unite in a collective voice and get involved!

It's imperative that our involvement be seen and heard. Assume nothing, but realize that Hell is truth too late.

J. Elegan

## Reparations Issue Raises Public Consciousness

BY HAVEN ALI  
FOR THE PORTLAND  
OBSERVER

The 2002 National Reparations Convention for Descendants of Enslaved Africans in America was held March 21 - 24 at DePaul University in Chicago with an impressive lineup of speakers raising the level of public consciousness about the reparations movement.

Portland delegates included Omiso Kenyaty and O.B. Hill.

The goal of the convention was to expose the horror and brutality of the slave industry in America and the continuing impact on the descendants of enslaved Africans.

Dr. Claude Anderson, president of PowerNomics Corp. of America, Inc. and author of "Black Labor, White Wealth, and Povernomics: The National Plan to Empower Black America," delivered a rousing opening speech elaborating on the present day condition of black descendants of Africans who were kidnapped from their homes and enslaved here in America.

One of the aims of the reparations movement is to document the calculated practice of de-humanization of African slaves by stripping them of their language, culture, religion and sense of self-worth, destroying the family unit.

Dr. Larry G. Murphy, a professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary,



Earline Arikpo of the National Coalition of Black Reparations Associations, listens attentively as Chicago Alderman Dorothy Tillman, the chair of the group, addresses a recent convention.

delivered a historical perspective of blacks and their associations with the Bible. Dr. Murphy eloquently addressed the irony of whites in using biblical scriptures to justify black enslavement.

A psychologist and professor of Africana Studies at San Francisco State University, he described the manner in which psychologists from colonial days to the present used untruths and stereotypes as a tool of oppression.

Dr. Wade Nobles said the so-called experts of their time equated Africans with animals and subhumans to justify slavery.

Dr. Charles Ogletree Jr., selected by the "National Law Journal" as one of the

100 most influential Lawyers in America, spoke on litigating the legacy of slavery.

"A full and deep conversation on slavery and its legacy has never taken place in America. Reparations litigation will show what slavery meant; how it was profitable; and how it has continued to affect the opportunities of millions of black Americans," Ogletree said.

Coincidentally, two days later, Daedria Farmer-Paellman, a 36-year-old black activist, filed the first class action lawsuit on behalf of black Americans descended from slaves, seeking reparations from selected private industries.

Three large U.S. compa-

nies were named in the lawsuit: Aetna, Inc., CSX Corporation and Fleet Boston Financial Corp.

According to the lawsuit, these companies played a major role in financing and profiting from the slave trade. The complaint did not contain a monetary damage figure, but did estimate the current value of slaves' unpaid labor as \$1.4 trillion.

The reparations convention now moves to the next level of strategizing and drafting a comprehensive plan of action to demand that the U.S. government and selected private companies pay reparations to more than 40 million descendants of enslaved Africans in America.

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