

System Clears Officer

continued ▲ from Front

said he would like to see dramatic changes in police training, policies, administration and legislature so that relations between African Americans and the Portland Police can improve.

"We want justice and peace and an improvement in the quality of life to come out of this," Haynes said. "We want to make sure Kendra James did not have to die in vain."

State Sen. Margaret Carter also expressed her disappointment in the grand jury's findings by saying the results of the incident were "totally unacceptable" and "disconcerting, to say the least." Carter vowed to work from within the legislature to change current laws on the use of deadly force in Oregon.

"This is as much a state issue as it is a local police issue," she said. "The laws on the use of deadly force are so broad that unless we

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— Pastor Le Roy Haynes

narrow them were not going to see any changes."

Haynes said the community just wants to see the police admit when

they do wrong.

"We realize that the overwhelming majority of police officers are good and do their job well," he said. "But what we want is for police to accept accountability when a mistake is made. It may not have been intentional, but a mistake was made."

Members of James' family have indicated they plan to file a wrongful death suit against the city.

Saturday's march and rally will start at noon at Alberta Park in northeast Portland and end at the North Skidmore Street I-5 overpass where James' was killed.

For more information, contact Pastor Robin Wisner at 503-287-7377.



Woodrow V. Broadnax (kneeling), joins other members of the community organizing events for the annual Juneteenth freedom celebration, scheduled for the weekend of June 20-22.

Gordly Finds Moral Abyss In Salem

African American leader calls for action to save community fabric



Sen. Avel Gordly

Speaking on the Capitol steps at the Fund Oregon's Future rally, Sen. Avel Gordly described the crisis that is gripping the state as a "moral crisis" and called on citizens to press legislators and the Governor to resolve it during the current legislative session.

"We as Oregonians are facing fiscal and economic challenges, we are all aware of that. We now must also face a moral challenge," Gordly said.

"What else besides a moral crisis," she said, "would cause us to allow our children to go hungry? What else—besides a moral crisis—could cause us to cut health care for 150,000 Oregonians?"

"What else—besides a moral crisis—could cause us to take away teachers, and music and art and libraries from our children and their schools?"

"Are these not unforgivable tears in the fabric of our community?" Gordly asked.

The African American lawmaker from northeast Portland quoted from an article recently published in The New York Times which stated that the severe cuts being made in Oregon and other states "are eroding the nation's basic defenses against ignorance, disease and destitution."

"Our policies should put us in position to prevail over ignorance, disease and poverty. We are part of what is still the richest nation on the face of the earth, the richest nation in the history of nations. Is this not a moral crisis?" she asked.

Gordly called for a different quality of leadership this session, one that discards old ways of doing things in favor of a discussion to develop more stable sources of revenue.

She spoke of the elected officials' constitutional obligations to

do more than balance the budget.

"It is our job to raise the revenue necessary to pay the expenses of the state. We each swore an oath to do that job, and we cannot end this session until we have completed that job. All 90 legislators swore to uphold the Constitution—all of it—in the service of our state," she said.

"In his final speech, the late Hubert Humphrey said 'the moral test of government is how it cares for those who are in the dawn of life—the children; those who are in the twilight of life—the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life—the ill, the handicapped.'"

"We are failing that moral test—badly," she said.

Gordly is, chief sponsor, with Rep. Gary Hansen, of House Bill 3608, which would call for a sales tax connected to the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement, a new system being implemented this year by 33 states and the District of Columbia.

Gordly called for Oregon citizens to show up at the Capitol to let their voices be heard on these revenue proposals.

Plans for Freedom Extravaganza Made

An extravaganza to celebrate freedom for African Americans with traditional festive activities and entertainment will mark this year's Juneteenth celebration during the weekend of June 20-22.

A new partnership between Woodrow V. Broadnax, chief executive of the Juneteenth Association of the Northwest, and

LaVon Van of Successful Choices was formed to help make the annual event a rousing success.

A committee of community residents, church leaders and others is contributing to the effort.

There will be a children's carnival provided by the Haworth Family of Carnivals; entertainment for the whole family with R&B, Jazz, Blues and hip-hop; as

well as a spiritual Gospel jubilee.

The planners are adding a raffle to this year's celebration with a pair of grand prize round trip tickets anywhere in the United States and cash awards of up to \$900.

Tickets will be sold for \$5. For more information or to purchase tickets for the drawing, call 503-887-8175.

Gains Made in Color Blind Justice for Kids

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Today of the 18 incarcerated youth, only 9 are minorities.

"When you look at that statistic you say, 'Well, still 50 percent are youth of color,'" Stegmiller said. "But on the other hand, 61 minority kids aren't sitting in detention anymore."

The department has instituted several measures over past several years that have brought about the improving numbers. They include the use of a standardized risk assessment tool that identifies youth who should be held in

detention, juveniles who can be safely released into the community and daily conferences with prosecutors, defense attorneys and community justice staff.

"Justice has got to be fair," Stegmiller said. "That's just plain and simple."

Most importantly, Stegmiller said, is that the reduction in minority over-representation has not affected public safety. Declines in the number of incarcerated minority youth have actually coincided with unprecedented reductions in juvenile crime and recidivism.

Last year, local juvenile crime dropped again, a trend that began seven years ago.

Since 1997, juvenile criminal referrals have declined 38 percent in Multnomah County.

Over the past five years from 1997 to 2002, Multnomah County juvenile crime has fallen in all major categories of offenses. Person-to-person crimes are down 30 percent, property offenses were cut 42 percent, drug offenses declined 38 percent and weapons offenses are down 55 percent.

"That's absolutely unheard of," Stegmiller said.

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