

# OPINION

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## Newspaper Editor Leaves 'Big Shoes to Fill'

### Black Journalists saddened by Boyd resignation

The National Association of Black Journalists is saddened and disappointed to learn that Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Gerald Boyd has resigned as managing editor of The New York Times. As one of the highest-ranking African Americans in U.S. newspapers, Boyd had been a leader in editorial quality, journalistic excellence and newsroom diversity for decades. He led the coverage

for the Times' series, "How Race is Lived in America," which was published in 2000 and awarded a Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting the following year. Boyd, a longtime NABJ member who was named as the NABJ Journalist of the Year in 2001, has also been a tireless mentor to hundreds of young reporters and editors, and a strong supporter of blacks and other journalists of color in our nation's newsrooms. Gerald Boyd's accomplishments in journalism before being named managing editor at The New York Times spoke volumes about his ability and leadership

skills. To have the actions of a self-destructive miscreant like Jayson Blair cost Gerald his post at the Times makes me sick to my stomach," said Condace Pressley, NABJ president and assistant program director at WSB Radio in Atlanta. Boyd's resignation came at the same time as the resignation of the Times' executive editor Howell Raines, and in the wake of the newsroom scandals involving Blair and Rick Bragg. "It is a shame that other reporters' ethical problems have led to the resignation of an accomplished journalist who has led



New York Times Managing Editor Gerald Boyd (left) and Executive Editor Howell Raines resigned in the wake of the Jayson Blair scandal. (AP photo)

one of the most important newsroom management positions in this country," said William W. Sutton Jr., deputy managing editor of The News and Observer in Raleigh, N.C. and NABJ immediate past president. "He leaves big shoes to fill." NABJ, founded in 1975, exists to promote newsroom diversity, expand job and recruiting opportunities for African-American journalists and journalism students, and to advocate for fairness and balance in media coverage of the African-American community and of the African-American experience.

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### Letters to the Editor:

#### System Caters to Well-to-Do

I am sickened by the May 5 killing of Kendra James, which like the murder of José Mejía Poot, is yet another injustice in a long list of murders, civil rights abuses and crimes by the Portland police. This is a tragic result of training officers to be trigger-happy and then unleashing them onto Portland's streets. I disagree that James' death was caused by "bad cops." Officers demonstrate a pattern of blatant disregard for the lives and rights of working people. When's the last time we heard about police "accidentally" strangling a Portland

West Hills resident or pepper spraying one of Portland's well-to-do? The fact is, the job of the men in blue is to bully and intimidate the have-nots while protecting large property owners and big business. The real corporate criminals, like Enron executives who stole retirement funds and created an energy crisis to boost utility costs or Bush and crew who slashed our social services and Constitution in the cause of war, get away with their lawless behavior and laugh all the way to the bank.

Kendra James' life was stolen, like so many before her, while the perpetrators are freed by a grand jury and the good ole boy system. Mayor Katz and Chief Kroeker are not held accountable for the policies that led

to James' shooting. How is this justice? The officers involved, the chief and the mayor should all be indicted by a grand jury.

The only way we can begin to curb police abuse of power is to have public oversight of their actions. We, the taxpayers, should oversee police behavior through an elected civilian review board, independent of City Hall and the Police Department. The board should have the authority to discipline and fire officers. If the public has no control over the police, we should not fund them. Give their budgeted allotment to Portland Public Schools and let the police hold bake sales and walk-a-thons. Jennifer Laverdue, Organizer for Radical Women

#### Policies Have Impact on Crime

If you listen to what people are saying in northeast Portland right now, you will hear of many ways that the police can improve their relationship with the community. But we also need to be thinking and talking about the impact of our public policies and funding priorities that favor law enforcement over mental health and drug treatment. Fortunately for us, we now have a vantage point from which to examine the impact of 20 years of drug policy on Portland's communities of color. The inequities are now obvious. We can longer talk honestly about justice and race with-

out talking about the impacts of these policies on communities of color. We need to look at the impact of our policy choices and how they contribute to the environment in which Kendra James and Jose Santos Victor Mejia Poot were shot and killed. We need to think about the impacts of our choices on our neighbors' civil and human rights. The answers to the self-destructive drug and alcohol problems and the crime associated with those behaviors is community policing, crime prevention strategies, education, treatment and addressing risk factors like poverty and inadequate housing.

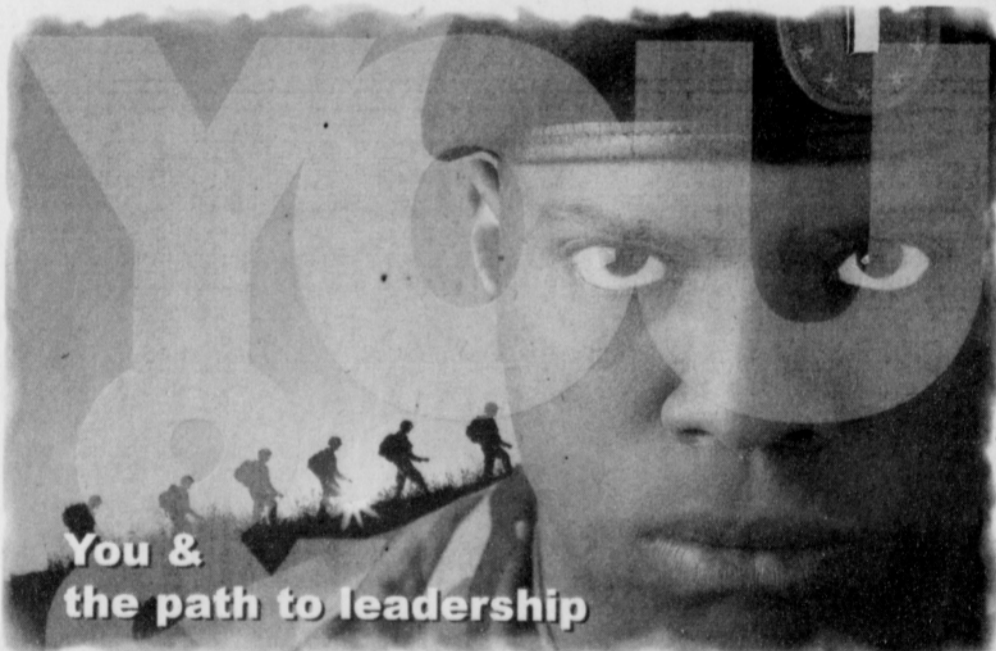
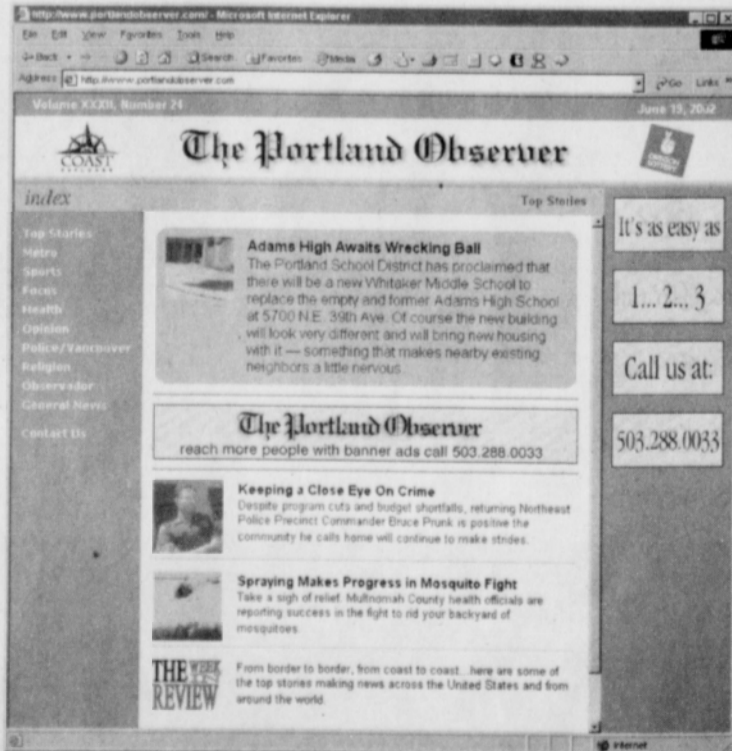
But our current funding priorities and community policing strategies are back to relying too much

on police, courts and jails. Couple that with the scarce resources for food and housing assistance and the misery that is often at the root of drug abuse is only compounded. Instead of blaming the police, we have to take personal responsibility for how public dollars are spent in this community. Ultimately it is up to all of us to work with our local leaders to commit the necessary resources, political will and creative imagination that will strengthen peace and justice, protect the rights of all, and assist in the redevelopment of our economic, social and cultural life as a peaceful multi-ethnic community. Paul Dinbert, NE Portland Crime Prevention specialist

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