

# Focus on Ron Herndon

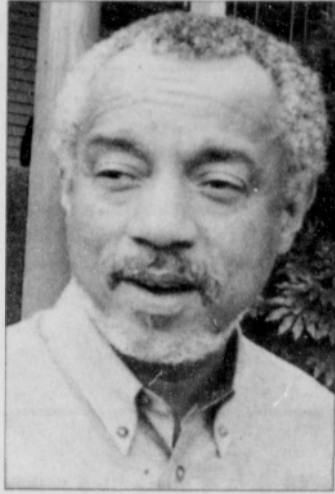
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rector in 1975, Herndon helped establish the Black Education Center, a school in northeast Portland emphasizing the basics.

"Children learning about their history and culture does you no good if the child can't read and write," he said.

Herndon credits parents with the strength and success of Head Start. Parental involvement, from the hiring to the curriculum, dispels the myth that poor people don't care about their children and can't make decisions about their children's education, he said.

Herndon said keeping Head Start alive and viable has been a struggle



Ron Herndon

ethnicity, not unlike segregation you saw in Mississippi in 1960," Herndon said. "The difference now is it's not just based on skin color, it's based on income."

*You have a segregated school system based on income and ethnicity, not unlike segregation you saw in Mississippi in 1960.*

—Portland education activist and Head Start administrator Ron Herndon

though every presidential administration.

"Every administration since Garter has tried to make changes in Head Start that would have been harmful. This one is the worst, absolutely the most anti-Head Start administration that I've ever seen because they're making changes to destroy the program and they know it," he said.

In line with his Head Start duties, Herndon serves on the Educational Crisis Team, an independent watchdog group keeping public schools accessible to kids of all races and economic backgrounds. The group emphasizes teacher training.

According to Herndon, better-prepared teachers are rarely assigned to struggling schools.

"You have a segregated school system based on income and

Herndon continued to say that students in low-income areas are not exposed to the same curriculum as in more affluent communities, particularly in the sciences. Some experts suggest that less exposure to science, mathematics and engineering explains why few minorities are represented in those fields.

The Education Crisis Team has been dormant during the summer months, but Herndon promises that the district's financing department will hear from them soon.

In an anthem of lifelong commitment to education, Herndon describes the role of the Education Crisis Team, saying, "We're pushing for fundamental change to give low-income kids a fair shake."

For more information about Herndon and Head Start, visit [www.saveheadstart.org](http://www.saveheadstart.org).



## Bluff Burned as Wildfire Prescription

Portland Fire and Rescue and the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services set and controlled a prescribed fire Sunday at Mock's Crest Bluff, on North Willamette Boulevard, between Killingsworth and Ainsworth streets. The fire burned from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., clearing flammable brush and making way for native vegetation on the bluff. The fire reminded many local residents of a wildfire on the bluff last summer that threatened homes in the nearby north Portland neighborhood.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



## Bush Gives Civil Rights Group Cold Shoulder



NAACP president Kweisi Mfume

### Liberal blacks shunned for carefully chosen minority audiences

(AP) — Since the days of Warren G. Harding, presidents have met at the White House with leaders of the NAACP. Not President Bush - at least not yet.

More than halfway through his presidency, Bush has yet to receive the nation's oldest civil rights group or the Leadership Conference of Civil Rights, an umbrella organization.

The president met with the Congressional Black Caucus for just an hour or so during his first month in office, but has not responded to a half-dozen subsequent requests to meet again.

While Bush, who got only 9 percent of the black vote in 2000, has shunned sit-downs



President George W. Bush

with established black groups, he has reached out to carefully chosen minority audiences and to civil rights advocates less critical of his policies. One example is the National Urban League, whose annual conference in Pittsburgh Bush addressed on Monday.

NAACP president Kweisi Mfume said he requested meetings with Bush in 2001 and 2002, and "was told politely, in writing, that he'd love to meet, but his schedule just didn't allow it."

Political analysts say the president's reelection effort is not targeting liberal blacks, but wealthy, conservative churchgoing blacks as a way to increase Bush's share of the black vote. Recent Gallup polls find that fewer than three in 10 blacks approve of Bush's performance as president.

During his early session with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Bush said, "I hope you come back, and I'll certainly be inviting." But there have been no other invitations.

## Katz to Retire

(AP) — Portland's three-term mayor said last week that she won't seek re-election in 2004.

Vera Katz, 69, who in the 1980s became the first woman speaker in Oregon's House, said she made her decision after talking with family members.

"I have other things, other adventures, other challenges I want to do," Katz wrote in an e-mail to about 5,000 friends and supporters.

"What Portland needs most over the next year and a half is a mayor who is completely dedicated to the job at hand."

The mayor and all city officials in Portland must remain unaffiliated with political parties. But Katz was a Democrat when she served in the House.

Only one candidate - commissioner Jim Francesconi - is officially in the running for next May's general election.

Earl Blumenauer, a Democratic congressman from Portland, has promised an announcement on a mayor's race after Labor Day. Commissioner Erik Sten has said he will wait on Blumenauer's decision before deciding on a mayoral campaign.



Mayor Vera Katz

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