

# Living African-American History



As African-American women in the historically white Oregon Senate, Margaret Carter, D-Portland (from left), Avel Gordly, D-Portland and Jackie Winters, R-Salem, know they have made history.

PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

continued ▲ from Front

that have historically not had a voice are represented in the Legislature."

Northeast and southeast Portland residents elected Gordly in 1996, after she served three terms in the House of Representatives.

As a senior member of state government, Gordly is widely known for introducing a measure in the 2001 session, eliminating the remaining white supremacist exclusionary language from the Oregon Constitution. She was instrumental in inserting racial- and gender-based considerations in the prescription drug bulk-purchasing bill, which increases access to medication to the sick and needy.

Gordly has resisted attempts to reduce the state education budget; she has sponsored legislation supporting equal rights for agricultural industry workers under Bureau of Labor standards, and leads statewide efforts to hold Oregon schools accountable for multicultural curriculum

Americans vote Democratic, Winters says pigeonholing her and other African Americans into a party is disenfranchising.

She remarked that many notable civil rights leaders have been Republicans.

Winters was elected to the Senate representing Salem in 2002. She had previously served as State Representative since 1998. Winters is the first African-American Republican elected to a state office in Oregon.

Now Winters has her sites set on the Congress, in a hotly contested race, where she will face off with the incumbent if she wins the May primary.

"I'm very confident about the election, when you think that I was already elected in this community," said Winters, whose mostly-white district lacks in cultural diversity when compared to inner north and northeast Portland. "People tend to think you have to be elected by blacks and that's a misconception."

Carter added, "I think it says something about



Sen. Margaret Carter, D-Portland, is deeply committed to her faith and her family of nine children, 26 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She was the only black woman in the Oregon Legislative Assembly when first elected to the State House of Representatives in 1984.

and policy.

Considering herself an "independent lawmaker," Gordly has defied party politicking by working with Winters, Smith and other Republican leaders on various projects.

"In politics, there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies; just permanent issues and there are always people you can work with for the good of your citizens," said Gordly.

Some recent collaboration with Winters and Carter include the Human Services and Ways and Means committees.

"We definitely support each other's work. We lend a dimension of moral and emotional support to each other and the other women in the Chamber as well," she said.

Winters came to Portland by way of Vanport, as did so many other African-American families, during World War II. She was educated in the Portland Public School district and graduated from Jefferson High School.

"I grew up very independent," she said. "I prefer to do things myself than have other people do things for me."

Those ideals shaped the direction of Winters' career as a Republican lawmaker.

Although an estimated 80 percent of African

Oregon's investment in human capital. If you have the passion, commitment and show dedication, then you have a level of supporters, regardless of the color of their skin."

For Winters, creating jobs, affordable healthcare and fighting over-regulation are among her major issues.

"Congress plays a part in that," she said.

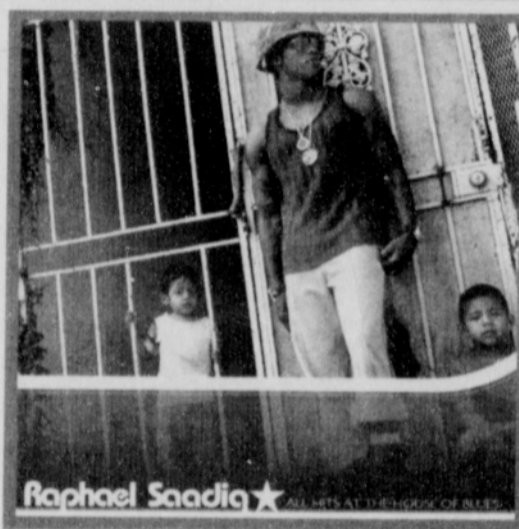
Winters says she will remain in the Senate if she loses the Congressional election in November.

Besides being an accomplished community and state leader, Winters is a small business owner. In 1985 she opened Jackie's Ribs, which has since expanded to three restaurants and three franchises.

One of her most emotional accomplishments was when a Jackie's Ribs opened on Southwest Broadway in Portland. She said the experience brought her to tears.

"Growing up in Portland, we couldn't go into some of the restaurants on that street," said Winters. "Never in our wildest dreams as kids did we think we'd be where we are. This is extremely significant to us. When that business opened, I thought, 'Yes we can, yes we did.'"

## CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH



"New Orleans May Have Been Hosting The Ninth Annual Essence Festival During The July 4<sup>th</sup> Weekend, but the Place To Be July 3<sup>rd</sup> was Los Angeles 'House Of Blues (to see the Raphael Saadiq Show)'."

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### Wellness Within REACH Activity Calendar

**Aerobics**

Mallory Ave. Christian Church  
M, W, F, 6-7am, Pierce; 5:30-6:20pm, Granville;  
6:30-7:30pm, Nickerson

Humboldt Elementary  
T, Th, 6-7pm, Keller

**Low Impact Aerobics**

Daniel's Memorial Church  
T, 7:15-8:15pm, Granville

**Water Aerobics** (Contact AAHC)

Salvation Army  
Matt Dishman

**African Dance**

Matt Dishman  
Sa, 10-11am, Addo

**Body Conditioning**

Wild Oats Market  
Sa, 9:30-10:30am, Nickerson

**Salsa**

Salvation Army  
M, 6:30-7:30pm, Henry

**Stretching/Body Sculpting**

Matt Dishman  
T, Th, 7-8am, Lois

**Tai Chi**

Salvation Army  
W, 6:30-7:30pm, Lyles

**Walking Group**

Peninsula Park  
Sa, 12:30pm, Woods

**Weight Mgmt./Conditioning**

U. of Portland Indoor Track  
T, Th, 9-10am, Hasan

**Yoga**

Wild Oats Market  
T, Th, 7:30-8:30pm, O'Rourke

Daniel's Memorial Church, 12th & Killingsworth  
Humboldt Elementary, 4915 N Gantenbein  
Mallory Avenue Christian Church (Gym), 126 NE Alberta  
Matt Dishman, 77 NE Knott

Peninsula Park, 700 N Portland  
Salvation Army, 5325 N Williams  
U. of Portland Indoor Track, 500 N Willamette  
Wild Oats Market, 3535 NE 15th

\*\*Must be 21 or older to participate. Please contact AAHC before showing up to the first class and for more information at 503-413-1850 or kdempsey@aahc-portland.org. Please receive approval from your doctor before beginning exercise class.

**REACH**

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health  
A Program of the African American Health Coalition, Inc.  
Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Contact AAHC at 503-413-1850 or visit our web site at [www.aahc-portland.org](http://www.aahc-portland.org)