

Officer Smeared in Poster Campaign

Foxworth calls Copwatch tactics divisive

By MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A campaign to obtain a photograph of the police officer who shot and killed Kendra James during a traffic stop last May has stunned the Portland law enforcement community.

A group calling itself Rose City Copwatch claims to have distributed 300 posters in areas of southeast Portland offering \$40 in groceries for a picture of officer Scott McCollister.

The fliers smear McCollister as an "armed and dangerous killer" and call for his removal from the police force. The distribution coincided with his return to duty in the Police Bureau's Southeast Precinct after a five month suspension.

Portland Police Chief Derrick Foxworth condemned the poster campaign as "sophomoric and divisive" saying it did nothing to promote healing or strengthening the partnership between the police and the community.

"It is time to build trust and increase communication between police and the community, not to drive wedges of mistrust and contempt," Foxworth said.

Mayor Vera Katz called the flyers appalling.

"This is a rank attempt at intimidation of an of-

ficer whose case was handled through the due process of law. Further, the offer of a 'prize' of groceries diminishes the memory of the shooting victim," Katz said.

McCollister shot James, a 21-year-old unarmed African American motorist, on May 5 as the two



Chief Derrick Foxworth

struggled inside a car during a traffic stop on the I-5 overpass on North Skidmore Street. Police said she

was trying to escape. The car was pulled over for failing to make a stop at an intersection.

A grand jury cleared McCollister of any wrongdoing, but he was later found to have erred in judgment and he was suspended by then police chief Mark Kroeker.

McCollister has never appeared in public to apologize for his actions. His face was blocked out on videotape to protect his identity in a police reenactment of the shooting.

Foxworth said Oregon Law prohibits any law enforcement agency from releasing a photo of a police officer without their permission.

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— Chief Derrick Foxworth

Jury Considers Death Sentence

A jury began hearing testimony Monday and Tuesday in the sentencing phase of the trial against Ladon Stephens, the man found guilty in the murder and rape of 14-year-old girl and in sexual assaults in north and northeast Portland.

Last Thursday, the jury convicted Stephens of stran-

gling and raping Melissa Bittler in December 2001. The girl was abducted from the sidewalk as she walked to school in her northeast Portland neighborhood.

He was also found guilty of a 2002 sexual assault of an acquaintance and three sexual assaults of teenage Portland girls in 1997.

Prosecutors said DNA evidence links Stephens to each case.

But Stephens' defense attorney, Bill Brennan, had questioned the legitimacy of the case, saying there was reasonable doubt about the way DNA evidence was handled and processed in these different cases.

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