

# RELIGION



## Blessed with Hip-hop

Ramiyah's self-titled album combines praise with an up-tempo dance track

Even though these four teenagers were raised on old-fashioned gospel, the hip-hop laced bass lines make Ramiyah's self-titled debut album inspirational. Still, their radio-ready single "Turn it Out" reaffirms their dedi-

cation to Christ and holy praise. Detroit-based singers Sherise Staten, Tracy Bryant, DeLaurian Burton and Stephanie Bonner have been described as a match made in heaven.

"It's not common for young

people in this day and age to listen to gospel music," said Bonner.

"We show them it's cool to stand up for God," added Burton.

The band has already turned out soul-stirring performances at

the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Trumpet Awards, the 2003 Stellar Gospel Music Awards and "Showtime at the Apollo."

Ramiyah's album is in stores now, or visit [www.ramiyah.com](http://www.ramiyah.com) for more information.

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"The Just Shall Live  
By Faith" Romans 1:17

## 'Under God' Pledge Before Court

Does it matter whether the Pledge of Allegiance proclaims that the indivisible American republic is "under God"?

In a political sense, the answer is certainly yes. The attorneys general of all 50 states, the Bush administration and many

members of Congress joined briefs backing the current wording, an issue to be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday, March 24.

But the religious answer to the "under God" question is more complicated, as indicated

by the unusual lineup of groups taking stands and what they're saying.

Pledge proponents think general acknowledgment of religion is good for society, and dropping God would rewrite history or threaten religion's legitimate status.

Opponents, some of them religious believers, argue the phrase violates church-state separation as well as the religious rights of some Americans - or that it's just a meaningless phrase and possibly demeaning to persons of faith.

## Obituaries

### Long Time Resident Remembered

#### Mercedes U. Hardy

Mercedes U. Hardy died March 3, 2004, at age 95.

Mercedes U. Johnson was born Jan. 5, 1909, in Pensacola, Fla., and raised in Omaha, Neb. She moved to the Portland area in 1933. She was a homemaker and self-employed caterer. In 1931, she married Harry H. Hardy; he died in 1976.

Survivors include her daughters, Marlene Fuller, Beverly Johnson and Marsha Hardy; sister, Burtron Kellogg; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Remembrances to the Oregon Commission for the Blind. Arrangements by Rose City Cemetery and Funeral Home.

### Community Member Dies

#### Princess Lee Miller

A funeral was held Tuesday, March 2 in Albina Christian Life Center, for Princess Lee Miller, who died Feb. 24 at age 60.

Princess Lee Polk was born Nov. 6, 1943, in Bamboo, Miss. She was a food service worker and bartender and later a child and adult care provider. She moved to Portland in 1969. In 1987, she married Porter Miller.

Survivors include her husband; sons, Rodney Braxton and Alvin Johnson Sr.; daughters, Angela Braxton and Tiffini Braxton; and three grandchildren.

Arrangements by Killingsworth Little Chapel of the Chimes.

### Head Start Assistant Dies

#### Dorothy B. Johnson

A funeral was held Friday, March 5 at St. Johns Missionary Church, for Dorothy B. Johnson, who died Feb. 27 at age 75.

Dorothy B. Johnson was born Dorothy Williams in Mt. Enterprise, Texas. She lived in Oregon for 48 years. She was a teacher's assistant at Albina Head Start. She was married for 50 years, before her husband died in 1990.

Survivors include her sons, Al-Din Rahmaan and Billy D. Johnson; daughters Clemmie Daniels and Dorothy N. Johnson; sister Margarite Lewis and brother Jessie Ray Williams; and 29 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.

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