

Civil Rights Experience Stories Wanted

AARP and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights are unveiling a year-long project to build the world's largest archive of first-hand accounts of the civil rights struggle in America, supported by an array of media ventures, exhibits and special events.

"Americans have stories and we want to hear them, to collect them and to archive them at the Library of Congress. For unless we remember, neither we, nor future generations can understand," said AARP CEO Bill Novelli.

The project will go beyond collecting stories of the Freedom Rides, lunch counter sit-ins, and the 1963 March on Washington to include the memories of those who worked—and continue to work—to stamp out discrimination against women, people with disabilities, Hispanics, and others.

Throughout the year, Voices of Civil Rights will collect and preserve thousands of poignant memories of people who witnessed or took part in the civil rights struggle. Much of the project will be an online at www.voicesofcivilrights.org.

A book titled "My Soul Looks Back in Wonder: Voices of the Civil Rights Experience" will be published in May to correspond with the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education ruling, which declared "separate but equal" schools to be unconstitutional. Additional stories, features, interviews, and essays will appear in a special edition of AARP "The Magazine," followed by coverage throughout the year in all AARP publications and radio programs as well as on the Leadership Conference Web site at www.civilrights.org.



Hewlett-Packard team members of Vancouver are honored with the Val Joshua Racial Justice Award.

Hewlett-Packard Honored for Racial Justice

Congratulations are going out from the YWCA of Clark County to Hewlett-Packard, Vancouver for their leadership in advocating for racial justice.

The company and its employees were recently awarded the Val Joshua Racial Justice Award by demonstrating leadership in working to eliminate racism, significant involvement in the struggle for peace, justice, freedom and dignity

for all people and demonstrating the commitment to self-determined social change for all people.

The company has a strong commitment to this work through many diversity and inclusion activities at its Vancouver site, including implementing a diversity leadership council, adopting diversity curriculum, employing and recruiting diverse interns and holding a diversity and inclusion speaker's series.

Victory for Equality Celebrated 50 Years Later

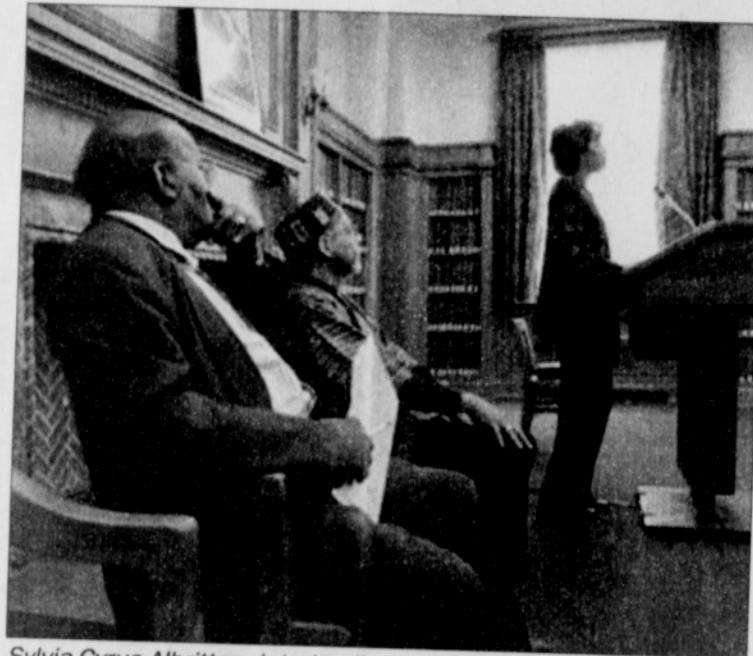
Brown v. Board of Education struck down segregation

(AP)—The 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark Brown v. Board of Education desegregation decision, has generated an outpouring of enthusiasm and a flood of events by schools, libraries and other organizations.

"It's a more emotional issue. The mood is more personal," said Sylvia Cyrus-Albritton, interim executive director of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that separating black and white children in public schools was unconstitutional. Segregating students solely on the basis of their race denied black children the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law, it said.

"In the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place," the court ruled. "Separate educational facilities are



Sylvia Cyrus-Albritton, interim director of the Association for the study of African American Life and History, speaks at a symposium on black history at Howard University.

inherently unequal."

The ruling overturned the court's 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision, which concluded there was nothing unconstitutional about a Louisiana law that required separate but equal railroad cars for black and white passengers.

"Brown broke the back of

American apartheid," said Theodore Shaw, associate director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. "It was a case that finally breathed life into the 14th Amendment for African Americans."

"Brown gave the civil rights movement a great boost," agreed historian John Hope Franklin,

who helped develop the legal brief that led to the Brown decision. "It became an armor in their fight to equalize opportunity—not only education, but in other areas, too."

A year and a half later, a tired, black seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to yield her seat to a white passenger, launching the yearlong Montgomery bus boycotts. The campaign ended after a Supreme Court decision de-

lawed in public parks, recreation areas, interstate and intrastate commerce facilities, libraries, courtrooms, hotels, restaurants and other public places.

Some caution the anniversary events should be infused with a careful examination of race relations today. Schools across the nation are becoming more segregated for black and Hispanic students, a recent report by Harvard

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—Theodore Shaw, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

clared the city's segregated seating unconstitutional.

It was a sign of how Brown energized both activists and the courts. Over the next 12 years, the Supreme Court "handed down decision after decision that followed the path Brown had opened," Richard Kluger writes in "Simple Justice," a book about the decision.

Segregation was finally out-

University's Civil Rights Project found.

"We're at a really serious risk of losing what we're celebrating," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the project. "We're trying to inject into this a sense of both the amazing accomplishments of Brown and the Civil Rights Act and the fact that we've been pretty much going backwards now ever since the early 1990s."

After Hours Emergency Numbers in Multnomah County

City of Portland/Multnomah County Information and Referral.....	503-823-4000
Police Non Emergency.....	503-823-3333
Mental Health 24 Hour Crisis.....	503-988-4888
Aging and Disability Services 24 Hour Help Line.....	503-988-3646
Winter Shelter Line.....	503-721-1500
Alcohol and Drug Help Line.....	503-244-1312
Statewide Toll Free.....	1-800-923-HELP
Animal Services.....	503-988-7387 (Pets)
United Way.....	503-228-9131
Central City Concern.....	503-294-1681
Multnomah County Circuit Courts.....	503-988-3957
Sheriff's Office.....	503-988-4300
Multnomah County Emergency Management.....	503-988-4233
Transportation Hotline.....	503-988-4884
City of Gresham.....	503-618-CITY (618-2489)
Health Department Information & Referral (Daytime Only).....	503-988-3816
Multnomah County After Hours Nurse Triage (Bilingual-Spanish).....	503-988-3333
Juvenile Justice After Hours Line.....	503-988-3475
Adult Community Justice After Hours line.....	503-988-3230
Child Abuse Reporting Line.....	503-731-3100
American Red Cross.....	503-284-1234
Domestic Violence Services: Women's Crisis Line (translation available).....	503-235-5333
Bradley-Angle House.....	503-281-2442
Volunteers of America.....	503-232-6562
Salvation Army West Women & Children Shelter.....	503-244-7718
Yolanda House.....	503-977-7930

(The numbers above are provided as a public service from The Portland Observer)

Countries of Africa

BY RON WEBER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Although this northwestern African nation once fought bitterly against French Colonialism, the land once known as the Ivory Coast is now eager to trade with France. Like so many other African countries bound in poverty Cote d' Ivoire is selling off much of its land and business opportunities to foreign nations. This has created the extremely rich and the extremely poor, with out much of a middle class, a problem besetting much of Africa. Long term leaders have provided for much political stability and at the same time has locked out a democratic society. However, as we enter the 21st century pressure to convert to democratic free nations is facing many countries worldwide.

Recorded history of this nation, bordered by Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina, Faso, Ghana and the Atlantic Ocean is basically non-existent. Searching for gold and cola nuts, various tribes ventured into the area during the 16th century. Dense forests throughout much of the Ivory Coast provided easy incentives for different tribes to isolate themselves from one another, thus adding to the problem of one good solid historical record of the area and its peoples.

As in many places across the globe, the Portuguese were the first to arrive, landing here in the 15th century. For hundreds of years they would struggle with Great Britain and France for ownership of the territory. In what many call a miracle and due to what was termed "inhospitable condition," (rocky coast line, steep cliffs, thick forests, and hard land travel), the area was somewhat spared from the horrors of slavery.

After a brutal and murderous campaign involving the extinction of any rebels not aligned with the French, France finally gained complete control of the country in 1918. Early 20th century civil servants of the nation were treated well by the French as they received job security, educational opportunities, economic stability and land rights. Though this satisfied small numbers of govern-

ment workers, the general population received little in exchange for being ruled by the French and protested bitterly.

As France demanded their colonies to be self-supporting, much of the burden was put on the lower class with harsh working conditions, low pay, and high taxation. Forced labor was common. Also much land and business opportunities were sold to outsiders to make this political structure work. Early on wealthy white European planters benefited highly from this arrangement. Mines lumber businesses, and other major sources of exportation also benefited. This created a very elite society of the rich, in great contrast to the common citizen, thus fueling hatred and jealousy of those who had money.

After World War II the forced labor system was

outlawed. Communism was also strongly rejected. Political struggles continued throughout much of the 1900s. However, by the early to mid 1970s, Cote d' Ivoire was seeing economic success, causing many rural tribes people to come to the city for stable wages. The economy had finally turned around, causing a positive feelings regarding French leadership. Sadly an unpredictable worldwide recession soon caused extremely high unemployment rates and the country was struggling once again.

Although improvements in the country's political and economic structure are still needed, the country is back to the economic stability once seen in the 1970s.

Today, the Republic of Cote d' Ivoire has around 20 million inhabitants and is still edging forward in a positive direction. Human rights organizations around the world have also helped improve working and living conditions for the excessively poor. Still, life expectancy for men and women is only in the mid to late 40s. French continues to be the official language. The religious composition of the country shows approximately 20 percent Christian, 20 percent Muslim and 60 percent indigenous beliefs. The country's inhabitants still wish for total independence and a bright future.



Cote d' Ivoire (Ivory Coast)