

BLACK HISTORY MONTH and the American Experience



The Ethnic Heritage Ensemble performs Tuesday, Feb. 28 at Reed College in celebration of Black History Month.

African Ensemble Concludes Series

Reed College ends its Black History Month event series on Tuesday, Feb. 28, with a performance by The Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, a group that has been breaking the habits of boredom and pushing beyond nostalgia into the present for almost 20

years. The ensemble's music fuses traditional African rhythmic and melodic sensibilities with popular African American musical expression. Kahil El'Zabar plays drums, percussion and African thumb

piano, Joseph Bowie plays trombone, and Ernest Dawkins is alto and tenor saxophonist. The performance begins at 7 p.m. with 15-minute intermission between sets, at Reed College's Eliot Hall Chapel. For more information, call 503-771-1112.

It all started on a bus



Rosa Parks

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks took the first step toward bus desegregation. This African-American woman chose arrest rather than relinquishing her bus seat simply because of the color of her skin. Her stand against racism inspired a boycott which has improved all our lives.

Learn to Trace Your History

Free genealogy program Saturday

The North Portland Library, 512 N. Killingsworth St., will host a free Jump-Start Your African-American Genealogy program on Saturday, Feb. 25 from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Local genealogists and library staff will present information to help researchers find information on family histories. Participants will have an opportunity to practice researching techniques and will be entered in a drawing for a

free DNA test. Local genealogist O. B. Hill will discuss his experience conducting genealogy research; author Stephen Hanks will discuss his book, "Akee Tree: A Descendant's Search for his Ancestors on the Eskridge Plantations;" librarian Janet Irwin will offer tips on using library resources, including the specialized genealogy collection at Central Library and other genealogy

databases; and Emily Aucilino of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon and the International Society of Genetic Genealogists will introduce the basics of DNA genealogy. For more information, call 503-988-4810.

Civil Rights Activists Urge Look Forward

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Alito's "selection represents the culmination of a 20-year strategy by conservatives to retake the courts and a turning away from the civil rights agenda represented by the (Earl) Warren court," Henderson said. "This carries some symbolism."

Many mourned King's death even as they worried about how to keep her mission alive.

"I'm concerned that people don't take her passing as an opportunity to further antique

the causes that she and her husband and others stood for," said Theodore M. Shaw, president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. "Anybody who thinks that work is over is either terribly ignorant or willfully blind."

Henderson agreed: "I think she would be disappointed if the tributes ended with her being elevated to some god-like status without also recommitting ourselves to a social justice agenda that she very much helped symbolize."

A Great Defender of Civil Rights

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versity of Mississippi.

In 1964, Motley was elected to the New York Senate, the first African-American woman to achieve this honor. The following year she was chosen to be Manhattan's Borough President. No woman of any color and no African American of either sex had this distinction until her stunning victory.

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson selected Motley to become a federal judge. The appointment was another first. She kept this position for almost 40 years, until Sept. 14, 2005, the day she died.

Today, while watching Samuel Alito become a Supreme Court Justice after Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement, we are once again reminded of the need for outstanding women and minorities as high-ranking judges.

Motley stood elbow to elbow with Dr. King and others in the fight for equality. Her spirit and what she accomplished will serve us well into the future.

Ron Weber is a local writer and speaker on African American history and a regular contributor to the Portland Observer.

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