OPINION

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'Titles' Never too late to change

The following essay by Portland my childhood being disrespected; erty line Anderson earned her an award by Presidents Commission on the Status of Women:

BY CARMAN ANDERSON

I came into this world a baby branded with titles. I was called court and foster child.

and former professional boxer. My mother's challenges with the world led me to be raised by her oldest

State University student Carman noram I bitter about my adult memories of childhood being polluted. has brought me here to Portland State University to be the first college graduate in my family.

As a teenager I was a stereo unfortunate, at risk, ward of the type; composed of many titles I was called troubled, runaway, High I was born in Portland, Ore. in School drop-out, "high risk" eman-1972 to a heroin addicted teenager cipated minor, and eventually teen-

I ran away from home when I was 16 years old. All those years sister. I am certain that decision of being treated like an adult

I was 18 years old. I was still a Everything I experienced in my life typical teenager hanging out with my friends, I just had a baby boy in tow. I loved my son and was not have him alone. When I was pregnant with my son I saw a movie at the theater called "Rain Man." It was a popular movie about an autistic man. Following the movie there was a plethora of information about autism. Autism was all over the TV and I made sure I learned all I could

My son was born in 1990 when he was a one-year old. I noticed he source of pity, and so strong. was very irrational and would shriek unexpectedly. I also noticed that he was not uttering a single word. His behavior progressed and sorry that I made the decision to he began to add odd repetitive have been the source of admiration motions. I started thinking of all the TV shows and articles about autism that grasped my attention. I was of course no expert, but by the time my son was two years old I was convinced that he was autistic.

After my son was diagnosed at age three with autism, I was prebecause I was fascinated. My son's scribed more titles. I was called an My son is my blessing and my gift;

I felt so lucky when my son was diagnosed with autism. I also felt like I was ready for the incredible journey I had to look forward to. I and curiosity. I have been asked how I handle it; being a single mother of a developmentally disabled child. I always thought I don't have a choice, he is my son. When I think back to the decisions my mother made in regards to raising me; I suppose I did have a choice.

personality began to change when anomaly, special education parent. I consider myself lucky to be his mother. I am majoring in the Child and Family Studies program here at Portland State. I am also working towards a minor in Black Studies. I want to be an advocate and educator for parents and foster parents raising children with developmental disabilities. I know what a challenge it can be, but I want to steer parents towards the blessings. I want to be a voice and an ear for families, so I can provide them with valuable counseling, information,

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Carman Anderson with her son

saved my life. Although I was given a stable home life complete with weekly piano lessons, a puppy and plenty of dysfunction, I was still troubled. I remember on Friday nights packing all of my belongwith my "real mother." In her comoccasion my mother injected heroin nant unwed mother. in front of me resulting in an overdose. I was trained at 5 years of age many studies, polls, and surveys. ing by holding a mirror to her mouth. more titles. I am called a single

caught up with me. I felt I had an adult mind far beyond my years and rules did not and should not apply to me. I ended up dropping out of high school and getting my ings to go and spend the weekend GED my junior year. After all, school was for children, not somepany I was subject to whatever her one like me. Shortly after graduaactivities were. Idid love my mother, tion I fulfilled all "high risk" teen but her lifestyle scared me. On one stereotypes and became a preg-

I am a statistic represented in tocheck to see if she was still breath- The results have granted me even I was not around to do that when mother, welfare recipient, housing she overdosed in 1996 and died at project resident, low skill worker, the age of 43. I am not bitter about and a person living below the pov-



Now Is The Time to ... Focus ... Forward ... Finish



Gustavus A. Aranda





Dr. Andriette Ward



Senator Margaret Carter 2006 Conference Chair

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21st Annual Conference

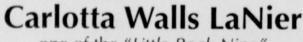
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Gustavus A. Aranda, Pharm.D., M.Sc. University of Southern California

Dr. Andriette Ward, M. D., M.P.H.

Childrens Hospital, Los Angeles Featured in O Magazine, February 2006

Other speakers & presenters include:

Dr. Titus D. Duncan, M. D., F.A.C.S. Dr. Carolyn M. West, Ph.D. Dr. Barbara Earl Ward, M.F.A.





Carlotta Walls LaNier

