

# Turning Two Years into 20

continued ▲ from Front

Lockett considered himself a healthy person until he suffered a heart attack during a Hawaiian vacation in the spring of 1984.

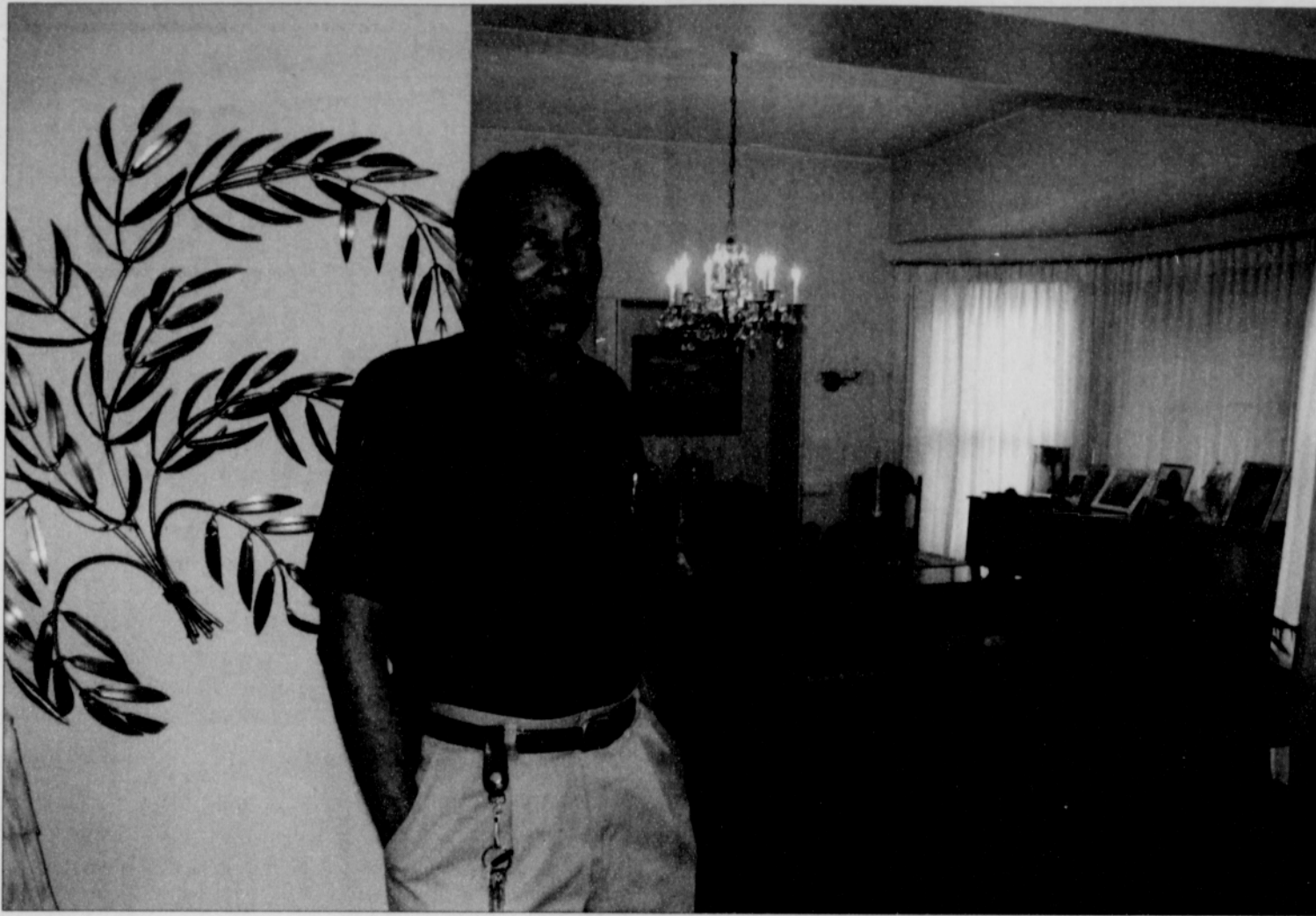
Always thin and in good health, he was unprepared to recognize the signs of heart disease. Doctors treated him with medication in Hawaii and the five-day trip turned into a month, but by January 1987 he suffered a second heart attack. Number two came only days after his deteriorating heart forced him to retire from his job at the Bonneville Power Administration.

At that point, walking from his bedroom to his living room left Lockett breathless.

Doctors told him a bypass wouldn't help and gave him two years to live. Soon his youngest daughter, LaLita, a University of Oregon undergraduate, mentioned the possibility of a heart transplant.

"A transplant at that time was something I read about happening to other people," he said.

Things began to move quickly, doctors ran tests to determine if he qualified. In February 1987, Lockett joined the OHSU waiting list. Just days later, he sat awake in the same living room chair he



Luther Lockett of Portland became the 25<sup>th</sup> heart transplant recipient at Oregon Health Science University in 1987. The hospital has performed hundreds of heart transplants since then.

sits in today when a phone call came, and a voice said "how soon can you get here, we think we have a heart for you."

Lockett and his wife Marie made a beeline for Oregon Health Sciences University.

"I got up there and they had a heart for me and it's been working good ever since," he said.

He became the 25<sup>th</sup> heart transplant recipient at OHSU, which has now performed 473 heart transplants since 1985.

Lockett doesn't know much about the organ donor who saved his life. In the mid-1980s, when the procedure was in its infancy stages, doctors didn't promote contact between the families of organ donors and their recipients.

Lockett only knows there was an auto accident. Two young people on a Saturday night near Vancouver, Wash.

He and Marie never considered donating their organs before, but circumstances changed their outlook.

Now that Lockett celebrates his two birthdays every year, plus that of that of a third grandchild he may have never been able to see, he is a strong advocate of educating the local African Americans and others about organ donations.

PHOTO BY SARAH BLOUNT/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

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## Health Problems Create Need for Donors

Healthy lifestyle would reduce impact

BY SARAH BLOUNT  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
Organ donation carries the stigma of fear, mystery and religious debates, but for the African American community, these issues combined with health problems have created a desperate need for donors. The number of black and minority patients who can't find

organ donors has risen in the past 10 years, and now African Americans make up more than a quarter of the 92,000 Americans on waiting lists. The federal program MOTTEP, or the National Minority Organ and Tissue Transplant Education Program, is the first of its kind in the nation to address the critical need for organ donors while promoting a healthy lifestyle that prevents the need for transplants. Founder and principal investigator Dr. Clive Callendar began work addressing minority

donors in 1982, and said numbers have tripled though various community education and empowerment programs. "We've seen minority donors increase from 15 percent when we started MOTTEP in 1995, to 28.5 percent in 2003," he

tend to believe it." As a result of their outreach, Callendar said past public fears and misperceptions aren't as troublesome. Minorities are well-represented organ donors — as a quarter of the population they account for 28.5 percent of all donors. Now the real challenge, and the reason there is still such desperate need, is a disproportionate amount of health problems afflicting African Americans. This group is more likely than other ethnicities to carry genetically predisposed diseases, like high blood pressure and diabetes, and at higher rates.

*We want to at least level off or stabilize these health risks.*

—Dr. Clive Callendar, National Minority Organ and Tissue Transplant

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Project director Norman Brooks said they identified significant obstacles for minority organ donors: religious beliefs (although all the major religions support organ donations) fear that doctors won't work as hard to save a donor's life, the fear that a minority's organs will only go to white recipients, and distrust of healthcare professionals. Brooks said African Americans often refer to the "Tuskegee Incident", a disturbing act known formally as the Public Health Service Syphilis Study, which followed the progress of untreated syphilis in nearly 400 poor black men in Macon County, Ga. from 1932 to 1972. Brooks also noted the media in creating negative perceptions with stories about organ donation, including the 2002 film "John Q", in which Denzel Washington's character takes an emergency room staff and patients hostage until hospital doctors agree to conduct a heart transplant for his son. "I think that film that really speaks to the black community," Brooks said. "People relate to things they've seen, and

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### School Grounds Help Coming

School grounds throughout Portland will get a makeover from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Aug. 26 at Portland Public Schools campuses, thanks to thousands of volunteers participating in Community Care Day. Working through the volunteer action organizations SOLV and Hands on Portland, community groups and individual volunteers will weed, rake, sweep and spread bark dust at more than 50 of the district's 85 school sites. Following the cleanups, a thank-you reception for volunteers will

run from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Tubman Middle School, 2231 N. Flint Ave., with entertainment provided by Radio Disney. PPS has only two groundskeepers because of budget cuts. Maintenance on lawns and gardens is sacrificed in order to spend limited resources on school programs. Registration and information on the volunteer sites is available at [solv.org](http://solv.org). Additional information is available from Matt Shelby, PPS community engagement specialist, at 503-916-3027.