

## All Faiths to Honor King 'Drum Major' service at local church

The first "Drum Major" ecumenical service honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mrs. Coretta Scott King and Mrs. Rosa Parks will be held Sunday, Jan. 21 at 4:30 p.m. at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, where Dr. King preached during the Civil Rights Movement.

For the past 38 years, churches of all faiths have held a service in Dr. King's honor on the third Monday in January at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Ga. Vancouver Avenue will bring a similar service as a first for the Portland community to pay tribute and remember the legacy of Dr. King, Mrs. King and Mrs. Parks.

The program will feature



Sen. Margaret Carter

words of expression from keynote speaker, Oregon State Sen. and President-Pro-Temporary Margaret Carter and other local

dignitaries. Three people who made important contributions in the spirit of the Civil Rights Movement will be honored as "Drum Majors."

"As a person who was honored to be close to Mrs. King and her family for many years, I had the privilege of attending the ecumenical service with them in Atlanta, Ga. It has always been a vision of mine to duplicate that service here locally," said J.W. Matt Hennessee, senior pastor.

Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is located at 3138 N. Vancouver Ave. For more information, call 503-282-9496 or visit [vancouveravechurch.org](http://vancouveravechurch.org).

## Bringing It All Back Home

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ing their heads above water made it difficult to enrich the community and give back."

Boston looks to herself and her peers for leadership.

"We've been brought up differently and shaped by different principals," she said. "In the 1960s it was basic human rights, now our issues are civil liberties on a very personal level. It doesn't stop at race, class and gender."

Boston admits these are touchy subjects that speak to the dynamics of authority.

"There is an assumption to be careful because you are speaking about authority," she said, "but I don't have anything to lose."

It's that type of courage and attitude that led her to a job at her political party's headquarters.

Housed in a nondescript southeast Portland building, Boston's responsibility at the Democratic Party of Oregon is to familiarize the community with the electoral process in order to increase votership.

Her position came about after she complained to the DPO about their laissez-faire practices.

"After settling back in Portland I decided to call the state office to see what was going on."

*"In the 1960s, it was basic human rights, now our issues are civil liberties on a very personal level. It doesn't stop at race, class and gender."*

— Cyreena Boston, one of Portland's young black leaders

"I asked 'why should I be a Democrat?'"

They connected her with the volunteer coordinator, who was armed with a canned response.

"I saw straight through his spiel," she said. "We met for lunch, and I described to him how you couldn't treat all communities the same."

The party soon offered Boston her first political job.

Rejoining Portland's rapidly growing population, she is surrounded by political activism recognized nationally more for groundbreaking leadership in sustainable development than civil rights.

"There are lots of idealists in Oregon, but Portland people are adamant about having no changes," she said. "There is a lot of 'I don't want outsiders coming in'."

"The problem is Oregonians are about being liberal and progressive, but only about the things that matter to them. They say 'we keep it clean and our city and state are organized, so how dare you accuse us of other social ills?'"

But Boston courageously recognizes the strength of her own voice and minority status to achieve her goals.

For example, after attending an Envision Oregon summit last year in Portland (a statewide town hall visioning plan for future generations in Oregon), she noticed participants did little to include race in a discussion about livable communities and strong economies.

"It was so interesting sitting in on that," Boston said. "I was only one of three black people in a room of 600. I brought up gentrification and they looked at me like I was crazy."



Behind a "Berlin Wall" imposed by Alabama authorities, marchers sing freedom songs in a round-the-clock vigil.

*"God is not merely interested in the freedom of brown men, yellow men, red men, and black men. He is interested in the freedom of the whole human race."*

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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