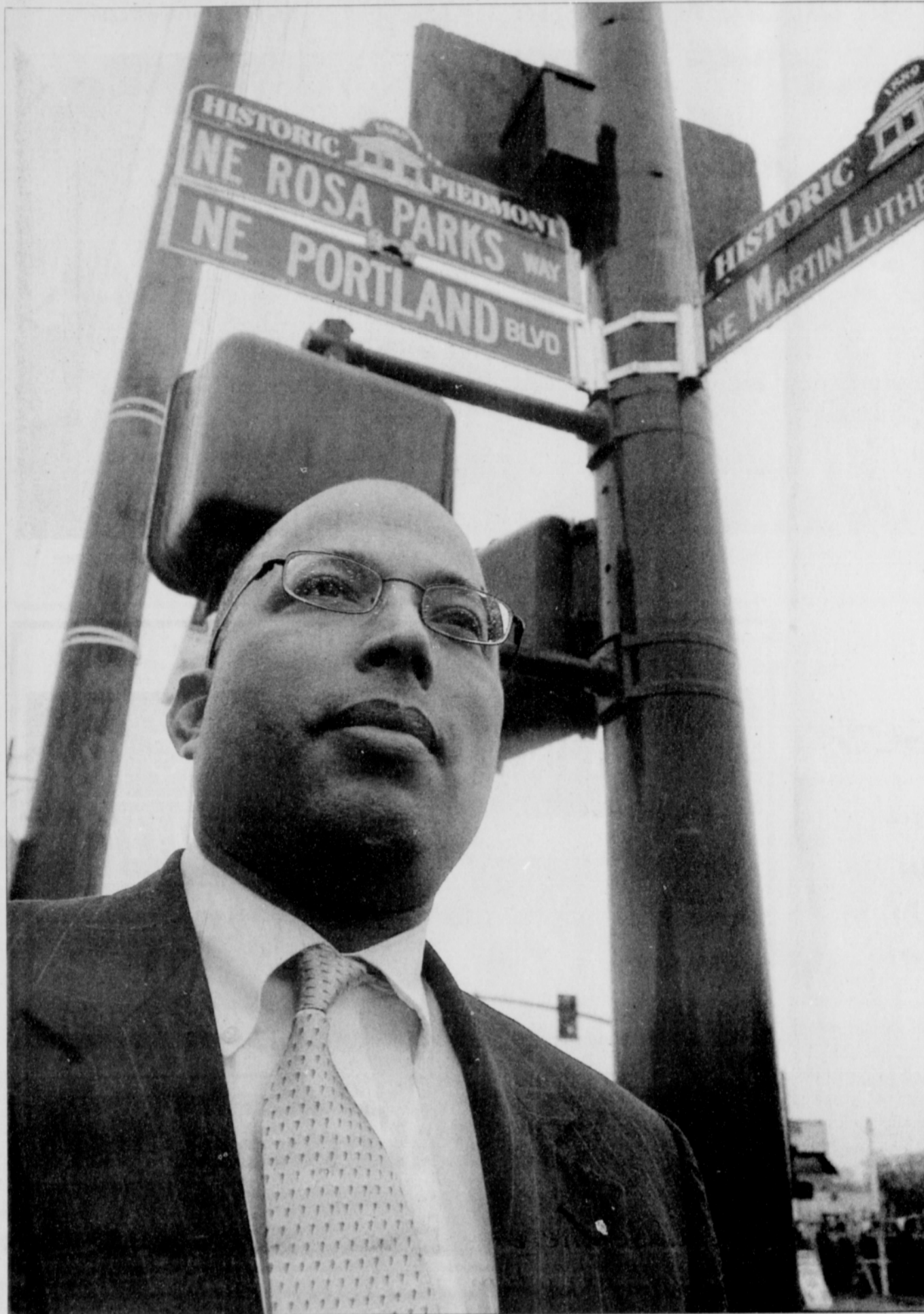


Local Leader Committed to King's Dream

Pursuing economic justice for all



BY CHARITY PRATER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Walk into the Urban League of Portland office and you will find a framed portrait of Martin Luther King Jr. and an excerpt of his "I Have a Dream" speech.

The civil rights leader's words are echoed in the Urban League of Portland's mission today: Bringing economic equality to all.

"You can't be equal unless you are economically equal," says Marcus Mundy, president and chief executive officer of the civil rights and social services organization.

Mundy was a member of the local urban league's board of directors for three years before he took the temporary seat as president and CEO. Since last July, he has represented the league in the place of Vanessa Gaston, a

The next person expected to take the seat as president and CEO is expected to have a clear vision of what the league represents - a strong passion for helping the community, have an ability to lead and to be fair when making decisions on behalf of the organization, and the strength to do what is right when making critical calculations.

Although the Urban League has had problems in the past, there are a lot of misconceptions about its present state.

The league, its workers and its members have worked hard the past few years to improve its overall condition, from working on strong management to cleaning up the organization's debts.

Mundy spends a lot of time off the

Several years ago the league underwent a very difficult period of mismanagement, loss of corporate support, and program cuts.

— Marcus Mundy of the Urban League of Portland

former executive director who left with high regards to another position in Nevada.

"Several years ago the league underwent a very difficult period of mismanagement, loss of corporate support, and program cuts," Mundy says. "Vanessa and other CEOs, including myself, have worked to pull the urban league out of the ditch."

The local organization now has a secure financial future with goals set on continuing to work toward slow, sustainable growth.

As a single parent of four children, Mundy plans to find a replacement for his position within a few months. He also is concerned with continuing to run his finance company while still remaining on the board.

job trying to become more visible within the community. He makes regular speeches, meets with people in the metro area, joins local events and walks, and basically works on informing the people of Portland that the urban league is around to help others.

The organization has strong and successful programs in place to help educate seniors, advocate for local issues and find jobs for young professionals. The only thing holding back the league right now is funding.

"I can't think of a single reason why every African American in Portland doesn't have a membership at the Urban League or why every company doesn't have a corporate membership

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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
The recent dedication of Portland Boulevard as Rosa Parks Way draws Marcus Mundy of the Urban League of Portland to its intersection with Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

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