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Special Coverage Issue

Black History Month

Hollywood Bound

A send off party for Miss Oregon USA Sharitha McKenzie See story, page A8



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## Week in The Review

### Clyde a Dance Star

Popular former Portland Trail Blazer star Clyde Drexler will be in the new cast of the television series "Dancing With the Stars" when it returns for its fourth television season on March 19th. Drexler, 44, a forward and a Hall of Famer, played for Portland from 1984-1992 and later played for Houston.

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### Homelessness Down

The City of Portland and Multnomah County announced Tuesday that dramatic progress is being made on the number of people who sleep on Portland's streets, a 70 percent reduction in the number of chronically homeless people who were living out doors two years ago.

### Farrakhan's Farewell

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan was greeted by cheers and chants from tens of thousands as he returned to the public eye just long enough to say he would be leaving it soon. Farrakhan, who ceded leadership duties last year because of illness, spoke for nearly two hours Sunday. See story, page A2.

### Sharpton Wants DNA Test

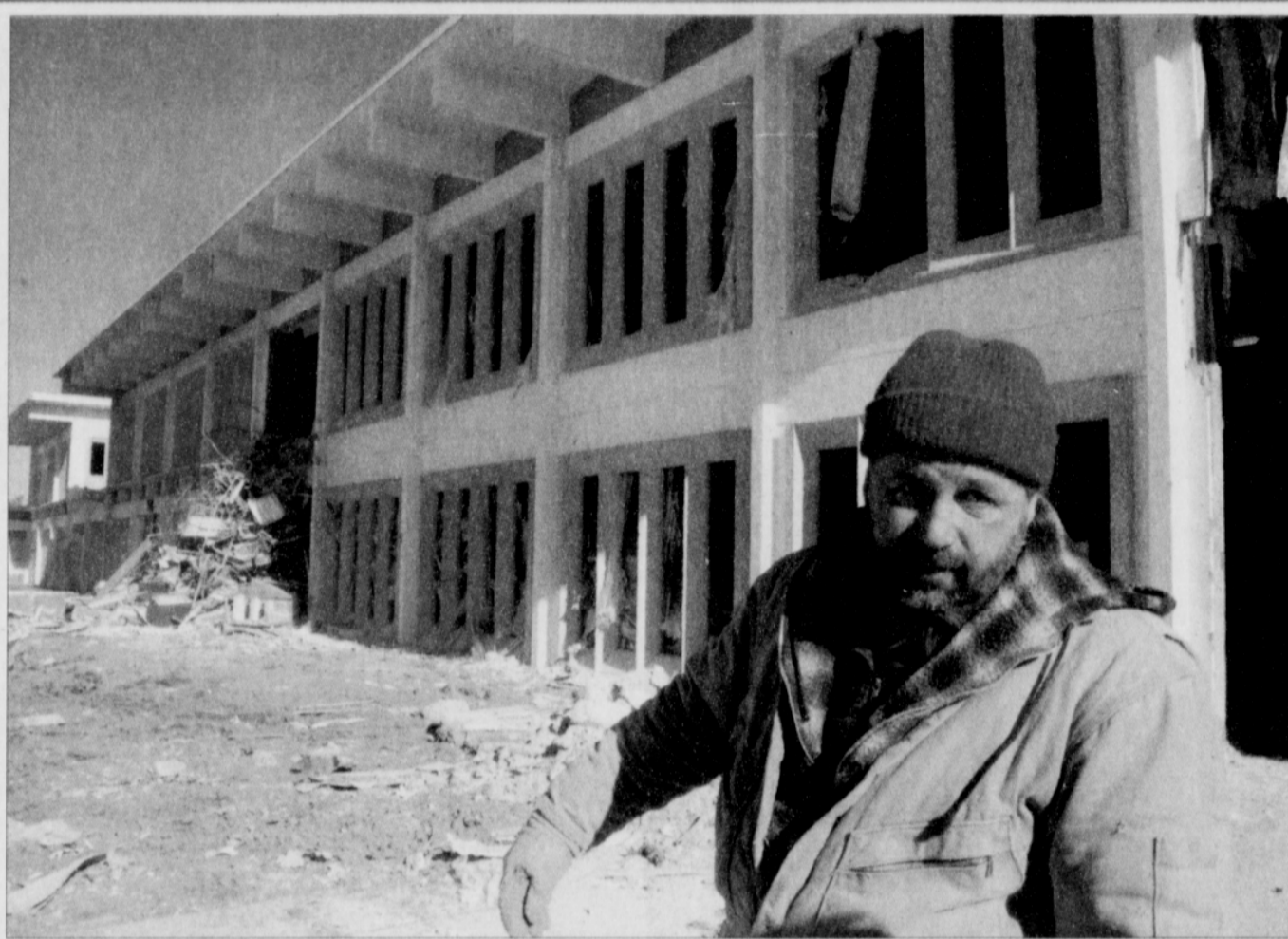
The Rev. Al Sharpton said he wants a DNA test to determine whether he is related to former segregationist Sen. Strom Thurmond through his great-grandfather, a slave owned by an ancestor of the late senator. "I can't find out anything more shocking than I've already learned," Sharpton told the Daily News. See story, page A2.

### Fred Jones a Blazer

The Portland Trail Blazers traded guard Juan Dixon to the Toronto Raptors on Thursday for guard Fred Jones. Jones is a University of Oregon grad and lives in Portland during the off-season. He went to Barlow High in Gresham and was twice named Oregon Class 4A Player of the year. See story, page B6.

### Bombs Nearly Hit Cheney

It is unclear how a suicide bomber was able to get close to a U.S. base in Afghanistan where Vice President Dick Cheney was staying, the White House said Tuesday. "People are still investigating what happened," said White House spokesman Tony Snow.



Bruce Vittitoe takes part in the demolition of the former John Adams High School in northeast Portland. Vittitoe said there have been many overnight thefts of wire and other supplies.

## A Dream Turns to Dust

### John Adams destruction ends amazing chapter

BY SARAH BLOUNT THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The demolition of the John Adams-Whitaker school site ends an amazing chapter of education experimentation in north and northeast Portland, with decisive community talks about future development still to come.

The school tear down is on schedule, said Justin Devers, assistant director of facilities and asset management for Portland Public Schools. He said the building should be completely gone within the next month and a half, with site improvements wrapped up by mid to late May.

The 269,899 square-foot building opened as John Adams High School in the fall of 1969. The school closed due to low enrollment in 1981 and was then renamed Whitaker Middle School, until the school closed for good in 2001 because of hazardous construction and a buildup of radon.

The building sat empty — to the tune of nearly \$700,000 in maintenance, utilities and insurance — until the district made a decision last summer to raze the building with demolition crews arriving in early January.

Once the school is razed, the district plans to grade the site, plant grass and maintain the property until it is sold.

"We're also looking at doing something interesting with the Adams-Whitaker signage to commemorate the building," Devers said.

The district expects to complete the project under budget, totalling \$2.1 million for demolition and site improvements. However, the final chapter in the building's saga has been slightly problematic due to a hazardous history. Abatement crews were slowed down by asbestos removal when they discovered a larger amount than anticipated, and a representative from the hazardous materials company said it had been "a horrible job to work on," with break-ins and vandalism nightly.

The property, just north of Killingsworth Street and west of 42nd Avenue, is loosely secured with overnight patrols, but not enough to keep away vandals, or to keep wire and other salvageable materials.

Portland Police Sgt. Brian Schmautz said eight crime reports have been taken at the site this

## What Went Wrong at John Adams?



John Adams High School Principal Robert Schwartz and student Donald Means (right) on campus during the opening 1969-70 school year. In 1970 feature spread, Newsweek Magazine called Adams "the most interesting public school in the U.S. today."

BY SARAH BLOUNT THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Say your final goodbyes to John Adams High School — a goodbye that has been a long time in the making.

The building's days are now numbered, with wrecking balls bringing about the school's final chapter as they crush concrete slabs into sand and rubble. Soon

there will be no white roof peeking up from partial view along Northeast Killingsworth Street and it will be that much easier for us to forget one of Oregon's most interesting and tragic high school stories.

Everyone except for the students, teachers and staff who played a part in an experiment that shaped their lives. The

last new high school built for Portland Public Schools closed as Adams in 1981, after graduating only 12 classes.

Talking with those who lived it offers insight as to what was right — and what went wrong. The questions are plentiful, and the answers may never be clear.

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## Black Stars Make History Again at Oscars



Forest Whitaker and Jennifer Hudson hold up their Oscars at the 79th Annual Academy awards Sunday. Whitaker won for best actor and Hudson won for best supporting actress. (AP photo)

### Biggest winner is diversity

The 79th annual Oscars featured the most ethnically varied lineup ever, with stars and stories that reflect the growing multiculturalism taking root around the globe.

"What a wonderful night. Such diversity in the room" said Ellen DeGeneres, serving as Oscar host for the first time. "in a year when there's been so many negative things said about people's race, religion and sexual orientation."

African Americans Forest Whitaker won best actor for his frightful yet charismatic performance as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin; while Jennifer Hudson, a former "American Idol" contestant, scored the best supporting actress award for her debut performance in the musical

"Dreamgirls."

"Receiving this honor tonight tells me that it's possible, it is possible for a kid from East Texas, raised in South Central L.A. and Carson, who believes in his dreams, commits himself to them with his heart, to touch them and

*It's a wonderful year to be an African-American actor.*

— Beyonce Knowles

to have them happen," Whitaker said as he accepted his award.

"It's a wonderful year to be an African-American actor," Beyonce Knowles, who co-starred with Eddie Murphy and Hudson in "Dreamgirls," said on

the red carpet before the ceremony.

Although Jesse Jackson noted that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences includes only 110 African-Americans out of 5,830 members, the recognition of stars of color has been increasingly frequent.

After a long history of the Academy Awards being a largely all-white affair (Chris Rock once called the Oscars a "million white man march") this was the third year where multiple black actors won Oscars.

Denzel Washington ("Training Day") and Halle Berry ("Monster's Ball") memorably shattered the Oscars' racial ceiling in 2002, the first time blacks won both lead-acting prizes.

In 2005, Jamie Foxx ("Ray") and Morgan Freeman ("Million Dollar Baby") won Academy Awards,

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