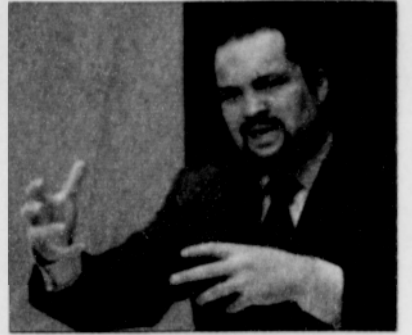


50¢

Special Coverage Issue

Black History Month and

A Century of Activism Past achievements create a daunting challenge as the NAACP turns 100 See story, page A5



The Portland Observer

'City of Roses' Volume XXXIV, Number 7

Established in 1970 Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com Wednesday • February 18, 2009

Week in The Review

Obama Signs Stimulus
Racing to reverse the country's economic spiral, President Barack Obama signed the mammoth stimulus package into law Tuesday and readied a new \$50 billion foreclosure rescue for legions of Americans who are in danger of losing their homes.

More Troops to Afghanistan
President Obama has ordered a significant troop increase in Afghanistan authorizing the deployment of an additional 17,000 troops to take on the resurgent Taliban in southern Afghanistan. The first units will begin deploying in the spring.

Ginsburg Cancer Contained
Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's cancer was found at the earliest stage and has not spread beyond her pancreas, the court said Friday. The 75-year-old justice returned to her home in Washington Friday after being released from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

California Budget Stalemate
California lawmakers gathered again Tuesday in another bid to end the state's multibillion-dollar budget stalemate, as the state was poised to start laying off as many as 20,000 government workers.

Oregon Considers Beer Tax
It's an issue that seems to rise and fall every legislative session — a proposed increase in the beer tax. But with Oregon facing another budget shortfall, Rep. Ben Cannon, D-Portland, has co-sponsored a bill that would raise the tax on a 12-ounce beer to 15 cents for drug and alcohol abuse prevention and treatment.

Morgan Stanley VP Charged
A former Morgan Stanley vice president has been arrested on charges of embezzling more than \$2.5 million from the investment bank. Richard Garaventa Jr., of Manalapan, N.J., pleaded not guilty Tuesday to grand larceny and other counts.

Burrises Makes Admission
U.S. Sen. Roland Burrise now acknowledges attempting to raise money for ousted Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich — an explosive twist in his ever-changing story on how he landed a coveted Senate appointment from the man accused of trying to sell the seat.

Gas Prices Going Up
Crude oil prices continue to drop but the average price of a gallon of gas in Oregon increased about 6 cents in the past week to \$2.12, according to AAA Oregon/Idaho. The national average also increased, rising 3 cents a gallon to \$1.96.

39 years of community service

Passing the Torch

Avel Gordly inspires future leaders

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Oregon's first female African American senator has found a new way to help the next generation break barriers of its own.

Avel Gordly ended her 18 years in the Oregon Legislature last month by not running for re-election, but she's not retiring to a life of idleness. Instead, she's working to inspire new leaders as a professor at Portland State University.

Gordly, a Portland native and longtime social services leader before becoming an advocate for the disadvantaged during her three terms in the Oregon House of Representatives and two terms in the Senate, spoke with the Portland Observer in an exclusive interview.

"I was feeling a real urgency in passing on what I know," said Gordly, 62.

Gordly is helping prepare the next generation of African-American leaders by jointly teaching a leadership seminar with Dalton Miller-Jones, the chair of the Black Studies Department at PSU, her alma mater.



PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Avel Gordly tours a 'Living the Legacy' exhibit displaying key pieces from her personal archives at the Portland State University library. The Black History Month exhibit has been extended to March 31.

The course seeks to recruit students of color who show leadership potential and shape and direct their abilities. It also points them to opportunities in local and state government, said Gordly.

She is also working closely with the African American Alliance, a coalition of civic organizations, to connect young people of color with opportunities.

Passing on the torch of leadership to the next generation of African-American leaders is paramount concern for Gordly, whose new absence from the Legislature leaves only three people of color among the 90 lawmakers.

"If you don't see the torch being passed, come and get it," said Gordly, "but you gotta be prepared."

For Gordly, carrying the torch of leadership in public service is about strengthening communities. Her parents, who migrated from Texas in the late 1930s to Portland, helped inculcate this message to her while growing up in northeast Portland near Going and Prescott Streets.

Her father was a porter for Union Pacific Railroad and her mother worked as a domestic. She recalls the dining room being stacked with books, magazines, and newspapers, which instilled in Gordly a genuine curiosity about the world. Her parents were active in church and civic organizations.

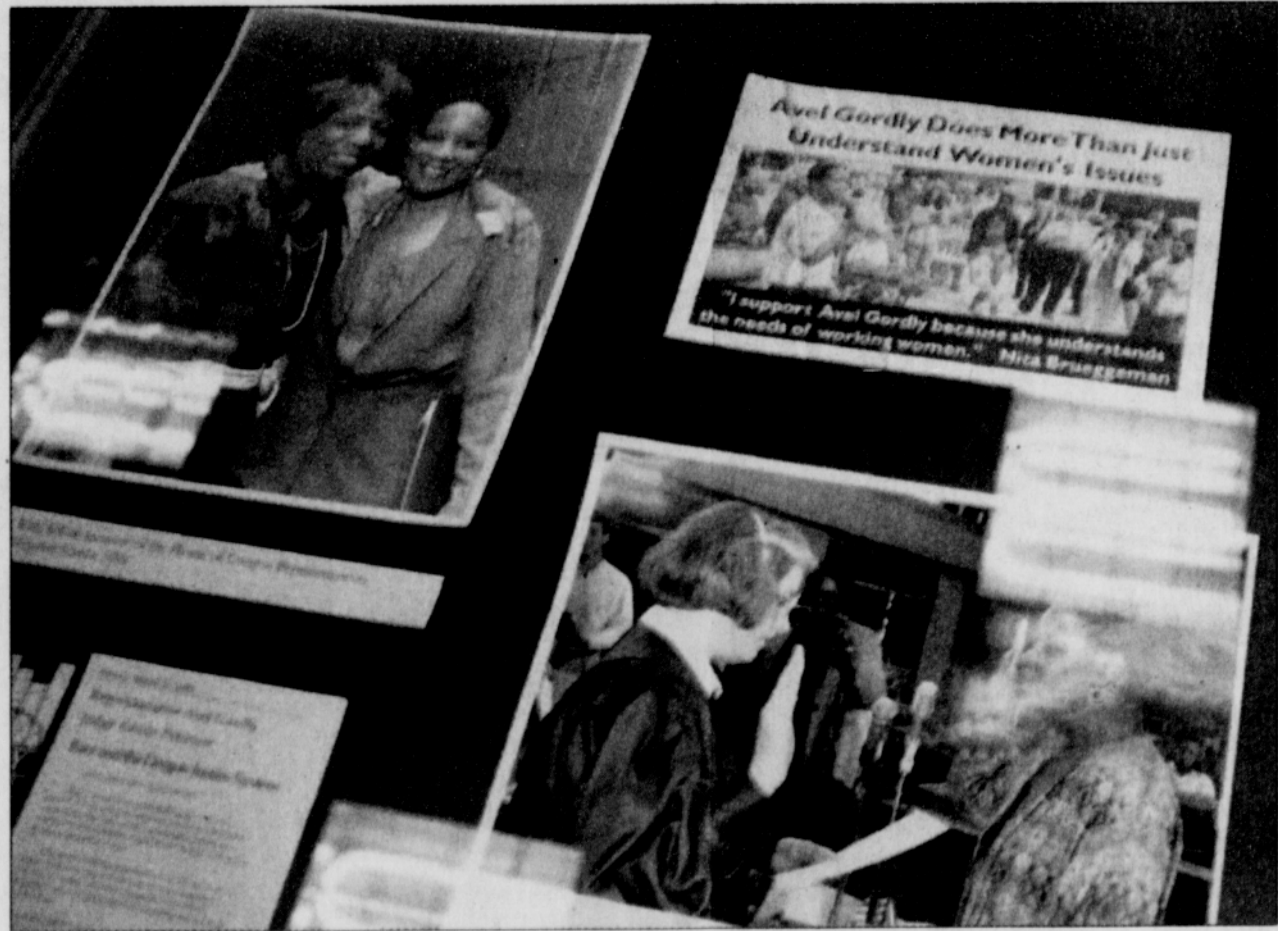
"They were community builders," she said. Her parents goaded her toward college, and expected her not to come home from school with "C's" while growing up.

After being the first person in her family to graduate from college, Gordly worked for years in community organizations until a friend encouraged her to seek a recently vacated House seat.

"It wasn't my idea," said Gordly of her initial foray into the Legislature. She dismissed the notion initially, but she mulled it over and began to ask friends and family what they thought.

"Where can we send the check?" was the response she got back.

continued ▼ on page A8



Photographs document Avel Gordly's historic rise to power in Portland State University's 'Living the Legacy' exhibit, including Gordly swearing into office in 1991 and a picture from her first years as a lawmaker with then State Rep. Margaret Carter (upper left).

Ethics Cited in Adams Scandal

Gordly says mayor acting like he's entitled

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Mayor Sam Adams' admission that he lied during last year's mayoral campaign about having sex with an 18-year-old legislative intern has drawn a line between those who want him to stay on and those who want him to step down.

Count former State Sen. Avel Gordly in the latter camp. In an exclusive interview with the Portland Observer, Gordly had pointed criti-

cism of Adams, who has opted to stay on despite a blaring chorus of calls for him to step down.

"We have someone who lied to gain political power," said Gordly, who backed businessman Sho Dozono against Adams in last May's election. "That is not OK," she added.

Gordly reasoned that because

Adams used a lie to get into office, he should now give up that office.

"There's truth in that position," said Kirk O. Hanson, professor and executive director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University in California.

Hanson added that it's difficult to justify Adams staying in elected of-

fice after having misled voters on a subject that may have affected how they might vote.

He said the scandal raises two ethical issues: the relationship itself and Adams' lying.

The relationship with the intern, Beau Breedlove, may have been consensual and legal, but that doesn't mean that it was ethical because of the power relationship between the two men, he said.

As a legislative intern seeking a career in politics, Breedlove was not on an equal footing with Adams, a city commissioner at the time who was in a position to advance

continued ▼ on page A8

"I think there is something terribly wrong with the political culture in our city."

-- former State Sen. Avel Gordly