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~Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967

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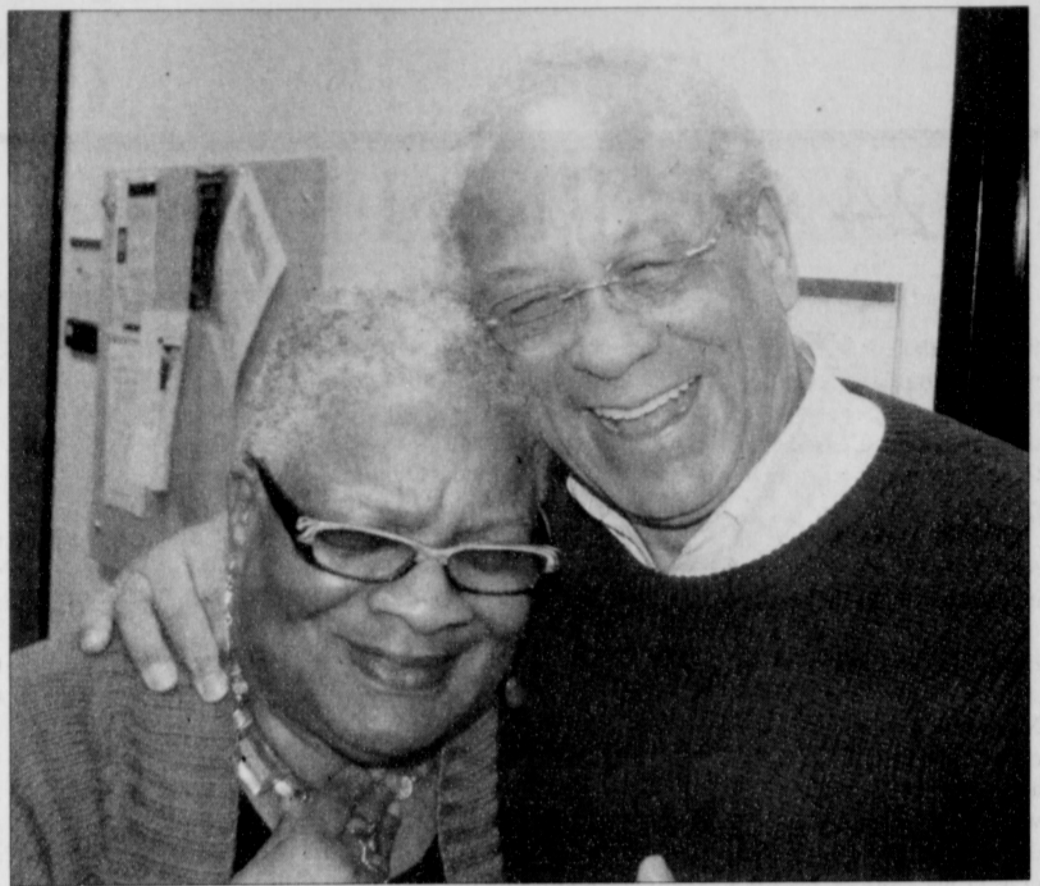


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
Avel Gordly gets a hug from Dalton Miller-Jones, the chair of the Black Studies Department at Portland State University. Gordly is helping prepare the next generation of African-American leaders by jointly teaching a leadership seminar with Miller-Jones.

## Passing the Torch

continued from Front

Since stepping into politics, Gordly has earned widespread respect and has made inroads on previously ignored issues. She helped maneuver through a bill that required police departments to establish planned responses whenever they used deadly force.

Shortly before leaving office, Gordly also shepherded through a bill establishing the Environmental Justice Task Force, which aims to give a voice to those affected by natural resources decisions.

Darrell Millner, a professor of black studies at Portland State University, said that because of Gordly's race and gender, more people in traditionally marginalized groups have felt they have a voice because of her.

Millner added that Gordly has been a strong moral voice during her time in Salem, particularly in the area of mental health.

Jason Renaud, the board secretary for the Mental Health Association of Portland and retired social worker, said that few state legislatures have someone like Gordly who has boldly brought an issue to the forefront that is typically ignored.

Gordly's connection to the issue is personal. She has a son who has struggled with

mental health and who is currently living and working independently.

Also during her time in politics, she helped push through a bill requiring training for police officers on how to handle the mentally ill, and has called attention to the need for funding for mental health services, like the Garlington Center in northeast Portland.

But she hasn't turned her back on the issue since. Recently she partnered with Oregon Health and Science University to create the Avel Gordly Center for Healing, a clinic geared toward providing culturally sensitive mental health treatment.

Gordly was also unabashed about pointing out to others the struggles African-Americans have experienced in obtaining equality.

She partnered with the Oregon Historical Society to provide every member of the Legislature with a copy of Elizabeth McLagan's "A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Black in Oregon, 1788-1940."

She also recalls convincing then Republican House Speaker Karen Minnis to move a historical picture of former Gov. Mark Hatfield working on a bill to end Oregon's racist public accommodation laws to a more prominent and symbolic place in the capital.

"I don't think we've seen the end of her influence," quipped Millner.

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## Ethics Cited in Adams Scandal

continued from Front

the young man's career. "You have the potential for exploitation," said Hanson.

Supporters of Adams have insisted that he should have never had to answer a question about his sex life in the first place. Hanson explained that this view would normally have credence, but because Adams was specifically asked about a potentially inappropriate sexual relationship the question was fair.

"It was a trap he created for himself," quipped Hanson.

Darrell Millner, a professor of black studies at Portland State University, said that few public figures are as widely respected as Gordly, a Democrat who has crossed political lines to break partisan gridlock.

"She represented the conscience of the state," was the first words out of Millner's mouth when asked about Gordly's influence in the Oregon Legislature, adding that she was always on the fore-

front of issues concerning ethics or morality.

Gordly said it now appears that by refusing to resign, Adams is acting like he's entitled to the office of mayor.

"When I look at Sam and how he was groomed, so to speak, he is a product of the old boy old network in this city and this state. He is a product of white privilege and entitlement and, he is acting like he is entitled to the role," said Gordly.

Adams was the chief of staff to former mayor Vera Katz years before he became an elected official.

Gordly also had harsh words for those who want to support Adams for other reasons.

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

Although Adams announced last month that he will stay on as mayor, there is already an effort to recall him, which can't take place

until he has been in office for six months under Oregon law.

But Gordly said that Adams should step down to avoid the costly recall election, which will further strain city coffers and impact important city programs and services that have been drained by the recession.

However, when asked if there has been a double standard in how Adams has been treated compared to former Police Chief Derrick Foxworth, an African-American who was demoted after an explosive sexual harassment case was brought against him by a police department desk clerk, she said the situations don't run parallel and are "totally different."

"I hurt for Sam. I pray for him," added Gordly, who said that she is prepared to personally forgive the mayor, but insists there must be consequences.

Gordly also wonders what message from Adams' decision to stay on sends to the youth of Portland.

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