

Cascade BY ALGIE C. GATEWOOD
Connections

Financial Aid Allowed Judge to Aim High

As he seems inclined to do on a fairly regular basis, President Barack Obama once again made history recently when he nominated the first Hispanic woman – Judge Sonia Sotomayor – to the Supreme Court of the United States. Judge Sotomayor is eminently qualified to serve on the high court, having amassed the numerous academic and professional accolades during her distinguished career.



While we can all aim to achieve as much as Judge Sotomayor has, few of us will actually go on to reach such heights. But there's one thing that she has in common with many, many aspiring young students from every walk of life – she used student financial aid to access the kinds of educational opportunities that would help her realize her full potential.

Growing up in the Bronx as the daughter of poor Puerto Rican immigrants, Judge Sotomayor had few opportunities as a child, particularly after her father passed away when she was 9 years old. What she had, though, was a keen mind and a love for the law and the Constitution – which, along with \$1.95, will get you a cup of overpriced coffee.

For Judge Sotomayor to have the opportu-

nity to grow, challenge, and develop her formidable legal intellect, she needed to go to college. And for that to happen, she needed financial aid. As valedictorian of her high school class, she was able to win a scholarship to Princeton University – and the rest, as they say, is history. She's the perfect example of our society making an investment in a promising young person and profiting by it.

Financial aid is a critical ingredient for almost anyone who wants to better themselves through the pursuit of higher education. Whether you're studying full-time or balancing work and school, financial aid can make the difference between going to school or missing out on higher education entirely. This is as true for people on their way to Princeton, like Judge Sotomayor, as it is for someone on their way a community college.

And don't let the hard economic times dissuade you. There is an abundance of aid out there for the taking, all the more so since the passage of President Obama's stimulus legislation. Depending on need and eligibility, a whole range of aid becomes available, including:

- **Federal Pell Grants:** The Pell Grant is one of the best kinds of financial aid, because it doesn't need to be repaid. As much as \$5,350 per year can be available to full-time students.
- **Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG):** Like a Pell Grant, a SEOG doesn't need to be repaid. The maximum amount available each year varies by educational institution.
- **Oregon Opportunity Grants (OOG):** Another grant that students don't need to repay. The maximum OOG amount available for the 2009-2010 academic year has yet to be determined; it was \$2,600 in 2008-2009 for full-time students.
- **Federal Work Study:** Work study dollars allow students to work a part-time, on-campus job for pay, while helping to cover educational costs at the same time. The maximum amount available each year varies by educational institution.
- **Federal Perkins and Stafford Loans:** Low-interest federal loans that students must repay after leaving school. The maximum amount available each year varies by educational institution. In my personal opinion, however, I recommend borrowing as little money as possible, and only when necessary.
- **Institutional or external aid:** These are scholarships and grants issued by a student's college

or by an outside organization. A little research in this area can really pay off – in many cases, a student can find scholarships that are specifically targeted toward his or her background or educational goals.

The list doesn't end there – aid from additional sources is available. The best way to find out what you might be eligible for is to make an appointment with a financial aid adviser at a community college or university campus near you and talk about it. He or she can help you determine which combination of grants, scholarships, work study, and loans works best for you. While you're there, take the time to visit an academic adviser as well to learn which course of study will best help you reach your goals.

As a community college campus president, I get to see people every day who are getting the chance to fully realize their potential. And as Judge Sotomayor's life so clearly shows us, great things happen when talent meets opportunity. She provided the talent; student financial aid helped provide the opportunity. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Algie C. Gatewood, Ed.D., is president of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus.

Emergency Food Provider Reaches Out

Mounting a trophy fish has new meaning at Fish Emergency Service.

The social service organization recently mounted a new sign to better identify its location at 1335 S.W. Hawthorne Blvd. for the many families seeking food, clothing, personal care items, information, advocacy and referrals to other help agencies. The building is open Mondays through Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Our old sign withered and weathered away," explains Executive Director Gloria Colvin. "Sometimes people would drive by without noticing where we are."

The new sign was provided



PHOTO BY LEEANN GAUTHIER

A new sign points people needing emergency food supplies to the Fish Emergency Service building at 1335 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd., thanks to help from ZB Chaberski (from left), owner of Forum Painting, who donated the sign; Gloria Colvin, Fish executive director; and James Arnold, Fish inventory manager.

by ZB Chaberski, owner of Forum Painting, a Portland company that specializes in exterior and interior decorative painting, cabinet and furniture refinishing and other residential and commercial restorations.

"The new signage makes it easier to locate our building," Colvin said, adding, "we are seeing more and more families trying to find us. Now they can."

Founded in 1967, Fish has been serving emergency needs of families for more than 40 years.

For more information about Fish and its services, call the agency at 503-233-5533 or email fishserv@teleport.com.

Long Time Volunteer Honored

Earns Gladys McCoy award

Portland resident Antoinette Edwards was recently named the 15th winner of the Gladys McCoy Award for lifetime volunteer achievement.

Edwards has spent her lifetime engaged in community activism.

"Ms. Edwards is a very worthy recipient of the Gladys McCoy Award," said Brad McLean, chair of the Multnomah County Citizen Involvement Committee, which makes the award each year to an outstanding nominee who has given exemplary time and service to the community.



Antoinette Edwards

Edwards is a tireless and passionate worker who has spent the past 20 years reaching out to the most vulnerable populations. She typically has several projects going at any one time. Active

is not a sufficient word to describe her commitment. Tenacious would be more appropriate.

For example, while stationed at Columbia Villa Resource Center she managed 21 on-site community groups aligning and coordinating services for low-income families.

She also developed English as a second language classes to meet the needs of Russian, Asian, and Spanish speaking residents.

Edwards has also worked

with the Jefferson Family Resource Center, Girls Empowerment Groups, the "Sister, I'm Sorry" discussion groups, and numerous grandparent support groups to name a few.

She is currently the diversity director for the Oregon Trail Chapter of the American Red Cross and serves on numerous community boards.

The Gladys McCoy Award was established in 1994 to honor those who have given outstanding service in the area of community service and citizen involvement.

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