

# Meet Medical Student Omar Washington

UC Davis Health, a magazine for the UC Davis Medical School in California, featured a story on Omar Washington of Portland who is on his way to becoming a doctor:

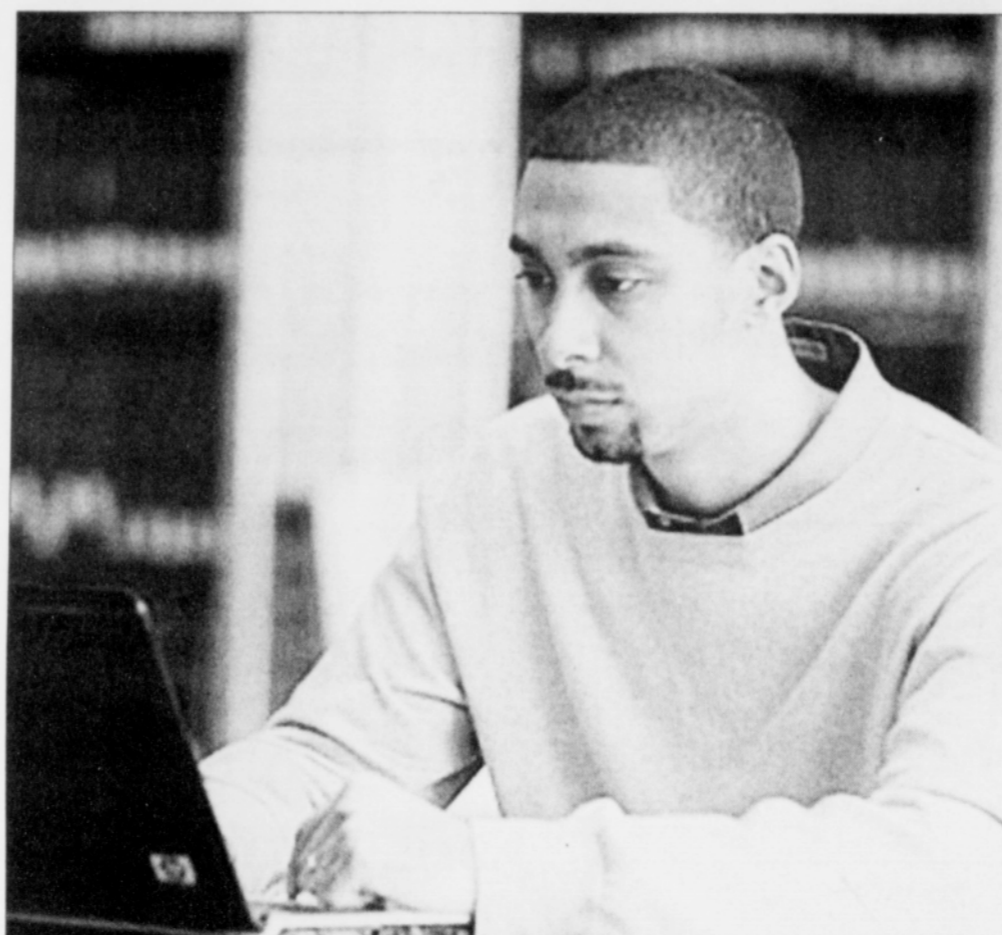
## Where did you grow up and complete your undergraduate studies?

I grew up in Portland, Oregon. While earning a bachelor's in microbiology at Portland State University, I was involved with a number of local community groups, including coaching my sister-in-law's girls' softball team.

## Why did you choose to study medicine?

I didn't see a lot of physicians who looked like me growing up,

so I thought becoming a physician would be a way I could give back to underserved communities. Many people lose their lives from a lack of preventive health care, like my grandmother, who died at 59 from a treatable condition. A physician with the ability to relate to my grandma might have saved her. Being a physician puts you in a unique position: Not only do you get to explore science but also you have the opportunity help people. I am about to finish my second year and am scheduled to graduate in 2012. However, I'm considering taking a year off to pursue stem cell research. Eventually I'd like to specialize in surgery.



## What is the best thing about the School of Medicine?

I've had the opportunity to grow and mature as a leader by being at UC Davis. I'm a co-director of the Imani Clinic, one of seven free clinics run by UC Davis students, and I'm the chapter president of the Student National Medical Association. The school has really supported me in developing ideas on improving diversity within health care, which is very important to me.

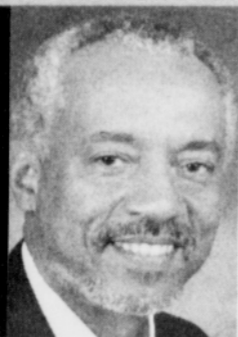
## What's new in your life today?

My wife and I just had our first child, a boy. Our busy household just got a lot busier!

Omar Washington

## Parent's Corner

BY RON HERNDON



Parents Preamble: I will ensure my child receives a quality education. If I don't fight for my child's education, no one else will. It's worth the effort. My child's future depends upon me.

and teachers. Most principals and teachers appreciate you making the effort to do this.

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## Making Sure the Teaching is Effective

In the beginning of the school year, it is important to meet your child's principal and teachers. Most principals and teachers appreciate you making the effort to do this. The visit is important because this is often when school personnel are forming opinions of children, including the determination of which children's parents "care." Right or wrong, educators frequently give children more attention if they believe their parents "care." In summary, parents should quickly meet principals and teachers. They will be responsible for your child's education six hours a day for the next nine months.

Share your phone number, text

messaging number or email address with the principal and teachers. Ask that they immediately contact you if your child is falling behind in any subject or is having behavior problems. Let the principal and teachers know you want to be notified right away if your child is having problems, not nine weeks later on a report card.

Ask school personnel to share the procedure for getting a copy of your child's permanent record. It is referred to as the cumulative file. Also, request in writing a copy of any and all information on your child that is in Portland Public Schools electronic records or ESIS file. It may have information that is not in the cumulative file, such as staff referrals. This follows your child year to year, and school to school.

Many times, the information in these records determine how teachers view your child. It may influence whether school personnel have high or low expectations of your child. You should be aware of all official records regarding your child. Again, this information may impact how teachers and administrators view your child. This information will help you better advocate for your child.

Teachers and principals who consistently help your child achieve at or above grade level should be publically supported and praised. If your child is below grade level, and school personnel help your child make rapid progress toward grade level, thank them profusely. These educators are helping you protect your child's future. Announce their names at church, ask their names to be

included in church bulletins. Invite them to community meetings so they can be recognized and thanked. Share the names of these educators on Facebook. Ask that these educational heroes be introduced at the Oregon Symphony, Blazer games, Oregon Legislature. A heartfelt thank you cannot be said enough or shared in too many public places.

If parents learn a principal or teacher has a consistent record, year in and year out, of not being able to help children perform at grade level, every effort should be made to move your child into a room with a teacher who has a record of consistently helping children perform at or above grade level. Every effort should be made to remove the principal and teacher, replace them with educators who have consistently had children performing at or above grade level.

Children do not have years to waste in the care of ineffective adults. Adults would not return to eat at a restaurant consistently featured on "Dirty Dining." Why send our children to principals or teachers that have consistently been unable to help children perform at or above grade level? The dirty little secret is that parents at schools in upper-income communities have a long history of quickly moving ineffective teachers and principals. More next week.

Ron Herndon is a long-time advocate for educational opportunities for African-American children. He has served as director of Head Start in Portland since 1975.

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