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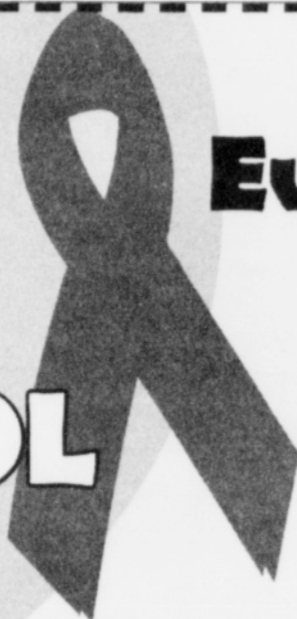
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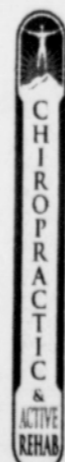
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'Crowned Jewels'

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exhibit, put together by Rev. Renee Ward, was held on Monday, and made possible by Concordia University's Arts and Culture program in partnership with Ward's Chrysalis Ministries and other community associations, including Portland Center Stage.

"These are all Northwest African-American women whose lives were touched by breast cancer," said Linda Church, another breast cancer survivor and the director of the Arts and Culture Program at Concordia University. "The whole point of doing this exhibit here and now is because we are an institution of education, and we are dedicated to our surrounding community."

The reception was filled with individuals from throughout the community whose lives have been changed by breast cancer. Dressed in pink, Church was one of many attending wearing a local tailored hat, in honor of the brevity and courage of the survivors, like her, of the disease.

The purpose of the program, she said, was to educate and inspire with the visual arts because it is a different process of learning than

simply opening a book, which is why she is so excited to support women who have made an effort to help educate the public of breast cancer.

"We learn from each other," said Church. "More than we can ever learn on our own."

The American Cancer Society and Multnomah County attended the ceremony to outreach and provide information to the public with display tables, which will be available throughout the entire month.

"The point is to get the word out," said Church. "This visual exhibit is very engaging. I like seeing and creating avenues where people are excited and pulled in by what they see."

Although she lost a breast during treatment of cancer, Jackson said she couldn't find the words to express the amount of joy and appreciation she has gained from the experience, and she spoke of her grandchildren.

"I thought I had become a woman with the birth of my two sons," she said. "It wasn't until I had to make profound and altering decisions about my physical body, along with the loss of my hair, that I entered into woman hood."

Author Sends Message of Hope

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The name for his book, he said, graphically details the consequences of acting on wrong information in anticipation of right results. A lesson that came into being the night he realized his plane of reference was "really skewed."

"So many of us are not aware of who and what we are," said McCoy. "Seldom do we look within for those genuine authentic true answers that reside within all of us."

According to McCoy, too many people within society have a dependency on others to tell them what to believe.

Even as a child, he said he received information that he should do what he was told, and if he did all these things, then he would receive the American dream.

"But I received the American nightmare," he said. "I was a prison of my own mind, and was using the wrong information."

McCoy said humans have consequently fallen into "some sort of deep amnesia," which catalyzes the pervasive mentality which often keeps people from making changes within their own lives. "Forever incarcerated in a state of mental and spiritual ignorance, I was unaware of, and therefore unable to seek, the guidance of the authentic being that I am," he said.

"Because we don't realize or act on this," he said. "We submit ourselves to a lesser existence, and this

crosses all economic and community lines."

He said, however, as a result of his process of self-discovery, those issues are no longer alive within his life.

Although he felt helpless for a long time, he said "everyone has the power to rescue their own selves, which is a gift we give to ourselves."

"As a result of regaining my humanity I can allow myself to live my own happiness."

According to McCoy, Portland in particular has such an incredible opportunity for healing within the city. "Portland is so progressive in its thinking, but we need to truly see and value one another, and say together we can deal with the issues that are impacting our communities," he said.

"In order to do this, you must look into yourself."

Each and every obstacle I have encountered has a purpose, said McCoy. "And that is the purpose of the book—to promote healing."

Coming up on Saturday, October 29, McCoy invites the community to attend his book release celebration where wine and Hors d'oeuvres will be served at the Talking Drum Bookstore located at Reflections Coffee House in northeast Portland.

McCoy's book will be available to purchase at the event, which will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. at 446 N.E. Killingsworth St.

Leon McCoy's Book False Images is also available at Portland State University bookstore and online at amazon.com.