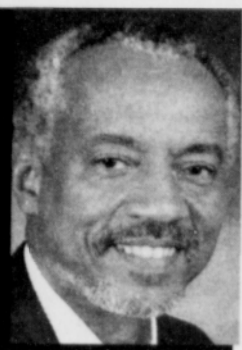


Parent's Corner

BY RON HERNDON



Scholar Derrick Bell and Portland Schools

Derrick Bell, a civil rights scholar who went on to become Harvard's first black tenured law school professor, died Oct. 5. One of professor Bell's Harvard students was President Barack Obama. Parents, you may ask, what does this mean to children in Portland Public Schools? Derrick Bell was instrumental in stopping Portland's racist policy of busing only black children to accomplish its warped notions of school integration.

In 1979, Portland's black community organized to stop this despicable busing practice. In 1980, Derrick Bell was the incoming Dean of the University of Oregon Law School. While traveling through Portland on his way to the Oregon campus, members of the local black community asked Bell if he would be a surprise speaker in their support at a Portland School Board meeting.

He agreed, and for almost an hour calmly destroyed any intellectual underpinnings for busing black children to improve academic perfor-

mance. A few months after Bell's presentation and continued pressure from the community, the decade plus busing program was ended.

It is important to read Professor Bell's work. The following is taken from his May 8, 2000, Brooklyn College, Samuel Konefsky Memorial Lecture, Revisiting Brown v. Board of Education:

"On May 17, 1954, I was on a troop ship heading home from a year's military duty in Korea. I entered law school that fall, and after the first year, began submitting so much writing on racial issues that the faculty advisor to the law review warned me, only half in-jest, that I was trying to turn the publication into the University of Pittsburg Civil Rights journal."

"At that point, like many, I assumed that the Brown decision marked the beginning of the end of Jim Crow in all its myriad forms and that for black Americans, for too long burdened by our subordinate status, there was to paraphrase the Spiritual, 'a great day a-coming."

"And why not? Brown repre-

sented the culmination of two decades of litigation all aimed at gaining reversal of Plessy v. Fergusson, the 1896 Supreme Court decision providing constitutional legitimacy to the growing number of state laws requiring the segregation of blacks and whites in public facilities, schools, and virtually every area where the two races might intersect.

"Focusing on segregation in the public schools, the challenge in the five cases the (Supreme) Court brought before it in the Brown decision, the Court said whatever the state of public education when Plessy was decided,

it was now of far more importance, and the evidence showed, school set asides were not only inferior, but harmed the hearts and minds of black children forced to attend them in ways so serious as unlikely to be undone.

"Thurgood Marshall, then director counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, invited me to join the staff where, from 1960 until 1965, I handled and supervised most of the Southern school litigation that at one point reached 300 cases.

"Joining a law faculty (Harvard) in 1969, I gained a broader perspective on the by then quarter-century-long campaign

to desegregate the public schools. For reasons I will explain, I recognize now that the Brown decision, while serving the nation's foreign policy and domestic concerns, provided petitioners with no more than a semblance of the racial equality that they and theirs have sought for so long. In fact, Brown was actually an anti-subversion decision carefully couched in civil rights rhetoric."

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.

Margaret Carter Honored

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life working and advocating for the people of north and northeast Portland. I don't think one can find a more committed proponent of education, nor a more dedicated champion for members of traditionally underrepresented communities."

Senator Carter's personal and professional association with the college dates back some five decades, when she began taking classes at the Cascade Campus to support her baccalaureate studies.

"Portland Community College has been the access and success to the renewal of my life," said Senator Carter. "I began my renewing journey with PCC as a student in the fall of 1968. After completing my master's degree, I interned as a student in the spring of 1973. The rest is history."

Carter credits the forward thinking of PCC's faculty and administration - particularly Dr. Amo DeBernardis, PCC's first president - for giving her the opportunity to go to work for the college.

"Because of the opportunity thinking of Amo DeBernardis, I began my work as a member of the counseling faculty in September of 1973," Carter said.

Sen. Carter's successful stint as a counselor and instructor with the college as well as her growing stature in the community, led the Louisiana native to seek public office. She ran successfully for the Oregon

House of Representatives in 1984, becoming the first African American woman to be elected to the Oregon Legislature. She followed this with a successful bid for the state Senate in 2000, where she eventually served as President Pro Tempore and co-chair of the Joint Ways & Means Committee and co-chair of the Joint Ways & Means Committee. She capped her public career as Deputy Director for Human Services Programs at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

While in Salem, Sen. Carter continued as a vocal advocate for higher education in general, and for community colleges and PCC in particular. In 1989, she was instrumental in establishing the Cascade Campus Skill Center, which was renamed in her honor in 2007.

"Sen. Carter's history with the college and the campus is deep and abiding," said Gatewood. "And it's only fitting that we name a building in her honor."

Carter herself was delighted that her name will be forever associated with PCC.

"I came to PCC and moved on," she said. "My children came to PCC and moved on. My grandchildren came to PCC and moved on. And with 15 great-grandchildren, I am sure that PCC will help generate educational opportunities for a third generation of my family. Kudos to PCC and its 'opportunity thinking.' "

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