

# New Life

continued ▲ from front

arms felt like they had needles sticking out of them."

After witnessing the expression of her husband, Marie asked if he was alright, but when it became clear he wasn't, she drove him to the nearest hospital.

"I went in, and I said I need to see a doctor. My chest is really hurting me," he said.

The health professionals administered morphine for the pain, but Lockett said the drugs were not helping him feel better.

"That is when they told me I was experiencing a heart attack," he said.

The couple doesn't remember the name of the drug the hospital told Marie she needed to sign off on, but they both recalled, in unison, the power the medicine had on him.

Lockett wasn't allowed to leave the island for six weeks, but he recovered quickly.

"I owe my life to her," he said, looking across their living room to his wife, who smiled a modest smile.

After recovery, Luther returned to work for two years, until mid-1986, when he was encouraged to take a medical retirement because of the poor condition of his heart.

A few days after the New Year in

1987, Luther said he was home sitting in the green and beige lounging chair he currently sits in, when he began to feel pain emerge in his chest.

After Marie saw the expression on his face again, she rushed him to the nearest hospital.

"The next day she (the nurse) told my wife we had a second heart attack," he said. "I could see the fear in her face."

Although they stabilized him, Lockett said, "It was the only time I had a feeling I might be ready to cash it in, and I told her (Marie), 'Guess I won't be see my granddaughters again.'"

Unable to bear the thought, Marie called her daughter, who worked for an airline company out of California, and she put their 4-year granddaughter Le Shante on a plane to Portland.

"Our family is close," he said. "But my heart was pumpin' 1/5th of what it should be pumpin'. They gave me at most 2-years."

But after his daughters talked with the doctors, they suggested a transplant, which Luther said he had yet to consider.

"So they ran tests and then sent me to OHSU for some more tests," he said. "I met with social workers,

psychologists, and finally, they approved me."

He was put on a waiting list for a transplant on a Wednesday, and by the following Sunday at 1 a.m., Marie and Luther Lockett received the life changing phone call, saying "We have a heart for you."

Everything began to move quickly once they arrived at the hospital, where they took him to a room that contained a plethora of boxes, which Lockett said resembled

the batteries from the Bonneville sub-station at his work.

"They said, that is what is going to keep you alive without a heart," he recalled. "I had heard my heart was coming from Vancouver, and that is the last thing I remember until Monday."

Throughout the two-weeks in the hospital after his surgery, Lockett said within a few days he "hadn't felt that good in a long time."

Previously, he said the walk from

"The number one myth still prevalent in our community is that people think that if the hospital knows they're a registered donor, doctors won't try to save their life, but that is not true at all," she said.

Organ, eye and tissue donation happens only after all life saving efforts has been exhausted and death has been, we believe, declared, she said. "The hospital staff are there to tend to your immediate emergency and don't access donor

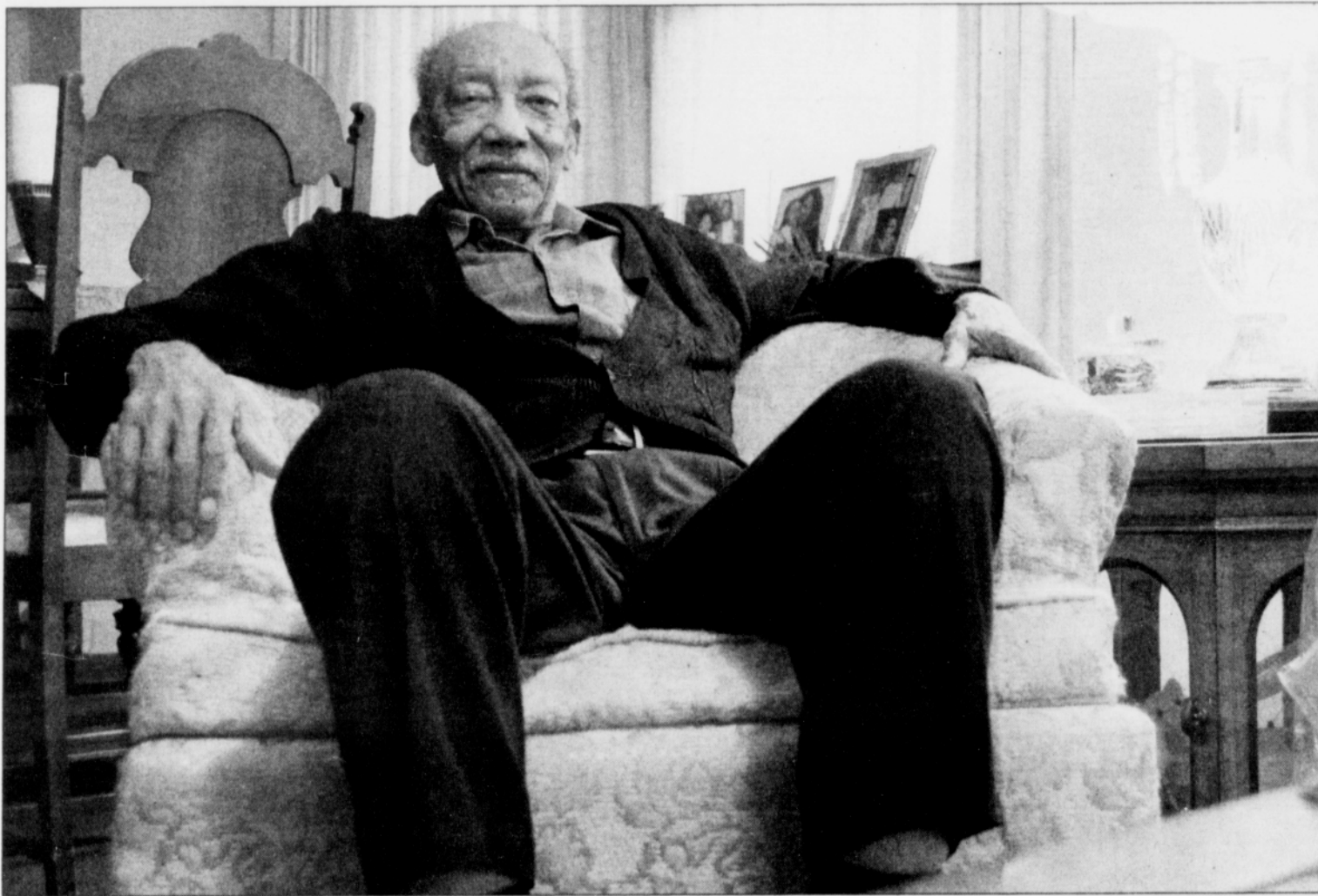


PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Heart transplant recipient Luther Lockett Jr. in his northeast Portland home, 25 years after his lifesaving operation.

Living the Legacy

# MLK

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## TRIBUTE



REV. DR. W.G. HARDY, JR.  
Advocate for Portland's African American community

THURSDAY,  
JANUARY 19, 2012  
7 P.M.

Portland State University  
Smith Memorial Student  
Union Ballroom, Room 355  
1825 SW Broadway

\$5 general public  
FREE with valid student ID  
Tickets available at the PSU Box Office  
503-725-3307, or Ticketmaster outlets

Complete details at [pdx.edu/mcc](http://pdx.edu/mcc)

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Urban League of Portland, Black United Fund of Oregon,  
Oregon Nikkei Foundation, Mexican Consulate, PSU Office  
of Information Technology, PSU Multicultural Center,  
PSU Office of University Communications



the bedroom to the living room was a wind full.

"But since the transplant, I was no longer disabled, and if I am no longer disabled, I could go back to work," he said.

At the time, he said waiting lists for organ transplants were much shorter.

"As more people hear about it, see what it does, and what it means, more people are put on the waiting lists than they have organs for," he said. "So we try to educate people because there is a need, and transplantation does work."

He said, however, you still have to take care of yourself, obey doctor's orders, and above all, take your medications, including the anti-rejection drug, which he said he will take for the rest of his life.

"I know a lot of people, especially black people, who will tell you that whatever I was born with I want to be buried with," he said. "But if you have known someone, it is different, and they are willing."

He encourages everyone to talk to their family members, if they don't know your wishes.

Hunt agrees. "I think for some people it is really hard to talk about death, and donations are related to death," she said. "But we like people to consider thinking about the good that can happen from their passing, and they can help over 50 people by being an organ, eye and tissue donor."

registry."

Although Marie and Luther Lockett said they don't know much about the donor, despite multiple attempts to locate his family, they believe he was a late-teen who was killed in a car accident with a friend on a highway in Vancouver.

Although Lockett never had the chance to speak with the donor's family members, if given the opportunity, he would say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. Because whatever their loved one has done, or what kind of person, he has been a good person to me."

As a way to give back, Lockett is a volunteer with Donate Life Northwest, sharing the message of the importance of organ donation.

Although studies show that 90 percent of Americans support transplantation, only 30 percent know the steps needed to sign up on their state's registry.

In conjunction with the American Red Cross Martin Luther King Jr. Blood Drive on Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Red Cross Blood Center on Vancouver Avenue, residents are encouraged to also sign up for the organ donor registry.

Registration can also be made online at [donatelifenw.org](http://donatelifenw.org), by requesting a donor code on your driver's license at any Department of Motor Vehicle office, or by calling 503-494-7888 to make the change through a paper form.