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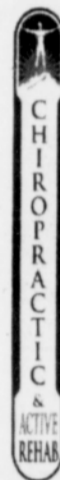
Parking Area

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Whatever It Takes

continued ▲ from front

demonstration, downtown. "But I find it completely unfair that a person is going to be arrested for something that is neither immoral nor threatening."

Whitten said police are hired by the legal system, but the public is still equal when it comes to moral authority.

"I am willing to use any conduit to help people realize their potential," he said.

Although Whitten has no previous experience in politics or government, he said he has been a concerned citizen his entire life.

Growing up in Virginia, Whitten experienced first-hand what a life of hardship feels like while living with an abusive father, and a mother he described as an "insecure, misguided woman."

"It was my upbringing, and the fact that I suffered so much as a kid, that I know what it feels like to feel anguish," he said. "And I never want to wish that upon anybody."

In 2009, after graduating from high school, he moved to the Portland area, where he said he instantly felt at home.

"Culturally, Portland is probably stronger than any other area in the country," he said, explaining his vegan lifestyle, love for biking and yoga. "No one in the city can be a cultural majority."

He said, however, disparities are still extremely present throughout Portland, where there is a disconnection between residents and the institutions, which people rely on too often to make necessary changes instead of collaborating together and demanding answers.

"Politicians have been avoiding a convention," he said.

Whitten said he wants the city to be doing more in terms of economic and social equality. He recognizes that intertwined within Oregon and Portland's history lays economic and racial oppression, which is still apparent in its rural areas and highly segre-

gated neighborhoods.

"Although the city flaunts its liberal, progressive politics," he said, "it is lagging behind in employment and education in comparison to the rest of the country. It's time for Portland to experience a reawakening."

Although running for mayor is one more way to have his voice heard, Whitten said joining the campaign was not initially on his plan of action.

City Hall was under a lockdown by Mayor Sam Adams, when Whitten, along with 40 other individuals, rallied outside the building.

"My first intention was going into City Hall and complaining and refusing to leave until I was listened to, but it was locked down," he said. "I met somebody outside who said they were running for mayor, and being spontaneous like I am, I went to the security officers and asked them for the paper work, and then they actually let me inside."

Although Whitten became the only one to truly enter his name into the race, once he returned outside from City Hall, he said he attempted to inspire everyone to run for office.

"I have gotten really serious about what my commitment to the city looks like, and how I can support these activists and retain the positive message that they have about returning equality to society," he said.

He rejects comments from others who say he is too young, that he doesn't know what he is doing, and that he isn't going to get anywhere within the elections.

"Me running is my statement of not taking no for an answer," he said. "I believe anytime a person resists against oppression it is a success."

"The second we start submitting—that is when we fail to exercise our freedoms," he said.

For more information, to contact or to help with the campaign, visit Cameron Whitten's website at cameronwhittenforunity.com.

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