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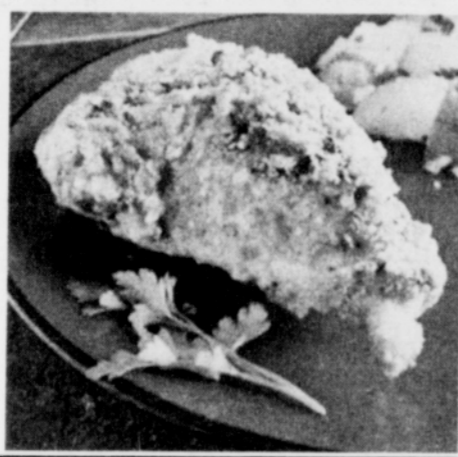
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# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?

## LOCAL NEWS

# New Urban Leader

### Humble roots lead Michael Alexander to public service

BY CARI HACHMANN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

"I understand how to serve a community, because I grew up in one," said New York-raised Michael Alexander, who has taken the reins as the Urban League of Portland's 13th president and chief executive officer.

A Regence Blue Cross Blue Shield executive in Portland for the past seven years, Alexander was selected to guide the local civil rights and community service organization because of his success as a leader in business and public service. He has worked in large healthcare organizations for the past 25 to 30 years, but came looking for a unique opportunity like this one.

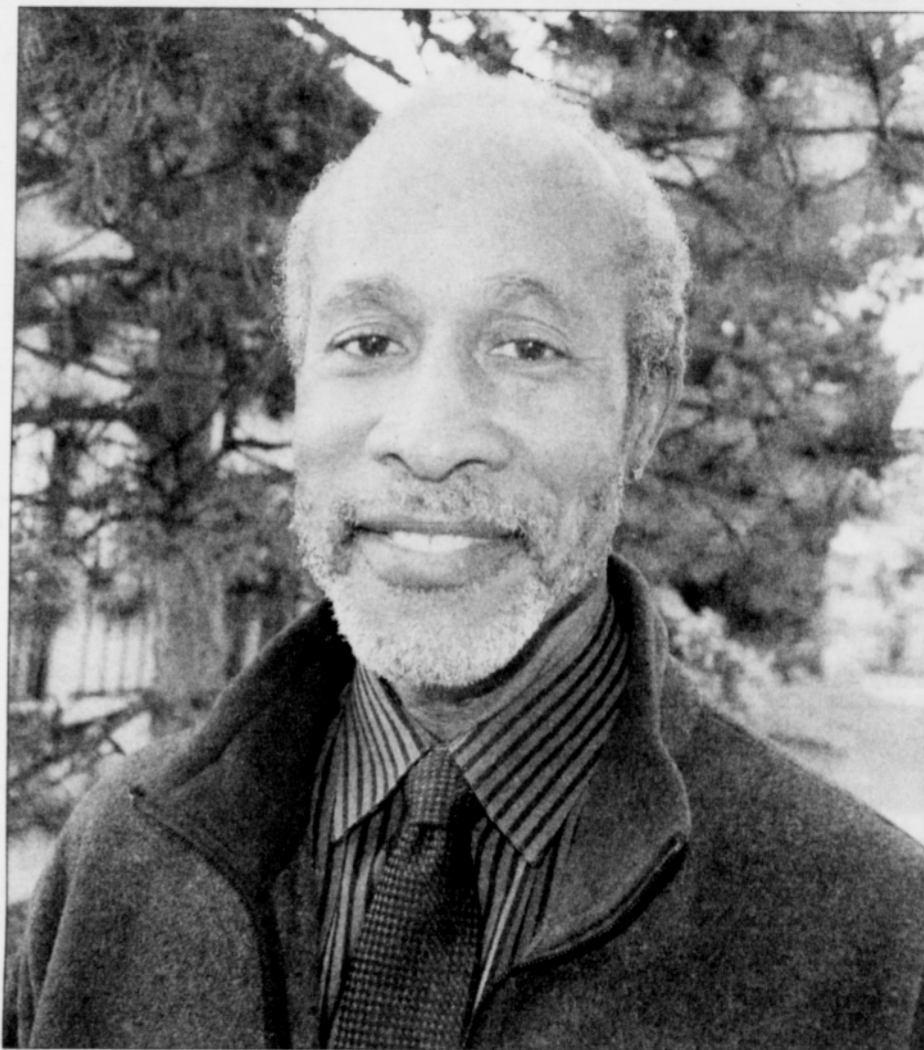
"I wanted to spend the last couple years of my career where I started," Alexander said in an interview with the Portland Observer.

The Urban League began its search for a new leader in March after the resignation of former League president, Marcus Mundy in December. Among a pool of highly-qualified candidates, Anderson took the position in August.

"The Urban league is a critical voice in advocating and elevating the interests of Portlanders and Oregonians who want and deserve to share more fully in all this very special city has to offer," he said.

Humble New York beginnings, working hard alongside three brothers, saving money for college as a lifeguard, and doing a job no one else would as a claim adjuster in Harlem, pointed him to a life dedicated in the humanities and touching the lives of others, said Alexander.

His highest degree, a Masters in Social Services from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, helped guide his rich work history in social work as a community organizer and mental health director



Michael Alexander is the new president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Portland.

and later, a behavioral health manager for multiple large health divisions and corporations including Aetna, Magellan and Regence.

Anderson moved to Portland in 2005 to become vice president of account management at Regence. Since his arrival, he has served on boards for Lifeworks Northwest, Portland Parks and Recreation, the Oregon American Leadership Forum, and the cabinet for United Way of Columbia-Willamette.

Of all the cities he's lived in, Alexander says he loves Portland the most.

"It's a peculiar paradise," he said. He likes the city's progressive bent and that Portland doesn't just tolerate, but invites differences among its inhabitants.

There's room at the table for everyone," he said, but that doesn't mean the city is without its failings.

Alexander said he's never lived in a city where the

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## Portland Schools Enrollment Up

Enrollment is up for Portland Public Schools by more than 200 students from last year to 47,508 students, according to the district's fall student count.

That makes four years of growing enrollment and an increase of nearly 1,500 students since the 2008-09 school year, school officials said.

Some individual schools saw even more notable increases.

Roosevelt High School in north Portland gained 74 students to reach 826, a 10 percent increase and the largest enrollment in nearly a decade.

Lane Middle School's enrollment increased 10 percent to 486. James John Elementary gained 37 students to 439 – an increase of 9 percent. Abernethy Elementary School gained 50 students – an

increase of 11 percent.

Overall, the trend of triple digit growth in early grades continued this year. With the exception of second grade, all grades K-7 have more students than the year before.

While overall high school enrollment decreased this year, the numbers are predicted to rise in the coming years.