

## Startup Businesses Make Cut

'PDX Challenge' focuses on diversity, ambition

Six startup businesses have made the cut to win the second annual "Startup PDX Challenge," a Portland Development Commission-sponsored effort to find entrepreneurs with diverse founding teams and the ambition to scale to a national or international market.

Each company receives a package valued at \$50,000, with a \$15,000 working capital grant, a full year of rent-free office space at 115 SW Ash in Portland's Old Town/Chinatown, and free professional advice, memberships and services.

In addition to the six winners, five companies have been named merit finalists and will each receive a package valued at \$4,000.

The Challenge drew a field of 134 applicants, narrowed first to 19 semi-finalists and then to the six



Patrick Quinton

winner and five merit finalists by a selection committee which interviewed the representatives of each semi-finalist company.

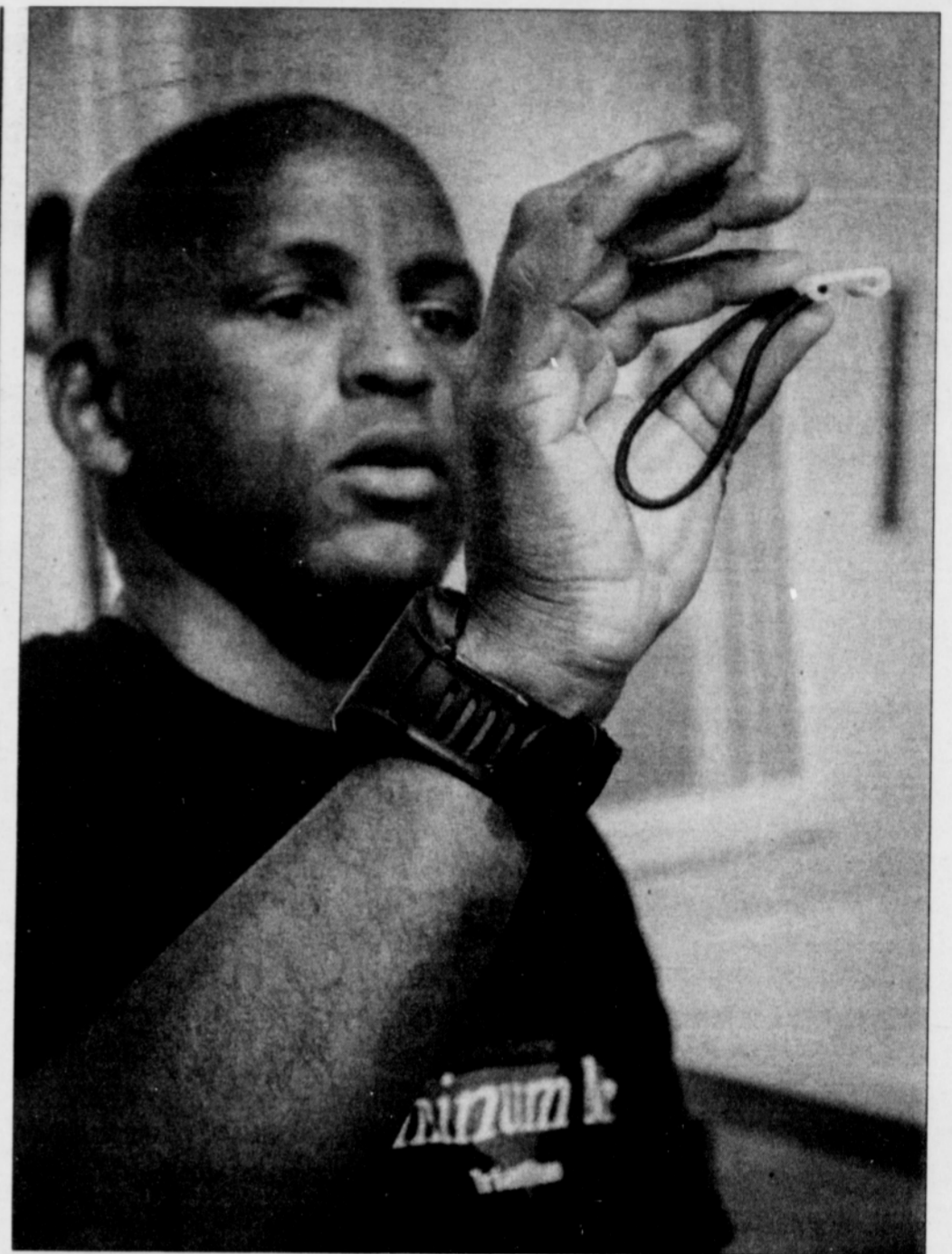
The winners represent both industry and demographic diversity. The full group encompasses developers of new consumer products, technology and services, and includes eight startups with women founders; five with African American founders; three with Asian founders; two with Native American founders; and one with Latino founders.

Patrick Quinton, PDC executive director, said, "We were

thrilled with the response to this year's call for diverse founding teams that will help us develop a more inclusive innovation community. We look forward to welcoming the winning entrepreneurs to our expanding network of experienced, innovative companies competing in the global economy."

The six winners, all from the Portland metropolitan area, are Yellow Scope, a creator of rigorous science kits just for girls; RAFT Syrups, which brews organic botanical and cane sugar syrup for cocktails and home soda making; Society Nine, a fight gear and activewear apparel brand for women; NoAppFee.com, a technology solution to rental market problems for landlords and tenants; Design+Culture Lab, a research-based urban social lab addressing issues of cultural, racial and ethnic inequality; and Tique Box, a subscription service for specialty items from local artisans.

Merit finalists are Genki Su; VDO Interpreters; and Carehubs, from the Portland area; and ICOM of Atlanta, Ga., which was also the winner of the public vote.



Portland inventor and business owner Reggie Senegal shows off his "SnapLaces," a revolutionary way for both the elderly and young children to fasten their shoes without shoelaces.

## Portland Entrepreneur Invents 'SnapLaces'

Reggie Senegal, an African American inventor and entrepreneur living in Portland is the creator of "SnapLaces," a product designed to assist your daily living and to improve quality of life.

SnapLaces is a revolutionary way for both the elderly and young children to fasten their shoes without shoelaces. They provide a simple way for all people to fasten their shoes in order to accomplish a healthier lifestyle.

Senegal says he plans to make the Northwest the hub for his

manufacturing with the hopes of contributing to the local economy and jobs.

Raised by a single mother in Houston, like many, Senegal dreamed of independence and success. He was a college athlete, a personal trainer and had a strong creative will. SnapLaces is the showcase of his strong work and dedication.

SnapLaces launched an online Kickstarter Crowd Funding campaign this summer. For more information, visit [snaplaces.com](http://snaplaces.com).

## Leaving Justice Department

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But the first black attorney general could be leaving several things undone as he transitions out:

— Possible federal charges in the deaths of black men including Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Fla.

— The November monitoring of congressional and statewide elections that will take place after the Supreme Court threw out a major protection in the Voting Rights Act.

— And projects he personally promoted such as the reduction of racial profiling in federal investigations, changes in how federal prosecutors negotiate sentencing,

changes in the death penalty system and efforts to reduce tensions between local police departments and minority communities.

For his part, Holder told the Congressional Black Caucus during its legislative conference on Friday that he plans to keep on pushing voting rights and civil rights protections while still in office. He has agreed to stay on until the Senate confirms his replacement, and President Barack Obama has yet to name that person.

"In the meantime, there remains a great deal to be done," said Holder, who got a standing ovation from the crowd as he entered the room. "I have no intention of letting up or slowing down."

*Saluting Martin Luther King Jr.*

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