

Amber Starks's passion for natural hair led her to successfully advocate for the re-writing of state law easing regulations on hair stylists who braid, weave and lock hair without the use of chemicals.

Change Agent

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with natural hair styles as a volunteer hair stylist. At the time you could not offer to braid hair even as a volunteer without the required 1,700 hours of cosmetology classes.

Making matters worse, African-American children are over-represented in the foster care system, and many adoptive parents are unfamiliar with natural hair care.

"So many of us learn this at home, from our families," Starks said, "We need that to be recognized."

Since the passing of the bill, other black hair care specialists can open and operate their own legitimate businesses outside their homes.

"Before, you just had to hope you knew someone, word of mouth," Starks says. "It was hard if you had a child but you didn't have insider knowledge, because there wouldn't be someone to tell you where to go."

"This kind of award is so important to me," Starks says, as she twists a client's hair. "It's not just important to black families, but to everyone. We cater to all kinds of families, and I work with a lot of kids, and all this is important to them. They deserve to have these skills passed along to them regardless of who raises them or what their family looks like."

Starks also gives credit to the Urban League of Portland where she enrolled in a social justice and leadership program. The tools she gained during that program helped empower her to tackle the legislative process.

Starks will continue to work from her downtown Portland salon and you can learn more about her business and her story at consciouscoils.com, call or text 971-998-8606, or visit 1033 S.W. Yamhill St Suite 405, Portland.

Clearing the Air

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of hip hop shows.

Tensions came to a head last March after an incident at the Blue Monk in southeast Portland, when Portland-based rapper Immaculate left his own show in protest of a heavy police presence. The night still burns bright for many of Portland's rap fans, and last week the City Auditor's Independent Police Review Board released results of an investigation that it hoped would prove or disprove a perception that law enforcement was pre-deposed to targeting black music events.

Over 30 local rappers and hip-hop artists, promoters, officers, and city officials were interviewed for

the investigation, officials said.

"One way to move the conversation beyond conflicting narratives of whether police are present at hip-hop events more than other types of music events is for there to [be] better documentation by the Portland Police Bureau of the walk-throughs it does conduct," the board found.

The review noted that similar instances of police and fire marshal inspections arrived on more mainstream white-audience events like PDX Pop Now or at venue's like Kelly's Olympian. It concluded that despite no definitive evidence of whether or not black venues are targeted more often, the perception that they are is pervasive and needs

to be addressed.

The report said the belief in the hip-hop community that events which are perceived to have a significant percentage of black patrons are subject to closer scrutiny than other types of music events is one that should greatly concern city officials.

The review also makes many suggestions to how the city can address these perceptions. One of the most important points was for police and fire department officials to develop a standard operating procedure for how it conducts walk-throughs of local venues.

The review also calls for the city to open and maintain an extended dialogue with members of the hip-hop and black music community, letting conversations to flow more easily and the music to be appreciated more at ease.

Leaving a Legacy

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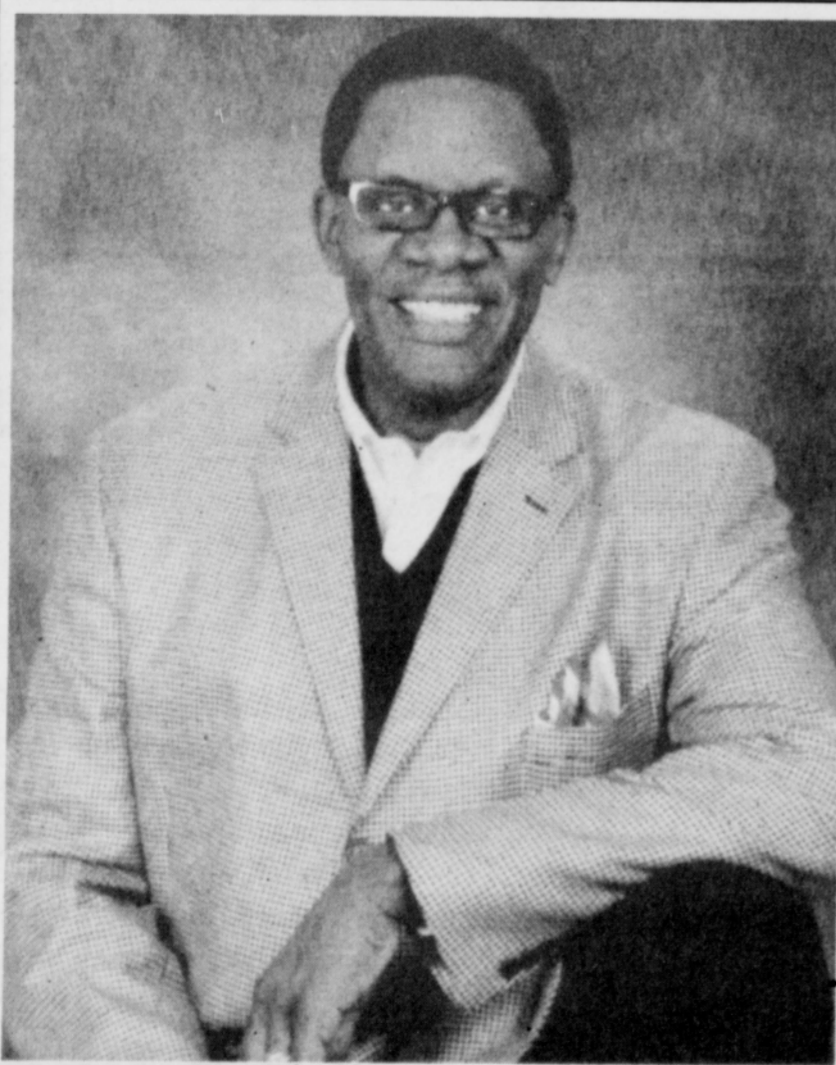
string of business and professional awards, including the Business Excellence Award, the King Neighborhood Business Award, and the Delta Sigma Theta Women of Excellence Award.

She will be remembered for her service to the community as well, as being active with the American Cancer Society and the Sister Circle. She was an active member of dozens of community organizations and social clubs, including the New Hope Baptist Church, the Urban League of Portland, the Chal-

lengers Bridge Club of American Bridge Association, the Ebony Rose Ski Club, Bubbling Brown Sugar, and the Alpha Chi Pi Omega Sorority and Fraternity Alpha Mu Beta Chapter.

A life celebration is pending arrangements of services and will be announced by the Portland Observer as soon as they are formulated.

The Knauls family has been so deeply connected to the African American community in Portland. The Portland Observer shares in the love for Geneva and hopes that the entire community will join in honoring and celebrating her life and memory.



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