

Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to [news@portlandobserver.com](mailto:news@portlandobserver.com).

# OPINION

## Our School Board Endorsements

Three upcoming open seats on the Portland School Board will be decided in the May 16 vote-by-mail election. The Portland Observer encourages you to vote for Jamila Singleton Munson, Julia Brim-Edwards and Virginia LaForte.

By choosing Monson for Zone 4, voters can elect a needed voice from the African American community, a dedicated and experienced educator, and a candidate to correct board dysfunction with collaborative leadership.

Monson is a Grant High School graduate, former teacher, principal and leader of a non-profit organization for future education leaders. She has the distinction of empowering kids in historically underserved



Jamila Singleton Munson

communities and wants to use that experience to reshape public education in Portland and decrease disparities between students.



Julie Brim-Edwards

Monson established her teaching credentials as a fifth grade public school teacher in the South Bronx after being recruited by Teach for America, a



Virginia LaForte

non-profit committed to teaching in low-income schools and working to increase opportunities for disadvantaged populations.

We disagree with critics who oppose her work with charter schools, an unfair attack that puts the self interest of teachers ahead of students, especially from Portland's black community and other minority groups. Consider the value of Self Enhancement, Inc. for example, the highly successful, homegrown public charter school working hand in hand with Portland Public Schools to improve the outcomes of hundreds of black and minority children.

In Zone 5 and 6, voters should choose LaForte and Brim-Edwards, two leaders who have successfully worked with the district in the past and know how to get things done in a spirit of cooperation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

## Public Downfall Long Time in Making

### O'Reilly's exit from right-wing Fox

BY MARC H. MORIAL

*"Bill O'Reilly has helped set the bar for the normalization and dissemination of right-wing hatred, offering incendiary commentary about sexual harassment and assault, gender, race and ethnicity, low-income people, the LGBTQ community, Muslims and refugees, immigrants, and reproductive rights."* — **Media Matters for America**



Bill O'Reilly's public downfall was a long time in the making—set in motion by a string of sexual harassment claims and the hemorrhaging of high-profile advertisers from "The O'Reilly Factor," a Fox News channel mainstay and money maker.

According to reporting by the New York Times, for a period that spanned 15 years, O'Reilly and 21st Century Fox—the parent company for Fox News—together settled five separate allegations of sexual harassment brought by female Fox employees—which included accusations of verbal abuse, unwanted advances and explicit comments—for \$13 million. And since that report was published, more women have come forward alleging gross and inap-

propriate behavior by Fox's biggest star.

O'Reilly's cable news program was cash cow for Fox News. It is nothing short of a testament to the show's money generating power and vaulted cable ratings perch that Fox News kept O'Reilly on payroll as the company quietly purchased the silence of his accusers for over a decade.

In a nod to television's obsession with re-runs, the so-called swift end to O'Reilly's career at Fox News was preceded by a similar scandal involving Roger Ailes, the network's co-founder and then-chairman. Accused of multiple acts of sexual harassment, 21st Century Fox paid out \$35 million to Gretchen Carlson, a former Fox News anchor, and several unidentified women to settle their lawsuit against Ailes. Fox News also lost two top hosts, Greta Van Susteren and Megyn Kelly (who later accused Ailes of sexual harassment) and paid \$40 million in severance to Ailes in the ensuing fallout.

Following the ouster and made-for-television-scandal of Ailes, 21st Century Fox released a statement that vowed to maintain a work environment based on trust and respect, yet, O'Reilly remained on the payroll—his last contract even included a clause for his termination in case any new cases of harassment came to light—and women who

claimed to have suffered under his abuse were being quieted, as per usual.

It is clear that if Fox News could not be moved by decency to maintain a "work environment based on trust and respect," it was certainly moved by dollars.

O'Reilly was also a problematic figure in many other ways. He has a long and well-established history of making racist remarks.

Days before his expulsion from Fox News, O'Reilly watched a speech Rep. Maxine Waters gave from the House floor discussing patriotism in our nation's current political environment, and his response was to mock her hair, calling it a "James Brown wig." Outraged that a college president was criticized as racist for posting a picture of his staff dressed in sombreros and mustaches, O'Reilly claimed that if you go to any Mexican restaurant in the world, staff comes out, "singing 'Guantanamo' with the sombreros on." I've had my own brushes with O'Reilly, including an interview where he demanded that leaders such as myself "stop the BS" in relation to reducing what he coined "the Black crime problem."

But it was neither racism, nor the bitter fruits of sexism that ended O'Reilly's storied rise at Fox News.

Fox News had a choice to make: Keep O'Reilly, whose ratings were still strong despite the scandal, or hurt the bottom

line and lose 90 advertisers, and counting, who had stampeded away from the taint of scandal. Despite O'Reilly's repeated denials of the harassment claims and support from people like Sean Hannity, a Fox news contributor who is now facing his own accusations of sexual harassment, and President Trump, who has his own colorful history with women, including boasting about grabbing them, and dealing with his own accusations of sexual harassment, Fox News could no longer bear the cost of keeping their star contributor.

But while O'Reilly may be down, he is far from out. His permanently tarnished reputation aside, we haven't seen the last of Bill O'Reilly. Just days after his unceremonious ouster

from Fox, O'Reilly is making his media comeback online, resuming his "No Spin News" podcast. His publisher has said he will continue to publish O'Reilly's books. And he received a sizeable parting gift from Fox News in the amount of \$25 million—a year's worth of his salary.

There is a victory to celebrate here, but it is a qualified one, if at the highest levels of leadership, we commit to the belief that women, children, and men have inherent dignity that should never be violated. The rise and money-padded fall of O'Reilly sends a mixed message, to say the least, to women and men in the workplace.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

Providing Insurance and Financial Services  
Home Office, Bloomington, Illinois 61710

**Ernest J. Hill, Jr.** Agent

4946 N. Vancouver Avenue,  
Portland, OR 97217

503 286 1103 Fax 503 286 1146

[ernie.hill.h5mb@statefarm.com](mailto:ernie.hill.h5mb@statefarm.com)

24 Hour Good Neighbor Service®

State Farm®

