

The INSIDE

The Week in Review

page 2



METRO

page 9



Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

pages 7-11



OPINION

pages 12-13

CLASSIFIEDS

pages 14

CALENDAR

page 15

This page
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Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?



Former Portland Mayor Vera Katz died Monday at the age of 84 after a long illness. Katz broke gender barriers to become Oregon's first female House speaker, and deployed a tough-but-tender political style to also win three terms as Portland mayor. (AP/Rick Bowmer file photo)

Vera Katz Remembered

Three term mayor
broke barriers; had
tough but tender style

Vera Katz, a former three-term Portland mayor and first female speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives who died Monday after a long battle with complications from cancer is being remembered as a politician who broke gender barriers and deployed a tough-but tender political style to advance her priorities.

Katz was a one-time stay-at-home mom from the 1960s who was inspired to politics by listening to Robert F. Kennedy talk about the poor and disadvantaged. She volunteered with Kennedy's 1968 presidential campaign and went on to serve a combined

30 years in the Oregon legislature and Portland city government.

She broke the all-male restrictions at exclusive social organizations, espoused progressive causes such as gender equality and gay rights long before they were main stream, and helped shape modern-day Portland.

"I'm truly saddened to hear of the passing of Mayor Vera Katz, one of the strongest and most respected leaders our city has ever had," said Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman. "As Mayor, she never took 'no' for an answer. She was incredibly visionary, thoughtful and tenacious on a wide range of civic issues, and I greatly enjoyed and respected her leadership all the years we overlapped on Portland City Council."

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon called her as an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

First Equity Director Resigns

The first director of a Portland office charged with removing barriers in government for Portlanders of color and people with disabilities is leaving his post.

Dante J. James announced his resignation last week saying he planned to move to Colorado to reunite with his family.

James was hired in 2012 to run the newly created office of Equity and Human Rights. Under his leadership, the office elevated the discussion and awareness of racial issues in the city in order to reduce disparities.

"Dante's work was instrumental in creating the budget equity



Dante J. James

tool and our plan to enhance equitable workforce development in city construction projects through our Community Equity and Inclusion Plan, which was unanimously adopted by City Council this year, among many accomplishments," said Mayor Ted Wheeler. "His leadership at the helm of OEHR will be sorely missed."

Wheeler has named Koffi Dessou, currently equity and business operations manager in the equity office, as interim bureau director. Dessou's contributions to the city include creating the city's equity training and education program.