

# King School Legacy Celebration



Former students of Martin Luther King Jr. School attend Friday's 50th anniversary celebration honoring the legacy of the northeast Portland being named in honor of the civil rights leader. Formerly called Highland School, the name was changed on April 24, 1968 just 20 days after King's assassination in Memphis, Tenn.



The student drill team at Martin Luther King Jr. School performs at Friday's celebration honoring the 50 years of legacy since the school was named in honor of King.



West African dance is performed by students from Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School during a "Celebrate the Legacy" event honoring the tenants of social justice and equality.



Martin Luther King Jr. School Principal Jill Sage at the 50th anniversary celebration of the school's renaming.

## 50 Years of History

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Portland School Board to change the name from Highland School to Martin Luther King Jr. School just 20 days after King's assassination. It's thought to be one of the first, if not the first, school to be named after King.

School alumni who served on a council that sent the resolution to the school board attended the celebration and spoke about their hard fought struggle which was hotly debated at the time. Some of those students now have grand children attending the culturally diverse school on 4906 N.E. Sixth Avenue in the heart of Portland's historic African American community.

The school was predominately black in 1968 and King's widow, Coretta Scott King, gave her personal permission to

use to his name.

A historic temporary sign, in blue lettering and painted on butcher paper by students, that was hung in front of the school in 1968 on the first day of its renaming, resurfaced for the celebration, which also included live gospel and jazz music, students performing West African and drill team dances, and a soul food supper.

King School Principal Jill Sage said the celebration was a reminder of the power from student-led conversations and mirrors some of the actions by students today who are continuing to lead important conversations on issues of basic rights to this day.

"The legacy of student action in response to this terrible tragedy speaks to the hope and resilience to this community," Sage said.



Yolanda Coleman, assistant principal at Martin Luther King School and Lisa Jarrett, a King Museum of Contemporary Art and Portland State University professor, raise a 50 year old poster that was used to rename the school 50 years ago.