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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A makeshift memorial with flowers and messages of love appear on the doorstep of the late Eugene C. Gora's welding and fabrication shop at the corner of Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Skidmore Street. Police are investigating the murder of the 85-year-old after he was discovered dead in his garage on the property last Thursday.

Legacy Fabricator Killed

Community in shock after 85-Year-old murdered

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Community members of a northeast Portland neighborhood have been stunned by the murder of an 85-year-old man whose welding shop was a landmark of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

A homicide investigation is ongoing for the death of Eugene C. Gora after he was found dead in his welding shop in northeast Portland Thursday. Gora had told a city housing inspector a few months prior that he had been residing there for over four decades,

a city official said.

Police and emergency personnel confirmed Gora was dead when they arrived at his garage at 4232 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. around 6:30pm Thursday in response to a call made by a friend of the deceased who discovered him unresponsive on his floor.

The circumstances of his death were noted as "suspicious-in-nature," according to a press release by Portland Police that same day and the Oregon State Medical Examiner's office cited "homicidal violence" as the cause.

Gora was known in the neighborhood as a skilled welder and fabricator who spent a decades-long career at his shop, Gora's Welding and Fabrication, making barbecues, trailers, and custom builds like the stainless steel swoops on the Niketown

store on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Northeast Knott Street, just a few blocks from his shop.

"He could weld whatever you had. And he could fabricate whatever," Bart Colson, proprietor of Bart's Swedish Formula, an auto repair shop next door to Gora's shop, told the Portland Observer.

Colson had seen Gora on a near daily basis and noted in recent years his vision and mobility had become limited. Lately, he'd gotten around using a walker while visiting local establishments, like the Miracles Club, a recovery center, or the Heavenly Taste Café, both less than one block away, chatting up people in the neighborhood.

"He passed his skills and knowl-

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School District Faulted in Probe

Inaction over decades by Portland School District supervisors and inadequate protocols to keep records of his multiple sexual misconduct complaints on file, may have enabled a former teacher, Mitch Whitehurst, to continue to work with students over a three decade-long period at multiple schools, an independent investigative report released Thursday found.

A lack of teaching training and disciple protocols that persist to this day, as well as the district's failure to stop him, was also indicative of a complete failure to how Oregon's largest school district handles sexual misconduct, the report said.

Part of the problem had to do with the purging of files, which is required by the teacher's contract, and may have enabled sex-

ual misconduct to continue when Whitehurst transferred to different schools.

Whitehurst has denied the multiple sexual misconduct complaints against him. He resigned under pressure in 2015 and his teacher license was revoked. The teacher licensing agency found students had made misconduct complaints against him going back to the 1980s.