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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/PORLAND OBSERVER PUBLISHER

Rosemary Anderson High School Principal Joe McFerrin (right) presents a proclamation to the family of Pearl Smothers Mashia, honoring the late and beloved attendance secretary for her 22 years at the school. Attending the ceremony last Wednesday were (from left) Linda Mashia-Jones, Donna Jean Harris, Pearl Thomas, Anita Craig, Lucy Mashia and Eric Mashia.

A Role Model's Impact

Rosemary Anderson honors late 'Grandma Pearl'



Pearl Smothers Mashia

A beloved staff member and role model for an alternative high school serving Portland's black community, who passed away in January, has been honored posthumously for her life's work and dedication to students, families, staff and others.

Pearl Smothers Mashia was an attendance secretary for 22 years at Rosemary Anderson High School on North Killingsworth Street where she got to know students and their families and came to be affectionately known as

"Grandma Pearl."
"She learned the circumstances that caused barriers to student attendance and proactively helped identify and implement solutions," read a resolution from the school in gratitude to the long time staff member that was presented last Wednesday to her surviving family members.

Grandma Pearl came to Rosemary Anderson High School

through Multnomah County's Grandparent Program, but officials said she became everyone's grandma, making the school and its co-program Portland Opportunity Industrialization Center a home for all.

The resolution noted how she was devoted to welcoming students each morning and how her calm presence changed the atmosphere of the entire building by cultivating trust and respect.

"Grandma Pearl made Rosemary Anderson High School a better place by bringing out the best in people, their best behavior, their best attendance, their best work," said the proclamation signed by RAHS Board Member Amy Angel and the school's principal, president and chief executive officer Joe McFerrin II.

Cold Case Turns Seven Years

Family tries to break silence on murder

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Family members of a Portland murder victim, Leonard James "LJ" Irving Jr., whose death remains unsolved seven years after the fatal shooting, are urging anyone who may have information leading to an arrest to speak up. Last Saturday marked the anniversary of the night of June 23, 2011 when Irving was shot four times in the back after trying to calm an



Leonard James "LJ" Irving Jr.

argument outside a northeast Portland bar.

Irving's family says they know there are witnesses who have more information they're not telling police, but are keeping silent in order

to not be a "snitch." Irving was 34 when he died and is survived by three children, his mother, and a sister.

"It is heart-wrenching for me and my family," said Irving's mother, Lucy Mashia. "L.J.'s murder was witnessed by many people in our community and yet our community remains silent. My heart is broken, my grandchildren have no father. It has been seven years. Please, if you know something, please come forward."

Since Irving's death, Mashia has become an active member of Enough is Enough Portland, a

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