

# New Leader in Justice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Her mother was the first African American woman hired as a police officer by the City of Portland and the state of Oregon in 1973. She was also one of the first five women placed on street patrol. Even with a demanding job, Preuitt's mother volunteered as a coach, was active in her church and served as "officer friendly" in local schools.

Preuitt's father is award-winning blues musician and community activist Norman Sylvester who currently is a leading advocate for a statewide Health Care for All organization.

"The example they set put me on a path of wanting to build community and influence the lives of those involved or impacted by community violence," Preuitt said of her family.

"My mother modeled courage and perseverance. She exhibited what it meant to care about the community and engaged us in these efforts at an early age. I love northeast Portland and wanted to be a part of making a difference in the community where I lived," she said.

Preuitt said she was exposed to social justice issues early in life as a student at St Mary's Academy.

"These experiences led to focusing my career on making a difference in my community, particularly working with women,



PHOTO BY MOTOYA NAKAMURA/MULTNOMAH COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS

The new director of the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, Erika Preuitt (center), poses with her family, including her father, Norman Sylvester (on her left) and mother Carmen Sylvester (on her right).

families and gang-involved individuals," she said.

Preuitt was first assigned to Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice Intensive Case Management Program working with justice-involved women. She also spent significant time assigned to the Adult Gang Unit, helping gang members change their behavior. Her talents were quickly noticed as she was promoted to community justice manager, then district manager, and then director of the Department's Adult Services Division. She was promoted to deputy director of the Department of Community Justice in April 2018.

and Scott Taylor.

In 2017, Preuitt was also sworn in as the first African American president of the American Probation and Parole Association, the international advocacy organization for pretrial, probation, parole and community-based corrections professionals. She served as president of the group for two years.

During last week's ceremony marking her appointment, Preuitt thanked the county managers who had mentored and supported her career including Elyse Clawson, Joanne Fuller, Carl Goodman, Truls Neal

and Scott Taylor.

Preuitt said she will remain steadfastly committed to ensuring staff feel supported in their work. She also wants the department to continue learning, and always looking to the latest evidence-based best practices. And she plans to grow its work to better emphasize trauma-informed care.

"The work of community corrections is so important because of its multiplying effect. We are change agents," she said. "When our staff helps people to change their lives, a family is restored and communities grow stronger."

**YOUR LOTTERY DOLLARS MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

CLEANING RIVERS & BEACHES  
FUNDING NATURAL HABITATS  
& MORE ACROSS OREGON

**OREGON LOTTERY**  
Together, we do good things.

SEE PROJECTS AT:  
[OregonLottery.org/watersheds](http://OregonLottery.org/watersheds)

LOTTERY GAMES ARE BASED ON CHANCE AND SHOULD BE PLAYED FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY.