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# LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rev. Willie Banks, a long time African American community advocate, has announced plans to run for mayor of Portland in the May 2020 Primary.

## Running for Mayor

### Rev. Willie Banks outlines his priorities

BY BEVERLY CORBELL  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rev. Willie Banks has long been active in supporting Portland's African American community, but he's fed up with local government, so he's running for mayor of Portland in 2020.

"What got me is the city has used people of color as a token, and only call us when they want us to do something," he said. "When they did the reconstruction in northeast Portland and pushed black folks out, they have used people of color to gain their wealth and used people of color to pay taxes, and that's all they really care about."

Banks recently lost his wife

Earnestine, but said that he's running in her memory.

"She was such a sweet wife to me, and every time I see her picture, it motivates me," he said.

Banks' top priority as mayor would be to reduce poverty in Portland. Over a decade and more, he established a foundation and resource for legal help in Portland to help the disadvantaged and named both efforts in honor of civil rights icon Rosa Parks, work he said has saved people \$3.5 million in real estate foreclosures and rental assistance since 2000. He said the public service mission has also generated holiday food baskets for poor families and supported educational programs.

The most evident sign of poverty is all the homeless people sleeping on Portland streets, Banks said, and he's disgusted that not more is being done.

"We need to stop beating

around the bush and do what we can for these people and get them back into the neighborhoods," he said. "We've got empty buildings all over the city. We seem to push homeless people around like we're pushing a buggy. We need to realize that they are human beings too."

Banks says he gained experience looking out for other people when he was president of the National Federation of Federal Employees for 20 years.

"I dealt with grievances and firings and prepared a bargaining agreement with management to make sure everything affecting working people was addressed," he said.

Banks, who is also pastor at the New Beginnings Church of God in Christ, said he is also unhappy about the cost of having a

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## Free Flu Shots at Legacy

Free flu shots are available to the community this month while supplies last at three Portland Legacy locations: From 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center; from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays (except Thanksgiving) and Saturdays at Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel; and from 11

a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays and Tuesdays at the Legacy Holladay Park campus.

No payment or insurance required. Those under 15 years old require a guardian present. Vaccine options will meet every need: Egg-free, high-dose, preservative-free, latex-free and 4-strain.

Health officials say they have started to see cases of flu in Ore-

gon. They recommend everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine.

People who get vaccinated not only protect themselves but may also protect those around them. People at higher risk of severe illness include babies and young children, adults older than 65, pregnant women, and those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems.