

Communities of Color Leader Fights for Progress

Marcus Mundy says King's message more important than ever

BY BEVERLY CORBELL

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Editor's Note: As we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the Portland Observer invited leaders of the African American community to reflect on the relevance of his message today. Marcus Mundy, president of the Coalition of Communities of Color, shared his thoughts about the civil rights leader:

Marcus Mundy was only 9 or 10 years old when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, but his parents made sure he knew what the great man stood for. Mundy's father was from Alabama and his mother was from Louisiana, so they knew first-hand the injustices that King railed against.

"They knew of him, knew

of his issues and imbued in us a sense of pride, of discipline, of working hard, all the things that he spoke about in his messaging for our families and our race, they taught us," Mundy said. "He was peers with my parents. My dad is in Tuskegee, (Alabama) and he (King) did a lot of his work in Montgomery, (Ala.)."

He said King's pronouncement for equality became more significant to him as he grew older and he internalized King's words to the point that he now often thinks of some of the civil rights leader's more memorable passages in his day-to-day life.

"When you're young, you don't get into it as much, but over time you see the resonance of his message, you see how important it is," he said. "I'm talking now to city leaders on a couple of civic ideas and quoting him from his letter from a Birmingham Jail, about how 'wait' almost always means 'never' and it's like these are things you

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PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Marcus Mundy of the Coalition of Communities of Color works to advance racial justice by organizing collective, cross-culture allies. Pictured at his downtown office, Mundy says the messages of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., America's foremost civil rights leader, influences his life on a daily basis.

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