

Forest Supervisor Writes Memoir

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her supervisor, who called the school superintendent and in a short time, the principal called her and said they let the white girl continue to participate because she had an abusive father and they were afraid he would hurt her if he found out she had been in a fight. Incredulous, Brown asked if anyone thought about her daughter.

"They said no," she said. "It was an honest answer. But I said that is not acceptable and feels like racism against my daughter."

But it was while in Montana that Brown learned to make camp in the woods, ride a horse and learn all about the wilderness experience that she came to love, as she relates in the book.

Although she had made friends in Missoula, and the reason for her leaving was featured in the July 1987 issue of the Missoulian newspaper titled "Shades of Racism," Brown knew she had to leave.

"I felt sad about leaving," she wrote in the book. "I had been naïve about Montana, but I'd also learned that if I set my mind to it, I could do just about anything. I had ridden a horse, set up camp, cooked outdoors, learned to fight fire, made new friends in an all-white community, helped other women and begun to focus on civil rights. When I arrived, the beauty of the Big Sky country had enveloped me like a blanket. Now I felt cold."

But all those experiences also

gave her courage to face the future, and Brown was determined to forge ahead. After the incident at her daughter's high school, Brown ended up sending her daughter back East to live with her parents to finish her senior year, and she was given a transfer to the regional office in Portland to work for the Willamette National Forest.

But Brown still wanted more. She wanted to become a Forest Service line officer, so she could make the decisions that were then only being made by white men, she said. So she found out about an opening in public affairs and applied for it, saying if selected, she would help them get their overdue Forest Plan published quickly. And once she did that, she said, she wanted a sabbatical to go to OSU to get training to become a forest ranger, the only track to becoming a line officer. It worked, and she became a forest ranger and was able to work out in the woods.

Brown went on to other assignments in the Northwest, including Mount St. Helens, and eventually reached the lofty position of being hired as Forest Supervisor of the 630,000-acre Siuslaw National Forest. It was both a shock and an unbelievable challenge, as she wrote.

"My position as forest supervisor was new territory not only for me, but also for the Forest Service," she wrote. "We were betting on each other, and the stakes were high. I had watched and participated in the continued

unfolding of Mount St. Helens' ecological network, the flora and fauna that brought back an ecosystem. Just as wildlife, birds and sprouts of green reemerged on the once-barren landscape, I realized that I, too, had blossomed toward my new assignment. I knew that my dream job would present huge and unexpected challenges."

Brown's book is chockfull of anecdotes about the inner workings of the Forest Service and the many situations she has overcome, from the internal racism in her own family because of her dark skin, being raped at age 12, becoming a widow at a young age and experiences as varied as working to protect the California condor, promote women's rights and standing up to white men who would keep her down.

She sums up her life in the Forest Service and her experience with racism in the book's epilogue:

"My philosophy was that if you want to be successful as a black person in a white world, you were the one who had to make it work. That could mean educating white people or simply turning the other cheek. The reality is that many African Americans don't make it past a single summer in the Forest Service, in part because the onus is always on them. But others do. I'd had to put aside my own feelings and push my way upward. My need to provide a decent life for my children and my own ambition had more power than the words of a few racists."

Obituary

In Loving Memory

Hilary Thomas Clark

Hilary Thomas Clark was born Feb. 26, 1929 in McGregor, Texas to John Clark and Lizzie Thomas, and the third child born to Lizzie. His siblings included five brothers, Jack, Roscoe, Roy, R.L. and Curtis; and five sisters, Beatrice, Willie, Maezella, Lizzie and Evia.

Though he had just a seventh grade formal education, he was determined to make his life better, telling others how he lied about his age to be accepted into the military. While he never saw action, he served as a quartermaster and received an honorable discharge. His military service entitled him to all the benefits that would put him on the path to more opportunity. His biggest success was his marriage to Doshie Lee Brannon whom he met through a friend. With her support, he was able to purchase his first home through the G.I. Bill. They went on to create a blended family of nine children in a marriage that ended with Doshie's death just shy of their 50 year anniversary.

Hilary had a career working for the Southern Pacific Railroad and Portland Public Schools. He also had multiple businesses, including



Hilary Clark Construction Services.

Also preceding him in death were two sons, Donald Allen Clark and Ricky Van Clark; and his first-born daughter, Margaret Clark. He leaves to mourn his passing, a sister, Maezella Marlborough; sisters-in-law Jean Winters, Merle Rogers and Doris Cumby; his children, Lurlene Johnson Shamsud-Din, Carolyn Johnson Gamble, Ozie Johnson Jr., Beverly Edmondson, Linda Sue Beasley, Larry Dean Clark and Harold Thomas Clark; and the spouses of his children, Jeddy O, Beasley and S.K. Clark. He was blessed with 26 grandchildren, 60 great grandchildren and 8 great-great grandchildren. He also leaves many nieces, nephews and friends.

While Hilary will be missed, he has left his family and many friends with great memories of his humor, tireless work ethic, and many unbelievable and outrageous stories to tell.

Trying to Slow an Epidemic

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"All of our dining centers are closed and we are not distributing meals to diners and diners cannot pick up meals. If they have no other source of food, they can register for Meals on Wheels delivery," she said.

Finley says many volunteer drivers have backed out of making deliveries, so more volunteers as well as more bags with handles are needed. One hitch in getting more volunteers to make home deliveries, is that all drivers must pass a criminal background check, which normally takes about three weeks. She said efforts are being made to shorten that time or to use people who have already passed background checks, such as teachers.

The nonprofit also needs donations of hand sanitizers, anti-bacterial wipes and plastic gloves. Donations of this type can be brought to the Meals on Wheels

Central Kitchen at 7710 S.W. 31st Ave. in Portland.

Finley stressed that if people can cook at home or get food from any other source, like restaurant take outs, they should.

The Urban League of Portland, one of the oldest African American service, civil rights and advocacy organizations in the area, is also redefining how it offers its services. The nonprofit will not hold in-person walk-in hours and will maintain at least six feet of social distancing along with enhanced hygiene procedures.

Starting on Monday, March 23, all Urban League offices and satellite locations will be open by appointment only. In addition, in response to guidance from Oregon Health Authority, the Urban League is cancelling all planned gatherings, including daily activities at the Multicultural Senior Center, parenting groups, upcoming Zumba classes, and the Rent Well series. The annual Urban

League Career Connections Job Fair, previously scheduled for April 7, has been canceled.

Hospitals are also limiting contact between people, and the Legacy Health hospital system announced that unless accompanying a patient, the general public is not allowed inside Legacy medical center until further notice, including cafeterias, waiting rooms and other indoor and outdoor meeting spaces. There are a few exceptions.

"It is important that we initiate these safeguards to protect our patients, staff and the public," said Brian Terrett, director of public relations and community relations for Legacy Health.

Many other organizations and health providers have taken similar steps to limit people-to-people contact, and readers should call or email agencies whose services they use to find out what their policies are and not rely on websites alone.



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