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# The Portland Observer

Volume XLVIV • Number 12



'City of Roses'

www.portlandobserver.com  
Wednesday • May 6, 2020

Committed to Cultural Diversity

# Important Election Looms



PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

*Portland Attorney Ernie Warren puts his 31 years as lawyer heading up his own law firm and a lifetime of pursuing justice issues as qualifications in a campaign for election as an Oregon Circuit Court Judge for Multnomah County.*

## Ballots out; countdown begins

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON  
PORTLAND OBSERVER EDITOR

Voters in the May 19 Primary have less than two weeks to mark their ballots in an important vote-by-mail election that will decide who wins many local offices outright or sends their campaigns into a runoff in November. In addition, two ballot measures face ratification and adoption with a simple majority.

In Portland, a diverse field of candidates faces votes with candidates of color and clearly liberal credentials running in all four contested races for seats on the Portland City Council, including mayor; an open position on the Oregon Circuit Court in Multnomah County; and contested positions for Metro Councilor and Oregon Secretary of State. The names of Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders will appear on the Democratic Primary Ballot for President, but Biden is already the presumed nominee after beating Sanders in recent contests and holding what political experts say is an insurmountable lead. Sanders and Warren have already conceded, but in some cases they can collect more delegates for the party convention.

A two-way race for Multnomah County District Attorney features Mike Schmidt, a former deputy DA and justice reform candidate who has won endorsements from civil rights and racial justice advocates versus Ethan O. Knight, another former deputy DA and assistant U.S. Attorney who has endorsements from a wide swath of the legal establishment, prosecutors, police and firefighters.

Two ballot measures face voters in Portland, a proposed city measure to renew a 10-cent per gallon fuel tax to pay for street repairs, maintenance and safety; and a proposed Metro tax on high incomes and business profits of over \$5 million to pay for homeless services.

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## Warren Campaigns for Judge

### Experience and community ties win accolades

BY BEVERLY CORBELL  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Ernest "Ernie" Warren Jr., a seasoned Portland lawyer, passionate civil and criminal defense attorney and long time advocate for pursuing justice issues, is asking voters to put him on the bench for an open seat on the Oregon Circuit Court for Multnomah County, one of six candidates running in Oregon's May 19 vote-by-mail election.

Warren has been a mainstay in Portland's African American community since his family migrated here from Texas in the 1930s and '40s.

The Warren clan came to Portland from Pleasant Hill, Texas after mechanization took their farming jobs. During World War II, employment at ESCO Corporation, today a global manufacturer of metal parts, provided economic opportunity. By the 1960s, there were more Warrens in Portland than back in Texas, and like other second and third generation members of the black community, they were employed in many different professions.

In an interview the Portland Observer, Warren told how his father, Ernest Warren Sr., was a successful insurance

broker. But far from coddling his son, the senior Warren was insistent that his son learn the value of work. From the time he was just 9 years old, while other kids were playing summer sports, Warren Jr. was expected to work and work hard.

Warren said he remembers joining his grandfather at the time, who would pick him up before daybreak, to go pick whatever produce was in season on local farms.

"So I know what it's like to go out and pick berries and beans all summer long and have your hands all stained with dirt," he said.

Warren said the values he learned growing up in a big close knit family formed the basis for his lifelong involvement in the community. In 1990, he opened the first African American-owned law firm in the state with the goal of "being a resource to the community, serving the common good and steadfastly pursuing justice." He said he was inspired by the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

"I'm running because I want to be a person who maintains justice and always do what is right," Warren said.

In his 31 years in practice serving a diverse clientele, Warren earned a reputation as a passionate attorney and

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Ballots for the May 19 vote by mail election are out.