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No End to Massive Protests

Black leader says streets is where change will be won

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New Police Chief Named to Build Trust

Chuck Lovell rises to the top of command

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Committed to Cultural Diversity



Honoring the Class of 2020

Reflecting on a school year cut short

The Jefferson High School senior class created all of the Class of 2020 content for this special graduation edition of the Portland Observer.

Inside you will find reflections from the students on a school year cut short by the coronavirus pandemic and how they are responding to another tragedy, the police custody death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

See the letters of support and congratulations to the graduates from their teachers, administrators and adult mentors, like those from Self Enhancement, Inc. The students also include photos to showcase their school experience, list their favorite music, and share their special art projects.

Valedictorian speeches by five of Jefferson's achieving students, not able to be delivered at a formal graduation ceremony because of the social distancing requirements of the pandemic,

are also included and will inspire you.

This special coverage was coordinated by Jefferson students attending a Senior Inquiry class, a dual-credit class designed through a partnership between the Jefferson High School Middle College for Advanced Studies and Portland State University.

All seniors at Jefferson take the class and earn 15 college credits upon completion. Jefferson teachers and Portland State professors help direct them on a path of individualized learning by engaging in community advocacy, action projects, art installations, writing and other types of academic exploration.

At its core, the Senior Inquiry model stimulates critical thinking and self-reflection while focusing on the importance of building strong relationships with classmates, instructors, high school staff and community members.



Senior Tarisha Spencer is draped by messages of unity and equality in the halls of Jefferson High School in a photo taken earlier this year.

Congratulations Seniors!

The Portland Observer is proud to dedicate this special issue to all of our high school seniors, and especially the Jefferson High School Class of 2020, the school historically grounded to the heart of Portland's African American community.

We are proud to give a voice to these honored students during a difficult time, sharing their dreams for the future and providing them a proper sendoff after a senior year cut short by the coronavirus pandemic and the public health crisis that closed all schools since Spring Break.

"Your lives were disrupted, but you have not been forgotten," said Portland Observer Publisher Mark Washington. "Congratulations seniors and best wishes to your future!"



Publisher Mark Washington