

Mapps Calls on End to Violence

Promotes a peaceful fight for racial progress

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mingus Mapps, just the third Black man elected to serve on the Portland City Council, is sure of one thing as he starts his four year term in the same month we celebrate the birth of America's most prominent civil rights leader, the late Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mapps wants the ongoing fight for racial progress in Portland to follow King's lead by being non-violent.

"Dr. King has been on my mind a lot lately on the occasion of his 92nd birthday, and I know I wouldn't be here if not for the sacrifices Martin Luther King made to make America a better country," Mapps told the Portland Observer.

He said when it comes to civil rights and violence on our streets, King's message is more important than ever.

"Last year Portland was transformed by violence, between the



PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When it comes to civil rights and violence on our streets, the example of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is more important than ever, says Mingus Mapps, just the third Black man elected to serve on the Portland City Council. Mapps begins his four year term in office this month as America celebrates the birth of its most prominent civil rights activist.

police and protesters, and the murder rate is up," Mapps said. "Every weekend, business districts are vandalized and we have a plywood canyon downtown. If you do anything political online, you receive death threats, even

at home."

The new city commissioner promised that in his first 100 days of office, he will be devoted to promoting more peace in the city.

"Violence leads to destruction

and despair and deaths too often, but fortunately, we also have the politics of love," Mapps said. "One of the things I'll be doing is challenging the entire city to embrace the politics of nonviolence, the politics of peace. If

we come together and listen with open hearts and open minds, we can make progress on COVID, civil rights and policing, but until we listen to each other we will never be able to combat things like homelessness or violence."

Mapps won a November election in which he faced some arguments by opponents that he would be too soft on police because his candidacy was endorsed by the Portland police union, an organization which has also come under sharp criticism for supporting officers accused of undue violence.

He defeated City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, his former boss at City Hall, who told Oregon Public Broadcasting that Mapps' win and the re-election of Mayor Ted Wheeler doesn't reflect Portland's progressive spirit and was "a step backward for progress."

But Mapps disputes that characterization, insisting that 2021 will usher in a new era of politics with more cooperation.

"I'm not claiming it's going to be easy, but I very much believe we can build a better city if we work together," he said. "The progress that Portland has made is always doing what Portlanders do well — building a table to work together to build a better future."

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