

43 Years of MLK Tributes

Keep Alive the Dream documentary ready for debut

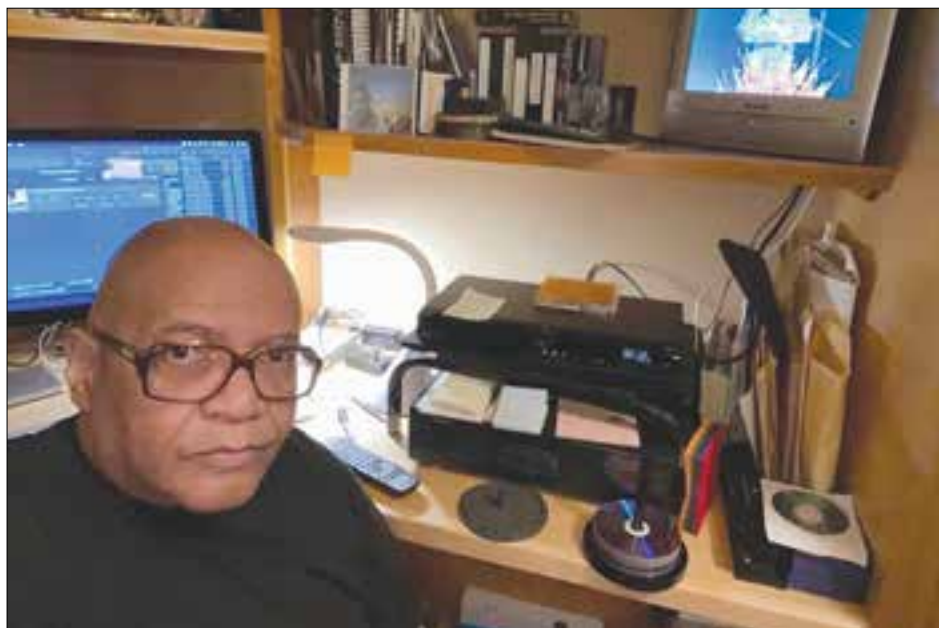
By BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

To say that the World Arts Foundation's new documentary, "Keep Alive the Dream," is a labor of love, is an understatement. The film is a work of passion. Passion for the past and passion for the future, to keep the teachings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King alive now and for future generations.

The documentary, to premier on this year's Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday, highlights great moments from the more than 40 years of community celebrations the World Arts Foundation has held annually to commemorate the late civil rights leader's birthday.

Berry, in an interview with the Portland Observer, described the importance of celebrating King's civil rights legacy over the years, from the first World Arts Foundation event in 1978 to today, bringing the community together annually with other educators, speakers and performing artists.

"This was our outlet to understand what it means to be Black in the state of Oregon. This was before there was fed-



Retired Portland educator and World Arts Foundation co-founder Ken Berry at the controls of video editing equipment used to produce *Keep Alive the Dream*, a new historic film documenting 43 years of annual MLK tributes and showcasing the lives of African Americans in Oregon.

eral holiday to honor Dr. King. But we couldn't wait. We needed our children to understand the world they were about to inherit," Berry said.

Every minute of each MLK celebration over the years was recorded, but in many different formats, Berry said. Now, after many months of hard work, those recordings have been condensed into a one-hour documentary in digital form. It is an amazing accomplishment that provides glimpses into many past celebrations along with

many historic photos and videos.

The documentary's first showing will be at 3 p.m., Monday, Jan. 17 at the Hollywood Theater, 4122 N.E. Sandy Blvd. Admission is free but tickets should be reserved at hollywoodtheatre.org/events/keep-alive-the-dream.

At 6 p.m. the same day, Berry said, Open Signal Cable will showcase interviews to build around the film, and at 8 p.m. the documentary will be shown on Oregon Public Broadcasting, Channel 10.

The film will eventually be available on the Internet, he added.

Condensing the years and hours of celebrations was due to the editing by award-winning filmmaker Elijah Hasan, Berry said, and digitizing everything from 16mm film to three-quarter-inch videotape recordings was spearheaded and overseen by archivist Bobby Smith.

"He's the one that came to my house and he's the one that made me say, 'Okay,'" Berry said describing the moment he agreed to join in to make the documentary.

"I knew where everything was, and although I had moved six or seven times, I always kept all these materials in a cool place, thank goodness. Because otherwise, they would have been dissolved. They're a little bit scratchy here and there, and we still have more to do."

The result gives a fabulous look at the MLK celebrations over time. Watching the local performances and speakers from years past, brings the joy and love of each year's celebration to life.

"Keep Alive the Dream," opens with orator Herb Cawthorne delivering a portion of King's "I Have a Dream" speech, while historic photographs are shown in the background.

Other highlights show a panel discussion from 1989 which included Dr. Joy DeGruy who talked about "planting a seed" for the future, and the late Harold Williams who

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Continuing to honor Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy through ongoing work toward equity and inclusion in our community.



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