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The Portland Observer

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The Portland Observer

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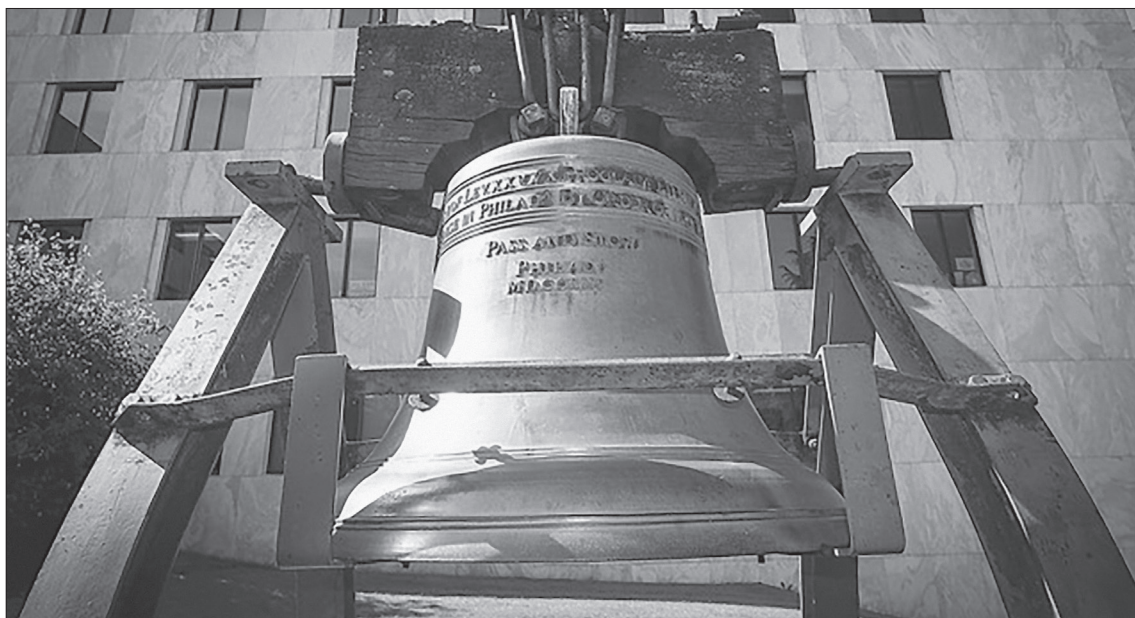


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# LOCAL NEWS

## Anniversary of Statehood



The Oregon Liberty Bell; photo courtesy of the Oregon state capitol foundation

### February 14 is Oregon's 164th Birthday

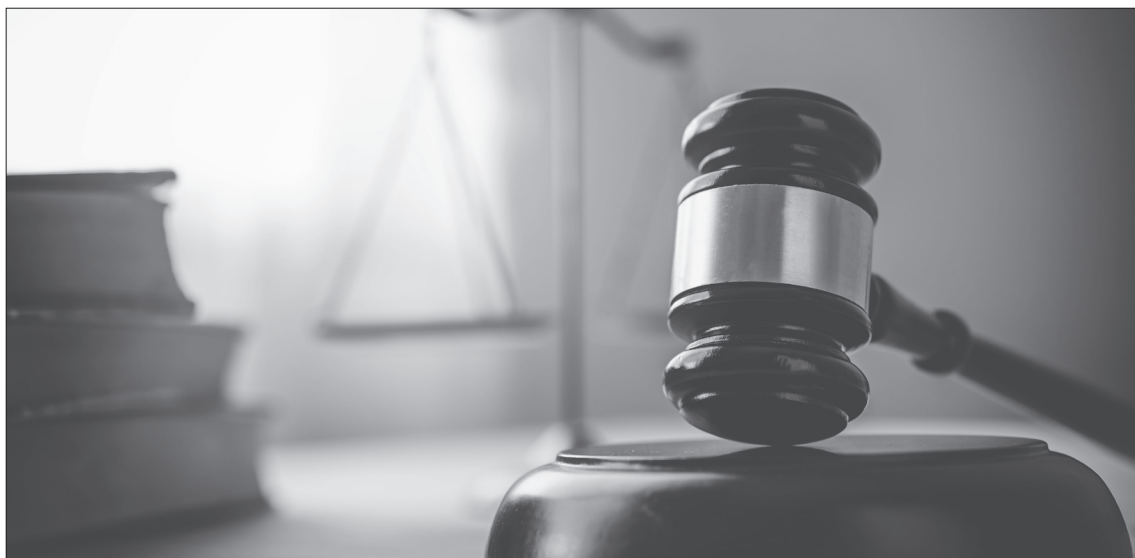
Oregon was founded on Feb. 14, 1859. It was the 33rd state admitted into the union, and in 1860 was home to over 54,000 residents. Today, around 4 million people call Oregon home. In the 1850s, there were no cell

phones or computers. The news had to travel across the country from Washington DC, and the telegraph -- our best technology at the time -- could only reach as far as St. Louis. From Missouri, it traveled by stagecoach to the west coast. It then traveled by ship to Portland, and finally a rider rode his horse from Portland to Salem. It took three days in the March rain.

When enacted in 1859, Oregon was the only state in the union

to have an exclusion clause prohibiting African Americans from living or owning property. The law was removed from the state constitution in 1926. The ripples of the state's racist history are still felt today, particularly in Oregon's largest city. This year, there will be a number of cultural and heritage organizations, as well as some of Oregon's tribes, that have provided online activities and learning opportunities for the public.

## Portland Woman Awarded \$1M In Discrimination Suit



(AP) — A jury has awarded an Oregon woman \$1 million in damages after finding she was discriminated against by a gas station employee who told her, “I don’t serve Black people.”

The Multnomah County jury’s award this week to Portland resident Rose Wakefield, 63, included punitive damages of \$550,000.

Wakefield’s lawyer, Gregory Kafoury, said she stopped for

gas at Jacksons Food Store in Beaverton on March 12, 2020, and saw the attendant, Nigel Powers, ignore her and instead pump gas for other drivers.

When she tried to ask for assistance he said, “I’ll get to you when I feel like it,” according to Kafoury.

Attendants are required to pump fuel for motorists at gas stations in Oregon’s larger

population centers including Portland and the nearby suburb of Beaverton.

Surveillance video showed Wakefield go inside to ask for help. Another employee followed her back outside to pump her gas. Kafoury said as she was leaving, Wakefield asked Powers why he refused to help her and that he said, “I don’t serve Black people.”