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Committed to Cultural Diversity

All About Flagging

Ten Years In and Still Going Strong

By MOLLY WASHINGTON

All About Flagging celebrates its 10 year anniversary this month! As a Black, woman-owned, small business in Oregon, its journey has been one of triumph, tragedy, strength and resilience. This 10 year achievement is an incredible testament to continuing the legacy and vision of owner and founder Reynelda Hayes (1961-2022).

All About Flagging is an Oregon-based flagging and traffic control company that was founded in May 2013 by Reynelda Hayes. Reynelda had previously worked as a construction flagger and had been experiencing issues with getting paid on time and being treated fairly. It was these experiences that ultimately led her to cash in her retirement account at age 50 and invest in her dream of business ownership through the creation of All About Flagging. The vision of the business was to provide livable wage jobs, timely paychecks, and second chances for people who were making their way through a variety of life experiences that created obstacles to employment. Reynelda wore every hat in the company for many years, receiving support from organizations like the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC), the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs (OAME), the Port of Portland, and from fellow business owners like Jeff Moreland Sr. of Raimore Construction. In turn, Reynelda herself provided significant support to her employees, developing deep and meaningful relationships and offering assistance for any need that arose. "She would offer to babysit the kids...she would help pay bills, if they needed any-



Shawnta Hayes and Founder of 'All About Flagging,' Reynelda Hayes.

thing she was always there for her employees," recalls her daughter, Shawnta Hayes. Jeff reiterates that point, stating: "She did whatever was necessary to help our people with success."

From Jeff's perspective, Reynelda's ability to create and maintain the success of All About Flagging was due to her perseverance. "Reynelda's personal story is a tough story but a very trium-

phant story for what she's overcome... She grew up very tough and she was able to overcome all those things and I think that taught her perseverance. She would always, no matter how tough it was, it could be the toughest time, and Reynelda would be smiling and laughing," he remembers. "She always kept a positive attitude and she was going to figure it out and the one thing she was going to do is she was going to work!" Jeff also recalls the challenges Reynelda faced as a Black woman in business, and most importantly, the way she approached those challenges. He described her perspective as "recognizing that I can't control the racist system, I can't control people trying to take advantage of me, I can't control people not paying me, but what I can control is my ability to go out everyday and show up and work my behind off. And that's what she did. And keep a positive attitude and keep a can-do attitude... and help as many people along the way in that process."

Tragedy struck the business in November of last year when Reynelda died unexpectedly. "It was a huge loss, losing her," Jeff expressed. "As young as she was, she had so much more to give." Amidst the grief and devastation of the loss of their matriarch and pillar in the Black community, All About Flagging dug deep and continued to perform work and employ its workforce through the leadership of Reynelda's daughter Shawnta. Shawnta had been working for All About Flagging for the past 6 years as a flagger and in the office, and has now stepped into the ownership role with a focus on leading the company to honor her mom's vision. Taking over her mom's multiple roles has been a challenge but, like Reynelda, Shawnta is resilient, smart, and hardworking. What does it mean to Shawnta, to take these pieces of what Reynelda created and to continue her legacy and her vision through All About Flagging? "It means everything," she said, "just because I know that's what she wanted me to do."

All About Flagging means a lot to the family, they are proud of it, and they want to keep it going indefinitely, un-

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