

FBI

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"We can now work more efficiently and effectively having all our agents in one central location with many improvements, including tighter security and upgraded technology," said Special Agent Gregory Fowler. During the last decade, he said, "We've learned who homegrown violent extremists are, and the damage that they do to our democracy. We have learned that strong law enforcement partnerships are the key to stopping such attacks. And we as an agency have learned that keeping our employees secure is the first step to keeping our communities safe."

Just in case you're thinking about trying to break in. Forget it. This building has 100-foot setbacks on all sides and a blast resistant concrete and laminated glass exterior. It's lit up by giant street lights and surrounded by a tall, spiked metal fence. And that's just the security you're allowed to know about.

The inauguration ceremony was held Friday, June 15, from 10- 11 a.m. Speakers at the event were: Special Agent Fowler, who

heads the FBI in Portland; William Wyatt, executive director of the Port of Portland; Aneshka Dickson, commissioner at Portland Development Commission; George Northcroft; Irwin A. Molasky; Ronald C. Ruecker, assistant director in the FBI's Office of Law Enforcement Coordination; and Michael D. Donnelly, deputy assistant director of FBI Facilities and Logistics Services.

Speakers praised the FBI's dedication and values of loyalty, courage and integrity.

"The people at the FBI here in Portland have been absolutely fantastic to me," said Ruecker, who was an Oregon State Trooper before he went to work for the agency in Washington DC. "They are a fantastic group of people. Nobody deserves this more than the men and women of the Portland FBI."

Power, Influence and Money

Irwin Molasky is now considered one of the most influential people in Nevada. His development company has built numerous

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CIO Celebration



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

The Center for Intercultural Organizing held its annual gala party June 21 at Oaks Park. Attendees included Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish and Oregon Commission on Black Affairs Commissioner Judge Kemp.

projects in the Las Vegas Valley, from hospitals and schools to high-rises, shopping malls, exclusive resorts, and government buildings. A school is named for him and

his wife Susan. So far, so respectable.

But early in his career, Molasky created Paradise Development in Las Vegas, Nev.,

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Gloria

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Boothe has to get his points out in bits and pieces because Griffith constantly prods him with jokes and the insults that someone would only accept from a true friend.

"We piss each other off and have a good time," says Griffith. "We come in here and solve all the world's problems."

Griffith's company Dagri helped install the countertop for Reflections and painted the original green floors when the store opened in 1995.

It's not long before he's trading barbs with Reflections owner Gloria McMurtry.

After relocating to the Talking Drum Bookstore to get away from Griffith, who McMurtry affectionately calls a "loud-mouth," she describes the history of the business she "fell into by chance."

She moved to Northeast Portland from Detroit by way of Jackson, Miss., about 20 years ago.

McMurtry collaborated with Eddie Bryant, O.B. Hill and Joe McHenry, who ended up bowing out early, to start Reflections and take over the bookstore. She says she has run the business singlehandedly for the last eight or nine years.

Although the demographics have changed drastically over her time here, she says the store has never ceased serving an integral part in the community.

"As a Black book store, we have books you wouldn't find at Barnes & Noble or Powell's," says McMurtry. "The community uses it to communicate, as well as have meetings."

The store has been forced to close at the end of June because the business is no longer able to support itself. A combination of gentrification and exhaustion on the part of McMurtry, have led her to decide it's time to leave.

Individuals and groups that have utilized the bookstore vary and represent different pieces of the community.

Daniel Capuia, who lives a few blocks away, briefly operated reading sessions for children at the store. After that fell through, he still made a point to bring his son, who is now six, to the coffee shop every Saturday morning.

"I wanted to let him see a place where there was a whole bunch of black folks,"



Kathy Kendrix, left, and Gloria McMurtry

says Capuia. "He used to ask me 'Why am I Black?' At Reflections our people can be loud and you don't have to constantly justify your policies."

Ahjamu Umi of Occupy Northeast "The Black Working Group," says the group got its start at Reflections in December of last

'Every city has a Reflections. Unlike the Bay Area, Reflections is one of the only ones here. It's going to leave a void in the community because there aren't that many places where African-Americans can meet. There are a lot of places we can go but people don't feel as comfortable.'

—Ahjamu Umi

year. They meet at the store every Saturday afternoon to plan actions around foreclosure resistance and stopping police brutality.

Although their work against foreclosures lends them people's homes to operate out of, Umi, who is originally from San Francisco, says Reflections provides a safe space where people can express themselves.

"Every city has a Reflections," says Umi. "Unlike the Bay Area, Reflections is one of the only ones here. It's going to leave a void in the community because there aren't that many places where African-Americans can meet. There are a lot of places we can go but people don't feel as comfortable."

Reflections/Talking Drum has also sup-

ported the work of Groundwork Portland, a group that works with neighborhoods with concentrations of low-income individuals and people of color to give them a voice in developing and planning.

According to program director Cassie Cohen, the community hub has been involved in Groundwork's efforts interact with youth from King and DaVinci schools to develop the Emerson Street Garden and outdoor learning center. Also, their monthly meetings at the store have given the group more opportunities to reach out to community members they might not otherwise interact with.

"We've spent time there getting to know folks," says Cohen. "We've recruited a board member or two from meeting at Reflections."

Her colleague and co-chair of Groundwork, Chabre Vickers, adds that the store

might be contaminated.

Rep. Lew Frederick of House District 43 has had a number of events at the store, most notably his monthly "Chat with Lew" town halls.

He found out about Talking Drum back in the 70s and started coming more regularly when Reflections opened. Echoing others' sentiments, he says it has provided a space where it is easy to talk with his constituents.

Frederick has even brought political figures Gov. John Kitzhaber and gubernatorial candidate Chris Dudley to the store, which he says made an incredible impression on both.

"For people not in the community, it helps them to understand the community better," he says. "It's different when you have to deal with people face to face in their comfort zone."

A number of people have expressed interest in maintaining the space. Although she acknowledges the store as a vital part of the community, McMurtry says she doesn't want its next incarnation to be a giveaway. If someone can take over the business and make money, she would love to see that happen.

Frederick has said he would take it over if he had the money. Griffith expressed interest but admitted he has concerns about running a business with his heart condition. Capuia has suggested renting the store out as an office space for aspiring entrepreneurs trying to get their businesses off the ground. According to Vickers, there have been some impromptu meetings at Reflections with concerned community members to brainstorm what the best options will be.

Everyone acknowledges that having a community space for African-Americans is a priority, wherever that may be.

Above all, they express gratitude to McMurtry and the others who started the business 17 years ago for providing them with a meeting place that will be missed by many in the community.

"I just want to say thank you to the community at large," says McMurtry. "They've always shown their appreciation. They've been great customers."

has yielded a space for people living outside of the community to come back to and stay involved.

Although she grew up in Northeast Portland, when she moved back to Oregon after college, she settled in Tualatin.

Vickers heard about Reflections "haphazard" but says McMurtry made her feel at home.

"I always made a point to come to Reflections," she says. "The atmosphere puts the community at ease. You always see someone you know."

Vickers says the space helped bring the community to take a serious look at brown-fields, a term Groundwork uses for land that