

Harold Williams Dies

Civic leader helped change the face of higher education

Portland businessman, youth advocate and public servant Harold Williams Sr. has passed away after suffering a stroke last week. A towering figure on the Portland landscape for more than 50 years,



Harold Williams

Williams many achievements include serving as Oregon's first Affirmative Action Director, reporting to Gov. Bob Straub.

A celebration of his life will be held 11 a.m. Thursday, July 12, at Portland Community College's Cascade campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St. in the gym. The public is invited to share their recollections and stories.

A Portland Community College board member since 1990, Williams was a lifelong champion of education. Representing Zone 2, which includes Cascade campus, Williams helped steer the college through a period of unprecedented expansion. The growth of the college brought new educational and training opportunities to North and Northeast Portland. In 2010, his work for the college was recognized with the Pacific Region Trustee Leadership Award.

"This is a sad time for us all," said PCC District President Preston Pulliams.

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PROTEST



Former students – and prospective students – at the Harriet Tubman Young Women's Academy staged a silent protest in front of the school Monday afternoon, as the building was closed down for the last time by the Portland Public Schools District. Clockwise from left, Jada Commodore, 11; Priscilla Kitanga, 11; M'Kya Bettega, 11; Lydia Chiton, 9; Gloria Kitanga, 9; and Chiarka Bettega, 9, all taped their mouths shut and wrote the letters 'by PPS' over their mouths to signify the criticism that district officials voted to fast-track the school closure and denied its community a full public process.

Want to Braid Hair? Get Licensed

New effort to change state laws keeping women out of business

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Amber Starks just wanted to volunteer to braid the hair of African American and Native American girls in foster care; both groups are over-represented in the system, and carers are desperate for help with the kids' culturally-specific hair needs.

But despite the solid backing of the Oregon Department of

Human Services, Starks isn't allowed to do it because it's against the law.

So she's taking it to Salem – and she's already got the attention of lawmakers ready to craft new legislation.

"Currently the state of Oregon requires anyone who's going to do hairdressing – that means touching the hair for any reason – to attend the cosmetology program, which is 1,700 hours specifically just for hairdress-

ing," Starks says. "So that's what is required, if you want to braid hair, put hair in a ponytail – even volunteer to do hair or put it in a ponytail."

What's more, standard beauty schools don't teach Black hair care. So getting licensed by the Oregon Board of Cosmetology takes a couple of years, thousands of dollars and involves learning about hairstyling chemicals, heat equipment and more — practices that Starks,

and other natural hair champions, never plan to use.

Starks says that not only are the state licensing rules a barrier to African and African American women who want to build a career around creating braids, twists and curls, but it's also a barrier to the natural hair movement itself – which is promoting healthier living by getting away from chemicals and hot irons.

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PAL's East Portland Youth Center Grows

Problem: Fifty teens show up, but center can't fund evening meals

Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

The PAL Youth Center, at 424 N.E. 172nd Avenue at Glisan St., is a bright spot in East Portland's struggling Rockwood neighborhood.

With free lunches, a large gym and an enthusiastic, young staff group, the center has been attracting around 200 youth every

day – including some of the city's poorest and most "at-risk." But with a dilapidated building, a tight budget and no extra money to feed the 50 or so teens who flock to evening basketball, PAL is scrambling to meet the need.

"The energy out here in the last few months has just gone through the roof," says Jay Williams, the rangy Portland State University graduate, who took the helm of the

club last year.

"We have 185 kids who believe in everything we do, because they have a voice in everything we do."

These teens don't always feel safe in their neighborhoods, Williams says, but they can feel safe at PAL.

"Whatever they want to do, I will make it

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