

Williams

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"In the community, Harold was known for his eloquence and was sought after to speak at conferences and other occasions. Many people know about Portland Community College because of a presentation that Harold has given, and many have been moved to donate, volunteer, or enroll in the college because of his outreach. We have lost a man widely regarded as a pioneer, advocate and mentor for our communities."

Williams understood the value of a good education from personal experience. A political science major, he earned his bachelor's degree at Portland State University. After that he traveled to Zagreb, capital of the former Yugoslavia, where he received a

Those who knew Williams well knew him as a "doer," said The Skanner News Publisher, Bernie Foster. He mentored many leaders, including former State of Oregon Treasurer Jim Hill. Foster says Williams was something of an MC before it was cool.

"Some people called him a poet," Foster said. "You could give him a sentence and he would just start making poetry. He could do that with anything."

Williams and Foster were both part of a 15-person delegation to Ghana in 2000. The fact-finding mission, sponsored by the Ghanaian government aimed to support business and education ties between the United States and Ghana.

Williams founded a consulting business, CH2A & Associates, Inc., which has contracted with Oregon Youth authority to develop education programs. He also consulted on labor relations, workforce diversity and contract negotiation. CH2A & Associates

Williams' long record volunteer service covered many organizations. He was a member of the Black Leadership Conference, the Urban League, is past chair of the Coalition of Black Men, and served on the board of the Oregon Community College Association, to name just two. He also served as board chair for Success Academy, an innovative program that brought spiritual and cultural leaders to meet with PCC students who have been involved with the juvenile justice system. Williams favorite quote echoed this work and was, "To give without remembering; to receive without forgetting."

Williams received numerous awards for his leadership and volunteer service. As



Harold Williams pictured at right with, from left, PCC Board Chair Jim Harper; Mayor Sam Adams; PCC President, Preston Pulliams.

Williams was a force in local, state and national political leadership for many years

certificate in International Relations. He went on to obtain his master's degree in general studies, also from Portland State University. From 1969-1973, he worked at Portland State University as director of the Educational Center.

As his career progressed, he gained expertise in workforce and labor issues, partly through his work for the State of Oregon, as Labor Relations Manager from 1979-1984.

In 1975, Gov. Bob Straub appointed him to serve as his Director of Affirmative Action. In that role, he was a key player in promoting civil rights for minorities, women, and disabled persons.

early as 1973, the Portland Jaycees named him "Man of the Year," and in 1974 Jet Magazine recognized him for "Outstanding Achievement in Human Services." In recent years his awards have included: the PGE/TACS Community Treasure Award in 1998, the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs Award in 1996, and the above mentioned PCC leadership award in 2010.

He was a force in local, state and national political leadership for many years. Williams was a candidate for the state legislature, walking door to door in his campaign to raise awareness of the issues facing the African American community in Portland. If he had been successful, he would have been only the second African American elected to the Oregon Legislature at the time. At PCC, during Oregon Legislative sessions, Williams routinely testified on bills of significance to community colleges.

Harold Williams is survived by: his children; Harold C. Williams Two, of Portland; Anthony O.D. Williams, of Portland; and Natasha Butler, of Myrtle Beach, S.C.; his father, Cleophas Williams, of Oakland, Calif.; his stepfather, John H. Brown Sr., of Texarkana, Texas; his siblings, John H. Brown, Jr., of Texarkana, Texas; Nealie L. Henderson, of Texarkana, Texas; Albert C. Brown, of Portland, Ore.; Garland O. Brown, of Portland, Ore.; Rev. Roy Bailey, of Texarkana, Texas; Gwen Williams, of Oakland, Calif.; his grandchildren, Isaiah Anthony and Malena Marie, of Salem, Ore.; and Tyonna Butler, of Myrtle Beach, S.C.; his companion, Consuelo Vazquez; and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

The Terry Family Funeral home is handling arrangements for the family.

Braids

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"Yes I acknowledge that cosmetologists go through a lot to be licensed," Starks says. "What we're saying is that what we do does not involve the cutting, the dyeing, the perming. What we specifically want to do is twist or braid. We're asking the state to acknowledge that this is different and that we're not doing the same things that are in cosmetology schools."

"At the same time we want the state to acknowledge that a lot of us with natural hair find it hard to get services in traditional salons because our hair isn't the dominant hair," Starks says.

"A lot of the time if you want to learn how to do natural hair care you either have learned it growing up or you have to go take a specialty class," she said. "And our hair isn't a specialty - it is our hair."

After getting shut down in her attempt at volunteering, Starks - a model and actress, who braids at the Lock Loft in Vancouver - saw a column in October about hair braiding license disparities written by Alan Durning at the Sightline Institute in Seattle.

Sightline is a think tank that analyzes economic and community demographic trends in the Pacific Northwest.

Durning's research highlighted that seemingly random requirements for hairbraiding, kickboxing, timeshare sales, concert promotion licenses and more in some states are far more costly and time-consuming to fill than are those for food handlers, gun owners, emergency medical technicians and firefighters.

"I emailed him and I said I'm going through the same thing in Oregon, what can I do? I think it's unfortunate that I can cross the river and I can do ponytails for foster kids but I can't do it in Oregon," Starks says. "He said the best thing you can do is to contact your legislators."

That's exactly what Starks did - she says

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

Rep. Jackie Dingfelder and Rep Alyssa Keny-Guyer responded to her queries immediately.

"From there we've been very proactive about discussing what a law in Oregon would look like," Starks said. "We want to look at different options around the country and what different requirements would best fit Oregon."

Starks says most of the braiders she has spoken with around the country suggest a self test option, which would allow for braiders and other natural hair stylists to take a test online and receive some type of certification allowing them to legally open a busi-

ness.

"We don't want this to be a burden on the state but we also want it to break down those barriers for people who might want to go into business in hair braiding," she says.

The issue of cultural competency in such a test is a key issue, Starks says, because currently the Oregon Cosmetology Board only offers its tests in English, and the requirements for obtaining a translator for the test are themselves a barrier.

"The spectrum of hair braiders and other natural hair stylists includes individuals who are just coming over from Africa, or who have been here most of their life but maybe have a language barrier," she said.

Durning, of the Sightline Institute, has a word for these requirements: racist.

'Licensing keeps skilled hair braiders from legally earning a living'

-- Alan Durning, the Sightline Institute

"Hair braiders—most of whom are African immigrants or native-born African Americans serving African-American clients—do not cut, straighten, curl, or color hair, the skills taught in beauty schools.

What hair braiders do is braid hair," Durning wrote in his report last year. "They weave in extensions and decorations, in keeping with traditions that originated in Africa. Licensing keeps skilled hair braiders from legally earning a living."

Durning traces the "onerous" licensing requirements to systematic efforts by industry insiders to control their competition.

"These cartel-like politics are what lies behind outrageously divergent licensing rules: 1,600 hours of instruction to get a hair-cutting license in Washington, for example, but only 130 hours to become an Emergency Medical Technician. In fact, you can earn certification as a fire fighter in Washington after just 385 hours of coursework—one-fourth the time it takes to become a stylist."

Seven years ago, Washington state officials issued a "clarification" of the state's rules on cosmetology licenses which now exclude professional hair braiders from the old requirement - a process that did not involve changing any laws.

"What we're trying to do is remove some of those barriers so that people can actually have access to becoming an entrepreneur and using their braiding skills," Starks says.

"I think that it's a movement, and I think it's one of the movements that wasn't intended to be political, but somehow it is political."