

Models

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Most of the women Forster captured in black and white in 1975 are in their 60s now, though some have passed away. Others have moved out of state, and a few could not be located.

Forster said prints of the few who hadn't been found were placed on a table in the hope that someone may recognize

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them.

The women who remain in Portland — Debbie Hicks, Patsy Andrews, Rosa Bletson-Washington and Sue Chiles — took to the runway with style and confidence.

Those not present from the original shoots included: Mariam Fletcher, Sophia Gentry, Melinda Hicks, Barbara Garnett, Terry Napper and Jackie Allen.

Hicks called the experience "incredible." Despite losing contact, the women's comradery remained. "It was as if we had not missed a beat. The girls were on cue, and we didn't even have a rehearsal," Hicks said.

According to Hicks, all of the women from the Forster's original shoot were a part of a now-defunct Northeast Portland-based modeling troupe called the "Golden Girls."

"We ate together, we did these shows all over the state of Oregon — on the coast, up in the mountains, here in the neighborhood, so we pretty much got a chance to know each other and each other's moves," Hicks said. "[The reunion show] proved that nobody's lost anything."

Hicks said when she heard people were looking to find them this past summer she was both surprised and elated.

"Most of us weren't looking to be big-time models," she



The top floor of the North Portland library became a runway Sept. 27 during a fashion show reuniting a group of African American models Portland photographer Bruce Forster worked with in 1975. The models were reunited this summer after *The Skanner News* published a feature about Forster's shoot and a call to the community.

said. "We were just having fun, and pursuing a sort-of-kind-of dream here in Portland. If we made something of it, that was great. If we didn't, that was great. We just wanted to give back to the neighborhood."

Hicks said she has no ambition to walk the runway, only to act as a resource for young women who are considering a career path in modeling. "I don't know if our babies understand what true beauty is anymore, and how important it is for them to actually love themselves. If I could interest just a handful of girls in what it really means to be successful I'd

really be satisfied," Hicks said.

Several other women, who weren't a part of Forster's original shoots back in 1975, also joined the runway, rounding the Sunday afternoon celebration. All the models were styled by Yollanda Nins-Johnson.

"The overall thing was the joy of being together and the joy of being back together," Forster said. "It was just so much fun to hear them getting ready and putting on their makeup, and just jiving with each other. It just got a lot of spirits up," he said.

Alzheimer's

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lyoid deposits in their brain but haven't developed memory loss. Another requirement is that study needs to be diverse. Every fifth participant needs to be a minority or the study can't move forward.

This brain health intervention is especially important because Black people are more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease as White people.

African American patients are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of the disease with fewer treatment options and worse health outcomes.

A report from the Alzheimer's Association called the high rate of disease among African American people an emerging public health crisis.

Social science studies have shown low participation in medical research among African Americans.

Most studies mention the 40-year -long Tuskegee experiment as a reason to mistrust medical experiments. Starting in the 1930s,

U.S. Public Health Service lied to hundreds of African American men, who were told they were simply being treated for "bad blood," a colloquial term applied to various illnesses, including syphilis, anemia and fatigue.

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The two-thirds of study participants who had syphilis already were never told their specific diagnosis, and were left untreated for the course of the study.

The experiment, which ended 43 years ago, fundamentally changed the rules for clinical studies with the passage of the 1974 National Research Act. But the betrayal still casts a shadow over medical research.

Other barriers to getting diverse people into research studies include a lack of

awareness of clinical trials, miscommunication by researchers and economic or time constraints.

Attitudes about medical experiments are slowly changing. A 2011 study conducted in Boston showed that African Americans are

more likely to participate in a clinical trial if they have been previously exposed to research.

At the Friday meeting, there will be an information session about the A4 study and then an ice cream social. Rice plans to share his experiences volunteering for clinical research trials. He has been part of seven studies so far.

"Word of mouth travels faster than newspapers and TV," Rice said. "When you have

a friend who has been through it and is willing to share with you, or a loved one who has been through it and willing to share with you, that is a plus right there."

There are future plans to visit the Hollywood Senior Center in inner Northeast Portland, as well as attending the Charles Jordan Community Center meeting for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. He would like to convene in East Portland to reach those who have been displaced by gentrification.

Rice said volunteering for clinical trials is a way to give back to the community and contribute to a large body of research.

"What I want people to understand is that when you take a clinical trial you're helping your loved ones, not only of your race, but you're helping everybody," he said.

To receive notice of upcoming information sessions or to participate in the A4 Study, contact study coordinator Allison Bianchi at (503) 494-7615, or email adresearch@ohsu.edu.

Housing

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she said the housing market in the state will continue to be unstable.

"I think that, until the laws are changed are changed to protect the community, I think we're just throwing our good money into bad," she said.

Roberts also added that the \$20 million Mayor Hales pledged towards affordable housing in North and Northeast Portland has yet to come to fruition.

Other advocates and civic organizations in the Black community have realized the specific toll the rising cost of living has had on African-descended populations in the city for some time now.

In the Urban League's updated "State of Black Oregon" report, released earlier this year, Portland State University Professor Lisa K. Bates noted displacement as an issue largely rooted in the lack of home and

business ownership among African Americans.

"Black community development should encompass a range of possibilities, not only individual, but also collective and community ownership," Bates said.

"Historically Blacks have shared collective values of putting down roots, creating

Behind Native Americans, Black people were the second-most denied group when it comes to home mortgages in the County

multi-generational opportunities and building communitywide prosperity."

An article penned by the *Portland Tribune's* Steve Law this year noted the falling

number of Black homeowners in the city.

The article notes that Blacks owned 4,199 homes in Portland in 2012, down from 4,626 in 2010 and 5,044 in 2000.

That same report said that behind Native Americans, Black people were the second-most denied group when it comes to home mortgages in the County — a startling

14.7 percent in 2012.

The Skanner reported this summer that despite only accounting for 7 percent of the county's inhabitants, African Americans

have disproportionately high rates of homelessness compared to other races, making up 24 percent of Portland's homeless population.

Despite disproportionate housing rates for Blacks and other people of color in the city and county, the proposed \$30 million plan makes no mention of focusing on race in its efforts.

For the past two months, the cities of Portland and Gresham, along with Home Forward and Multnomah County, have been hosting fair housing assessment meetings that are free and open to the public across the metro area.

During the last meeting it was noted that East 82nd Avenue, an area many low-income groups have migrated to in the past decade, is already seeing signs of gentrifying, as are other East County neighborhoods.