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PHOTO: THE SKANNER NEWS

Dr. T. Allen Bethel, President of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, at The Skanner's Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast 2010.

AMAC Urges City to Continue COAB

Members of police oversight board plead to keep it afloat

By *Melanie Sevckenko*
Of *The Skanner News*

Last Thursday, the City of Portland's Community Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) met for the final time in its current formation.

With Mayor Ted Wheeler in attendance, along with representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the closing meeting was a culmination of years of confusion, conflict and distrust. It seems no one party was equipped to save the sinking ship, amid pleas from COAB members to keep it afloat.

The COAB was formed after a 2012 investigation of the City of Portland

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AP PHOTO: CAROLYN KASTER

President Donald Trump speaks during the 58th Presidential Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Friday, Jan. 20, 2017.

Inauguration Speech Talks of 'Carnage'

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'Bowing Down Is Not an Option'

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IMMIGRATION PROTEST



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Thousands of people filled Westlake Park and the surrounding streets to protest President Trump's executive order which imposes a temporary, 90-day ban on people entering the U.S. from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The order stopped dozens of people who had already received visas from entering the country which prompted protests in dozens of airports including Seatac on Saturday evening and larger protests in several cities, including Portland, through the weekend.

Sharon Gary-Smith Passes the MRG Torch

Former MRG director reflects on the foundation's growth during her tenure

By *Melanie Sevckenko*
Of *The Skanner News*

The idea of a force like Sharon Gary-Smith ever slowing down seems almost comical. But, at 68-years-old, this mogul has recently stepped down from her role as the executive director of the McKenzie River Gathering (MRG) Foundation, a 40-year-old philanthropic organization that mobilizes resources for Oregon communities.

With unprecedented vigor and integrity, Gary-

Smith joined MRG in 2011 and helped steer the charitable nonprofit into the spotlight.

As the daughter of a fierce activist who once sat on MRG's grant-making committee, Gary-Smith was raised with her mother's social justice spirit, which she took to the streets and communities of Portland.

"You did the work, no matter what your station in life, whether you were African America or female," recalled Gary-Smith in an interview with *The*

Skanner.

From her earliest years, Gary-Smith remembers wanting to stand out for her talents and passions, especially among Oregon's overwhelming White population. And so it was MRG's support of groups such as the Black United Fund, the Coalition for Black Men and various labor and immigrant organizations that aligned with her own interests.

"That work was very challenging and different in Oregon, to stand up politically and say, 'We're in-

vesting our money in this change," she said.

Gary-Smith's life-long drive to make change led to careers in Atlanta, Georgia, where she worked with a national Black Women's Health Imperative, and as the president of the Urban League in Austin, Texas.

But her unwavering aspiration was to challenge the changemaker persona of philanthropy. Coinciding with that urge, she developed a knack discussing diversity, equity and inclu-

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'Constructing Identity' Puts Black Artists on Display

Portland Art Museum will work throughout the spring to engage community, local artists

By *Christen McCurdy*
Of *The Skanner News*

When Trayvon Martin was killed, Monica Montgomery was working as a preschool teacher in Washington, D.C. Suddenly she found herself fielding kids' questions about whether it was bad to eat Skittles or wear hooded sweatshirts.

"It made my community feel very

unsafe," Montgomery said.

She started to create curricula around community care that imparted the Black Lives Matter message to children. Soon after, she said, she was fired.

"I was told, 'Your politics aren't welcome here. You're too radical. You're fired,'" Montgomery said.

She started the Museum of Impact, which she describes as the world's

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PHOTO BY CHRISTEN MCCURDY

Monica Montgomery, founding director of the Museum of Impact, addresses a crowd of about 100 people at the community opening of "Constructing Identity," the Portland Art Museum's exhibit of African American art dating back more than 130 years.