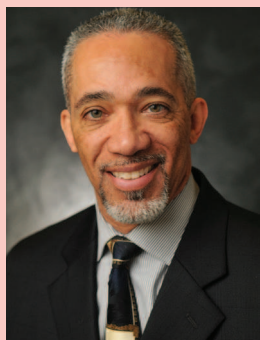


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## Dante James Resigns From City Post

Equity director will be replaced by Koffi 'Jean-Pierre' Dessou

The Skanner News Staff



Dante James

**D**ante James' last day as director of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights will be Friday, the mayor's office announced last week in a press release.

James told *The Oregonian* he has decided to leave Portland so he could pursue options in Denver, where his wife and son live.

The equity was created in 2011 and James was hired in 2012.

"Dante's work was instrumental in creating the budget equity tool, and our plan to enhance equitable workforce development in city construction projects through the Community Equity and Inclusion Plan, which was unanimously adopted by (the) city council this year,

See JAMES on page 3

# DE-ESCALATE WASHINGTON



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

The family of Charleena Lyles, a pregnant mother of four who was killed by Seattle Police June 18, speaks at a De-escalate Washington, Building Bridges Call to Action Rally Dec. 10 at Cal Anderson Park. De-escalate Washington is a coalition of organizations collecting signatures for I-940, an initiative that would require law enforcement to receive violence de-escalation, mental-health, and first-aid training and provide first aid to victims of police shootings. De-escalate needs to collect 340,000 signatures by December 22nd. The rally featured speakers from numerous organizations who support the initiative including the Black Law Enforcement Association, Not This Time, Seattle Indivisible, the Puyallup Tribe and Equal Rights Washington.

## New Planned Parenthood Board Chair Speaks

Sita Symonette is the first Black woman to serve in the position

By *Melanie Sevcenko*  
Of *The Skanner News*

**T**he board of directors for Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette (PPCW) recently elected small-business owner Sita Symonette as its new chair.

A practicing acupuncturist who owns Black Pearl Acupuncture, Symonette served as a board member since 2012 and as vice chair since 2015. She is the first Black woman to hold the position of board chair.

Symonette, who identifies as queer, earned a

bachelor's degree in biological psychology from Western Washington University, before completing her master's degree in acupuncture and Oriental medicine from Oregon College of Oriental Medicine.

Symonette spoke to *The Skanner* from her home in Vancouver, Wash., which she shares with her wife Lai-Lani and their seven-month old daughter.

**The Skanner News:** You've served on the Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette board since 2012. What made you

initially want to join the board?

**Sita Symonette:** I'm a big supporter of women's rights and equitable health care, and I think Planned Parenthood does a good job of making sure people from all walks of life can have accessible, affordable, high quality reproductive healthcare. And it's not just reproductive care nowadays. We just started offering primary care in the form of wellness checks, as well as cancer screening services.

As the owner of Black Pearl Acupuncture, I want-

ed to represent alternative and whole body wellness care on the board. I also tend to have the honor of having a lot of communities of color seek me out - being a person of color who practices acupuncture - which is not that common in the Portland metro area. And I know it's important for persons of color to be in places of leadership within health-care services, so that's why I wanted to join.

**TSN:** Does the current vulnerable state of federal  
See SYMONETTE on page 3



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Lindiwe Sisulu, the nation's minister of Defense and Military Veterans, is among the candidates for the ANC's next president. In this photo, Lindiwe Sisulu, participates in a ceremony, during a visit to Brazil.

## South Africa's Next President

The ANC Battle for South Africa's Presidency Heats Up page 9

## Movie Credits Dickens for the Way We Celebrate Christmas

page 7

## Teresa Raiford Running for City Mayor 2020

The activist said Mayor Wheeler hasn't done enough for police accountability and public safety

By *Melanie Sevcenko*  
Of *The Skanner News*

**P**ortland activist and organizer of Don't Shoot PDX, Teresa Raiford, told *The Skanner* she plans to run for city mayor in 2020.

While she's yet to make a formal announcement, Raiford said she plans to make it official in the coming weeks. She's already launched a cam-

paign Facebook page and a website.

"I've run for office before, though I used the platform to plant value from voiceless people in my community," she said.

Raiford ran to unseat Loretta Smith as county commissioner in 2014, but was unsuccessful. She also ran for city council in 2012, but lost to Amanda Fritz.

Four years earlier, in September

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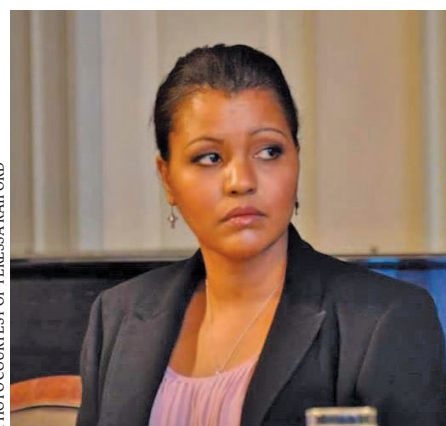


PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESSA RAIKORD

Portland activist Teresa Raiford said she will run for Portland Mayor in 2020.