

# A Look Back at 2017



PHOTO BY CHRISTEN MCCURDY

## Honoring Black History on Williams Ave.

Cleo Davis and Kayin Talton Davis' Williams Avenue public art project, which honors the history of Black Portland, launched in May. It consists of murals embedded into the sidewalk as well as signs with art and text describing events, prominent citizens and institutions central to the lives of Black Portlanders in the Albina neighborhood, particularly North Williams Avenue between Broadway and Killingsworth.



PHOTO BY CHRISTEN MCCURDY

## Rev. Jesse Jackson Visits

Rev. Jesse Jackson visited Portland June 2. His primary purpose was to attend the National Organization of Black County Officials Portlanders last week, but before his scheduled talk he held an impromptu press conference at Augustana Lutheran Church. He urged "multiracial, multicultural" action against racist attacks like the May 26 stabbing on a Portland MAX train – and called for the opening of a local office of his organization. He said he'd asked the Rev. Mark Knutson, pastor of Augustana, and County Commissioner Loretta Smith, to co-chair the chapter. The current status of that effort was not clear as this issue went to press.



PHOTO BY CHRISTEN MCCURDY

## Portland Reels After Attack

Portland made national and international headlines May 26 after two men were killed and a third injured trying to protect two Black teenage girls – one wearing a hijab – on a MAX train as it pulled in to Hollywood Transit Center. According to witness accounts and court records, Ricky John Best, 53, Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, 23, and Micah David-Cole Fletcher, 21, intervened after seeing a fellow passenger – 35-year-old Jeremiah Joseph Christian – target two teenage girls on the train, shouting Islamophobic and xenophobic remarks and violent threats. All three men were stabbed; Best died at the scene, and Namkai-Meche passed away shortly after the incident at a local hospital. Fletcher was treated for his injuries and released from a hospital the following week.

Christian will be tried on charges of aggravated murder in June 2019. In December *The Oregonian* reported the families of Best, Namkai-Meche and Fletcher had locked horns in a still-unresolved dispute over how to divide \$1.6 in funds raised for them in crowdfunding campaigns. Fletcher won a seat on the Montavilla Neighborhood Association's board in October.



PHOTO BY ALLEN DELAY (1915-2005) © THOMAS ROBINSON

## Oregon Senate Votes to Commemorate Vanport

On May 30, the Oregon State Senate unanimously voted on Senate Concurrent Resolution 21 to officially commemorate the anniversary of the Vanport flood.

In 1948, the disaster washed away Oregon's second largest – and most racially diverse – city and displaced close to 20,000 residents, about 6,500 of them African Americans. At least 15 people perished that day, among them a two-year-old boy and his 11-month-old sister.

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THE SKANNER ARCHIVES

## 'Good in the Hood' Threatened

On June 7 a staff member at Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, going through the day's mail, discovered a threat naming Good in the Hood organizer Shawn Penney, using racial slurs and promising a "blood bath" if the festival goes ahead as planned. The multicultural festival, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, went forward as planned despite the threat and a major heat wave that weekend.