

Obituary: Erin Lemar Cowan

Sept. 17, 1971 - Sept. 3, 2018

Erin Lemar Cowan, known to many as “JoJo” was born on Sept. 17, 1971 to Julius “JC” and Shirley Cowan in Portland, Oregon. His early education was received at Faubion Elementary School and Whitaker Middle School. Erin graduated from Jefferson High School, “The School of Champions, School of Pride” and always represented strongly for his alma mater. Erin earned a basketball scholarship and continued his education at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. From there he continued his basketball playing career at Idaho State University.

From a young age, Erin spent hours honing and mastering his signature jump shot, along with the rest of his basketball skills. It was at the Matt Dishman Community Center, where he originally teamed up with some of his friends who he would remain close with for the rest of his life.

Throughout his life, Erin always remained a part of the Portland community - going from player to coach to mentor and trainer.

Erin was able to take his passion for basketball to build a career that included working for Damon Stoudamire, Inc. and starting his own business, JUMP Sports Management. Through his work, Erin was blessed to travel the world and work with some of the greatest athletes, including LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Kevin Durant, and one of his favorites Kyrie Irving to name a few.

In 2001, a fellow Demo introduced Erin to his wife, Miko. They were married on August 18, 2007, in the couple’s beautiful backyard and



Erin Lemar Cowan

recently celebrated their 11th anniversary.

Erin loved to cook, and took much pride in his grilling. Erin loved to make people laugh, whether it was telling a joke, a story, or videotaping a prank. In his free time, you could find Erin in his favorite chair watching sports, amateur to professional, tennis to football. But his first love was basketball.

For anyone who knew and loved Erin, they know he was always happy, loved a good laugh and would do anything to get someone to smile. And if you’ve ever met Erin, you know that he’s “from the streets.”

If given the choice between a long and ordinary life and a short but extraordinary life, there is no doubt that Erin would’ve chosen the latter. And an extraordinary life is what he lived.

Preceding Erin in death are his father, Julius “JC” Cowan; brother, Julian Cowan; grandparents, Ella Mae Sherrod; Nathaniel and Sallie Mae Carter, and Terry Overton; and Nemo, his beloved bull mastiff.

Erin leaves behind many loved ones to cherish his memory: his wife, Kimiko Cowan; daughters, Brandi, Eryn, Jade, Mia and Seiji; his grandson, Landen; mother, Shirley Cowan; brother Marc Cowan; sister TerriLynn Cowan; Ghost (English Bulldog) and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins, extended family members and friends.

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officials pulled the plug on the entire sitting committee.

“My wishful thought would be that Kafoury would be a little bit more humble in understanding that what she is doing is counter-productive not only for race relations for Multnomah County, but counter-productive toward transparency within our government,” he told *The Skanner*.

Citizen-led push

The Multnomah County Office of Community Involvement was created by a vote of the people in 1983, as a tool for taxpayers to have input on policy decisions. The Community Involvement Committee essentially helps run

that office – which also receives dedicated funding – and is technically tasked with hiring a director and support staff to help the citizens committee.

The conflict started brewing in 2016 when an Office of Community Involvement staff turnover triggered the hire of a new director; meanwhile, citizen volunteers on the CIC became more active in pushing for new county policies, a deeper look at the charter and more independence.

While meeting minutes compiled for the panel by county staff don’t reveal much controversy, the meetings themselves began to trigger deep and sometimes contentious discussions – especially after the election of Donald

Portland Parks & Rec. Presents the Second Annual Yard Tree Giveaway Events

Portland Parks & Recreation’s Urban Forestry division presents the Second Annual Yard Tree Giveaway events to help increase Portland’s tree canopy and continue fostering a healthy urban forest. To expand Portland’s tree canopy in east Portland – where it is currently below other parts of the City - this year’s events will be held in the Centennial and Lents neighborhoods.

Event dates are Saturday, October 13, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Parklane Park in the Centennial neighborhood and on Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bloomington Park in the Lents neighborhood. Yard tree giveaway info is online at portlandoregon.gov/parks/73498. The trees are expected to go quickly, so neighbors are encouraged to register and reserve a tree today.



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Mailers

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rector of policy for commissioner Chloe Eudaly, whose office developed the ordinance. “I can think of maybe three or four comments, that say ‘Don’t do this.’ They’re mostly from landlords, though – not so much from renters. I think that’s interesting.”

In its current form, the ordinance states that a landlord “may consider only income and certain credit, rental and criminal history of an applicant as set out in this ordinance, and may only consider that information that is relevant to the applicant’s likely performance as a tenant.”

It doesn’t actually say that a landlord can’t reject a tenant based on criminal convictions – but a landlord who does reject a potential tenant based on certain criteria, including certain criminal convictions, has to provide an individual assessment explaining why the applicant was rejected. Even then, the ordinance specifies that the violent offenses included on the “low-risk criteria” list are only in consideration if it’s been more than three years since sentencing or one year since the applicant was released.

Under current state law, a prospective tenant has the right to ask for a written explanation after being denied a housing application. Oregon landlords also have the right to deny rental applications based on criminal convictions and to terminate, with 24 hours’ notice, the tenancy of those who commit acts of physical

violence on their property.

In some ways the individual assessment is analogous to the form rejection credit card companies must provide if rejecting a credit-card applicant or customer for a line of credit or an increase in credit limit. But because the proposed ordinance doesn’t require a rejected applicant to ask for a reason they were rejected, it could create more paperwork and red tape for landlords.

“You can still deny housing for [adverse criminal backgrounds], you just have to provide an analysis. It’s guidance for an individualized assessment,” Duhamel said. “The real issue isn’t around those criminal histories. The real issue is landlords use online platforms to get denials or approval within minutes. What we’re requiring them to do is a more manual process. It’s a more humanizing process that requires them to take more time.”

To say it will have the consequences the postcard states is a stretch, said Katrina Holland, executive director of the Community Alliance of Tenants – and one that plays to fears and prejudicial tendencies. Holland also said she hasn’t seen anything like the mailer in 11 years of renting in Portland.

“From our perspective, this was disappointing to say the least,” said Katrina Holland, executive director of the Community Alliance of Tenants. “This is despicable.”

An Aug. 31 blog post on Multifamily Northwest’s website implores its membership – mostly landlords – to contact city officials, but provides a slightly different argument.

“[The ordinance] calls for a new “individualized assessment” which is far more administratively burdensome than the HUD requirements. Effective, fair and objective resident evaluation systems are already used by property management professionals,” the post reads. “Multifamily NW has expressed grave concerns on behalf of all of us to city leaders regarding the screening criteria proposal; however, they have not listened to the industry they’re so keen to reform.”

“We represent a diverse group of rental housing providers. Educating our members and Portlanders about proposed changes in the housing ordinance is part of our work. Many of our members are concerned about the impact of these proposed changes, and we hope all residents will engage with the City on this issue,” wrote Multifamily Northwest executive director Deborah Imse in an emailed statement to *The Skanner* Wednesday morning. Imse did not respond to messages asking how many mailers were sent and how recipients’ addresses were obtained.

Imse sits on the Rental Services Commission, which has been working on the ordinance since

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J. Trump.

Multiple participants told The Skanner that committee members apologized to each other when the talk got heated – and that they feel county officials are holding civic volunteers to a double standard, in light of Kafoury’s uttered profanity at another commissioner caught on a live microphone at the end of a tough public meeting last year.

“No one in our meetings ever called someone a ‘b****h’ like Kafoury called Loretta,” De La Torre said.

By April, committee members voted to ban full-time county employees from the CIC, they said to keep county officials from potentially controlling

votes and discussions.

Finally, in late June staff from the county chair’s office stepped in and announced the resolution to reconstitute the CIC with almost no notice to committee members, and no discussion with the committee itself.

On June 28, Multnomah County commissioners passed a resolution to “reset” the citizens commission with fewer powers; only Commissioner Loretta Smith voted against it. The volunteer citizen committee’s right to hire and fire county staff, which had previously been written into the ordinance, was eliminated by the new resolution.