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# BLESSING OF THE FESTIVAL



The 2019 Rose Festival Court was introduced to the public for the first time April 13 at the annual Blessing of the Festival and Memorial Service at Piedmont Presbyterian Church. Following the blessing there was a rose planting ceremony and reception. This annual tradition marked the beginning of the Rose Festival season, introduces the 2019 Court and pays respect to honored members that have recently passed.

## Dr. Markisha Smith Steps Into New Role at City

### New Director of Equity and Human Rights talks about her vision for the role

By Christen McCurdy  
Of The Skanner News

In February, Dr. Markisha Smith became Portland's new director of the City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights.

Dr. Smith came to the city from the Oregon Department of Education, where she had served for six years as director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Prior to that, Dr. Smith served as a professor and director of undergraduate teacher at Warner Pacific College

and Western Oregon University, and as an equity trainer and strategic consultant for Metro and the Camas, Washington school district, among other local contracts. Before she got her PhD, she taught high school in English in Texas.

In her new role, Dr. Smith leads a team of 11 staff; the office's 2018-19 budget is \$1.9 million. The Office of Equity and Human Rights provides education and technical support to city staff and elected officials with the aim of recognizing and removing system-

ic barriers to just distribution of resources. Last week *The Skanner* sat down with Dr. Smith to find out how she intends to tackle the job. This interview has been edited for space and clarity.

**THE SKANNER NEWS:** Tell us a little bit about your background and where you came from and how you came to this work.

**DR. MARKISHA SMITH:** It's interesting because I never really thought that I'd be in public service and the government. I taught

high school English in Texas and loved that, loved education — loved everything about education and decided to go back to school and work on a doctorate. Then I said, "OK, what do I do with this?" It made sense that I would go into higher ed and so I started down a track of academia and tenure and all of the things that come with that. I had a couple of appointments in Michigan and then moved here and worked at Western Oregon University and Warner Pa-

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## White Supremacist Gets Life for Killing Larnell Bruce

### Russell Courtier found guilty of murder, hit-and-run driving and hate crime in death of young Black man

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A White supremacist who ran down and killed a young Black man in Oregon two years ago was sentenced Tuesday to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 28 years.

Russell Courtier's sentencing came after jurors in March found Courtier, 40,

guilty of murder, hit-and-run driving and the hate crime of second-degree intimidation in the death of 19-year-old Larnell Bruce, local media reported Tuesday.

Courtier and Colleen Hunt were in a Jeep driven by Courtier in August 2016 when he was encouraged by Hunt to drive into Bruce af-

ter the two fought outside a convenience store in the Portland suburb of Gresham, authorities have said.

Prosecutors argued Courtier was motivated by his White supremacist beliefs — saying he was a member of the European Kindred

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Russell Courtier, the White supremacist who ran down and killed Larnell Bruce two years ago was sentenced Tuesday.



Don't Shoot PDX will launch a Community Legal Referral Services program by the end of spring.

## Don't Shoot PDX to Launch Community Legal Referral Services Program

By Sandra Sorensen  
For The Skanner News

When Don't Shoot PDX opened a second office at 14 NE Killingsworth earlier this year, founder Teressa Raiford envisioned it as a venue to legally empower vulnerable members of the community.

"We have anti-racism laws in the country, we have anti-discrimination laws," Raiford said during a public brainstorming session at the offices of

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Lawrence Cherono, of Kenya, breaks the tape to win the 123rd Boston Marathon in front of Lelisa Desisa, of Ethiopia, right, on Monday in Boston.

## Kenya's Cherono Wins Men's Boston Marathon in Sprint to Tape

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## Senator asks IRS to Explain Disproportionate Auditing

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