The Urban League of Portland

On the Road to Equality

A 50 Year Retrospective

By Dr. Darrell Millner
Acknowledgements

Like the Urban League of Portland, this book is the result of many individual contributions. The history section was written by Dr. Darrell Millner, professor of Black Studies at Portland State University. Individuals who assisted with gathering information for this book include: Myrtle Carr, Vernon and Fannie Chatman; Laura Glosson, Alene Grice, H.J. Belton Hamilton, Heloise Hill, Ray Leary, E. Kimbark MacColl, Senator William McCoy, Nathan Nickerson, Bobbie Nunn, Barbara Peterson-O'Hare, Joy Pruitt, and George Rankins. Support was also provided by the Oregon Historical Society, the Urban League's Community Relations/Advocacy Committee, and Cecelia Jackson.

Underwriting support for the book was generously provided by Terry Ann Rogers, a former member of the Urban League board; Howard Shapiro; Portland State University; and Anheuser-Busch Companies.

This book is the final element in a year-long public information campaign that was led by Ad2, a local professional society of young advertising professionals. Special thanks to all the members of Ad2 who donated their time and creative talents to the campaign. Thanks also to the following companies and individuals who supported the campaign with materials or talents: Artistic Edge; Exact Imaging; Great Impressions Printing; Oppenheimer Camera; Ownco Marketing; NIKE; Pacific Grip and Lighting; Pacific Photo Design; Portland AdType; Rex Recording; West Coast Screenprinting; and Ken Boddie.

Special thanks also to the many Urban League clients who shared their stories and faces for the public service spots and to the local media outlets who ran the public service announcements.

We also wish to recognize the support of the Honorary Co-Chairs of the Urban League's 50th Anniversary Dinner: U.S. Senator Mark O. Hatfield and Senior Circuit Court Judge Mercedes F. Deiz.

Finally, thanks to the members and clients of the Urban League of Portland. Without them there would be no story to tell.

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Author: Dr. Darrell Millner.

Book Design: Crow Design, Vancouver, WA.

Cover Duotone: Jim Dittmer and Associates, Portland, OR.

Film: Negative Perfection, Portland, OR.

Printing: Great Impressions, Portland, OR.

Cover Photo: DeNorval Unthank, often called the father of the Urban League of Portland. He helped start the agency and served as president of the board of directors.
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From the Board Chair and the President

BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Portland's Urban Mosaic—How 50 Years Can Make A Difference

Many of us who make up today's Urban League of Portland family were not around 50 years ago. Had we been here, we would know all too well that it was a different time in America in 1945. But thankfully, then, as it is now, the Urban League of Portland was on the job.

To trace our Urban League's 50-year journey is to trace a critical evolution for the city of Portland and the state of Oregon. It's an evolution that has weathered the plague of racism; challenged the stigma of inequality; and fought through the barriers of poverty and segregation. Yes, it was a glorious evolution, led by men and women whose names may be unfamiliar to some, but whose legacy flows through the very foundation of our community.

So what of today's Urban League? What of today's challenges?

The mission of the Urban League of Portland remains true to its original creed. The great men and women who helped craft our purpose were true champions of fairness, justice and equal opportunity. Those issues were important 50 years ago, and they remain the lifeblood of today's Urban League.

On this special occasion, our Board of Directors reaffirms its commitment to the mission of the Urban League and the community we are charged to serve. There could be no more lasting a tribute to our history, than to solidify our future through the same hard work and dedication which created the Urban League of Portland.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Half a century ago a group of people with a vision for a better Portland came together to solve a problem. The problem was how to reduce the barriers that African Americans faced in an era when the laws and practices of the community made a mockery of equal opportunity. The work is not complete; however, a foundation, a "movement" is in place to assist people and institutions that have
more than a commitment but the will to embrace, practice, and live true equality. However, our entire community can take pride for moving us so far along “On The Road To Equality.”

If Dr. DeNorval Unthank and the other founders of the Urban League of Portland were alive today, I am sure they would be impressed by the progress we have made. We have succeeded in eliminating racial inequality in our written laws and policies. Many African Americans and other people of color have risen to the top of their professions in several fields: politics, education, law enforcement, and the cultural arts, to name a few. What remains to be done is turning the intent of our written laws into the reality of racial progress. Economic equality and self-sufficiency are our unfinished agenda and one the Urban League of Portland will focus on as we begin the second half of our first century.

The following pages share the vision, commitment, and hard work of a community of people who dedicated their time, talent, and energy for 50 years. We do not pretend to think we have covered it all. Any movement that is about change requires hundreds and thousands of unsung heroes and heroes to push it forward. A lot of people have given us a push “On The Road to Equality.” We are grateful to those whose efforts helped make us what we are today. There is no way to mention all these important contributors in this book. Instead, we dedicate this book to them, and thank them.

These words by Robert F. Kennedy summarize why we will continue our course “On Road to Equality”:

“Social progress and social justice, in my judgement, are not something apart from freedom; they are the fulfillment of freedom. The obligation of those who are free is to use those opportunities to improve the welfare of their fellow human beings. This, at least, has been the tradition of democratic freedom in America. It must be the permanent effort of Americans to keep moving ever forward until we can realize the promise of American life for all our citizens.

It should be clear that, if one person’s rights are denied, the rights of all are in danger—that if one person is denied equal protection of the law, we cannot be sure that we will enjoy freedom of speech or any other of our fundamental rights.”

Four of the principles of Kwanzaa will help us to build during the next 50 years: Umoja (Unity), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamma (Cooperative Economics) and Imani (Faith).
League Directors

There have been nine directors of The Urban League of Portland. Each brought a different set of talents to the job of leading one of Portland's premier social service agencies. Each inherited a different set of issues, board of directors, and historical circumstances. What they all shared in common was a desire to improve the quality of life in the community they served.

Perhaps equally important were the individuals who stepped forward to shepherd the agency between directors. The job of interim director is an often thankless one. Interim directors usually added the temporary director duties to their existing responsibilities. Yet they had no mandate to lead. Often they kept the agency on track during tough times. Each succeeded in keeping the train running until the next conductor could get on board.

Edwin C. "Bill" Berry was the League's first executive director. He led the agency from 1945-1955.
William Boone led the Urban League from 1955-1959. Here he receives a proclamation from Governor Robert Holmes announcing Urban League Week, as Board President George Dysart looks on.

E. Shelton Hill served the longest of any Urban League president and led the agency through much of the Civil Rights Era. He served as director from 1959-1973.

James Brooks directed several programs for the League before taking over as director from 1974-1978.
Freddye Petett served as president from 1979-1984 and was the first to move the League’s headquarters from downtown into North Portland.


Useni Perkins helped found the Coalition For Black Men during his tenure as president from 1988-1989.

Dr. Darryl Tukuifu helped rebuild the League’s financial reputation and increased the agency’s profile as an advocate for the community. He served as president from 1990-1993.
Current Director

Lawrence J. Dark was named president and chief executive officer of the League in 1994. He has led the agency's efforts to prevent the growth of HIV/AIDS in communities of color and set out a vision for the agency to pursue in the 1990's.
Interim Directors

Nathan Nickerson led several programs at the League before taking over as acting director from 1978-1979.

Ray Leary was one of the League’s youngest directors. He served as interim director from 1987-1988.

Cletus B. Moore, Jr. (left) oversees construction of the Whitney Young Education Center with Education Director Herman Lessard, Jr., Moore was the League’s interim director in 1993-1994.
The Urban League of Portland

A 50 Year Retrospective

1945–1995
CHAPTER 1

The 1940's - Localizing Global Issues: Race and Politics

INTRODUCTION

The history of African Americans in Oregon is long and complex. The first African Americans could have arrived in Oregon as early as 1579 with English explorer Sir Francis Drake. The first documented evidence of a Black person in Oregon was recorded by Robert Haswell, an officer with the crew of Captain Robert Gray in 1788. Captain Gray led the first American explorations of the Oregon coast. In an encounter with Native Americans in Tillamook Bay Marcus Lopius, an African-American member of Gray's crew, was killed. Haswell's report of this incident begins the modern record of African Americans in Oregon.

Blacks continued to come to Oregon through the Fur Trade and Wagon Train periods. Some like York, the slave of William Clark on the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-06, made well documented and important contributions. Numerous others passed through Oregon history with less visibility and prominence, but made contributions that nevertheless helped shape the course of Oregon life and culture.

Oregon's African-American population was always artificially small. In the years of early settlement most Blacks in the country could not freely choose to come west. They were held within the grip of involuntary slavery. Other obstacles faced those Blacks who did migrate across the Oregon Trail. The politics, economics and social conventions of the pioneer community reflected the harsh anti-Black realities of this period of American history. Black exclusion laws, prohibitions on homesteading and other manifestations of discrimination flourished in early Oregon society and discouraged the evolution of a large Black resident population until well into the Twentieth Century.

Before World War II, Portland's African American population was small. The Cannady family organized an early musical quintet.

Those African Americans who did come to Oregon fought valiantly to overcome these barriers. While small in numbers, they succeeded in creating a viable and progressive Black community with high hopes for the possibilities of its younger generation.

THE WAR YEARS

This uneasy but stable accommodation between racial groups in Oregon endured until the outbreak of global conflict in 1941. The impact on race relations in Oregon after the beginning of World War II was dramatic, swift and long lasting.
Portland became a center of wartime shipbuilding activity. Kaiser Company shipyards were quickly constructed in Portland and Vancouver. The new demands for labor created by the war allowed non-traditional sources of labor — including women and minorities — a chance at previously denied opportunities. Thousands of African Americans were a part of the new labor force recruited across the country and relocated to Oregon. Vanport, a temporary wartime residential community on the outskirts of Portland, was created to house them.

Between 1941 and 1943 the African-American population in Portland increased tenfold, from roughly 2,000 to over 20,000. This rapid increase in population, the different cultural qualities, expectations, and orientations of the new immigrants, both White and non-White, spelled doom for the old patterns of race relations traditional in Oregon life. New tensions, dynamics, and confrontations were inevitable. The demands of wartime solidarity and national unity contained these conflicting forces in a tenuous equilibrium of interests while the war’s outcome was in doubt. As an Allied victory became more apparent, the impact of latent racial conflict and competition increased steadily in Oregon and Portland life.

By 1945 the elements of Portland life that wished a return to the pre-war racial status quo and those that sought to make permanent the war-inspired changes were struggling for control of the city’s racial agenda. Representatives of traditional Portland life sought the departure, forced or voluntary, of the wartime immigrants so that things could return to "normal". Opposing the racial reactionaries was an emerging multi-racial alliance that wished to permanently improve the racial climate in Portland and Oregon.

The interracial group included Dr. DeNorval Unthank, one of Portland’s first Black physicians, who took a leading role in convincing the National Urban League to consider opening a branch in Portland. Other members of this group included Bishop Dagwell from the Episcopal Diocese, Father Tobin from the Catholic Archdiocese and David Robinson from the Jewish B’Nai Brith. Dr. Unthank donated his examination room for the League’s first office. He remained an active board member of the League for years, serving some time as Board President.

Dr. DeNorval Unthank was one of Portland’s first Black physicians. He helped convince the National Urban League to open a Portland affiliate.
CREATION OF THE
URBAN LEAGUE OF PORTLAND

During the war years Portland had gained a national reputation for its hostile racial environment. In part this was due to the pioneer legacy of anti-Black legislation and discrimination. Another factor were the segregationist policies of Local 72 of the Boilermakers Union which had maintained shipyard labor practices that violated wartime fair employment executive orders. These combined to focus national attention on local racial conflicts.

As the war moved towards its conclusion, Jim Crow practices, decreasing employment opportunities, inadequate housing, negative racial stereotyping, real estate discrimination and police harassment all contributed to the escalation of racial tension.

In the fall of 1944 Reginald Johnson, the Field Secretary for the National Urban League, arrived in Portland to investigate such conditions. Leading local citizens were encouraged to organize a Board of Directors for a Portland Urban League affiliate. This was done by December of 1944. The local branch was officially established in April 1945 and Edwin C. Berry was hired as the first Director of the Portland Urban League on May 1, 1945. It was a fortuitous choice because the League faced formidable problems that required all the considerable talents and charisma that Edwin Berry brought to the position.

The arrival of Edwin C. "Bill" Berry in 1945 gave the Urban League a seasoned leader and strategist. Here Berry counsels a young student.

Berry’s arrival in Portland and acceptance of the League’s top job is revealing of the ambiguous nature of Portland race relations in the postwar years. Berry had been enthusiastically recruited by the group of private citizens and religious leaders led by Dr. Unthank. But upon his arrival in Portland he also met with a group of the city’s White business leaders. This group was most interested in having Berry arrange the departure from Portland of the African American wartime labor immigrants. In response, Berry indicated he would himself be leaving on the next train out of town. He went on to say that if the group was willing to support his efforts to integrate local African Americans into the mainstream of community life, he would take on the job. They did, he did, and the League had its first director.
"The Negro Problem"

It was the practice of that day to describe racial issues as "The Negro Problem". In fact, African Americans were not the problem, but the victims of a lengthy legacy of discriminatory racial behavior enforced by the dominant culture. In Portland that legacy in the mid 1940's included most elements of the Jim Crow patterns of race relations traditionally associated with the Southern states. Restaurant windows proclaimed "White Trade Only". Indeed, in the building that housed the League's first office, on the ground floor was a cafe boasting a "White Trade Only" sign in its window.

Downtown hotels generally refused to accept Negroes as guests. Insurance companies either refused outright to offer life insurance to African Americans or required significantly higher premiums of them for the same coverage offered to Whites. Labor unions held on to segregated employment practices. The Portland Real Estate Board demanded in its code of Ethics that real estate agents refuse to sell homes to individuals whose race would "be determined to lower property values in that neighborhood". Such phrases were well understood code words for maintaining a segregated approach to residential home ownership. The Police Department had few officers of color, a chief who denied there was racial discrimination within the force, and a string of police killings of Black men that all-White juries declared "justifiable homicide". Most critically, employers generally refused to hire African Americans in deference to "prevailing public attitudes".

Strategies and Objectives of the Urban League

Under Berry's direction and with the energetic support of his board of directors, the League's attack on these problems was forthright, calculated, and comprehensive. The League adopted its national organization's slogan of "Not Alms But Opportunity". The first focus of League efforts was employment. The loss of wartime production jobs was devastating to the local Black community. Developing alternative opportunities for economic survival by opening the local job market was of primary importance.

The League was influential in the campaign to adopt a statewide Fair Employment Practices Law that was finally put into place in 1949 after a difficult two-year struggle. The League recruited and screened prospective Black employees, lined up potential employers, monitored workplace problems, and tracked implementation of the new law.

In the campaign against these ills, from the start the League combined the talents of dedicated Whites, Blacks, and other individuals of like mind and objectives. Several of the League's strongest early supporters were influential Whites like city Councilman Peter Gantenbein and then journalist Tom McCall, who later became one of Oregon's most popular governors. The League also had allies in organizations like B'Nai Brith, the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, the local NAACP chapter, and other organizations that had
A key early supporter of the League was Tom McCall, who went on to become one of Oregon's most popular governors. As an aide to Governor Douglas McCay, McCall helped arrange a meeting with League Director Bill Berry.

battled racial ills in Portland before the League's arrival and would continue their efforts through the next decades. It was often the case that League members and staff were also active in these other organizations and members of those organizations often worked with the League as well.

Conditions in the post-war years were ripe for a concerted attack on racial problems. The war effort after all had been conducted against the racial outrages of foreign powers and the heinous political ideologies of fascism and imperialism based on racial distinction. Furthermore, America's internal racial practices were becoming a major embarrassment in an escalating Cold War contest with the Soviet Union. A pivotal report on racial issues in Portland conducted by the City Club in 1945 concluded in part:

"The treatment of the Negro is the greatest barrier to America's moral leadership in the world today... For its international prestige, power and future security, America must demonstrate to the world that its Negroes can be made a part of its democracy. In a way, then, the Negro Problem is not only America's greatest failure but also its greatest opportunity".

The Urban League echoed this refrain and made it a major plank in the program to attack racial problems. The Urban League Newsletter of October 1945 declared:

"This is 1945! This is the year we have beaten Fascism into the mire abroad. What have we done about it at home?"

The answer of course was not nearly enough. The League articulated a plan of attack based on a belief in the importance of education and the acquisition for African Americans of employment rights and economic power. The League envisioned itself as two entities simultaneously:

"It is a Movement of people of all colors, creeds and national origins who believe that intelligent cooperation can solve the multitude of minority problems which beset us; who believe devotedly that the
best interest of the community can be served by the protection of the weakest, as the strongest and the most articulate. This movement in Portland symbolizes the hopes and aspirations of 10,500 Negroes, and the social conscience of a great many fair minded and informed White persons.”

And

“It is a Social Agency with a professional staff, which works day and night to carry out the functions of the Urban League under the direction of an inter-racial Board.”

[From: Urban League of Portland Board of Directors minutes for July 26, 1947, Report to the Council of Social Agencies]

This dual vision has provided the framework for League programs and activities throughout the 50 years of the history of the Urban League of Portland.

The Urban League’s Gertrude Rae had some help attracting members in the 1940’s.
The 1950's—Breaking Through Old Barriers

As the League moved into the 1950's there were both items of unfinished business lingering from the post-war era and new possibilities for progress on the horizon that had been unthinkable only a few years before.

While the campaign for jobs had been the number one priority of the League in the 1940's, it had not been their only iron in the fire. The legacy of anti-Black legislation stretching back to the pioneer exclusion laws had long cried out for attention. Periodically throughout the twentieth century there had been attempts by the African-American community to pass positive civil rights legislation that would grant first class citizenship rights to all Oregonians. Earlier attempts had always met with defeat in the state legislature. Most recently, the Oregon Senate in 1945 had rejected a Civil Rights Bill by 24-6 vote. The passage of the Fair Employment Practices Law in 1949, of which the League had played a large part, encouraged a renewed attack on other discriminatory practices.

The battleground shifted in this new campaign from the state legislature to the halls of city government. After years of preparation and negotiation by a multi-racial committee of prominent individuals and organizations, a Public Accommodations Act was introduced to and adopted by the Portland City Council in early 1950. This law prohibited discrimination in any facilities or services made available to the general public.

Immediately opponents initiated a referendum drive to overturn the new law. Sufficient signatures were quickly collected to put the issue on the ballot in the November general election. The intervening months were filled with vigorous campaigns by both sides to sway the final vote. The League was at the forefront of supporters of the measure and committed extensive resources of time and energy to the struggle. In the November election the opposition forces prevailed and the Public Accommodations Act was repealed before it ever went into effect.

The loss of this battle was, of course, discouraging. It did not however destroy the determination of many supporters to continue the war against racism. Both local and national circumstances in the early 1950's were rapidly changing on the racial front. The early foundations of the national Civil Rights movement that would explode across the headlines of the country were coming into place. In only four years the U.S. Supreme Court would issue its monumental Brown vs. Board of Education ruling. In 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, a courageous Rosa Parks would spark a bus boycott that started a young preacher, Dr. Martin Luther King, on his path to international fame. In 1956 the country would be shocked by the televised horror of "Southern justice" at work, when two White Mississippi men were freed by an all-White jury after the hideous murder of the Black teenager Emmett Till.

Circumstances were subtly changing in Portland as well. Sometimes the change was the
result of overt action on the part of organizations like the League. At other times significant change grew from unplanned or unanticipated natural events. Such a natural event had occurred in Portland in 1948. Over time it had great impact on the course of race relations in the city.

**THE VANPORT FLOOD**

On Memorial Day 1948 the Columbia River overflowed its banks and washed away Vanport City, on the flood plain north of Portland. Vanport had been created to temporarily house the area's wartime workers. The post-war housing shortage allowed it to linger on long past its original intended use. Vanport had been the home of many Black workers during the war. The restrictive policies of the local real estate industry kept Black residents largely pinned up in Vanport after the war. When the flood swept Vanport away, the city was faced with a racial crisis. What was it to do with this large African-American refugee population?

White residents of Vanport could be fairly easily absorbed into the larger fabric of the White community with minimal disruption. The response to the plight of Vanport's Black residents presented a dramatic challenge to the previous patterns of racial thought and action in the city.

In general, Portland rose to meet the challenge in a display of admirable humanitarianism. It was inevitable that some distinctions related to color were made in the aftermath of the disaster, given the racial conventions still pervasive in that era. However, other new interracial dynamics and interactions emerged from the event that in the long term helped change the course of local race relations. Old negative racial stereotypes in many cases fell away in favor of positive interracial interactions and cooperation made necessary by the flood.

H.J. Belton Hamilton, a former chair of the League's board, recalls, "A lot of people got to know each other then." Some of the new interactions were the result of White families taking displaced Vanport Blacks into their homes after the flood. Many other new relationships emerged on different social, political and economic levels in direct response to the flood emergency.

The old artificial boundaries of the African-American community had to be stretched to accommodate the relocation of former Vanport residents. "The Vanport Flood had a major impact on Portland," said Bobbie Nunn, an early activist in the NAACP and the Urban League.
“The Flood opened up job opportunities for us. All these people needed a place to stay. So some of the boundaries that the realtors had set had to be changed.”

More importantly, the boundaries of human insight, empathy and understanding were also expanded by the disaster. The impact was often not instantaneous. But taken together with events unfolding on the national level and the continued efforts of the League and others to address local racial issues like the Public Accommodations Act, the changes in politics, economics and social issues in the 1950’s became profound.

The movement for positive racial change was on the rise in the 1950’s. In 1953 the state legislature finally passed a Public Accommodations Law that applied the concept across the state. A leading strategist in that effort was a young Republican state representative named Mark O. Hatfield, who went on to serve Oregon as governor and U.S. senator. The Oregon Legislature followed up four years later with the state’s first Fair Housing Act, that made discrimination in housing sales and rentals illegal. In both cases, private behavior often lagged far behind the letter of the law, but now such discriminatory behavior no longer enjoyed the mantle of legal acceptability.
THE LEAGUE GROWS INTO AN INSTITUTION FOR CHANGE

By 1953 League membership had grown to 1,800 persons. The charismatic leadership of Bill Berry, the less visible but solid presence of an interracial board of dedicated and influential citizens, a track record of political victories, strong community support, and a well qualified paid professional staff implementing service related programs combined to elevate the League in the mid 1950's to a new level of stature in local racial issues. It had truly transformed from a protest organization into an institution of social change.

A measure of the League's maturity as an institution came in 1955 when Bill Berry departed to take the position of Director of the Chicago Urban League. He was succeeded by William H. Boone, who served as Director until 1959. E. Shelton "Shelly" Hill took the reins of the League in 1959 and ably filled that position until his retirement in 1972. Shelton Hill was a veteran League official having first been hired as Industrial Secretary in September of 1947, after having also served on the Urban League Board of Directors.

The paid membership ranks of the League had continued to grow under Berry, reaching 3,000 by the time of his departure. Before the end of the decade under Shelton Hill, the League boasted an all-time high of approximately 4,000 members. No other American city has ever produced such membership on a percentage basis for the Urban League.

During the 1950's the League's menu had been full. One area of activity that had begun in the 1940's continued to be an important part of the League's success. This was the breaking of employment barriers by placing individuals as the "first" African American to hold previously all-White positions. The League's lists of "firsts" grew to an impressive length. These breakthroughs benefitted both the individual and the course of general racial progress as first-hand interaction across racial lines destroyed many old negative racial stereotypes about African Americans' character and ability. The breakthroughs also added to the economic
resources of the African American community and served as encouragement for the aspirations of the younger generation.

The 1950's also saw advances in the arena of residential housing opportunity. One major focus of League activity in the mid-50's was a survey and conference that attacked the restrictive real estate practices that had hampered free choice in the housing market for African Americans. One League tactic was to send out "testers" to gauge local housing practices. The work of the League on this issue was an essential element in the successful passage of the state's 1957 Fair Housing Act. The League's survey on the effect on property values of African American home ownership in previously all-White neighborhoods showed that real estate values did not precipitously fall. This helped to reduce the fear and hysteria that surrounded such transactions and smoothed the way to more residential access for African Americans in Portland neighborhoods.

Not all League activities were aimed at such monumental and evident barriers to African American advancement as employment and housing discrimination. Some victories also came in the more subtle areas of racial combat. A major but more abstract obstacle to better race relations were the lingering yet powerful negative stereotypes and misinformation commonly held about African-American life and culture by many members of the majority culture. These adverse notions often were the foundation of ignorance and confusion that made racial progress more difficult.

Powerful majority culture institutions often reflected these negative attitudes as well. Perhaps the most influential of such institutions were the press and police. Stereotypical thought and action by the police community could and did have dire and immediate consequences for local African Americans on a daily basis. The League continued to pressure the city government and police hierarchy to hire more members from ethnic communities and better train majority culture officers in interactions with non-White populations. There were some victories in the hiring of a few African-American officers. The Duke brothers—Charles, Horace and George—for example, were hired in the late 1940's. But by and large the tensions between the police and the African American community would continue to be a problem for decades to come.
Before the arrival of the Urban League and other civil rights groups, Portland's White elite preferred to deal with Black underworld figures like Tom Johnson (left). Johnson allegedly controlled much of the vice in Albina. Here he presents a check to an Urban League representative.

The problem with the press would continue as well. As early as 1948 the League and others had successfully prevailed upon The Oregonian to cease using racial identifications in its coverage of events. Occasional lapses continued however. Yet this was a minor problem compared to the tendency evidenced in local journalism to portray the Albina area specifically and the African-American community in general as a haven of criminality and immoral activity. Under a September 18, 1959 headline from The Oregonian that screamed "Stabbing, Shooting, Prostitution Rife in N. Albina Ghetto..." reporter Wallace Turner simply declared, "...Portland's Negroes are more lawless than her other citizens." Later in the article the author softens his declarations somewhat by conceding that "Most of them are good. Many contribute heavily to their community." But the powerful negative accusations and assumptions dispensed in such coverage made the job of the League more difficult and was a constant element in every struggle for racial progress.

Yes, there was vice and crime in the African-American community. The systematic exclusion of African-Americans from legitimate avenues to success guaranteed that at least some would turn to illegitimate paths. Largely unacknowledged was the fact that while some participants in such activities were African Americans from the "ghetto", many other customers and participants were majority culture individuals who found crossing the color line for illicit pleasures and recreation enjoyable, profitable or both. The League's fight for a balanced and objective portrayal of the African-American community's full and complex reality was an ongoing battle in this era and an important part of the educational agenda the League pursued.

There was another very important role that the Urban League provided to the local African-American community during these first decades of its existence. Life in the African-American community was always much more than a constant struggle against racist oppression. The social and recreational life of the community was an important haven away from an often hostile larger society. African Americans needed and knew how to have a good time in spite of Jim Crow restrictions and exclusions from the social and recreational life of
the majority culture. Organizations like the Urban League and its volunteer auxiliary, the Guild, also provided outlets for these social impulses. League members were serious campaigners against racial and social wrong, but they also knew how to have a good time. The social and entertainment agenda of the League was an important part of building African-American community cohesiveness and releasing accumulated stress and tension.

It fulfilled other important roles in the individual lives of African-American Portlanders. Mrs. Mercedes F. Deiz, for example, arrived in Portland from New York in 1948. Mrs. Deiz went on to become the first African-America female judge in Oregon history. She recalls, "The Urban League was the place you could go to meet other Black people, especially new-comers like me." It was at the offices of the Urban League that she was introduced to her future husband, Mr. Carl Deiz.

The social and entertainment activities of the League also contributed to the intellectual enhancement of Portland life. The League brought to Portland leading national and international speakers that exposed Portland to the leading thinkers and theorists of the day. This helped to connect Portland's African-American community, which was geographically off the beaten path, to the main currents of national dialogue about important issues and events. The list of notable visitors sponsored by the League included writer Langston Hughes, National Urban League President Lester B. Grainger, journalist Carl Rowan, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackie Robinson, and many other prominent figures in the African-American struggle for civil and human rights.

Finally the League, especially through the activities of the Urban League Guild, provided a much needed vehicle to recognize and acknowledge individuals and organizations. Through its awards and social programs the League made significant contributions to the
struggle for progress in Portland. Awards and honors dispensed by the League were highly valued prizes, eagerly anticipated and fondly cherished by the recipients.

The Urban League Guild's Mad Hatter's Ball was an annual event in the 1950's.

The Urban League's second office was downtown in the McKay Building at S.W. Third and S.W. Stark.

Carl and Mercedes Deiz attended an early League function with their children Karen and Gilbert. Ms. Deiz went on to become Oregon's first female African American attorney and judge.
CHAPTER 3

The 1960's—Who Speaks For The Black Community

The 1960's would prove to be an era of challenge, change and turmoil for all of America's social and civil traditions and institutions. Many needed to change desperately to move the reality of American life closer to the rhetoric and ideals envisioned for America from its creation. Change is always difficult and when it is rapid can veer towards chaos, or so it will seem to those elements well established and closely connected to a powerful status quo. By the 1960's the traditional organizations of racial protest and progress, including the League, felt the hot breath of change upon their neck in a degree only slightly less insistent than the pressures for change targeted at the representatives of what came to be called the "establishment".

The League and other traditional organizations of racial progress had by the early 1960's attained a level of respect, recognition and influence never before known in a country with America's particularly ambivalent record on racial issues. This stature was the product of numerous, often contradictory, components. From its conception the objective of the League had been not to destroy the portions of American society that held power, but to transform them. The League was uncompromising in its attack on wrongs like racism, but it was remarkably patient, understanding and conciliatory with a majority population that it considered strategically to be more misguided than evil, more racially ignorant then irreconcilable.

The approach of the League had been founded upon and continually committed to the belief that White Americans could be brought to see the error of their ways through proper education and exposure to the real merits and potential of their African-American fellow citizens. The League's philosophy and program reflected a belief in the fundamental good in the American spirit and an embrace of the lofty ideals to which the American legacy aspired.

As the 1960's began the League had become a respected institution. Director Shelton Hill is flanked by staff members (from left) John Holley, Marilyn Gainer, Myrtle Carr and Jim Frazier.
This philosophy demanded great patience as its cornerstone. It required a near saintly ability to tolerate current frustration in favor of long-term progress. It selected persuasion, education, patience, merit, empathy and forgiveness as its tools of choice for change instead of more destructive weapons that perhaps could have been justified by the harsh conditions they challenged and the often hardened opposition they faced.

Prior to the League and its partners in the pursuit of racial progress, the city's white power brokers and police had often relied on informal dealings with Black underworld figures as a major conduit for interracial matters affecting the African-American community. This approach would never again satisfy the demands of racial interaction in Portland life.

The League's record of success had shown this way could work, but it had also shown that it would be a slow and painstaking process. The good intentions of even the most progressive elements of partnership the League found in the dominant culture could possess maddening remnants of unconscious paternalism and insensitivity at times. The scales of power had been tipped too far in favor of one culture for too long for it to have been otherwise.

The advice on the most desired approach to employment integration given in a landmark study of the status of Negroes in Portland by the City Club in 1945 reveals the depth of the problem. The City Club had the best of intentions. Its report was a major step forward in the acknowledgement of the need for change in local race relations. It was the product of an interracial effort by the leading citizens of the city of both races. Yet the unconscious influence of current Caucasian power is clear:

“Original introduction of Negro workers into a company should be carefully planned. Supervisors should be given full instructions. It is suggested that a start be made by the employment of a neat, efficient, attractive, well-qualified Negro girl in the employment office.”

Practical advice? Reasonable under pervading circumstances? Revealing certainly!

The League became a potent force in the education and sensitization of friends and sympathizers to racial progress who might still be under the corrupted influence of inherited paternalistic impulses. The League had become a major player in elevating racial issues into the spotlight of local affairs and placing them at the top of the local political and social agenda.

By the 1960's however, there were emerging new voices in the African-American community who did not necessarily think that you had to be a neat attractive Negro girl to breech the barricades of racial injustice. How the League would adjust to the demands of these new voices and the dictates of changing racial circumstances became an additional challenge for the organization in this tumultuous decade.
Disturbances like this one on Union Avenue contrasted with the League's philosophy of using diplomacy to make racial progress.

A primary source of the new voices and perspectives on how to approach racial matters in the 1960's was the arrival in Portland of representatives of new "movements" that took a more strident, militant and confrontational approach to change than had been prevalent in Portland previously. A Black Muslim minister attempted to organize a local mosque here in the early 1960's. Later, members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) were accused of inciting racial violence in the form of mini-riots that took place on Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.) in 1967 and 1969. By the late 1960's Portland also had a small but active Black Panther Party.

White power holders in Portland, conditioned by generations of unchallenged domination in racial matters, were shocked, outraged and repulsed by the different tactics and strategies of the racial dynamics of the new era. For them, form had been at least as important as substance in the negotiation of racial change. White political leaders, including Portland Mayor Terry Shrunck, insisted they were willing to listen to "recommendations" for change but adamantly refused to acknowledge the "demands" that the new groups used to articulate their racial vision. Even long-standing White "friends" of racial progress, who had formed important partnerships with the League and other traditional Black protest organizations, found it difficult to see beyond the style of the new advocates. Many Whites did not recognize the similarity in objectives that were shared between old and new voices in the Black community.

This rejection of a new militancy in racial matters by the Portland status quo could embrace even the older protest organizations if they stepped beyond the boundaries of their previous tactics of quiet persuasion and adopted more aggressive alternatives. The Oregonian for example, in an October 22, 1962 editorial, warned the NAACP:

"We object to the NAACP attack on the Portland School Board not as a defense of the existence of some schools with a
disproportionate Negro enrollment but because we firmly believe the NAACP is way off base and out of character in applying here a type of pressure campaign designed, say, for Chicago, and that by doing so it will surely hamper the elimination of the basic causes of the situation to which it objects."

Portlanders were willing to consider change, if asked politely. There was a companion reaction to demands for racial change that was also prevalent in the halls of traditional Portland power. It was the belief that it was communist inspired if it was not posed with civility and did not originate from the long recognized and acceptable venues of local Negro leadership. The accuracy of described problems, the reasonability of proposed solutions, the legitimacy of latent anger, frustration, and impatience with creeping progress were dismissed if not presented in ways sufficiently "respectable" in the minds of White power holders. Under such requirements, the fact that a problem may have been raised by an "outsider" was sufficient to invalidate its legitimacy.

White leaders were not the only practitioners of such selectivity. Some African-American leaders, veterans of previous struggles, winners of other battles on the racial front lines, could be resistant to the new voices and tactics. The League, its members, and its leadership had to come to grips with these new and complex challenges coming from within its own community.

Sometimes the response was swift and repressive. When the Black Muslim minister arrived in Portland in 1961, his failure to generate

*The times were a'changing by the time Jefferson High School student Beverly Williams addressed the League's 1967 Annual Meeting at Lloyd Center auditorium.*
a following and subsequent departure was fueled by the unanimous front of opposition and rejection thrown up by leaders of the local African-American Christian church community in concert with leaders from the traditional civil rights protest organizations. When Portland youth took to the streets in 1967 and 1969, it was in large measure the role of traditional community institutions like the churches, the League, and the NAACP to act as a calming influence. Traditional Black leaders would speak out against the insidious influence of “outside agitators” much as the White leaders of the day did.

There was no hypocrisy in this behavior. It was no reflection of White control or race betrayal. These African American leaders simply believed sincerely that the ways and methods they had used to confront racial problems were still the most desirable and effective in this new era as well. They were partly right and partly wrong as the history of the next decades would reveal. They were in fact entirely human when facing this difficult dilemma. The age-old and universal conflict of differing vision between an older generation and an emerging generation was in operation in Portland’s racial evolution.

The generational lines of demarcation were not universal. Some individuals from the earlier stages of activism could match the younger generation in energy and outrage when challenging the racial status quo and welcomed new allies in the continuing struggle. Others remained troubled by the new militancy in style, strategy and direction.

There were fundamental differences between the motives and insights of African-American leaders compared to White leaders in response to the new realities of “Black Power”. White leaders predominantly dismissed the possibility that real problems and legitimate concerns underlay the challenging behavior of the younger African-American generation. To them, Black youth were gullible dupes of cunning agitators, troublemakers, hoodlums and an opportunistic criminal element.

*The Oregonian*, under a headline of “Unsupported Hoods” following the unrest of August 1967, declared:

“A comparatively small group of juvenile delinquents and young adult hoodlums is eager to raise hell in emulation of the Black-power arsonists of the big eastern cities. No provocation, only agitation, such as that by presumable outside Rabble Rousers at Irving Park, is enough to set them off.”

Even majority culture leaders with a track record of involvement and commitment to racial issues often failed to grasp the essential elements of a revolution in social dynamics. Then Governor Tom McCall, a former journalist and former Urban League board member, considered the real “heroes” of the 1967 racial confrontation in Portland to be the media reporters who “...ignored the Black power spokesmen who were dying to see their names in print and faces on T.V....” He added that, as governor, he knew
how "...destructive such publicity could have been." (Journal, 8-3-67).

African-American leaders like those of the League knew that more was needed than to ignore the problems and points of view of the new forces of change surging up from the frustrating and very real problems of injustice and continued discrimination. When examined, the "demands" of the Black Power militants were not that different from the goals the established protest organizations were themselves pursuing. They were not going to disappear from a lack of journalistic coverage.

In a small back page article The Oregonian on August 1, 1967 printed a list of "demands" endorsed, according to a representative of the Congress of Racial Equality, by "200 Negro youngsters gathered at Irving Park...". The list included a call for employment of more Negroes at several stores and in government agencies; the creation of more recreational facilities; the inclusion of "Black curriculum" elements at Jefferson High School; and hiring more Black people by television stations. This was hardly a radical agenda.

However much the effort was made to paint the issue as the product of outside agitators, communists and hoodlums, the reality was more accurately captured in the words of one of the participating youth who declared that the violence was a "local" uprising; [and] "that it had been coming for a long time but nobody believed it would happen." The teenager concluded, "Well man, they better believe it, it's happened." (The Oregonian, 8/1/67).

When it did happen the pattern of reaction of the dominant culture enhanced the potential for continued and escalated reoccurrences. The White retreat politically to denial and denunciation precluded the already slim opportunities for effective dialogue between factions. The conduct of police in suppressing social disorders and in day to day interactions in the African-American community often bordered on lawlessness itself and reinforced the hostility of a younger generation already suspicious and hostile to what they considered an alien army of Caucasian occupation.

Urban League leaders knew that without the removal of the underlying causes of discontent that further alienation and conflict was inevitable. They also maintained unshaken confidence in the rightness of their own methods of steady
incremental progress rooted in patience, persuasion, education and interracial cooperation.

Ironically, the very diversity of strategies that now challenged their traditional position at the vanguard of racial progress, strengthened their negotiating hand in the new framework of political positioning created by the militant alternative. The holders of White power in Portland discovered a newfound appreciation for the articulate civility of League advocates and proposals.

This new favor, increased influence, and improved accessibility was, however, a double-edged sword for the League. In the same measure that the League might find its stature enhanced in relationships with the “establishment”, it potentially lost in credibility in the eyes of some, especially the young elements in the African-American community. It was a narrow and demanding path indeed that the League sought to tread between these two extremes. Gradually the role of the League evolved towards the function of a conciliatory force, mediating the dialogue across ideological, class, and racial lines.

The changes and challenges of the 1960’s did mark a permanent turning point in the dynamics of racial life in Portland. From that point on there would be many competing visions seeking to answer the perpetual question posed by the White power structure of “What do they want?” The federal War on Poverty initiated in the late 1960’s inspired a plethora of new programs, agencies and interest groups like Model Cities, Albina Citizens Together, the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee and others, each with a distinct agenda, strategy, role, and objective. Protest and passion continued to burn within youth and advocates of Black Power and Black Nationalism as well.

Throughout these dramatic changes the Urban League was able to sustain a sense of continuity and consistent purpose. The League maintained an unwavering commitment to the concepts of integration and interracialism as a solution to the ills of racism and discrimination. The wisdom of hindsight shows today that
integration would provide no panacea in resolving some difficult racial and community problems. Implicit in some of its ramifications was a subtle acquiescence in notions of the cultural inferiority of African-American community life, which by definition produced "disadvantaged persons". In the area of schools especially, the mechanisms and structures that integration produced in Portland would impose destructive and disproportionate burdens on the children of the African-American community. The implementation of the integration option would provide the battleground for much of the local racial conflict of the next two decades.

Yet the shortcomings of the integrationist approach cannot be laid solely at the feet of the League. Racial progress has always been a creative art rather than a hard science. For the League, integration theoretically had always meant the creation of a society in which a true amalgamation of all races and cultures could co-exist. If integration as a policy sometimes failed to rise to that lofty level in practice, League members remained committed to its purer model. Constantly changing circumstances in the civil and human condition require an ability to adjust course and modify behavior as prime requisites in any long-term program of social and racial change. During the 1960's the League proved itself to be equal to that challenge.

The League was capable of change when circumstances demanded it. Belton Hamilton, Board chairman of the League during much of this era, recalls,

"People were starting to use a lot of profane language. The idea was to shake up the middle class Blacks and shock them. One day a League staff person asked me to go on a march along with the Black Panthers, the Muslims, and R.L. Anderson, a young leader. We chanted "Power to the People" in the street while Shelly Hill stayed in the office. The new people had the fire and some kids were falling behind them."
Williams Ave. near N. Russell was the center of a busy Black business district in the 1960's. The only building that remains in 1995 is the Urban League Plaza, at the far left.

The League, as a part of a "New Thrust" initiated at the national level, made adjustments in policies and direction to tap the new energy of the times and respond to the new situation. Hamilton notes, for example, that the former policy of the League had been to hire only professionals with at least a master's degree for staff positions. Beginning in the 1960's, individuals who represented more of a grassroots and street level background were added to the staff. The League also reached out to the younger generations by hiring college students for summertime community work. Bobbie Nunn, a longtime League and NAACP activist who served as a Board member of the Model Cities Program in the 1960's, noted:

"Most of the new programs were run by Model Cities staff. But we could always count on the Urban League to endorse our new programs in education, employment and housing.

Sometimes the League itself would run the program."

Running programs was what the League had often historically done best. It was this element perhaps that provided a stabilizing and sustaining power within the consistent context of League interracialism.

Another force which promoted the stability and endurance of the organization was a hard-nosed practicality that throughout the intellectual storms of the decade always grounded the League in the solid foundation of its community service programs and professional staffing. Through the ebb and flow of rhetorical contests, political maneuvering, and fiscal competition that characterized the decade, the League never departed very far from the programmatic roots that had anchored the organization from its inception. This proved to be a saving grace.

The annual report for 1965-66, for example, lists the major achievements and activities for that year. They fell into the broad categories of Job Development and Employment, Education and Youth Incentives, Housing, Health and Welfare. The program highlights of the year reflect a continued commitment to survey research, job placement and employment training, conferences focused on community issues, cultural and social programs for youth and adults, and lobbying public officials and
politicians on issues of importance to racial progress. This agenda shows a remarkable consistency with the founding principles of the organization and helps to explain why the end of the 1960's saw the Urban League posed to face the challenges and opportunities the next decade would provide.

Yet it is a mistake to characterize the League as solely a protest or civil rights organization. One of the most important realities of the League during the 1960's was the difficult to define but powerful sense of advocacy and camaraderie that was integral to the organization's activities during that time. Continuing its earlier traditions of providing social, entertainment, and intellectual outlets for the community, the League was the focal point of numerous exciting and inexpensive functions that served the needs of the grassroots African American community on its own terms and home turf.

Urban League awards were valued and much anticipated by supporters like these at the 1963 Annual Meeting.
in 1972. In addition to recognizing these individuals with meritorious tribute, such events provided a continuing social outlet for the African-American community, a role the League had performed from its inception.

These recognitions of past leaders also highlighted a pressing current challenge facing the League as the 1970's began to unfold. As old leadership retired, new leadership was required. This new leadership would have to address both the legacies of the 1960's and design new directions and solutions for the ever-changing challenges that race relations would present in the 1970's.

One legacy of the 1960's worked to enhance the stature and prominence of the League in the new decade. The late 1960's had witnessed an explosion of programs and agencies targeted at a "War on Poverty" and fueled by a federal government cash flow into grass roots organizations. Social optimists believed that those most effected by poverty held the key to designing solutions to their dilemma and once connected to traditional power sources through such programs would win an eradication of the ills of poverty. More cynical critics of the "war" suggested that it was merely an attempt by the establishment to coopt the loudest voices of complaint through economic temptation. To some degree each point was valid. Ultimately as the 1970's evolved, what proved most evident was that these War on Poverty programs lacked stamina and staying power in the serious combat required by a war against poverty and inequity.
One consequence of the decline of such programs was an accumulation of new power and importance for the League as it stepped in to fill vacuums of service. The League's fires of advocacy had been kindled under different circumstances of social combustion in the 1940's and 1950's. They were not immune to self consumption, but they proved less susceptible and more enduring than most of the programs fired by the intense heat of the 1960's. The new leadership of the League would be called upon to continue the old fights as the caretakers of League traditions and strategies for progress.

The 1970's however would also see new elements of challenge that placed demands on the leaders of racial change that had not before been paramount. One such new adversary was a surge of majority culture reaction against the civil rights victories of the 1960's that came to be called "White Backlash". Long ingrained racial advantage, deeply held patterns of racial thought characterized by negative stereotypes, and notions of challenged self-interest within the "establishment" predictably resulted in a counter attack against the advances gained for social justice and equity in the 1960's.

Expressions and manifestations of racism changed from the more overt forms of earlier generations, against which the civil rights movement had been so successful, into something more subtle. The new racism used submerged and sophisticated machinery to continue to provide the majority culture with disproportionate advantage and privileges.
strategies and approaches would be necessary to meet these new changes in the old enemies.

The transformation toward the subtle from the blatant was not instantaneous in this ongoing combat between right and racial advantage. The local warfare would include a last-ditch stand by the remnants of old power in Portland to retain dominance in control of public institutions and agendas. The contested ground for this latter-day Battle of the Bulge would be the issue of school desegregation in the mid-1970's. The battle would prove to be a major setback for a long cherished tool of League tactics, interracialism. The entrenched powers would lose out as well and never fully recover the level of prominence and control they had once exercised over Portland life. The biggest winner would eventually prove to be the ascendancy in Portland’s racial affairs of a quasi-60’s approach to militant and assertive direct action campaigns on racial issues embodied by a new entity called the Black United Front.

Portland’s schools had become more and more racially segregated as the increasing size of the African-American population collided with the restrictive real estate practices of the post-war years in a system constructed around neighborhood schools. The national civil rights agenda had focused on the school desegregation issue. In Portland in the 1960’s organizations committed to the integration of African Americans into White society like the League, the NAACP, and their “liberal” allies prevailed upon the school district to eliminate racially isolated schools after a protracted and sometimes acrimonious campaign.

By the 1970’s this policy of desegregation had become the “Blanchard Plan,” designed by school Superintendent Robert Blanchard, and based primarily on the one-way busing of African-American students to outlying White schools and the systematic closure of schools within the African-American community. The inequities of such an approach became apparent as the 1970’s unfolded. A crisis came in 1977 when the Chairman of the School Board, Jonathan Newman, announced a plan to close Jefferson High School, the high school with the most African American students, as the capstone of the Blanchard Plan’s approach to desegregation.

The experiences of Black students in Portland Public Schools became the dominant racial issue of the 1970’s.
The Board accepted the report, discussed it, then shelved it in quick succession. Most involved in the coalition effort were shocked both by the Board’s non-response and the old fashioned arrogance with which it was handled. Faced with this rebuff the coalition disintegrated. Opposition to the Blanchard Plan then provided the spark for the birth of the more militant, more nationalistic and more African-American Black United Front.

The Front, through a highly confrontational campaign of direct action, street demonstrations and civil disobedience, eventually drove the old guard forces of educational and political control from the field. Their campaign forced the dismissal of Superintendent Blanchard, the dismantling of the Blanchard Plan, and the appointment of the district’s first African-American superintendent, Dr. Matthew Prophet. The Front’s efforts also led to the creation of a new plan for desegregation/integration that would in the 1980’s place Portland in the middle of a national ideological debate over the issue of Afrocentricity.

The Front’s victory had far reaching repercussions in Portland race relations. What could be called the Old Guard of Portland power had been under assault during the 1970’s from new political forces arrayed around the elective and governmental success of then mayor and future governor Neil Goldschmidt. The Front’s rise to power chipped away at more of the privileges and powers previously exercised by Portland’s old power elite. Organizations like the
League, still committed to visions of interracialism and moderation had adjustments to make in this environment. No longer did White downtown interests enjoy unilateral authority in matters of race. Yet realistically, little of significance could be accomplished without their involvement. The meteoric rise to prominence within the politics of the African-American community by the Black United Front did not eclipse completely the positions of established entities like the League. Fundamentally it allowed the Front to pull up a chair at the power sharing table.

For the League, effective new leadership in these complex times had to do several things: inspire continued confidence from interracial partners with crossover power; retain credibility within a minority community struggling with higher expectations, a growing impatience and very difficult realtime problems; hold its own in the jockeying for position among advocacy groups; and still find viable responses to the changing nature of discrimination and inequity.

Among the new leaders in the League that took up these new challenges were James Brooks, Nathan Nickerson, and Freddye Petett.

The entire Urban League staff turned out to welcome visiting National Urban League President Vernon Jordan. President Freddye Petett welcomed Jordan along with board member Bill Hilliard (far left) and staff member Norm Monroe (second from left).
Brooks had joined the League’s Job Development and Training Project in 1965 and later directed the economic development, employment, and community services sections and the League’s Northeast field office. He served as Director from 1974-78. Nathan Nickerson then stepped in to direct the League on an interim basis through 1979. He later left the League to develop a community mental health center in Northeast Portland that now bears his name.

In 1979, Ms. Freddye Petett was named League President and became one of the only women to lead an Urban League affiliate. She served as president until 1984 and was the first to move the League’s headquarters out of downtown Portland and into the heart of the local African-American community in the Northeast. She brought to the job strong political credentials with the prevailing downtown political interests and a track record of connections and accomplishments in the African-American community.

During this decade the League found a pillar of strength in a return to an earlier emphasis on programs. By focusing on individualized service directly provided to specific persons in need of fundamental assistance in employment, skill training, and youth education, the League was able to adjust once again to the demands of changing social dynamics and maintain its position as a leading player in Portland life and politics.
In the 1980's the League left downtown to move into its own building at 10 N. Russell St. The building required major renovations.

The stream of backlash that had flowed through the 1970's crested into a flood of reaction in the racial progress valley of the 1980's. The repercussions of a social mood that came to be called the "Me Generation" which characterized the 1980's created perhaps the biggest threat to the Urban League's health and stability in its history.

Fiscal considerations have long been a central element in the success or failure of social service and civil rights organizations. This was especially critical for the League, since most of its clients were unable to pay for services. From its beginning the Urban League has enjoyed a solid reputation for financial management. This reputation was both hard earned and essential since the League had always drawn its economic resources from individuals and organizations based on a faith in the integrity not only of the League's objectives, but its operations as well.

From the beginning, the League relied not only on membership dues and independent fund raising efforts, but also on the annual allocation of budget contributions from organizations like the Community Chest in the early years and the local United Way in later decades. Significant portions of the League's budget over the years have also been generated from government
grants as well as dedicated grants from non-profit foundations. The political and economic climate that gripped the country in the 1980's threatened the availability and magnitude of these traditional sources of the economic lifeblood of the organization to the extent that dire predictions for the future appeared not unreasonable.

The triumphant political theory of the day was termed "Reaganomics". Its primary contention was that the best way to facilitate social advancement was to flood the well-to-do with new economic wealth and let it trickle down to the lower levels of the social order. With the political and bureaucratic machinery of government in the hands of the adherents of this approach, it was inevitable that the leadership of organizations like the League, functioning at the dry end of that trickling pipeline, would feel the need to seek other more reliable sources of continued funding.

The direction eventually determined by the local League was to pursue a course intended to create long-term financial independence. This corresponded with a national shift in emphasis by the League and other black political leaders calling for an emphasis on "Black Capitalism," a philosophy then popular that encouraged community-based organizations like the League to acquire their own assets and embark on development projects in the inner city.

By this time Mr. Herb Cawthorne had assumed the top post with the League. Mr. Cawthorne had built a reputation as a leading educational expert from a post as director of the Educational Opportunity Program at Portland State University and for his leadership in the Community Coalition for School Integration in the 1970's. He served during the late 1970's and early 1980's on the Portland School Board and was widely known for his journalistic writing, television commentaries and theatrical recreations of historical Black figures. The new efforts at Black capitalism were to be a major theme of his administration.

Herb Cawthorne was known for his work in education and as a commentator before taking over as League President in 1985.
The vehicle chosen to pursue financial independence was the acquisition and management of income property. On the one hand this venture seemed reasonable and logical given the long League involvement in housing issues. In practical terms however, the nature of the properties acquired, the magnitude of the initial capital investments required, the larger economic context of the real estate industry in the 1980’s, and the inexperience of the League leadership in this new area of endeavor all combined to push the League towards a financial crisis that jeopardized not only the housing effort but other traditional League programs as well.

Perhaps most seriously, these fiscal difficulties threatened to taint the all important reputation the League had long commanded for sound money management and financial integrity. Eventually the crisis was weathered after pruning away the properties that were draining League resources, recharting a management approach to re-build the League’s damaged reputation and refocusing the League’s administrative priorities back to the traditional areas of success and service that had long served the needs of League constituents.

The impact of these difficult times on the League was not all bad. Organizations, like individuals, can emerge from a crisis with renewed strength and refocused energy, if they survive. Such was the case with the League. Not only did it rediscover the merits of its earlier approach, it discovered new constituencies that needed its services as dearly as the traditional recipients of League attention had. The plights of the homeless and the elderly, especially minorities, were approaching a scandalous level under the federal retreat from social responsibility. The League stepped into this breach with renewed energy and commitment.

Equally as alarming was the deterioration of the status of African-American youth. The Civil Rights Era victories over overt racism and Jim Crow discrimination had not reconfigured the basic economic inequities based in race that were a byproduct of the nation’s years under the influence of White supremacy. The War on Poverty, while well intentioned, had often benefitted more the middle class, middle managers and administrators of federal programs than the hard core poor they were initially created to aid. Through the 1970’s and into the 1980’s the African-American community had acquired new, more impersonal oppressors in the form of a widespread illegal drug driven economy that spawned and nurtured an elevating level of associated violence. Traditional structures of family life and community cohesiveness fell victim to the onslaught of these demons derived from civic neglect and individual despair.

The adverse effect on the youth of the community of these new circumstances was extreme. Gang lifestyles offered alternatives to dysfunctional families. Youth were disconnected from and disillusioned with a society that seemed irrelevant to their needs and uninterested in their survival. Disturbingly, these
difficulties were reaching lower and lower into the urban age groups of the area. The League found a renewed calling in the quest to reach and service the needs of these young people. New programs targeted at Youth Education, Young Male Responsibility and Gang Avoidance were added to the League’s agenda.

The League was also faced during this difficult period with some old problems and some new ones that demanded energy and attention. Among the old problems reemerged the problem of relationships between the African-American community and the police community. In the early 1980's this relationship was rocked by the “Possum Incident,” during which on-duty policemen killed and dropped in front of a local Black-owned restaurant a number of possums, representative of lingering negative racial stereotypes. Later police-related incidents included the strangulation death of an innocent Black man named Tony Stevenson after a convenience store incident and a subsequent outcry over police officers who sold within the force t-shirts that urged officers to “Don’t Choke ’Em, Smoke ’Em” (meaning shoot rather than strangle suspects). The League was of course drawn into the discussions and negotiations in this police vs. African-American community crisis.

In addition, there emerged in these years in Portland the specter of a new and dangerous racial threat. Portland had become the focal point of a violent and aggressive new generation of racists called “Skinheads” who advocated the abhorrent racial theories of the Nazi movement. The danger they represented was dramatically highlighted by the murder of Mulegeta Seraw on the streets of Portland in 1988 by Skinhead thugs using baseball bats. Portland was thrust once again, much as it had been in the 1940's, onto the national headlines as a location of great racial strife and hostility.

After the departure of Herb Cawthorne in 1987, Mr. Ray Leary, a well-known grassroots activist and trusted Cawthorne assistant took over the League’s operations as Interim Director. He was succeeded by Mr. Useni Perkins, who was named President in 1988. Perkins was a

Dr. Darryl Tukuftp took over as president of the League in 1990. Here he celebrates the opening of the League’s education center with Michael Grice of Portland Public Schools.
published author who helped launch an African-American authors collective in Oregon. He also was instrumental in the formation of a new group, the Coalition of Black Men, which became a strong community advocate. Perkins departed in 1989 to return to the Midwest. Another Midwesterner, Dr. Darryl Tukufu was then hired in 1990 to guide the League in these challenging and difficult times.

By the start of the 1990's, the League's feet were firmly back on the path of service and success, providing once again pathways to opportunity for those most needful in the complex urban world of modern America. The traditional E's of Urban League activity, Education, Employment and Economic Development were once again the mainstays in the pursuit of Equality.

In 1991 the National Urban League presented former League director E. Shelton Hill with the Whitney Young, Jr. Medallion for exemplary service. Joining in the festivities were then League President Dr. Darryl Tukufu and Myrtle Carr and Gertrude Rae, two longtime League employees.

Governor Barbara Roberts shares a light moment with the League's President Dr. Darryl Tukufu at the 1991 Equal Opportunity Dinner.
The 1990’s—Current Programs

The Urban League of Portland celebrates 50 years of community service in 1995. Since 1945 the League has worked to promote equal opportunity for all Oregonians. The agency was founded to advocate for African Americans who came to Portland to build ships during World War II and faced discrimination in education, employment and housing after the war. Today the League continues to advocate for those who have experienced discrimination and operates programs that directly serve constituent needs. All of the League’s programs pursue the agency’s multicultural mission “to assist African Americans and others in achieving parity and economic self-sufficiency through advocacy, community problem-solving, partnerships and by conducting programs designed to strengthen the growth and development of individuals, families and communities.”

ADULT & SENIOR SERVICES

The Urban League works to ensure that senior citizens, especially the low-income elderly and disabled, live out their lives in dignity, comfort and safety. The League has operated senior programs for several decades. In 1990, when the League evaluated its programs, community forums indicated strong support for maintaining senior programs. The League pursued that mandate by entering into a partnership in 1991 with Multnomah County’s Aging Services and Loaves & Fishes to create a Multicultural Senior Center in Northeast Portland. The center is one of eight district Senior Service Centers in Multnomah County. It was one of the first centers to offer a “single point of entry” for senior and disabled services, with a focus on cultural diversity.

The League’s senior programs are guided by two goals:

1) To provide services to the elderly and disabled population that allow them to live independently in their homes with dignity as long as it is possible and reasonably safe.

2) To provide activities to senior and disabled citizens that will enhance their social skills and provide them with opportunities for personal growth.

Case management and transportation services are provided to individuals who are experiencing problems that jeopardize their independent living and diminish their lifestyle. In the 1994/95 fiscal year the Center served more than 800 clients.
1990's

The Senior Fishing Derby marks the arrival of summer at the Multicultural Senior Center.

Social activities are provided to help seniors continue to learn, develop leadership skills and stay involved in their community. Seniors take field trips to museums, take yoga and painting classes, and work on projects with young people. About 100 seniors attend the Center daily for activities and meals.

The League has taken a leadership role in several areas of senior services by developing special programs. The Intergenerational Parenting Program assists more than 150 grandparents who have had to become full-time parents to their grandchildren for various reasons. Staff work with grandparents to improve their parenting skills and improve their access to services important to them and their grandchildren. In 1994 the League organized Oregon’s first conference on the needs of parenting grandparents.

Another program focuses on Alzheimer’s clients and their families and caregivers. Living with Alzheimer’s or Normal Forgetfulness offers a weekly support group for caregivers and a respite program that offers activities for Alzheimer’s clients while caregivers take a break. In 1995 this program located into the new Marie Smith Center, an adult day care center in Northeast Portland operated by a partnership of agencies. Partners include Volunteers of America, the Alzheimer’s Association, Legacy Health Services, and Oregon Health Sciences University.

EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Creating equal opportunity through education continues to be one of the League’s most important activities. The League’s Education and Career Development Department has grown in recent years to offer a variety of programs that help students and parents succeed in education or gain skills to help them achieve career goals. Current programs include:

Whitney M. Young, Jr. Education & Cultural Center: In 1995 the center began its twelfth year of providing free after-school homework/tutorial assistance to students who could not otherwise afford it. For Whitney Young students, school work doesn’t end after school. During the school year the Center is open until 8 p.m., Monday through Thursday. In addition to one-on-one tutorial assistance, students can access a multicultural library, computers, guest speakers, cultural events, and scholarship opportunities. The Center serves more than 300 students each school year, representing a variety
of schools and cultures. A Parent Enrichment Program helps parents become more involved in their children's education.

**Portland Street Academy:** The Academy is an alternative school with a math and science emphasis for junior and high school age students who have left Portland public schools. Up to 50 students attend the school Mondays through Fridays. Students learn at their own pace as they work toward their G.E.D. or high school diploma. Instruction in Spanish and an enhanced arts program are being added in 1995. The Street Academy shares facilities with the Whitney Young tutorial program. The academy is structured so that students deal with academic issues as well as social issues. The curriculum includes female and male responsibility groups, computer classes, special speakers, recreation, anger management and conflict resolution training.

Coretta Scott King and maestro James DePreist appeared at a fund raiser for the Urban League that coincided with an Oregon Symphony CD release.

**Female & Male Responsibility Program:**

The goal of the Female & Male Responsibility Program is to discourage teenage pregnancies by providing youth with positive alternatives for personal development. The program helps youth identify and promote positive values; develop a healthy self-image; be accountable for their actions and reactions; become involved in their community; and take necessary steps to excel academically. Youth in the program participated in the Youth Summer Employment program for a fourth year in 1995. Youth in the program are paid to provide free yard maintenance work to hundreds of low-income senior citizens. The program is 100% funded by local businesses.

**Computer Training Center:** The IBM/Urban League Computer Training Center provides job seekers with the skills they need to succeed in Oregon's changing information age economy. The Center offers students a free 15-week program, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m.
until 3:30 p.m. The Center offers two viable components:

1. *Career and Job Development*; and
2. *Computer Center Lab*.

These components consist of instruction in business math and English, job readiness skills, resume writing, job interviewing skills, special

speakers, as well as instruction in DOS, WordPerfect, spreadsheets, database and desktop publishing.

Graduates receive Certificates of Achievement and work closely with the League's Employment Division for potential job placement. The Computer Training Center was made possible by a generous grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust and in-kind support from IBM Corporation.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Employment continues to be a prime concern of Urban League constituents and one of the agency's most important service areas. The League's Employment Department helps minorities, women and others find employment in the Portland metro area. More than 40 local companies support the League's efforts as "Employer Partners". The goal of the Employer Partnership Program is to help employers recruit and retain qualified protected class job candidates. During 1994, the League placed approximately 425 people in new jobs.

The original Employer Partners included: First Interstate Bank, Mentor Graphics, Nike, Standard Insurance, and U.S. Bancorp. Since then Arby's, Arco, AVCO Financial Services, Bank of America, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Boeing, Business Man's Assurance, CH2M Hill, Cellular One, Coffee People, Electro Scientific Industries, Express Personnel, Franz Bakery, Gresham City, GTE Mobilnet, Halton Co., IDS Financial Services, Intel, Janssen Pharmaceutical, KATU TV, Key Bank, KPDX Fox 49, Legacy Health Systems,
The Career Connections job fair has become a major annual event for local employers and job seekers.

McDonald's, Meier & Frank, Nationwide Insurance, North Pacific Insurance, Northwest Natural Gas, Olsten Staffing, Orix, SAIF, State Farm Insurance, Tektronix, United Parcel Service, U.S. Navy, Veterans Medical Center, Wacker Siltronic, Washington Mutual Savings and Zellerbach Industries have joined.

Partners send staff to work at the League periodically as volunteers, assisting with: interviewing, referring clients to job openings, counseling and pre-screening clients. This volunteer pool has improved services for job seekers and helped employers become more sensitive to cultural diversity issues on the job.

Another important partner is the State of Oregon Employment Division, which has an outreach representative on-site and special services for veterans and ex-offenders. The League also offers monthly resume and interview preparation workshops. Every March the Urban League hosts the "Career Connections" job fair, which was attended by more than 2,000 job seekers and employers in 1995.

In recent years the Urban League has assisted workers who have become unemployed due to plant closures, restructuring, relocations, or work force reductions in the Dislocated Workers Project. The project is a partnership of Portland Community College, Mt. Hood Community College, Oregon State Employment Division, The Private Industry Council and the Urban League. The program offers assistance in re-employment services to workers affected by long periods of unemployment.

YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

The Youth & Family Service Center is one of six centers that Multnomah County has in its system. The program brings young people together with adult mentors.
A summer partnership with the U.S. Forest Service helps introduce inner city youth to careers in natural resources.

designated as “Family Centers”. This new name emphasizes the county’s focus on the family unit and each of its members. Urban League staff work to assist families in meeting their needs in relationship to each other.

The Center works with more than 700 youth and families each year. The Center offers individual and family support services which involve: group work on anger management, gang awareness and prevention; parent and teen support groups; education and employment assistance; Big Brother and Big Sister Volunteer involvement; and the Diversion Program.

In the Diversion Program juveniles referred by the courts provide community service to non-profit organizations like the Grace Collins Pre-School and Loaves and Fishes. This voluntary alternative to the court system allows youth to actively take responsibility for their actions while assisting local non-profit organizations. Community service helps youth understand the connection between their actions and the community they live in.

The Big Brothers and Big Sisters Program provides nearly 2,000 hours of companionship a year to young people in need of adult mentors. The Southeast Asian Youth Program provides group work around cultural identity and assists in the development of new programs targeting Asian youth from immigrant families.

A Counseling program operates groups for youth and adults in Gang Awareness and Violence as a Public Health Problem. The Rainbow Group supports youth dealing with issues surrounding sexual identity. A new program focus has been on outreach to the Hispanic Community, a growing constituency in the area served by the League.

The Youth Employment program places more than 75 youth each year in a variety of jobs, including summer positions with The Private Industry Council and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service.

Advocacy

The Urban League continues to advocate on a broad range of issues to improve the quality of life for African Americans and other disenfranchised groups and individuals. The goals of the program are to:
(1) Empower constituents to understand and protect their rights and help agencies provide accessible, accountable service so that clients can become self-sufficient;

(2) Educate and inform organizations and the public about issues that negatively impact our constituents;

(3) Effect change in attitudes, policies, institutions and social conditions through collaborative problem solving.

Program components include:

**Research and Education**—Conducting research and developing concept papers, positions and testimonies on issues pertinent to constituents; educating African Americans and others about existing and emerging issues negatively impacting their quality of life and empowering them to effect change.

**Mediation and Conflict Resolution**—Bringing groups together to resolve problems, often around racial issues.

An emerging focus of the league's advocacy work is environmental justice, public investment and quality of life. In this area, the League recently received a four-year grant from the Lila Wallace—Reader's Digest Fund to support the expansion of urban parks, particularly in the underserved neighborhoods.
The Next 50 Years—Building On A Proud Tradition

By Lawrence J. Dark
President and CEO
Urban League of Portland

The Urban League of Portland has admirably served Portland, the State of Oregon, and its constituents for 50 years. The continuing strength of the League attests to its resiliency and durability and its ability to serve the needs of the community. This is a proud testament to the work of my predecessors and many, many fine individuals and organizations over the years. I hope to merit your trust in passing responsibility—and this legacy—onto me.

Neither Lawrence J. Dark nor the League and its supporters have any time to rest on our laurels. Even in this 50th Anniversary Year. We must press forward into the 21st Century, in a world changing so rapidly and in so many surprising ways that the challenges are certainly not becoming any easier. Together, we must harness the League’s credibility, reputation, and resources to meet our new challenges and serve our constituency at an even higher level.

A Broader View

Our constituency is broad. One sees it reflected in our staff, volunteers, and board members. We are African-American, Caucasian, Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, Asian-American, young and elderly, gay, lesbian, or straight. We must mirror this diversity with an equally encompassing vision.

To achieve effective long-term solutions, we must resist taking a piecemeal approach to helping children and families. Instead, we must see the connection between our personal values and national policy. We must forge strong connections between our programs and our policies. We must see the link between empowering our communities and taking active roles in state and local politics and planning. We must form partnerships and alliances, both internally and externally, to meet our present needs and to launch a focused and stronger crusade into the 21st Century.

Into Action

We must first accept the fact that there are many shared values across our diversity. Then, we can get on with the real issue. How do we translate the values we share and affirm into the values on which we act?
In my vision, the League must both advocate policy development and provide services that will nurture our constituency. We must work within the three areas of concentration outlined by our National Urban League President, Hugh Price—not just because Hugh Price said so but because these areas provide excellent guidance and focus:

(1) Educate and develop our children growing up in the inner city to provide them the academic and social skills they require to be successful.

(2) Enable their families to become economically self-sufficient.

(3) Encourage racial inclusion so that our folk can participate fully in the mainstream economy.

The League’s mandates are to provide advocacy, develop programs, and deliver services to meet the present and anticipated needs of our constituents. I envision taking a holistic, broad and contemporary approach to these responsibilities and have established core principles to guide our efforts.

**CORE PRINCIPLES**

There are five core principles that I believe should guide the efforts of The Urban League of Portland into the next century:

(1) Economic Sufficiency and Development

(2) Cultural Competency

(3) Globally Educated

(4) Democracy Oriented/Citizenship

(5) Living Well, Staying Well in the Age of HIV/AIDS.

I’ll briefly outline what I mean by each of these principles.

**Economic Sufficiency and Development** – We must go beyond providing employment to teach people to be employers as well as employees, to foster entrepreneurial skills in our young people, and participate in state, city, and county issues and project development.

**Cultural Competency** – The economic dislocations of the shift to a global economy and a knowledge-based society are affecting our people adversely. We must take steps politically and programmatically to insure our people are culturally competent to deal with these new challenges.

**Globally Educated** – In a global marketplace, training and education must prepare our young people for life-long learning and provide them the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that permit them to compete successfully. The League must strengthen its advocacy and participation in educational issues.

*The League has helped popularize the Kwanzaa holiday which promotes traditional African American values.*
Democracy Oriented/Citizenship – Projects to assist people to interact with others and to work with and respect such institutions as the education or the legal system have been developed. The Urban League of Portland must support these and other efforts to help our constituents participate in building a safer, healthier community.

Living/Staying Well in the Age of HIV/AIDS – HIV/AIDS has become an outgrowth of other problems that have long existed in the African-American community—illiteracy, inadequate health care, homelessness, drug use. The Urban League should collaborate with the health community to emphasize health education, prevention, and information efforts among our constituents who are particularly vulnerable to this epidemic.

The overall message of these five guiding principles is a more focused and intentional definition of the mission of The Urban League of Portland. I believe if we care deeply enough we will commit the resources needed to meet these current community needs. Today’s problems may have different faces than the ones that sparked the League’s creation in 1945. But finding solutions will require us to work in the same fields of Education, Employment and Equality that have defined our first fifty years and will continue to do so.

A partnership with the World Affairs Council brings international visitors to speak to Urban League clients. Here a French-speaking visitor from Africa speaks as his translator takes notes.
# Board of Directors

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>James Boehlke-Chair Elect</td>
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<td>Chris Poole-Guild President,</td>
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<td>Terry Tracy</td>
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<td>Portland General Electric</td>
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<td>Amoy Williamson</td>
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Staff

ADMINISTRATION/ADVOCACY
Lawrence J. Dark – President/CEO
Brian A. Black – Director of Special Projects & Training
Michael Pullen – Director of Marketing
David Brody – Policy, Research & Special Projects Assistant
Don Chalmers – Executive Assistant
Ameera Saahir – HIV/AIDS Community Specialist
Nova Allen – Receptionist
Lovell Jones – Building Superintendent
John Lynch – MIS Specialist

FINANCE
Ivy Chilcote – Director of Finance & Human Resources
Tanya Perimon – Accountant
Deborah Johnson – Support Specialist

EDUCATION & CAREER DEVELOPMENT
Clinton Clarke – Director
Gaylen Brannon – Assistant Director & Street Academy Coordinator
Josephine Hayes – Administrative Assistant
Michael Smith – Coordinator, Male Responsibility Program

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. EDUCATION CENTER
Felicia Hassan – Coordinator/Tutor
Yaw Osei-Boye – Tutor

PORTLAND STREET ACADEMY
Anna Rodgers – Instructor/Female Responsibility Program
Silvia Sifuentes – Instructor
Steven Leverett – Instructor
Michele Potestio – Instructor
Sylvia Hauff – Retention Specialist

COMPUTER TRAINING CENTER
Mary Jarrard – Lead Instructor
Robert Wienman – Instructor

EMPLOYMENT
Brenda Sherman-Sanders – Director
Gayle Clark – Employment Coordinator
Donna Mackey – Employment Generalist
Eddie Lincoln – Dislocated Workers/Outreach Coordinator
Melinda Freemont – Office Assistant
Luong Vu – State Employment Office Representative

ADULT AND SENIOR SERVICE CENTER
Esther Hinson – Director
Rachel Belcher – Assistant Director & Activities Coordinator
Josephine Brown – Lead Case Manager
Daisylin Oten – Case Manager
Bettye Walker – Case Manager
Tammarra Barnes – Information & Referral Specialist
Jerry Alexander – Driver
Yvette Walker – Alzheimer’s Coordinator
Rosetta Kelly – Case Manager
Lavonne Freeman – Clerical Specialist
Alma Brown – Intergenerational Coordinator

NORTHEAST YOUTH SERVICE CENTER
Larry Foltz – Director
Larry Clayton – Assistant Director/Level 7 Coordinator
Shala Moaydie – Counselor
Cheira Belguellaoui – Diversion Specialist
Duc Hoang – Diversion Specialist/Level 7/Asian Outreach
Daniel Blue – Big Brother/Big Sister Coordinator
Carol Roberts – Big Brother/Big Sister Assistant
Thomas Hardy – Diversion Coordinator
Mary Harvey – Diversion Specialist
Tiffiney Martin – Youth Employment Specialist
Herbert Hager – Information Specialist
Linea Rein – Diversion/Hispanic Outreach
David Brinkman – Group Specialist
Susanne Rust – Clerical Specialist
Joan O’Neal – Clerical Specialist

COMMON BOND PARENT/CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Patricia Williams – Director
Meera Batra – Parent Trainer
Carrie Green – Child Development Specialist
Jean Lynch – Community Health Nurse
Clinton Jones – Administrative Assistant/Teacher’s Assistant
Anne Gaeta – Vista Volunteer

Contact:
Urban League of Portland
10 N. Russell St.
Portland, OR 97227
(503) 280-2600 Fax: (503) 281-2612
People who make things happen.

“We’ve got to stop youth violence or our kids won’t have a fighting chance.”

Hugh B. Price
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Urban League

The leading cause of death among our Black youth is homicide. Gang membership and gun possession continue to be on the rise. According to Hugh Price, the new, dynamic leader of the National Urban League, this is an issue that must be tackled head-on. By making young people the focus of his agenda, Price, the NUL and its 114 affiliates are trying to get our kids off the streets so they can do what so many others may not get the chance to do – grow up.

Anheuser-Busch supports the National Urban League, just as we support other educational and cultural programs, community projects and the development of minority businesses.

At Anheuser-Busch, we’re committed to a better quality of life. For everyone.
"Our house was on Piggott Street, across from a liquor store and a pool hall. But it was also near a recreation center, where Mr. Fennoy was a volunteer.

Even though I was too young, I had no other place to go, so Mr. Fennoy let me come to the center and run. Soon I could catch the older girls, and soon after that I was passing them.

I always knew I could run fast, but without Mr. Fennoy, I would have never known I could run so far."

P.L.A.Y.
Participate in the Lives of America's Youth

Nino Fennoy gave a young girl named Jackie a place to play. But today, many kids aren't given that same chance. You can help give a child the opportunity to play. To learn how, please call 1-800-929-PLAY.
1945 1995

THE URBAN LEAGUE OF PORTLAND

50th ANNIVERSARY

THE URBAN LEAGUE
of Portland

10 N Russell Street
Portland, Oregon 97227-2612

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