

THE MEDIUM

a message from the people...to the people

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Black Heritge

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NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY WEEK

Black history is a Black record of the Black past -- a chapter that was deliberately left out of white history books. It is our way of finding out who we are.

When we search the past, we go all the way back to the tribal villages of Africa, back to the slave ships, and up through slavery, emancipation, degradation, segregation, discrimination, and intimidation. And what we see, despite some shameful chapters, is the survival against the greatest of odds of a people who just would not give in. We see the word 'Black' tearing away from dirty dishwater, scrubbing floors, attending masters' plantations. But most of all, we see the word 'Black' becoming a badge of courage worn by a people enslaved into the lands once owned by Indians, but exploited by whites.

Our history needs telling. Although it has come from a long line of sit-ins, boycotts, protest marches, court trials, and riots lead by such greats as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Frederick Douglass, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and others who risked their lives in order to retain manhood, no other group has fought as hard as Blacks in the bid for freedom.

Some say attention needs to be focused on the future, rather than the past. In order to get to the future we've got to know from "whence" we came--although unfortunately, some of us have forgotten the past.

It's unfortunate that Black contributions are thrown into one week of the year. But, at this time, we are able to let historians know that we did invent, write, read, become soldiers, journalists, scientists, actresses -- that we contributed something other than our domestic and sports abilities or our 'soulful' moves. White America is able to see that we are human and the only difference in them and us is us and them.

So as THE MEDIUM and the Black community honored 36 Unsung Heroes and Heroines and one National Unsung Hero on Black History Eve, we still share with other Blacks across the country in recognizing such greats as Charles Drew (inventor of blood plasma which saved millions of lives); Representative Shirley Chisholm (among other things -- the first Black to seek presidency); Hanibal (Black Roman King); Ralph Bunche (first Black Nobel Peace Prize winner); Angela Davis (brilliant Black leader); Coleman Young and Maynard Jackson (Black Mayors of major cities); and to Blacks who have remained Black despite the power of money . . .

Carole Ennette

Editor



Leola Woffort, Elma Horton Receive Top Honors At Merit Awards Ceremony

by Connie Bennette

More than 1500 persons joined in to salute the "36 Unsung Heroes and Heroines" at THE MEDIUM's Second Annual Black Communities Merit Awards program at the Garfield 'A' auditorium Saturday. The ceremony got underway at 7 p.m. despite the harassment from "outsiders" attempting to tell the Black Community who "our" leaders are.

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, founder and president of operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) delivered the keynote address, receiving standing ovations throughout the 'rap' as he informed the audience to be "necessary". He said the name of the game is "silver" rights -- then civil rights. Comparing sit-ins to sleep-ins in explaining "silver" rights, the 'Country Preacher' said, "You can sit-in the Washington Plaza or any other hotel here."

"I can't sleep there broke. You need 'silver' rights -- money, money, money!"

Rev. Jackson's mind-blowing address touched several areas. He called abortion a genocidal attempt to 'kill off Blacks'. The dope pushers and pimps are leechers of the Black community, 'ripping off' in every aspect, he said.

He advised the youth to stay in school and yet all the knowledge possible because "they" are our future leaders and history makers.

Black history is 'necessary', but Blacks must pay attention to the future, "Where are we now? Where are we now", Jackson asked.

"The energy crisis is a hoax. How can we run out of everything in one day," Jackson said.

The 'Country Preacher' dressed in his usual, cool denim attire commended The Medium for honoring the backbones of the community--the real leaders.

Mrs. Leola Mae Woffort, who among other things, was nominated for the outstanding services to welfare rights, showed tears of joy as hundreds gathered around her, showering her with kisses and hugs, when she said, "For the first time in my life, I am speechless. I am so happy."

Adding to her happiness were kisses from the "country preacher" as he gave her the highest award of the evening, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award.



Mrs. Leola Woffort, winner of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award and Mrs. Elma Horton, Mahalia Jackson Spiritual Award winner pose with an innocent little bystander.

"I have got to be the happiness person in the world. Thanks to the MEDIUM all of this reality. It's so nice to honor the little people in the community. I am so happy," said Mrs. Elma Horton, as an unbelievable expression covered her face along with kisses from Publisher Bennett and Rev. Jesse Jackson when she received the second highest award, the Mahalia Jackson Spiritual Award.

Said one excited member of the audience, "I've never seen so many people so happy at the same time. This is what I call Black unity. We need more events like this and more people out here like Jesse Jackson who tell it like it is. This is Black Beauty!"

A special surprise award was given to Frank Wills for being a national unsung hero in his "unusual way of opening the doors to Watergate." The award was presented from members of the Black people in Washington (state) by Eddie Rye, Jr., newly-elected President of WSCBEE and director of C.A.M.P. Accepting the award for Frank Wills was Lee Davis, Public Relations Coordinator for THE MEDIUM.

Former Superior Court Judge, Charles Z. Smith was Master of Ceremonies.

Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney (pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church) introduced the speaker. Chris Bennett (Medium's Publisher) and Larry Williams (Medium's General Manager) presented the top awards, along with Rev. Jackson.

Associate Publisher, Priscilla Hailey and Connie Bennett, Editor, gave brief descriptions of the 36 nominees' unsung tasks while Rev. Jackson presented them with "Certificates of Recognition."

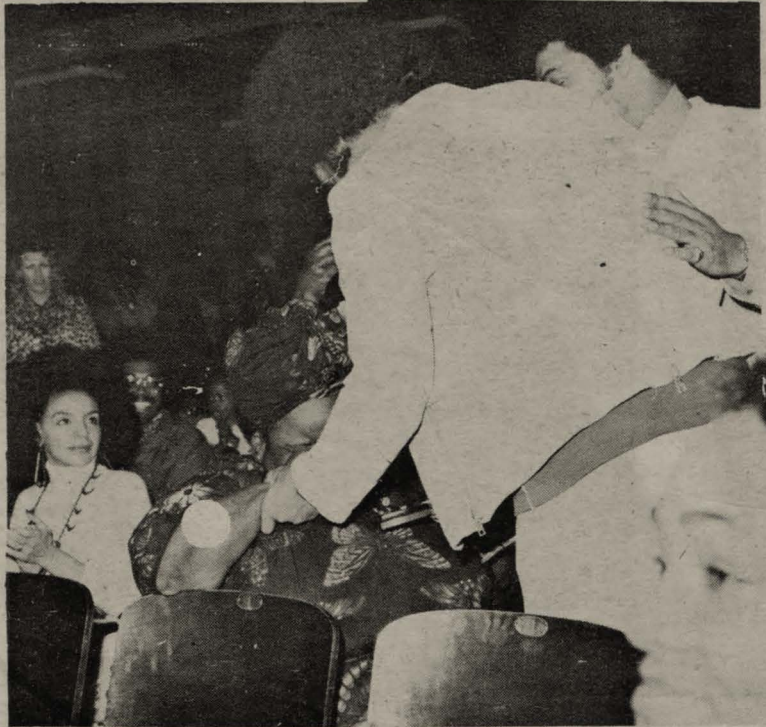
Pat Wright, Medium's Religious Editor, and the Community Choir provided the entertainment which caused the audience to "pat" feet and applaud for more.

Although the and r free, a generous donation was given to the MEDIUM from the audience for providing a memorable occasion for the Community's unrecognized members.

Thanks to the community for making this event successful and thanks for all the letters and calls for appreciation to THE MEDIUM for a "job well done." THE MEDIUM hopes next year's event will be even better.

TEARS HUGS KISSES

Photos by John Gladney & Ray Herring



"For the first time in my life I am speechless"



Audience showers Leola Woffort, first place winner with kisses and hugs.

Research of WSU Historians Shows

Contributions of Black Pioneers Significant in History of Northwest



**Sam Smith,
First Black
President of
Seattle City
Council**



**George Fleming,
First
Black State
Senator**



**Peggy Maxie,
First Black
Woman Rep-
resentative.**

1966

**Charles Z.
Smith of Sea-
ttle becomes
First Black
judge in the
State of Was-
hington.**

1967

**Samuel Smith
is elected to
City Council.**

Although the number of Blacks in the State of Washington was small — only 207 of 24,000 residents in 1870 and only 6,000 of 1 million residents in 1910 — their political and economic contributions to the settling of the Pacific Northwest were significant.

Historians indicate that Marcus Lopez was the first known Black man in the Northwest Territory. He accompanied Capt. Robert Gray when he discovered the mouth of the Columbia in 1792 and named the mighty river after his ship.

A Black referred to only as 'York' was a member of the Lewis-Clark Expedition which reached the Pacific Northwest in 1805. A little later, in the 1830's, James Beckworth, a Black mountain man, guide, hunter and fur trader made his way to Washington as did Edward Rose, another guide and interpreter for the Rocky Mountain Fur Co., later known as the American Fur Co.

Early research reveals that a Black man accompanied missionary Marcus Whitman on his journey to Walla Walla.

Black people, however, were not restricted to the stereotypes of servants and "Negro trades". They made their mark in other ventures.

George Washington Bush, a native of Pennsylvania and a resident of Missouri, sought to escape the socio-economic pressures of that area and migrated to Oregon in 1844. He later led a party of pioneers into Washington and established the first permanent settlement in the Tumwater area. When he died in 1863 he had accumulated 890 acres of land.

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction Period, many Blacks, some of them war veterans, found it no longer feasible to remain in the South with their new "freedoms" and continued the move West.

George Washington, a former slave, left Virginia for Oregon in quest of a better way of life. He later moved to Washington because Blacks were looked on unfavorably in Oregon and founded the town of Centerville (now Centralia) around 1871.

Probably the largest single migration of Blacks to Washington occurred in the 1880's. A Roslyn, Wash. coal mine owned by the Northwest Improvement Co., a subsidiary of the Northern Pacific Railroad, felt the effects of a massive strike in 1889. The company hired James Sheppardson, a Black coal miner and part-time Virginia politician, to bring strike-breakers out to the small mining town 55 miles east of the Cascade rim. Some 600 men and their families made the coast-to-coast shift with Sheppardson and Roslyn's population jumped to 52 per cent Black.

Many of the miners and their families became disenchanted with mining in Roslyn after the initial influx, chose different occupations and settled in other areas of the state. Many took up farming in the fertile Yakima Valley.

The first significant inroads by Blacks into state and local government occurred during the 1890's. Gideon S. Bailey became the first Black Justice of the Peace in Washington. His jurisdiction included the New Castle-Franklin areas of King County. Will Turner of Tacoma was appointed first deputy assessor of Pierce County. John N. Comma assumed the position of deputy United States

marshal for western Washington as well as sergeant at arms of the state Senate. R. B. Scott of Spokane became deputy internal revenue collector for northeastern Washington.

Other fields were also represented. Britain Oxedine, a former member of the North Carolina state legislature moved to Seattle and founded the first Black newspaper in the state. The Seattle Standard, in 1892. Horace R. Clayton became editor publisher of the Seattle Republican and held a number of state jobs including that of official printer for the state. William Owen Bush, son of George Washington Bush, was elected to the first state legislature in 1889.

In the 1850's a number of Blacks formed the Workingman's Joint Stock Association with George P. Riley as the first president. They purchased 67 acres of land in what is now the City of Tacoma and sold the land in plots to prospective settlers.

Martin Van Buren came to Washington from Kansas around the turn of the century and settled in Dayton. There he invented a vacuum cleaner and several cleaning solutions which he sold through a business he established before he died in 1913.

J. J. Baskins migrated to Walla Walla from Leavenworth, Kans., and between 1910 and 1925 he supervised the construction of two buildings in Pullman. One structure, now thought to be the old Pullman High School, was the largest in town at that time and valued at \$200,000. The other building had an estimated worth of \$25,000.

L. A. Busham of Olympia became a prominent real estate man in the 1890's. I. Israel Walker, a land developer, was instrumental in securing Blacks to homestead land in the Yakima Valley around 1907-08. As a land agent for two eastern Washington irrigation companies, Walker formed a land development in the Sunnyside area, advertised in the Pittsburgh Courier, and brought 20 black families out to homestead 160 acres each. By 1908 he owned \$83,000 worth of property.

Other prominent Black businesses in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century and the first decade of the Twentieth Century in the Spokane area included the Buffalo Gold Mining and Investment Co., owned by William Hopkins and George Anderson; the X-Ray Printing Co., Deer Lake Orchard Co., and Barrow's Landing Resort on Deer Lake, owned by the Barrow Family of Spokane.

David James of Colfax and Ollie Williams of Spokane operated restaurants in their cities and G.A. Whitley was a saloon proprietor in Seattle. Mr. and Mrs. William Howard of Olympia succeeded in the hotel business as did George Washington of Centralia.

During the first two decades of this century the white attitude toward Black participation in government and business began to undergo a change. The diversity of roles for Black people reached its apex around 1914 and thereafter suffered a steady decline.

The influx of a large number of Black people in this period (Seattle's Black population increased from 406 in 1900 to 2,296 in 1910) and the passage of anti-Black legislation in other regions particularly triggered the introduction of some discriminatory legislation and seriously curtailed Black economic and political activity in the Northwest well into the 1950's.



A FIRST IN WASHINGTON STATE



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