



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



# The Portland Observer

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Committed to Cultural Diversity

## Clark College Celebrates Opening of Boschma Farm Location

### New Advanced Manufacturing Center Addresses Growing Workforce Demand

Clark College officially marked the opening of its newest location, Boschma Farms, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Jan. 8. College leaders, community partners, and elected officials gathered in front of the building for opening remarks from Clark College President Dr. Karin Edwards, Board of Trustees Chair Marilee Scarbrough, and Ridgefield Mayor Matt Cole. Tanisha Harris, representing Senator Maria Cantwell's office, was also in attendance and read a statement from the senator.

Located on a 10-acre property in Ridgefield, Boschma Farms houses the college's Advanced Manufacturing Center (AMC), a 49,000-square-foot facility designed to support hands-on learning and workforce development. Following the ribbon-cutting, partners and guests toured the AMC, including the Learning Lab, where attendees viewed demonstrations of the state-of-the-art equipment used in Clark's advanced manufacturing program.

Advanced manufacturing is one of the fastest-growing industries in the Pacific Northwest, shaping the regional economy and driving demand for highly skilled workers. According to JobsEQ, more than 230,000 people are employed in advanced manufacturing in Washington state, including nearly 13,000 in Clark County. The Portland-Vancouver metro area currently offers nearly 3,800 job openings in the field.

"Today's official ribbon-cutting signifies a new beginning for the college and the community," Dr. Edwards said. "As the need for an advanced manufacturing workforce in our region continues to grow, we recognized the opportunity—and the responsibility—to meet it head-on. The Advanced Manufacturing Center



Clark President Dr. Edwards with Board of Trustees Marilee Scarbrough, Denise Gideon, Suzanne Donaldson, Cristhian Conseco Juarez (right) and Foundation Board Chair, Deborah Blom (left)

is a direct response to those regional and national needs."

With more than \$3 million in federal support, the AMC expands Clark College's ability to train advanced manufacturing technicians, modernize labs with clean energy technology, and increase STEM degree completion for low-income students. "The Center will provide more opportunities for Southwest Washington residents to gain the skills they need to land good-paying jobs and will help attract more high-tech businesses in the region," U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell said in her statement.

Advanced Manufacturing at Clark College offers pathways through stackable degrees and certificates with multiple entry and exit points, including certificates of achievement, certificates of proficiency, and an Associate of Applied Technology degree. Graduates can pursue careers

across a variety of fields, including mechatronics, programming, welding, and renewable energy.

"We talk a lot about affordability and cost of living, and a major solution is to create opportunities for better wages and improved livelihood through a quality education," said Ridgefield Mayor Matt Cole. "If we want people to live, work, and thrive here, we have to make sure workforce training is accessible, modern, and aligned with the realities of our region. That's why this campus matters—serving northern Clark County, and strengthening the regional workforce while keeping opportunities close to home."

Construction for the facility began in June 2023. The first cohort of advanced manufacturing students started classes at Boschma Farms during the fall 2025 term. In addition to the advanced manufacturing

program, the campus also hosts general education classes and Community and Continuing Education courses, as well as meeting spaces for community groups.

"Moments like this remind me why community colleges matter," Chair Scarbrough said. "This facility is not just a building—it is a promise to students that we are investing in their futures here in Southwest Washington. What happens here will ripple outward, strengthening families, businesses, and the regional economy for years to come."

At the heart of the AMC is the Learning Lab, a highly visible, hands-on instructional space featuring mills and lathes, water jet cutters, robotic welders, press brakes, and 3D printers.

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# Teaching Black History in an Age of Backlash

## The Black History Month Centennial Unfolds Amid Political Resistance

AP- For academics, historians and activists, the past year has been tumultuous for those advocating the teaching of Black history in the United States. As the nation marks the centennial of Black History Month's earliest observances, the milestone arrives amid a hostile political climate that many say threatens decades of educational progress.

Despite proclaiming February as National Black History Month last year, President Donald Trump began his second term by accusing some African American history lessons of indoctrinating students to hate the country. His administration has dismantled Black history programming at national parks, most recently removing an exhibit on slavery in Philadelphia. Advocates describe the chilling effect as alarming and unprecedented.

"States and cities are nervous about retribution from the White House," said DeRay Mckesson, a longtime activist and executive director of Campaign Zero. "So even the good people are just quieter now."

Still, celebrations and educational efforts continue. Black History Month traces its roots to 1926, when scholar Carter G.



Angelique Roche, author of and upcoming Book "First Freedom: The Story of Opal Lee and Juneteenth"

Woodson launched Negro History Week. One hundred years later, civil rights organizations, artists and academics are using the centennial to engage young people in a fuller telling of American history through lectures, teach-ins, books and free educational resources.

Campaign Zero, in partnership with Afro Charities and leading Black schol-

ars, has launched a nationwide effort to expand access to Black History Month curricula. Mckesson said the initiative involves more than 150 teachers and is designed to ensure students continue learning Black history in "intentional and thoughtful" ways.

That push comes as cultural projects also seek new audiences. About three

years ago, journalist and Xavier University of Louisiana adjunct professor Angélique Roché accepted what she called a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to write a graphic novel about Opal Lee, the "grandmother of Juneteenth." Lee, who will turn 100 this year, is widely credited with helping secure federal recognition of Juneteenth, commemorating the day enslaved people in Texas learned they were free.

Under Trump, Juneteenth is no longer a free-admission day at national parks. Roché's book, *First Freedom: The Story of Opal Lee and Juneteenth*, is released Feb. 10 and draws on extensive archival research and time spent with Lee and her family in Texas.

"There is nothing 'indoctrinating' about facts that are based on primary sources that are highly researched," Roché said. She hopes the book reaches classrooms and libraries and helps readers see shared humanity. Alongside Lee, the novel highlights lesser-known figures such as William "Gooseneck Bill" McDonald, Texas' first Black millionaire, and Lee's mother, Mattie Broadous Flake.

Roché said Lee's mantra — "make yourself a committee of one" — is meant to inspire young readers. "Don't wait for other people to make the changes you want to see," she said.

The centennial has also spurred new scholarship. Jarvis Givens, a professor of

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One PCC Alum Working to Close Oregon's Teacher Diversity Gap

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LOCAL NEWS

Free Children's Dental Clinic Set for Feb. 7  
Clark College provides care at no charge

Clark College's Dental Hygiene Clinic will offer free dental care for children ages 4-17 during its annual Free Children's Dental Health Care Day on Saturday, Feb. 7.

The college's dental hygiene students will provide free care under the direct supervision of licensed dental hygienists and dentists. Services are available to families with low income or no insurance, and children with special health care needs are welcome.

Free services include dental exams, teeth cleanings, dental X-rays, sealants, fluoride treatments, and select dental emergencies.

Appointments are required. Please call the Clark Dental Hygiene business office at 360-992-2158 to schedule. The Free Children's Dental Health Care Day will take place on Saturday, Feb. 7, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Firstenburg Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center in the Health Sciences Building on Clark's main campus, located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way in Vancouver, Washington.



Children Ages 4 to 17 can receive free dental health care at Clark College's Firstenburg Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center on February 7

Pre-Super Bowl Tips for Old TVs  
Metro Shares TV Disposal Tips

New televisions are a popular purchase when the Super Bowl comes around. That can lead to a lot of questions about how to get rid of older models, what to do with leftover cables, and whether any packaging can be recycled.

In Oregon, it is illegal to dispose of TVs in the garbage, landfills or incinerators. Many TVs contain toxic chemicals like flame retardants that can pollute the air and waterways. They also contain valuable materials that can be recycled to conserve natural resources.

Here's what people need to know to make sure TV disposal goes smoothly. TVs cannot go in the trash or be left on the curb. Working TVs can be resold, donated, or reused at home, while both working and broken TVs can be recycled for free at a Metro transfer station or other Oregon E-Cycles collection sites. TV cables should go in the trash, not in household recycling bins, as they can tangle equipment and endan-



Photo courtesy of Oregon Metro Communications Department

ger workers. Remote controls with batteries should also not be thrown out at home; consider donating them to a secondhand store or taking them to an electronics recycler, and bring old batteries to a Metro household hazardous waste facility or check with your local hauler for home collection options. TVs often come with a lot of packaging, some of which can be recycled while some belongs in the trash. Cardboard boxes can be recycled at home, but should be flattened or cut into smaller pieces to ensure proper collection. Plastic wrap, plastic strapping, and block Styrofoam or packing peanuts generally go in the trash unless

you can reuse them or take them to a recycling center; Green Century Recycling in Portland and James Recycling in Beaverton accept Styrofoam for a fee.

There may be additional options for recycling materials like block Styrofoam and plastic wrap within the next few years now that Oregon implemented the Recycling Modernization Act.

Still have questions? Metro can help. Call 503-234-3000 to speak with staff in English or Spanish. Metro staff can provide guidance on donations, recycling, and disposal, including instructions and drop-off locations for various items.

# The Mayor of Portland Demands ICE Leave

## The After Math of Federal Agents Gassing Protesters

AP - The mayor of Portland, Oregon, demanded U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement leave his city after federal agents launched tear gas at a crowd of demonstrators — including young children — outside an ICE facility during a weekend protest that he characterized as peaceful.

Witnesses said agents deployed tear gas, pepper balls and rubber bullets as thousands of marchers arrived at the South Waterfront facility on Saturday. Erin Hoover Barnett, a former OregonLive reporter who joined the protest, said she was about 100 yards (90 meters) from the building when “what looked like two guys with rocket launchers” started dousing the crowd with gas.

“To be among parents frantically trying to tend to little children in strollers, people using motorized carts trying to navigate as the rest of us staggered in retreat, unsure of how to get to safety, was terrifying,” Barnett wrote in an email to OregonLive.

Messages were sent Sunday to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, seeking to confirm details of the incident, including that federal agents deployed tear gas against demonstrators.

Portland Mayor Keith Wilson said the daytime demonstration was peaceful, “where the vast majority of those present violated no laws, made no threat and posed no danger” to federal agents.

“To those who continue to work for ICE: Resign. To those who control this facility: Leave,” Wilson wrote in a statement Saturday night. “Through your use of violence and the trampling of the Constitution, you have lost all legitimacy and replaced it with shame.”



Federal agents lobbed tear gas and flash bangs at protesters in front of the ICE building on Jan. 31, 2026, in Portland, Ore. (Allison Barr/The Oregonian via AP)

The Portland Fire Bureau sent paramedics to treat people at the scene, police said. Police officers monitored the crowd but made no arrests Saturday.

The ICE facility in Portland is a field office that includes a processing center where federal officers detain and interview people to determine their legal status as U.S. residents, according to a city website. Saturday’s Portland protest was one of many similar demonstrations nationwide against President Donald Trump administration’s immigration crackdown in cities like Minneapolis, where in recent weeks federal agents killed two residents, Alex Pretti and Renee Good.

Federal agents in Eugene, Oregon, deployed tear gas on Friday when protesters broke windows and tried to get inside the Federal Building near downtown. City police declared a riot and ordered the crowd to disperse.

Trump posted Saturday on social media that it was up to local law enforcement agencies to police protests in their cities. However, Trump said he has instructed Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to have federal agents be vigilant in guarding U.S. government facilities.

“Please be aware that I have instructed ICE and/or Border Patrol to be very forceful in this protection of Federal Government

Property. There will be no spitting in the faces of our Officers, there will be no punching or kicking the headlights of our cars, and there will be no rock or brick throwing at our vehicles, or at our Patriot Warriors,” Trump wrote. “If there is, those people will suffer an equal, or more, consequence.”

Wilson said Portland would be imposing a fee on detention facilities that use chemical agents.

The federal government “must, and will, be held accountable,” the mayor said. “To those who continue to make these sickening decisions, go home, look in a mirror, and ask yourselves why you have gassed children.”

## Clark College Celebrates Opening of Boschma Farm Location

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Led by construction partners, Mortenson Construction and Henneberry-Eddy Architects, the Advanced Manufacturing Center at Boschma Farms has earned a LEED Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, reflecting its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Design features include high-speed fans for air circulation, natural light supported by skylights and daylight-harvesting sensors, and bird-safe frit patterns on the windows to reduce bird run-ins with the glass. Additionally, portions of the building’s

mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are exposed, offering future learning opportunities for students.

During her speech, Dr. Edwards referenced one of her favorite aspects of the building’s design—a flowing basket-weave pattern incorporated into the walls, symbolizing the interconnectivity of threads, histories, and perspectives, and how diverse backgrounds and stories shape the Clark community and the region. “I am eager to see how this building will create new opportunities, transform lives, and impact our region in the coming years—by teaching the skills needed for a growing industry and helping students build a future right here in Southwest Washington.”

## Teaching Black History in an Age of Backlash

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African and African American Studies at Harvard, decided to write a book after watching Trump’s anti-DEI executive orders while teaching in London, where Black History Month is celebrated in October.

“I wanted to devote my time to honoring the legacy that gave us Black History Month,” Givens said.

His new book, *I’ll Make Me a World: The 100-Year Journey of Black History Month*, features four essays examining key themes and misconceptions. The research will feed into a “living history campaign” with Campaign Zero and Afro Charities, aimed at teaching students how to document and evaluate history themselves.

Born in 1875 to formerly enslaved parents, Woodson believed education

was essential to self-empowerment, said Robert Trent Vinson, director of the Carter G. Woodson Institute at the University of Virginia. Though one of the first Black scholars to earn a Harvard doctorate, Woodson rejected the dismissal of everyday Black experiences and built parallel educational spaces through churches, study groups and publications.

Vinson said Woodson would not be surprised by today’s backlash. Resistance to teaching Black history, he noted, has surfaced repeatedly across generations.

“There’s a level of strategy in how this knowledge is shared,” Vinson said. “Sometimes quietly, sometimes boldly.”

Mckesson agreed. “We’ve seen these backlashes before,” he said. “And the informal networks of Black people who have always resisted — they’re active again today.”

# Civil Rights Holidays Dropped from the Free-Admission Calendar



Tourists flock to Mather Point at Grand Canyon National Park (AP photo/Ross D. Franklin, file.)

## National Parks Cut MLK, Juneteenth Free Days, Add Trump's Birthday

The National Park Service will offer free admission to U.S. residents on President Donald Trump's birthday next year — which also happens to be Flag Day — but is eliminating the benefit for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth.

The new list of free admission days for Americans is the latest example of the Trump administration downplaying America's civil rights history while also promoting the president's image, name and legacy.

Last year, the list of free days included Martin Luther King Jr Day and Juneteenth — which is June 19 — but not June 14, Trump's birthday.

The new free-admission policy took effect Jan. 1 and was one of several changes announced by the Park Service late last month, including higher admission fees for international visitors.

The other days of free park admission in 2026 are Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Constitution Day, Veterans Day, President Theodore Roosevelt's birthday (Oct. 27) and the anniversary of the creation of the Park Service (Aug. 25). Eliminating Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth, which commemorates the day in 1865 when the last

enslaved Americans were emancipated, removes two of the nation's most prominent civil rights holidays. Some civil rights leaders voiced opposition to the change after news about it began spreading over the weekend.

"The raw & rank racism here stinks to high heaven," Harvard Kennedy School professor Cornell William Brooks, a former president of the NAACP, wrote on social media about the new policy.

Kristen Brengel, a spokesperson for the National Parks Conservation Association, said that while presidential administrations have tweaked the free days in the past, the elimination of Martin Luther King Jr. Day is particularly concerning. For one, the day has become a popular day of service for community groups that use the free day to perform volunteer projects at parks.

That will now be much more expensive, said Brengel, whose organization is a nonprofit that advocates for the park system.

"Not only does it recognize an American hero, it's also a day when people go into parks to clean them up," Brengel said. "Martin Luther King Jr. deserves a day of recognition ... For some reason, Black history has repeatedly been

targeted by this administration, and it shouldn't be."

Some Democratic lawmakers also weighed in to object to the new policy.

"The President didn't just add his own birthday to the list, he removed both of these holidays that mark Black Americans' struggle for civil rights and freedom," said Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada. "Our country deserves better."

A spokesperson for the National Park Service did not immediately respond to questions on Saturday seeking information about the reasons behind the changes.

Since taking office, Trump has sought to eliminate programs seen as promoting diversity across the federal government, actions that have erased or downplayed America's history of racism as well as the civil rights victories of Black Americans.

Self-promotion is an old habit of the president's and one he has continued in his second term. He unsuccessfully put himself forward for the Nobel Peace Prize, renamed the U.S. Institute of Peace after himself, sought to put his name on the planned NFL stadium in the nation's capital and had a new children's savings program named after him.

Some Republican lawmakers have suggested putting his visage on Mount Rushmore and the \$100 bill.

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# SPORTS

## Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest Returns to Portland

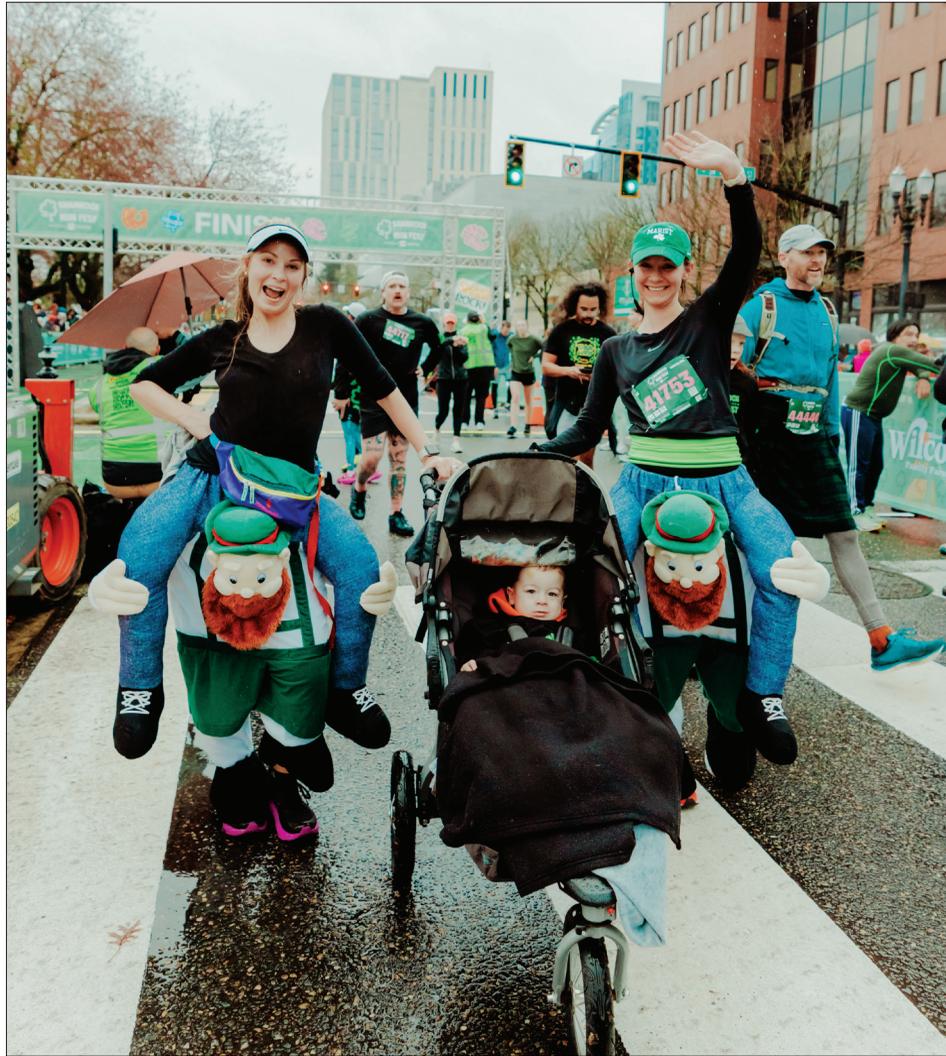


Photo credit to Motiv Sports

### The Event will Host Thousands While Also Benefiting Local Organizations

The 48th annual Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota, is returning on March 15, where it will host an estimated 19,000 participants, making it the largest running event in the City of Portland. The race organizers go beyond just producing the event, and engage with multiple local organizations, clubs, businesses and charities that benefit leading up to and on race day. Registration for all distances is currently open.

“It’s hard to put into words how amazing and unique the Portland community is. You truly get that small town feeling through the constant community support, with the bonus of big city offerings,” said Alex Jee, community and team’s manager at Motiv Sports, producer of the event. “The Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota, really highlights this feeling, with the large size of the event but community connections sprinkled in throughout all of the race day features. I look forward to this event every year for this reason; we really do feel like one big family out here in Portland.”

In 2024, the Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota, launched SheRock, an initiative dedicated to empowering and supporting girls in running. 100% of proceeds raised through SheRock is equally distributed between three local non-profits.

The Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota, also partners with OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital. Donations from the Run Fest directly benefit their Child Life Program. Since their partnership began, the event has donated over \$850,000 to the OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital.

The race also collaborates with Portland Track, a non-profit organization focused on creating, organizing and supporting events and programs that grow the sport of Track and Field and running in Portland. Through this collaboration, they are able to connect with local run clubs and teams to work directly with them on race weekend activations and more. They also work together on rallying the overall running community in Portland to take part in the various running events that take place leading up to race day.

“Shamrock Run is a race that the running community looks forward to every year. It’s rare to get a race that is competitive, connective and fun for everyone,

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# Cascade Festival of African Films Marks 36th Season

## A Vibrant Lineup of Films and Festivities

The Cascade Festival of African Films, the longest-running African film festival in the U.S., is set to celebrate its 36th year at Portland Community College with a lineup of 18 films from 16 countries.

The free film festival raises its curtain at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 6, at the Hollywood Theatre and runs through March 7 in celebration of Black History Month. Subsequent film screenings are in the Moriarty Arts and Humanities Auditorium on PCC's Cascade Campus (705 N. Killingsworth St.).

"This festival is cherished by the community because it showcases stories from African people and its diaspora," said Festival Director Eugénie Jolivett Fontana. "We invite people to celebrate brilliant African cinema and create moments that will linger long after Black History Month."

CFAF launches with a pre-festival kickoff Thursday, Feb. 5, at PAM CUT at The Whitsell on Free First Thursday, transforming the newly redesigned Portland Art Museum into a lively gathering



Scene from 'Black Tea' (Photo courtesy of Portland Community College)

space where African cinema, art, music, and education intersect within the Black Art and Experiences (B.A.E.) Galleries.

On Friday, Feb. 6, the festival grand opening at the Hollywood Theatre features the screening of "The Bride Price" by local film-

makers Ime Etuk (director) and George N. Faux (writer and producer), who are West African. The film explores an age-old practice of paying a bride's family for marriage and explores its misuse, concluding with a community discussion. Doors open at 6 p.m. and

seating is first come, first served for the 7 p.m. show.

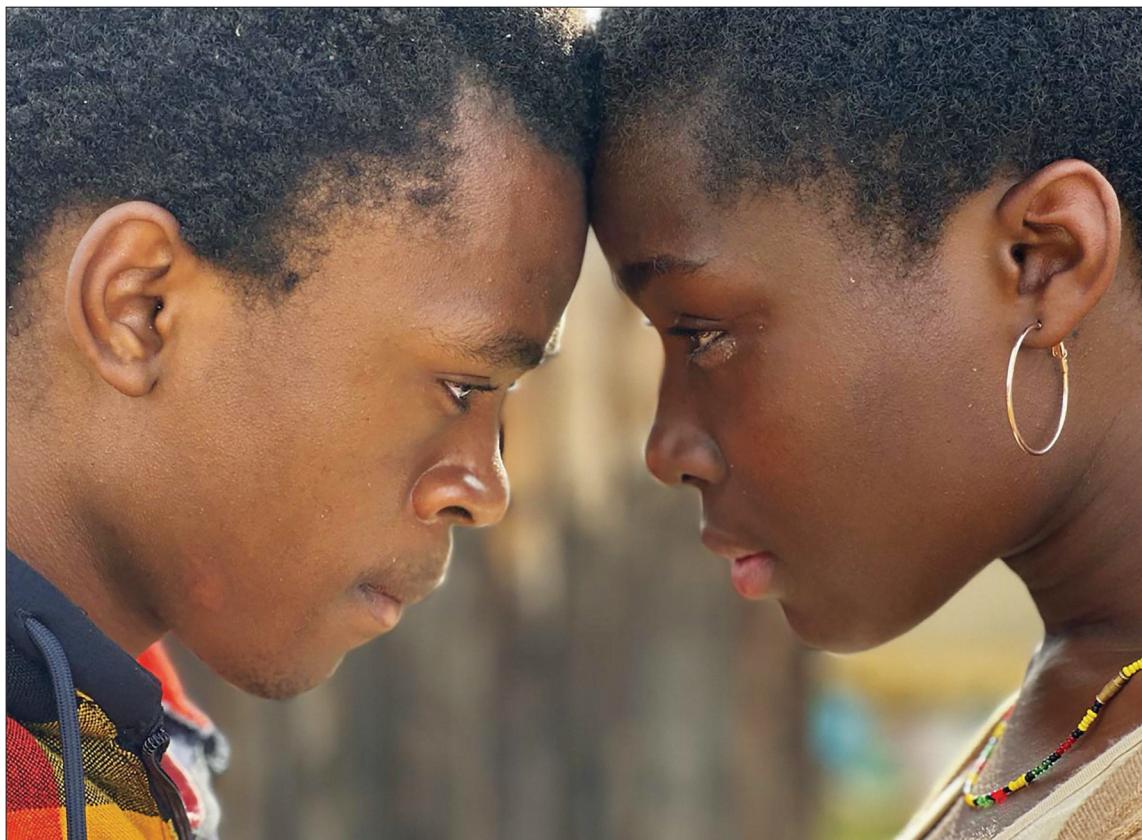
"This year's theme of 'cultural connection' reflects how the featured films examine migration, displacement and reinvention, and the universal search for safety, purpose and belonging," said Jolivett Fontana. "The selections are appropriate for most audiences and showcase filmmakers from across the diaspora. Often, women's voices take center stage, offering intimate, bold, and deeply resonant portrayals of strength, vulnerability and leadership."

One such highlight is the centerpiece film: "Black Tea" (Mali) at 7 p.m., Feb. 20 in the Hollywood Theatre. This cross-cultural, romantic drama by renowned Malian director Abderrahmane Sissako follows an Ivorian woman, Aya, who leaves her wedding in Ivory Coast for China, only to fall in love with Cai, a middle-aged tea shop owner. Their relationship unfolds against cultural bias, buried histories and societal judgment.

The festival offers something for nearly everyone, including Documentary Series Nights every Thursday at the Cascade Campus featuring select films such as *The Man Who Plants Baobabs* (Burkina Faso) on Feb.

12; Family Fest on Saturday, Feb. 28, with family-friendly screenings of *The Wall Street Boy* (Kenya) and *The Village Next to Paradise* (Somalia); and Marketplace Day that same afternoon from 2–6 p.m. at the Moriarty Auditorium, where local and regional African diaspora vendors showcase crafts, art, and more. Women Filmmakers Week, March 5–7, highlights three films by African women directors, closing March 7 at PAM CUT's Tomorrow Theater with *Hanami*, a coming-of-age story by Swiss-Cape Verdean filmmaker Denise Fernandes exploring migration and identity on Cape Verde's island of Fogo. The Literature-to-Screen Spotlight rounds out the lineup with films inspired by landmark African texts, including *So Long a Letter*, *The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka*, and *Katanga: The Dance of the Scorpions*, a reimagining of *Macbeth* set in Africa.

"In a time that calls for understanding and connection, CFAF's 36th year invites you to gather, learn, and engage through film. Join us—and bring someone who also believes in the power of shared stories," said Jolivett Fontana.



Kenya's 'The Wall Street Boy' (2025) (Photo courtesy of Portland Community College)



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## Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

# Jordan Peele's 'High Horse' Redefines Cowboy Culture



This image released by Peacock shows a scene from the documentary "High Horse: The Black Cowboy." (Troy Harvey/AP Photo)

## 'The Black Cowboy' Doc Sheds Light on an Erased Part of History

AP - Jordan Peele's docuseries *High Horse: The Black Cowboy* shines a spotlight on a long-erased chapter of American history, reframing the cowboy not as a mythic white figure of the Old West, but as a role Black Americans helped define. The series draws unexpected cultural connections, including to Texas-bred hip-hop legends UGK, who once stared confidently into the camera atop stallions in the music video for their fan-favorite track "Wood Wheel." The imagery reflected the group's signature fusion of Houston street realism and Texas cowboy culture—an aesthetic that felt authentic, not appropriated.

"This is not Black people trying to assimilate with this country Western lifestyle," said Bun B, one half of UGK alongside the late Pimp C. "Black people across this country—East Coast to West Coast—have been prevalent in this space for years." As pioneers of Southern hip-hop, UGK helped shape a sound that would eventually dominate rap music, while also embracing imagery rooted in Texas ranching traditions.

Bun B, now an ambassador for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and the first and only Black male hip-hop headliner

in the event's history, shares his personal journey in *High Horse*. Executive produced by Peele and Monkeypaw Productions, the three-part docuseries argues that Black men were the first Americans called "cowboys," a term originally used in a racially derogatory way to distinguish them from white "cowhands." Through historical analysis and personal testimony, the series challenges the pop-culture imagery that has long defined the American West.

According to historian Bruce Glasrud, one in four cowboys in the late 19th century were Black, despite African Americans making up a much smaller percentage of the U.S. population at the time. Yet their stories have largely been excluded from mainstream narratives. "Being a Black performer at this 90-plus year concert series has been amazing for me," Bun told *The Associated Press*, referring to the Houston rodeo. "But it's also given me a deeper perspective of understanding the Black cowboys' place in American history."

Directed by Jason Perez and streaming on Peacock, *High Horse* builds on the themes introduced in Peele's 2022 film *Nope*. That movie starred Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer as siblings running the only Black-owned horse ranch in California, training animals for Hollywood productions. The film also referenced early motion photography pioneer Eadweard Muybridge, whose famous image *The Horse* in Motion immortalized the horse Sallie Gardner while leaving the Black jockey riding her unnamed and forgotten.

"At Monkeypaw, we really think erasure is a horror story," said Keisha Senter, the company's senior vice president of culture and impact and an executive producer on the project. *High Horse* uses archival photos and footage to reconstruct the lives of early Black cowboys, while also documenting modern Black cowboy communities that remain vibrant across the country. The series addresses systemic racism, land ownership battles dating back to Reconstruction, and the profound influence African Americans have had on country and Western entertainment.

The project arrives amid heightened political tensions, as critics argue that recent federal policies disproportionately harm Black Americans through cuts to social programs and diversity initiatives. Appearances by Glynn Turman, Pam Grier, Tina Knowles, and Rick Ross underscore the personal and cultural stakes of the story, while an original score by Raphael Saadiq grounds the series emotionally.

"This is a survival tool," said Turman, a 78-year-old Emmy winner who has lived on a California ranch for decades. The docuseries also touches on modern debates over who "owns" cowboy culture—conversations reignited by Beyoncé's *Cowboy Carter*, Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road," and recent Western-themed films and books.

For Bun B, the goal is simple but expansive. "It's not a Black story—this is an American story," he said. "It turns everything you think you know about the American cowboy on its head, in the right way."

## A Quintessential Portland Experience



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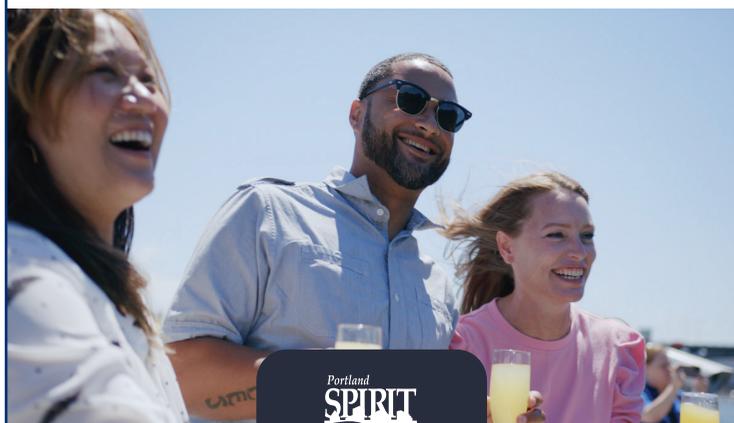
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# Rewriting the Future of Oregon's Classrooms, One Educator at a Time

## One PCC Alum is Making it Her Goal to Close Oregon's Teacher Diversity Gap

Oregon's classrooms are growing more diverse faster than its teacher workforce. In 2024–25, students of color make up 42.5% of K-12 enrollment (per the Oregon Statewide Report Card [pdf]), but teachers of color are 14.1%, which is a looming gap as districts move toward required implementation of social science standards integrating ethnic studies in 2026–27.

And nationally, 80% of U.S. teachers are non-Hispanic White (2020–21), making educator diversity a nationwide challenge, not just an Oregon one, according to the Pew Research Center.

Chantell Wesley, a Portland Community College alum, single mother and first-generation college student, is positioning herself to help close that gap. Wesley is graduating summa cum laude from Portland State University's Honors College, applying to PhD programs in Black Studies and Education, and building youth-led research projects that put students' lived experiences at the center of learning. Wesley, who was born in Portland and raised in San Francisco, first enrolled at PCC in 2014. A single mother and first-generation college student, she chose an associate's degree designed for transfer, keeping a long-term dream in view: earning a PhD. Her path is important as there are an estimated 3.1 million undergrad student-parents nationally, nearly one in five, who are following the single-mother pathway.

"I didn't know exactly how to pursue a PhD, so I took things step by step," Wesley said. "As a first-generation student, I initially chose PCC because it was the closest school to my mother after I moved back to Portland following my son's fa-



Chantell Wesley speaks at the Ninth Ethnic Studies Youth Conference at Portland State University. (Photo by James Hill)

ther's passing away. I met with an advisor who recommended a program that suited my goals, and I followed their guidance."

After time away from school, Wesley returned to PCC in Fall 2022. She soon enrolled in the Critical Educators of Color Pathway (CECP) after being inspired by instructor Gabriel Higuera's "Decolonizing Education." The experience reshaped her academic goals and solidified her commitment to becoming an educator and community leader.

Wesley said that completing the CECP program gave her valuable mentorship, practical experience, and insight into what it means to be an educator of color and provided a pathway to be active in the community and work with youth. It also helped her believe that she could apply for a PhD program.

"PCC has always felt like home where I found mentors who became like family," she said. "Instructors like Dr. Higuera, Jess Brooks in the Math Department, and Dr. Clifford Meeks in the Multicultural Center reminded me of my abilities, my worth and my potential."

"They have seen me stress, cry and persevere," she continued. "Being a single mother striving for a better life, while

trying to survive day to day, is beyond challenging. But the community I found at PCC has kept me going, and I'm deeply grateful for that."

At PCC, Meeks said Wesley displayed academic prowess throughout their many conversations and showcased inquisitiveness of her courses and strategies that would help her successfully navigate them.

"She asks thoughtful, engaging questions that generate philosophical discourse about the past, present and future state of the Black American community," said Meeks, who oversees PCC's Multicultural Center. "I am excited to witness her manifest her aspirations into the reality she is actively cultivating for herself and her family."

In 2024, Wesley transferred to Portland State as a dual-enrolled student while completing CECP. She is currently in her final term and will graduate in March 2026. She has applied to nine PhD programs in Black Studies and Education and plans to move directly from her bachelor's degree into doctoral study.

"As a student and peer mentor at PCC, she was deeply committed to learning and supporting others, with a natural ability to connect with students and make them

feel seen," said Jess Brooks, PCC math instructor. "Through mentoring, study groups, and showing up during stressful moments, Chantell helped build genuine community through collaboration."

While in CECP, Wesley facilitated impactful youth projects at Franklin High School and Vernon Middle School using Youth Participatory Action Research. She also co-organized the Oregon Ethnic Studies Youth Conference, where students from across the state presented research, advocated for change, and led initiatives in their schools and communities.

"She has positively impacted hundreds of young people's lives in Oregon," Higuera said. "Chantell's drive, pursuit of knowledge and passion for justice shine in her interactions with others, and are the qualities that will get her to wherever she wants to go."

She assisted with PCC's Ninth Ethnic Studies Youth Conference, held for the first time on the PSU campus in December. About 400 middle and high school students presented their own research, art and solutions for the critical issues shaping their lives, from environmental justice and healthcare equity to civil rights.

"Witnessing youth use their agency and voice was incredibly inspiring," she said. "It confirmed that my work belongs in classrooms and community spaces where young people are leading."

Wesley's long-term goal is to become a professor and to found a nonprofit for at-risk youth, focusing on emotional development, trauma-informed care and financial literacy. With graduation from PSU on the horizon and doctorate decisions ahead, Wesley said she is committed to continuing the cycle of mentorship and support that started at PCC.

"The community I found at PCC kept me going," she said. "PCC has been foundational to who I am today. These experiences, combined with PCC's supportive environment, taught me that asking for support, engaging deeply in your community, and building networks are essential parts of creating your path to success."

To learn more about PCC's Ethnic Studies Program or the youth conference, visit its webpage.

## Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest Returns to Portland

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

but Shamrock checks those boxes and more," said Jeff Merrill, president of Portland Track. "Their team sets the standard for engagement and accommodation, and they really care about putting the personal touches on making the weekend a great experience for each individual lining up to race. Because of that, people rock out, have a great time and tend to surprise themselves with how fast they run. The post-race celebration is hard to beat too! Shamrock Run is really a staple of the Portland running scene."

The Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota, is also returning to the tradition of the Toyota giveaway. This year, Oregon and SW Washington community members can enter the giveaway for a chance to win a 2026 Toyota 4Runner.

The Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota offers a variety of distances, including a half marathon, 8K, 5K, Stride Walk and the children's Doernbecher Leprechaun Lap. The half marathon distance features a mix of urban scenery and gentle hills, starting and finishing at Tom McCall

Waterfront Park and weaving through the heart of Portland in between. The 8K distance, featuring the Shamrock Showdown 8K, features a fast and flat course that annually produces impressive times, with the unique opportunity for top finishers to win their weight in beer. The Shamrock 5K, is the event's most popular distance and welcomes thousands of runners and joggers annually for the 3.1-mile course. The Shamrock Stride Walk is an annual Portland tradition for participants to enjoy all of the Portland Shamrock fun without the run. The Stride Walk is known for its

participants who dress up to celebrate the spirit of St. Patrick's Day.

Race weekend will also feature eco-friendly race materials, improved recycling efforts and new initiatives to reduce the event's footprint and ensure they continue to celebrate Portland while protecting the environment.

In partnership with Kells Irish Pub, the Shamrock Half Marathon Run Fest, presented by Toyota, will continue the celebration post-race with live Irish music, the city's infamous craft beer and a celebratory atmosphere true to St. Patrick's Day.

# Oaks Park Celebrates Valentine's Weekend!

## The Skate Date Package and Lover's Lane Love Notes

Oaks Park invites couples to celebrate Valentine's Day weekend with a nostalgic and playful twist through its Valentine's Skate Date Package, available February 13 and 14, 2026, during the 7:00 to 10:30 p.m. Open Skate sessions. The limited-time offering combines classic roller skating, shared dining, and a festive romantic atmosphere in one of Portland's most iconic destinations.

Designed for first dates, long-time partners, and everyone in between, the Skate Date Package sets the mood for a charming evening of retro romance on the rink. Couples can enjoy hand-in-hand skating during couples-only moments while soaking up the Valentine's vibe under the lights of the historic Oaks Park Roller Skating Rink.

The \$49.95 Skate Date Package for two includes two Open Skate session admissions, standard skate



Get lovey-dovey with your sweetheart this Valentine's Day weekend with a classic skate date! Package includes two Open Skate session admissions, two standard skate rentals, two meal vouchers for dinner in Rick's Cafe, and two drink tickets. Purchase a package on [oakspark.com/prices-roller-rink](http://oakspark.com/prices-roller-rink).

rentals, Two Rick's Cafe meal vouchers and drink tickets.

For guests who prefer to skate without the full package, skating-only tickets are available for \$13 per person. The Skate Date

Package is available online only for a limited time at [www.oakspark.com/valentine](http://www.oakspark.com/valentine).

In addition to the rink-side romance, Oaks Park is offering couples and families a lasting way

to mark the occasion through its Lover's Lane Plaque Campaign. The campaign invites the community to commemorate meaningful relationships with a custom-engraved plaque permanently in-

stalled along Oaks Park's beloved Lover's Lane walkway, creating a "permanent love note" that supports the preservation of the historic park and its nationally recognized roller rink.

"Whether it's a first date, a 50th anniversary, or a family tradition passed down through generations, Oaks Park has always been a place where love shows up in many forms," said Emily MacKay, Oaks Park Marketing and Events Director. "These plaques let people leave a piece of their story in a place that has meant so much to so many for more than a century."

For more than 100 years, Oaks Park has been a joyful, multi-generational destination where families gather, friends reconnect, and new love stories begin. This Valentine's season, the park invites the community to celebrate both the moment and the memory, from skating hand-in-hand on the rink to leaving a lasting message along Lover's Lane.

To participate, donors can visit [www.oakspark.com/love](http://www.oakspark.com/love) to customize their message and complete a tax-deductible donation through Oaks Park's secure online form.

## CLASSIFIEDS/BIDS

### SUB-BIDS REQUESTED

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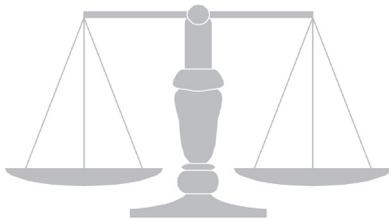
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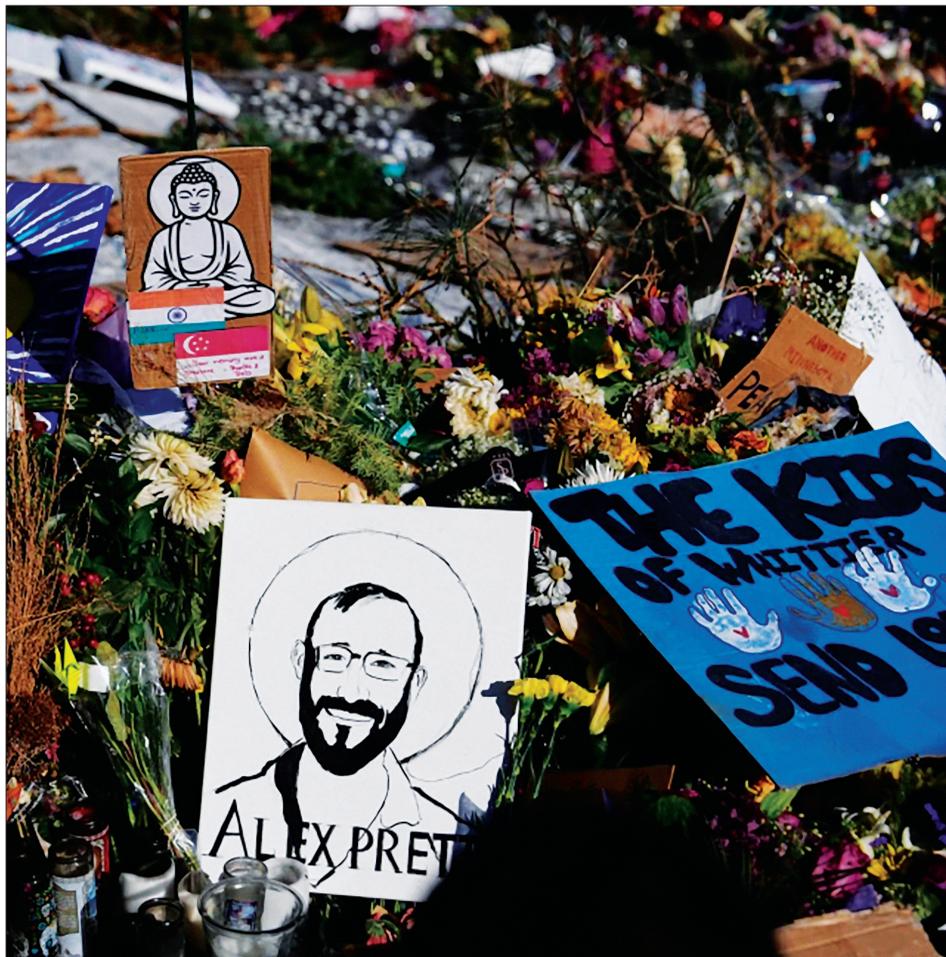
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# Pretti Family Retains Floyd Case Attorney



A drawing of Alex Pretti is displayed at the scene where 37-year-old Pretti was fatally shot by a U.S. Border Patrol office over the weekend, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026, in Minneapolis. (AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

## Veteran Civil Rights Lawyer to Lead Representation

(AP) The parents of Alex Pretti have retained a former federal prosecutor who helped Minnesota’s attorney general convict the police officer who knelt on George Floyd’s neck of murder.

Pretti, an intensive care nurse at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, was shot multiple times on Saturday as he was filming Border Patrol officers conducting an immigration enforcement operation.

Steve Schleicher, a partner at the Minneapolis firm Maslon, is an experienced litigator who served as a special pro-

secutor for Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison in the 2021 trial of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin.

Prior to entering private practice, Schleicher served as a state prosecutor and worked for 13 years in the office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, handling cases ranging from murder to organized crime, racketeering and federal civil rights violations, according to an online resume. He also served as a reserve officer in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps.

Schleicher is representing Michael and Susan Pretti pro bono, according to a family spokesman.

Pretti’s younger sister, Micayla Pretti, has separately hired attorney Anthony Cotton of Kuchler & Cotton in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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## Obituary

# Tamika Kelly

Tamika Kelly, a native of Beaumont, was born on January 2, 1974, to Claudette Barber and Charlie Kelly. She was the youngest of six children and brought joy, laughter, and light wherever she went.

About seven years ago, Tamika made Portland, Oregon her home. There, she was affectionately known as “Texas Tea” or “MeekMeek” by her family and friends. Tamika

worked hard to build a life for herself, securing a job and an apartment, and later welcoming her son, Norman, her daughter, Shatori, and her beloved granddaughters to join her.

Tamika was full of life and truly the life of the party—there was never a dull moment when she was around. Her laughter was contagious, and her presence filled every room she entered.

Most of all, Tamika loved God, and God loved her. She was never afraid to share His word, no matter the time or place, believing deeply that His message always mattered.

Tamika transitioned on January 15, 2026, leaving behind family and friends with an empty space in our hearts. Though we mourn her loss, we trust that God needed her more, and we hold onto the promise that we will see her again.

A very special thanks to Mark Washington and The Portland Observer Newspaper.



# Celebrating Mayor Paul Knauls' 95th Birthday



Friends, community members, and leaders gather to celebrate the Honorary Mayor Paul Knauls, Sr.'s birthday. (Photos by Antonio Harris/Antonio Harris Photography)

"The time is always right to do what is right".

*Martin Luther King Jr*

For more information, contact

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