

REAP Celebrates 25 Years Advancing Equity Across the Northwest

Breaking Barriers and Building Young Leaders

What began in 2001 as a bold vision to amplify youth voices has materialized into one of the Northwest's most impactful youth serving organizations. This year, REAP celebrates 25 years of breaking down systemic barriers, developing young leaders, and fundamentally reshaping how schools and communities support students across the region.

From its Portland roots, REAP has grown into a regional architect of change, now serving more than 1,800 students annually across 30 school sites and 14 school districts spanning 5 counties in Oregon and Southwest Washington. The numbers tell a powerful story: 87% of the students REAP serves represent culturally diverse and historically underserved populations, including significant numbers of immigrant and refugee youth navigating complex educational systems.

"Twenty-five years ago, REAP set out with a simple but powerful belief: that every young person, regardless of their zip code or circumstances, deserves access to opportunities that ignite their innate ability to solve problems and unlock their leadership potential to help them thrive," said Dr. Levell Thomas, CEO/Founder, and Mark Jackson, Executive Director and co-founder of REAP. "As we celebrate this milestone, we're not just looking back—we're building toward the future. The future is now."

That future-focused vision has been REAP's hallmark since day one. REAP has built a comprehensive, leadership-centered model that addresses the whole child through four interconnected pillars of impact.

At the heart of REAP's work is its flagship leadership development program, Solutions, which empowers youth to become proactive advocates for themselves and leaders within their school systems and communities. This isn't about teaching stu-



REAP Students (Photo courtesy of REAP Inc.)

dents to follow—it's about igniting them to lead, to question, to innovate, and to transform the systems around them.

The evolution is remarkable. From 2001 to 2004, the organization launched student leadership programming focused on youth voice and advocacy. By 2005-2009, REAP had expanded into multiple school districts, introducing Black Studies leadership models and regional civic engagement initiatives. The 2010-2014 period saw the launch of signature programs including Purpose Events and the Reflections program, along with youth-led forums, mayoral debates, and state-level advocacy efforts. From 2021-2023, REAP Created and expanded its Clinical Behavioral Health Program, marshaling the statewide Black Youth Suicide Prevention Coalition and growing its Young Entrepreneurs Program. By 2024-2026, REAP deepened state partnerships with OHA and ODE; YouthSave training expansion; Ignite Training for educators and continued regional systems impact.

REAP's academic support and mentorship pillar recognizes that students facing

systemic barriers need more than tutoring—they need advocates, mentors, and culturally responsive programming that honors their identities while building pathways to success.

The Reflections program provides intensive mentoring and proactive support for youth navigating disciplinary challenges, intervening before students fall through the cracks. Meanwhile, Renaissance, Sojourn, and Journey Academy offer culturally responsive programming and targeted academic support designed to ensure durable pathways toward cultural identity and graduation.

Understanding that educational equity must connect to economic opportunity, REAP created the Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP), which functions as a business incubator for students. Here, young people don't just learn about entrepreneurship—they become entrepreneurs, developing real businesses, managing finances, and building confidence.

Equally important is REAP's Ignite Team, which delivers educator training and coaching for school administrators

and educators. By working directly with educators and administrators, REAP helps create school environments where equity isn't an add-on—it's embedded in the culture.

Perhaps no expansion has been more critical than REAP's Clinical Behavioral Health Program, launched in 2020 as the pandemic exposed and exacerbated mental health challenges facing young people. This division provides direct, no-cost, trauma-informed counseling to students who might otherwise go without support.

REAP's leadership extends far beyond individual counseling. The organization leads the Black Youth Suicide Prevention Coalition (BYSPC) and several youth-led councils in direct partnership with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to inform statewide policy. This is systems change at its most optimum—young people with lived experience working directly with state agencies

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A Black History Month Celebration

Culture+ Commerce Market Returns Celebrating Black-Owned Businesses & HBCU Excellence

Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) is excited to announce the return of the annual Culture+ Commerce Market, a dynamic pop-up marketplace showcasing Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. This year's event will take place on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., offering the community an opportunity to support and engage with local vendors while celebrating Black excellence in business.

Held during Black History Month, the Culture+ Commerce Market honors the legacy, creativity, and economic power of Portland's Black community. In addition to shopping and entertainment, this year's event will feature expanded family-friendly programming, including line dancing, face painting, story time for young readers, and SEI's first-ever Culture Café, where guests can enjoy culturally inspired food and drink while building community.



Photo courtesy of SEI

The Culture+ Commerce Market was created to celebrate and support Black-owned businesses while fostering meaningful community connections. Over the years, it has grown into a cornerstone event that highlights entrepreneurship, creativity, and cultural pride. This year, SEI is taking the experience to new heights by integrating entertainment, education, and commerce into one unforgettable celebration.

SEI is proud to partner with the Portland Trail Blazers and Alaska Airlines as part of the third annual HBCU to the Pros Weekend, an expansive celebration showcasing the rich traditions and extraordinary talent of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The weekend will feature marching bands from two iconic universities. Members of the Southern University Human

Jukebox Marching Band (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), along with members of the Prairie View A&M University Marching Storm (Prairie View, Texas), will deliver electrifying performances that bring an authentic HBCU experience to Portland. Their high-energy musicianship, precision, and showmanship will elevate this year's Culture + Commerce Market like never before. Since its founding in 1981 by Tony Hopson, Sr., Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) is celebrating its 45th year and has been a cornerstone for African American youth and families in Portland. With a 98% high school graduation rate and 85% of students pursuing post-secondary education, SEI continues to empower the next generation through education, mentorship, and opportunity. The organization awards over \$500,000 in college scholarships annually, reinforcing its commitment to long-term success for youth.

We invite members of the press and the broader community to join us for this unforgettable celebration of culture, connection, and community pride.

The Culture + Commerce Market is a Black History Month celebration highlighting Black-owned businesses, culture, and community. The event will take place on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Tony Hopson, Sr. Center for Self Enhancement.

This event is free and open to the public. Families can enjoy a variety of activities, including line dancing, face painting, story time, and the Culture Café.



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LOCAL NEWS



Photo courtesy of the Rose Parade.

82nd Avenue of Roses Parade

20th Annual Roses in the Heart of Portland Parade Event

What started out nineteen years ago by the 82nd Avenue Business Association, has turned into a must-see event, hosted by community groups and enjoyed by all. To celebrate the 82nd Avenue of Roses Parade's 20th year, neighbors, businesses and community groups are filling a weekend of

fun events that highlights the diversity of Portland's Eastside. The 20th year theme: "History of East Portland," because many neighbors who represent this diverse community are new to East Portland. The 3-day event features interactive activities like the Fantastic Carnival, the signature 82nd Avenue of Roses Parade, food cart fun, farmer's market, and a classic car show, among other activities.

To get involved early, an online Rose Photo Contest starts on Jan 23rd, open to amateur photographers and judged by certified rose judges with prizes

awarded. Three awards winners will be selected in each of four categories: Rose Portrait - A single rose in any setting (all parts of the bloom must be featured); Macro View - Featuring a close-up image of a rose bloom or part of a bloom in extreme detail; Rose Garden - Featuring places where roses are grown; and Bouquet or Arrangement - Either an informal or traditional formal design. Full guidelines found on the Parade website: 82RosesHeartPortland.com. Submit entries by emailing: 82rosesphotocontest@gmail.com

Multnomah County Animal Services Under Quarantine

Multnomah County Animal Services Pauses Dog Intake and Adoptions

Multnomah County Animal Services (MCAS) notified the Oregon State Veterinarian of an outbreak of Streptococcus zooepidemicus (SZ) and, as a part of standard protocol, has been issued a quarantine notice. MCAS is operating with extreme caution and working in close coordination with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to contain the contagious bacteria, which can cause rapid-onset pneumonia in dogs.

There are currently two confirmed dog deaths linked to SZ, along with a third suspected case involving a dog that presented similar clinical symptoms at the shelter. As deaths and illness began to occur, MCAS took extreme



Abigail socializes a dog in the adoption kennels

caution and intensified disinfection schedules and increased the frequency of veterinary rounds and contact tracing. In addition, lab tests were initiated and analyzed by Oregon State University.

As soon as preliminary results identified the presence of SZ, the shelter promptly reported the findings to the state.

To prioritize the health of animals currently in care and minimize community exposure,

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CLASSIFIED/BIDS

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Portland Residents Say Tear Gas from ICE Protests Invades Homes

Affordable
Housing
Tenants Ask
Judge to Rein in
Tear Gas Near
ICE Facility

(AP) — Multiple residents of an affordable housing complex in Portland, Oregon, have bought gas masks to wear in their own homes to protect themselves from tear gas fired by federal agents outside the immigration building across the street. Others have taped their windows or stuffed wet towels under their doors, while children have sought security by sleeping in closets.

Some told their stories to a federal judge Friday, as they testified in a lawsuit seeking to limit federal officers' use of tear gas during protests at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building following months of repeated exposure.

The property manager of the apartment building and several tenants filed the suit against the federal government in December, arguing that the use of chemical munitions has violated residents' rights to life, liberty and property by sickening them, contaminating their apartments and confining them inside. They have asked the court to limit federal agents' use of such munitions unless needed to respond to an imminent threat.



Law enforcement officers stand in the street to allow vehicles to leave a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility during a protest in Portland, OR October 11 2025. (AP photo/Jenny Kane, File)

"They're simply trying to live their lives in peace in their homes," Daniel Jacobson, an attorney representing the plaintiffs, said during the hearing. "Yet our federal government is knowingly putting them through hell, and for no good reason at all." The defendants, which include ICE and the Department of Homeland Security and their respective heads, say officers have deployed crowd-control devices in response to violent protests at the

building, which has been the site of demonstrations for months.

"The conduct at issue, law enforcement's use of crowd-control tactics to disperse unlawful crowds, does not even come close to shocking the conscience," Samuel Holt, an attorney for the federal government, said during the hearing.

The case comes amid growing concern over federal officers using aggressive crowd-control tactics, as cities across the country have seen demonstrations against the immigration enforcement surge spearheaded by President Donald Trump's administration. In testimony, tenants of the Gray's Landing apartment complex described experiencing difficulty breathing, coughing, dizziness and other symptoms following exposure to chemicals from tear gas, smoke grenades and pepper balls. Gas canisters have hit apartments and been found in the building's courtyard and parking garage, plaintiffs said.

A resident who used a pseudonym in court filings due to being a domestic violence survivor said she has a gas mask in her bedroom, in her living room and in her backpack, and that she has slept with one on. She described how the gas entered her apartment and triggered her post-traumatic stress: "I could feel it, I could see it, I could taste it, I could smell it."

Erica del Nigro, another resident, said the chemicals have triggered her autoimmune syndrome and that her 12-year-old son has had hives, rashes and nightmares. Doctors have prescribed him multiple medications, including an inhaler, which he didn't need before the gassing began, she testified.

Diane Moreno, who said she has slept in her bathtub to avoid the chemicals seeping inside, said she has to have one of her adrenal glands removed due to the stressful environment exacerbating a disease that causes her to overproduce cortisol. "Not feeling safe and happy in your own home is a big stressor," she testified.

Other plaintiffs include a 72-year-old Air Force veteran who has been diagnosed with shortness of breath and mild heart failure, and a father who has taken his 7- and 9-year-old daughters to urgent care for respiratory symptoms. The girls sometimes sleep in his closet to feel safe, according to the complaint.

During the hearing, attorneys for the federal government questioned whether residents were trained in assessing imminent threats or unlawful behavior, and whether they were close enough to incidents to directly observe why officers may have deployed munitions.

The plaintiffs filed an updated request for a preliminary injunc-

tion limiting federal officers' use of tear gas late last month, after agents launched gas at a crowd of demonstrators including young children that local officials described as peaceful.

Of the affordable housing complex's 237 residents, nearly a third are age 63 or older, according to court filings. Twenty percent of units are reserved for low-income veterans and 16% of tenants identify as disabled.

The government said in court filings that federal officers have at times used crowd control devices in response to crowds that are "violent, obstructive or trespassing" or do not comply with dispersal orders.

It has also pushed back against the claims of tenants' constitutional rights being violated, saying that under such an argument, "federal and state law enforcement officers would violate the Constitution whenever they deploy airborne crowd-control devices that inadvertently drift into someone's home or business, even if the use of such devices is otherwise entirely lawful."

The hearing will resume next week. It came after a federal judge in a separate Oregon lawsuit, filed by the ACLU of Oregon on behalf of protesters and freelance journalists, temporarily restricted agents' use of tear gas during protests at the building.



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 Black EXPERIENCE

The Industrial Pioneer: Nathaniel "Nate" Hartley

A Single Truck
Sparked a Legacy of
Service and Growth

SUBMITTED BY THE HARTLEY FAMILY

In the history of American industry, there are entrepreneurs who fill a need, and then there are foundational figures who anchor a market. Nathaniel "Nate" Hartley belongs to the latter. As the owner of the only Black-owned residential, industrial, and commercial oil company on the West Coast, Mr. Hartley transformed a single rented truck into a multi-state energy market force.

His story is a masterclass in the "self-made" narrative. In the 60's, Mr. Hartley began working as a repairman for a furnace company, spending eight years mastering the inner workings of Portland's infrastructure. When his employer sold the business in 1969, he reached a pivotal crossroads: find another job or become his own boss. Drawing inspiration from John H. Johnson, the legendary founder of Johnson Publishing, he understood that business was far more than a means of income—it was a platform. Much like Johnson, who famously built an empire from raw vision rather



Photo courtesy of the Hartley Family

than a traditional corporate roadmap, Mr. Hartley launched his venture without a formal business plan, relying solely on field expertise and a desire to succeed.

After countless banks turned him away, he finally secured the "yes" that allowed

the company to begin. He successfully launched Nate Hartley Fuel Co. (later renamed Nate Hartley Oil and Associates) with nothing more than a single rented truck and handwritten notes serving as his business cards. In 1971, he established his

office on Alberta Street in the heart of the Albina District, anchoring a community that would rely on his grit and integrity for the next four decades. Central to the company's transition into the industrial and commercial sector was his partnership with his wife, Gloria Hartley. While Mr. Hartley managed deliveries and technical operations, Mrs. Hartley served as the operational anchor, maintaining the rigorous standards of financial auditing and hazardous material compliance required for "contract-ready" applications. Together, they grew the company into a robust enterprise of 12 employees, supported by a fleet of trucks.

The strategic turning point arrived in January 1983 with the signing of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 (STAA). This was a landmark moment for minority-owned enterprises; for the first time in federal history, Section 105(f) required that at least 10% of federally funded highway and transit contracts be awarded to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs). Mr. Hartley became a diligent advocate for the federal program, proving that minority-owned businesses could execute high-scale infrastructure projects and helped create a lasting link between the

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“Fighting the Power” Podcast Wins International Prizes



Lanita Duke teaching Granddaughter about audio (Photo courtesy of Lanita Duke)

The Show Explores the Role of Media in Democracy in the Age of Billionaires

The award-winning radio show Fighting the Power last month was named Best Non-Fiction Podcast 2025 for their episode, “Democracy Dies When the Fourth Estate Complies.” The Portland-based radio show was honored by the NZ -New Zealand-Web Fest, an international event celebrating digital media around the world. The award was announced at a ceremony in Auckland, NZ. In July, the show was also named Best Podcast by the Swedish International Film Festival.

Executive Producer Lanita Duke describes Fighting the Power as an intergenerational, multi-racial round-table discussion of race, class and the news of the day.

“Fighting the Power evolved from Let’s Talk About Race, and it’s been amazing to watch our work expand and grow across continents in such a short time,” she says. “People all over the world

care about democracy and what’s happening in the United States, no matter who or where you are, these issues probably affect you.”

“Democracy Dies When the Fourth Estate Complies” explores the responsibility that media outlets have in setting the stage for a democratic society, and what happens when legacy news outlets choose profits over integrity. The award-winning episode is remarkable for its timeliness: Last week, The Washington Post downsized its staff by 30 percent and its publisher abruptly resigned. Observers have blamed Post owner Jeff Bezos for destroying the brand by complying with President Donald Trump’s policy demands.

Panelist

The podcast is distributed internationally by the Pacifica Radio Network, and features contributions from a panel of journalists and pundits, including:

- LaNita Duke: Award-winning multimedia producer for Grassroots News Northwest.
- Dianne Johnson: Professor and journalist specializing in political

- Althea Billings: Journalist and radio producer covering Politics and National News.
- Rev. Cecil Prescod: Talk show host focusing on social and political issues.
- Nia Gray: Civil rights advocate from Pittsburgh.

In its previous format, Let’s Talk About Race, this crew has also won awards at the Echonation Audio & Film Festival in Greater Manchester, England; “Best Podcast” at the Swedish International Film Festival; and “Best Audio Podcast” at EdiPlay International Film Festival in France.

Another award-winning episode from 2022 is called “The Second Pandemic – Domestic Violence in America.” That program won “Best Podcast” at the 4th Dimension Independent Film Festival in Bali, Indonesia; “Best Audio Podcast” at Bright International Film Festival in London; and won at the International Black & Diversity Film Festival in Toronto, Canada.

For more information email: grassrootnewsedit@gmail.com

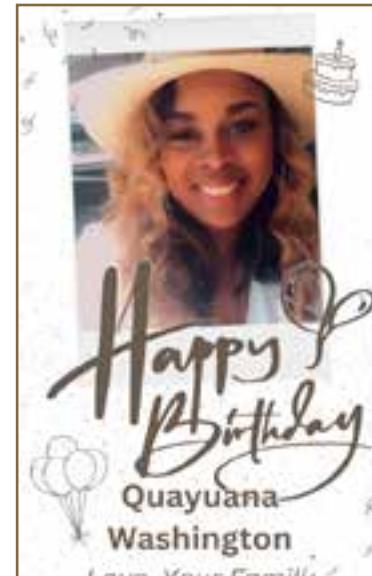


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House Renames Press Gallery after Frederick Douglass

Bipartisan Move Recognizes Black History

(AP) - The press gallery overlooking the U.S. House chamber has been renamed after the abolitionist, writer and presidential adviser Frederick Douglass in a bipartisan move brokered by Black lawmakers.

The renaming of the press gallery, spearheaded by Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., was conceived over the last year after the congressman said he brainstormed with his staff on ways to commemorate the history of prominent Americans, including Black Americans, across the Capitol.

"When we talk about Frederick Douglass, we are talking about a man who possessed a profound and unshakable faith in Americans, in America's family," Donalds said in remarks celebrating the dedication.

Douglass wrote about congressional proceedings from the chamber during the Civil War. His public speeches and letters to President Abraham Lincoln and northern Republican congressmen helped galvanize support among lawmakers and the public for the abolition of slavery.

"It's an important thing for us to give honor where honor is due. That's a biblical admonition," House Speaker Mike Johnson said during the unveiling of a plaque that now overlooks the entrance



Artwork portraying Frederick Douglass rests on a table during a formal dedication of the House Press Gallery to be named after Frederick Douglass on Capitol Hill, Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026, in Washington. (AP Photo/Rod Lamkey, Jr.)

to the gallery. "Frederick Douglass is certainly deserving of that honor."

Prominent Black conservatives, including activists, faith leaders and senior Trump administration officials, mingled with lawmakers at a ceremony inside the U.S. Capitol. Staffers from the Library of Congress displayed artifacts from Douglass' life.

The celebration, which came during Black History Month and the 100th anniversary of the earliest national observance of Black history, coincided with intense debate over how race, history and

democracy are understood in the U.S.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order last year targeting the teaching of history in the Smithsonian Institution, which the order claimed had "come under the influence of a divisive, race-centered ideology" that "promoted narratives that portray American and Western values as inherently harmful and oppressive."

Another order signed by the president claimed that in U.S. K-12 schools, "innocent children are compelled to adopt identities as either victims or oppres-

sors." Trump ordered federal agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy to end "indoctrination" by teachers who may promote "anti-American, subversive, harmful, and false ideologies on our nation's children."

Critics argued that the orders, with the removal of some public displays by the National Park Service related to race and identity, and the White House's ongoing efforts to end diversity, equity and inclusion programs, represented a whitewashing of history that could ultimately fuel discrimination against minority communities.

But the administration's allies argue that the policies are a corrective to an overly critical narrative about America's past. Black conservatives, in particular, have defended the moves and argued that more positive stories of individual triumph, like Douglass' life story, need to be more widely told.

"This is what we did when I was growing up. We knew about our Black heroes," said Rep. Burgess Owens, a Utah Republican who is Black and attended the dedication. "When we stop telling the good, then people start thinking that we're not the country that is the promise that we gave. So we need to talk about our history, our success."

Rep. Steve Horsford, a Nevada Democrat who worked with Donalds on the renaming, said it was important to find bipartisan agreement where possible.

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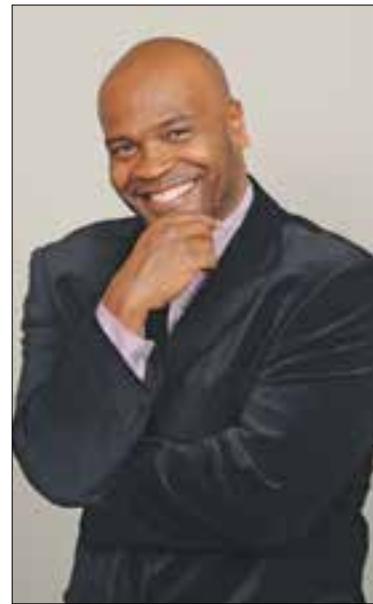
Additionally, REAP facilitates YouthSave, a specialized suicide assessment and intervention training program for school staff and community providers, equipping adults with tools to recognize warning signs and intervene effectively.

REAP's impact isn't confined to the Pacific Northwest. In 2020, even as the organization rapidly adapted to meet student needs during COVID-19, REAP launched the REAP International School of Bamako in Mali, West Africa, demonstrating the universality of REAP's model and its founders' commitment to educational equity as a global imperative.

The organization's 25-year trajectory—from local youth initiative to premier regional architect of educational equity and economic mobility—reflects both the urgent need for this work and the power of REAP's leadership-centered approach. In an era when educational inequity threatens to widen, when mental health challenges among youth are at



Levell Thomas



Mark Jackson

crisis levels, and when economic mobility feels increasingly out of reach for many families, REAP stands as proof that sustainable, systemic change is possible.

For the 1,800-plus students REAP serves each year, the organization isn't just a program—it's a lifeline, a launching pad, and a community that sees youth potential and invests in their success. For educators and administrators, it's a partner in institutional transformation. And for the broader community, REAP is

a model of what's possible when we commit to equity not as a checklist, but as a practice.

As Thomas and Jackson remind us, the future is now. And if REAP's first 25 years are any indication, that future is bright with possibility for every young person who walks through their doors.

For more information about REAP's programs and 25th-anniversary celebrations, contact Crystal Alexandar at 503-333-6774 or crystala@reapusa.org.



North by Northeast Community Health Center is the first and only independent clinic in Oregon devoted to African American health. For 20 years, we have provided welcoming, high-quality primary care to adults who have Oregon Health Plan. Our priority has been to serve the local African American community and to reduce the deadly effects of high blood pressure and diabetes. With a dedication to our community, you can also find us at community events and health fairs around Portland. We are accepting new patients, and if you're uninsured, we can help you get set up with Oregon Health Plan!

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OPINION

Happy 50th Birthday, Black History Month

It Began as Negro History Week 100 Years ago!

BY EDMOND W. DAVIS

Happy Birthday to Black History Month—50 years federally recognized, and 100 years strong in purpose, beginning as Negro History Week in 1926.

While the United States formally recognized Black History Month in 1976, the acknowledgment of Black history did not begin with a presidential proclamation. The roots of this celebration stretch back to 1926, when Negro History Week was established as a bold, scholarly, and affirming act—designed to ensure that Black contributions would never again be erased from the American story. The United States and humanity can thank, Dr. Carter G. Woodson for that.

Even before Negro History Week, Black history lived and was told across generations. Formerly enslaved African Americans and their descendants preserved history through oral tradition, faith, family memory, and community storytelling. In 1865, when freedom was announced to enslaved people in Galveston, Texas—now commemorated as Juneteenth—new chapters of American memory were written in real time. Long before history lived on calendars, it lived in kitchens, churches, schools, businesses, and told in dozens of black wall street towns in the U.S.



Edmond W. Davis - Social Historian | A Grand Marshal 2026 African American History Celebration Parade

Negro History Week was founded by Carter G. Woodson, whose life story alone dismantles the modern myth that Black history is grievance-based or divisive. Born to formerly enslaved parents, Woodson left school early to work and support his family. He later returned to education, graduated, and earned a PhD from Harvard University—becoming only the second African American to do so, after Dr. W.E.B. DuBois.

Woodson understood a simple but dangerous truth: when a people's history is excluded, their humanity is questioned. Negro History Week was never about separation;

it was about correction and completion. He intentionally placed the observance in February to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, anchoring Black history firmly within the American democratic experiment.

For fifty years, Negro History Week flourished—sustained by Black schools, churches, newspapers, fraternities, sororities, and civic institutions. Then, in 1976, amid the U.S. Bicentennial, Gerald Ford formally recognized Black History Month, urging Americans to honor the “too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans.”

That moment was historic far beyond race. Black History Month became the first federally recognized heritage month in U.S. history, setting the precedent for Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, LGBTQ+ Pride recognitions, Mental Health Awareness Month, and many others. Black history opened the door for a more inclusive national memory. That legacy matters.

Black History Month has empowered generations of Americans—of every background—to see excellence, resilience, innovation, faith, leadership, and creativity where silence once lived. It has elevated the stories of Crispus Attucks, the first casualty of the American Revolution; Nat Turner, whose resistance forced the nation to confront slavery's brutality; Mary McLeod Bethune, who built institutions when none existed; Hattie McDaniel, the first Black Academy Award winner; and modern pioneers such as Barack Obama, Simone Biles,

and David Steward. Yet even as we celebrate, the truth must be told: this legacy is under renewed attack.

Across the nation—from Philadelphia to school districts and statehouses—Black history and DEI initiatives have been defunded, distorted, and demonized. Reverse psychology has become the tactic of choice: labeling truth as “woke,” equity as exclusion, and history as indoctrination. Some now claim that teaching Black history somehow demoralizes white children—an assertion unsupported by evidence, logic, or morality. Scripture offers clarity in moments like these: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

—John 8:32

Black history does not erase anyone; it educates everyone. The continuity of this work is sacred. As Psalm 145:4 reminds us, “One generation shall commend Your works to another.” Black History Month has done exactly that—passing knowledge, pride, and possibility forward, generation by generation.

Despite cultural backlash and political resistance, Black History Month has expanded knowledge, inspired innovation, strengthened democracy, and humanized the American story. It has helped millions of Americans better understand who we are—not just where we disagree, but what we share.

So today, we celebrate—not in defense, but in gratitude. Black History at 100. Black History Month at 50. A birthday for a living legacy. Because beyond the flag, beyond politics, beyond fear—

American History is Black History.

House Renames Press Gallery after Frederick Douglass

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

“I wouldn't be here if it were not for the desire to want to work across the aisle, to not just recognize our history and culture, but to solve our problems that people face today,” Horsford said.

Born in Maryland, Douglass escaped slavery by fleeing to New York as a young man. He became one of the most influential activists for abolition and later moved to Capitol Hill in Washington, where he advocated for civil rights.

An estate he bought after emancipation in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington is now a national park.

Douglass, who taught himself to read and write, fiercely condemned the dehumanization of people of African descent and delivered numerous influential speeches throughout his life. His 1852 speech “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” denounced the contradictions of the country’s founding ideals with its embrace of slavery.

In an 1867 essay, Douglass urged Congress to allow Black men to vote

and called for more aggressive Reconstruction efforts in the South to guarantee multiracial democracy.

“What, then, is the work before Congress? It is to save the people of the South from themselves,” Douglass wrote. “It must enfranchise the negro, and by means of the loyal negroes and the loyal white men of the South build till a national party there, and in time bridge the chasm between North and South, so that our country may have a common liberty and a common civilization.”

Douglass, who did not know the day he was born because records were rarely kept about enslaved people's lives, celebrated his birthday on Valentine's Day because his mother called him her “little Valentine” before he was separated from her as a child.

Donalds praised Douglass for his ability to “love this country enough to tell the truth about it.”

“His life story, from the field, from the slavery fields to the world stage, is one of the greatest narratives of perseverance in U.S. history,” Donalds said.

Multnomah County Animal Services Under Quarantine

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

MCAS is pausing all dog intakes and adoptions effective immediately. The shelter cannot accept new found dogs until further notice. While owners may still reclaim lost pets, the State Veterinarian may require additional at-home care. For the latest schedule and notice of when adoptions will resume, please visit multcopets.org.

“We are treating this situation with the utmost urgency,” said Margi Bradway, director of the Multnomah County Department of Community Services. “Our team began shifting resources and responding immediately, and we remain fully committed to the safety of every pet in our care and the health of the broader community.”

The shelter remains open for cat and small animal adoptions and owners reclaiming lost pets (additional at-home care may be required by the State Veterinarian).

While the shelter is closed to new intakes, owners may still reclaim their pets. We are asking the public to sup-



4-month-old Shepherd mix named Solo. Photo courtesy of Multnomah County.

port the following efforts to help stray animals. If you are able, please provide temporary “finder-foster” care for found dogs in your home.

If you're unable to hold the found dog, reach out to friends and neighbors to see if anyone can provide a temporary place for them to stay until the owner is located, or network with members of online lost and found pet networks for support.

The Industrial Pioneer: Nathaniel "Nate" Hartley

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

halls of the Capitol and the voices of the local community.

While competitors focused solely on residential heating, Mr. Hartley had the vision to expand into industrial and commercial opportunities. He became the only Black-owned company in Oregon certified to deliver fuel directly to highway job sites, a distinction that placed him at the center of the state's physical expansion. He broke the "color line" of the heavy transport sector by signing a contract to supply diesel for Union Pacific Railroad locomotives and warehouse

operations. He soon secured the region's most vital infrastructure accounts: Tri-Met (5.5-million-gallon fuel contract); the Washington State Ferries (8-million-gallon maritime agreement); and various public works including the Seattle Metro, Sunrise Corridor, Portland Parks Bureau, Animal Control, the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) and Sellwood Bridge projects. Notably, he secured the fuel contract for Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), becoming the only Black-owned company to ever win that institutional account.

Despite being the winning bid-

der on multi-million gallon contracts, Mr. Hartley hit a systemic wall: the denial of traditional bank credit. He became a vocal example of these difficulties, partnering with the Albina Opportunities Corporation (AOC) to bypass gatekeepers and secure the capital needed to scale. His leadership was further recognized through his involvement in the Portland chapter of the National Business League, where he mentored emerging entrepreneurs.

Mr. Hartley's influence extended into the fabric of social policy and community outreach and philanthropy. He served as the Director of One Church, One

Child of Oregon, an organization mobilizing Black churches in finding permanent homes for Black children in foster care, and sat on the board of Give Us This Day, a liturgical press. Nate Hartley Oil and Associates was a visible sponsor of neighborhood life. The company's name was proudly worn by the Nate Hartley Oil bowling team, the Wilshire Riverside Little League, and local basketball team. In 1989, his commitment to Black literacy led to the establishment of the Nate Hartley Lending Library, a resource that ensured neighborhood access to educational materials.

The life of Mr. Hartley stands

as the definitive blueprint for Black industrial excellence in the Pacific Northwest. More than an entrepreneur, he was an institutional pillar who helped provide the economic heartbeat of the Alberta corridor for half a century. His mantra remains the guiding light for his family and the city he helped build: "You can't take out of life what you don't put in it." In return, he built a legacy that remains a permanent part of the West Coast's industrial history.

Biographical Note: Nathaniel Hartley (1939-2026) was a foundational figure in the Pacific Northwest's energy sector and a pioneering American industrialist.

CLASSIFIEDS/BIDS

The City of Milwaukie Facilities Division is in possession of 2 pieces of unclaimed property that we are preparing to auction to the **highest bidder on 3/2/2026**

<https://www.govdeals.com>

One is a Dixie-Narco refrigerated vending machine, and the other Crane National 147 vending machine.

Until the date of the sale, the property may be claimed at the office of Public Works. If ownership is proved, the Facilities Manager shall turn the property over to the owner and cancel the sale insofar as the claimed property is concerned.

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Rev. Jesse Jackson waves as he steps to the podium during the third day of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, July 27, 2016. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Civil Rights Leader Jesse Jackson Dies at 84

Prominent Voice for Racial Justice After King

(AP) - The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, a protege of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and two-time presidential candidate who led the Civil Rights Movement for decades after the revered leader's assassination, died Tuesday. He was 84.

As a young organizer in Chicago, Jackson was called to meet with King at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, shortly before King was killed, and he publicly positioned himself thereafter as King's successor.

Santita Jackson confirmed that her father, who had a rare neurological disorder, died at home in Chicago, surrounded by family.

Jackson led a lifetime of crusades in the United States and abroad, advocating for the poor and underrepresented on issues,

including voting rights, job opportunities, education and health care. He scored diplomatic victories with world leaders, and through his Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, he channeled cries for Black pride and self-determination into corporate boardrooms, pressuring executives to make America a more open and equitable society.

And when he declared, "I am Somebody," in a poem he often repeated, he sought to reach people of all colors. "I may be poor, but I am Somebody; I may be young; but I am Somebody; I may be on welfare, but I am Somebody," Jackson intoned.

It was a message he took literally and personally, having risen from obscurity in the segregated South to become America's best-known civil rights activist since King.

"Our father was a servant leader — not only to our family, but to the oppressed, the voiceless, and the overlooked around the world," the Jackson family said in a state-

ment posted online. "We shared him with the world, and in return, the world became part of our extended family."

Fellow civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton said his mentor "was not simply a civil rights leader; he was a movement unto himself."

Despite profound health challenges in his final years, including the disorder that affected his ability to move and speak, Jackson continued protesting against racial injustice into the era of Black Lives Matter. In 2024, he appeared at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and at a City Council meeting to show support for a resolution backing a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war.

"Even if we win," he told marchers in Minneapolis before the officer whose knee kept George Floyd from breathing was convicted of murder, "it's relief, not victory. They're still killing our people. Stop the violence, save the children. Keep hope alive."

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Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard (AP Photo/Kevin Kolczynski, File)

Lillard Makes History in NBA 3-Point Contest

Star Guard Shines Despite Not Playing This Season

(AP) - During his year away from the game due to injury, Lillard reminded the world why he's one of the greatest shooters of his generation with a stellar performance to win the 3-Point Contest for the third time. He joins Larry Bird and Craig Hodges as the only players to do it.

The 35-year-old Portland guard held off Booker in the tremendously exciting final, winning 29-27 when Booker missed

his final three shots.

Lillard tore his Achilles tendon last April, and his inclusion in this contest initially began as a joke he had with an NBA official — but the native Californian got the call, and he was healthy enough to shoot the lights out in Inglewood.

His performance was another example of an impressive comeback from that serious injury. Jayson Tatum, who also tore his Achilles tendon in last spring's playoffs, is back in practice with Boston's G League team.

After watching Lillard's performance, Stephen Curry announced he's going to compete in 2027, and he's hoping to be joined by his Splash Brother, Klay Thompson.

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Two Oregon Artists Selected for PDX Airport Murals

Highlighting Local Culture in the Airport's Renovation

In collaboration with the Port of Portland, the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) is excited to announce that Oregon artists Lettie Jane Rennekamp and Mark Small have each been chosen to create a mural design for the exit halls at the Portland International Airport (PDX), anticipated to be installed in spring 2026. The artists were selected through a competitive process by the PDX Terminal Core Redevelopment (TCORE) Public Art Committee that considered applications from an applicant pool of 78 artists and artist teams from across the region.

The renovation of the airport's main terminal aims to increase the capacity, flexibility, and resilience of the airport, while improving the travel experience and adding more of what people love about PDX—including more art. These commissioned mural designs are among several exciting new public art projects RACC is managing within the new PDX.



Left: Lettie Jane Rennekamp. Photo by Christopher Diego. Right: Mark Small. Photos courtesy of the artists.

The vibrant 59-foot-long murals will celebrate local mural culture and promote pride of place and a sense of home. Custom-printed and installed in the north and south exit halls of the main terminal, the artworks will remain on display for one to three years. The exit halls are the last post-security area passengers will walk through before they meet friends, family, or other meeters/

greeters, leave the terminal, or travel downstairs to baggage claim to pick up their luggage. The murals will be the first cycle of two new rotating art exhibition locations post-security at PDX that will be refreshed with new murals every two to three years.

"We're excited to collaborate with the Port of Portland on these new mural commissions by Lettie Jane Rennekamp and Mark

Small," says Kristin Law Calhoun, Director of Partnerships and Programs at the Regional Arts & Culture Council. "Located in the airport's exit halls, these bold, site-responsive works will engage travelers as they arrive or depart, highlighting some of the distinct creative culture and landmarks of our region."

"Talented local artists Lettie Jane Rennekamp and Mark Small

are creating two massive inspiring murals for PDX, bringing their unique transformative designs to the airport's new North and South passenger exit lanes. These fantastic and colorful mural designs represent Portland's resilience and potential, celebrate our thriving community spirit, and welcome everyone," says Wendy Given, Art Program Manager at the Port of Portland.

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