

Women of the Oregon Multicultural Archives

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OREGON WOMEN have enacted their citizenship over the past century in many ways — as political activists, community organizers, educators, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members, civic leaders, mentors, and working mothers. And as educated voters. Many women have taken some or all of these actions. Here, we consider women whose civic leadership and involvement demonstrate an active engagement with the past, present, and future, focusing on the professional and personal work of women documented by the Oregon Multicultural Archives (OMA). We present the stories of a politician, an educator, and members of a civil rights organization. These women saw a need to change the status quo, had the opportunity to effect change, and worked to empower future generations. Through biographical descriptions and stories demonstrating women of color as engaged citizens, brief collection descriptions, and ideas for further research, we make visible the histories of female Oregonians —

both as individuals and in communities — who have yet to receive deep, sustained attention from historians.

The history of racial relations in Oregon is both complicated and shameful. Past state and local laws excluded minority groups from land ownership, prevented marriage between whites and those of other ethnic backgrounds, and discouraged immigration and permanent settlement by non-whites.¹ In spite of the societal and governmental racism endured, or perhaps in part because of it, minority groups in Oregon formed community and organizational networks to support each other and to retain their cultural heritage.

While other Oregon institutions and archival repositories sometimes collect materials pertaining to ethnic minorities and their histories, the OMA was created in 2005 with the specific mission to establish relationships with, and to assist in preserving the histories and sharing the stories of, Oregon's African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native Ameri-



The Urban League of Portland is an organization dedicated to assisting the African American community by providing education services, employment opportunities, and a strong leadership base. Women involved with the organization's continued success include staff such as (left to right) Dorothy Berry, Gertrude Rae, Myrtle Carr, and Delores Casanosas.

can communities — all traditionally underrepresented groups in our state's history. These stories can be told within the context of ethnicity or race, but they also have roots in gender and in the experiences of women in our state.

The women we draw attention to in this article are indicative of many of the various ways women have acted as engaged citizens and activists, particularly having to do with multicultural issues. They are: Annabelle Jaramillo, a public servant, Jean Moule, an educator, and Freddy Petett and Alta Smith Corbett, leaders in the Urban League of Portland. The materials in the Jaramillo and Moule papers focus on their professional lives, including various levels of government for Jaramillo and the university system for Moule. The Urban League of Portland (ULPDX)

collection reflects women's social and political work within the organization. All the women share a dedication to supporting traditionally underrepresented groups and to educating the broader community about issues that matter to them.

ANNABELLE E. JARAMILLO
PAPERS, 1967–2011

Annabelle Jaramillo is currently serving her third elected term as Benton County Commissioner. Before taking that position, she served from 1995 to 2000 as Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber's Citizens' Representative. Throughout her career and in a variety of professional positions, Jaramillo has been a strong advocate for civil rights and environmental protection.



Annabelle Jaramillo is currently Benton County Commissioner. She served as Gov. John Kitzhaber's Citizens' Representative in the late 1990s and throughout her career has focused on environmental justice and immigration issues related to minority groups.

The Annabelle Jaramillo Papers was one of the first collections to be accessioned after the 2005 establishment of the OMA.² The nineteen-cubic-foot collection includes materials related to her undergraduate and graduate education at Portland State University and documents her work in county, state, and national government as both an elected and appointed official, specifically as it relates to social justice and politics for minority groups, as well as service on the board of a major non-profit organization. Jaramillo was born in 1940 and is a native of Colorado. She worked as a research botanist for the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA) Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station at the Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon, from 1974 to 1987. During that time, she also served as President of a national Hispanic civil rights organization, National Image Inc. (from 1983 to 1987), and for five years on the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, including as Executive Director. As part of Jaramillo's Citizens' Representative position with Kitzhaber, in 1997, he named her to the National Environmental Justice Advisory Board (NEJAC), an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) body that assists federal agencies in the development of environmental justice strategies.

Environmental-justice work focuses on "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."³ Much of the collection comprises Jaramillo's work with the NEJAC. Those materials document the impact of industrial pollution on minority communities, strategies for offering equal access to decision-making processes pertaining to environmental or health concerns, and tactics to prevent future hazards. Recent additions to the collection include significant materials related to her position as Benton County Commissioner and to her activism on issues directly affecting the Latino population, including affirmative action, English-only laws, and immigration laws.



In March 2004, Benton County Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo addressed marchers demonstrating in support of Oregon farm workers' right to organize.

Jaramillo's leadership and commitment is evident in her work with both women and Latino organizations. She served, for example, as president of the Oregon Women's Political Caucus, as a development officer for the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, and on the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs. She was the keynote speaker at the 1992 Utah Hispanic Women's Conference, and in her address, she noted that "conditions will improve if more Hispanic women get involved in the system and instigate necessary change." She continued, arguing that although it is "not easy for Hispanic women to thrust themselves into the limelight and make a fuss about issues that are important to the Hispanic community," they "must let society know their viewpoint and actively campaign for change."⁴

Jaramillo's work as an advocate also extends to gay rights. In Corvallis, during the early 1990s, she managed a successful campaign to defeat ballot Measure 9, a discriminatory ballot measure promoted by the Oregon Citizens Alliance. In 2004, in her role as a Benton County Commissioner, she again fought to uphold civil rights in the debate over same-sex marriage. For her, all such work is based in principle. "If we were going to end up with discrimination, we weren't going to issue marriage licenses to anyone," she said in 2007, concluding that "I think everybody deserves equality. . . . Having fought for civil rights for a long time, I know you can't leave anybody out."⁵

In a 1992 interview with *The Eugene Register-Guard*, Jaramillo recalled a childhood experience of racism in her Colorado elementary school, specifi-

cally classroom segregation, which led to an early desire to defend traditionally underrepresented groups. Her mother acted as a strong role model, refusing to leave the superintendent's office until the policy was changed. Jaramillo reflected: "I learned the importance of standing up for principle," continuing to declare: "Whatever cause I get involved with, I get into deeply."⁶ Her five-decade career working with women, Latino communities, and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) rights demonstrates her commitment to advocacy for minority and civil rights.

Scholars using this collection have a range of materials for investigation; it is rich with reports, conference materials, publications, memos, and correspondence. Jaramillo's work and research on minority and civil rights is well documented, as is her work on environmental justice as it pertains to minority citizens. For researchers studying the career and experiences of elected officials, the Jaramillo collection contains professional research files that reflect her work in local and state government. A project focused on the role of women in government or Latinas in government would find much of use in the collection.

Jaramillo has no intention of retiring, as she is seeking reelection in 2012 to serve a fourth term as Benton County Commissioner. The OMA therefore expects more additions to her collection. We also plan to conduct an oral history interview to help permanently document and make accessible her professional and personal journey as a woman, citizen, and activist.

JEAN MOULE PAPERS, 1984–2011, AND ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Jean Moule was a faculty member in Teacher and Counselor Education at the Oregon State University (OSU) College of Education from 1998 until her retirement as Associate Professor Emeritus of Early Childhood and Elementary Education in 2011. She still teaches classes, however, continuing to advance her work on multicultural issues in education, especially as they relate to teacher training.

Moule was born in 1945 in South Carolina, but was raised in New York City and Los Angeles, California. She earned a B.A. in Art from the University of California at Berkeley in 1967, an elementary teaching license from Mt. Angel College in 1972, and an M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Oregon in 1990. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Moule worked as a teacher and talented-and-gifted program coordinator in several Oregon public schools. In 1998, she earned a Ph.D. in Education from OSU. During her OSU tenure, she wrote and published *Cultural Competence: A Primer for Educators*, initiated and directed OSU's Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Education Immersion Program from 2003 to 2009, and taught courses specifically addressing multiculturalism and education.⁷

Throughout her career, Moule focused on social justice issues related to multicultural education. Her sense of activism was rooted in her experiences as an undergraduate at the



Jean Moule is an Oregon State University (OSU) College of Education emeritus professor who focused on multicultural education and cultural competence during her tenure, 1998 to 2011. Moule created the OSU College of Education Immersion Program and is pictured (far bottom right) with the 2005 to 2006 cohort.

University of California, Berkeley in the early 1960s. In an October 17, 2011, interview, Moule discussed her participation in the Free Speech Movement and Students for a Democratic Society. She reflected on her feelings at the time, stating that she felt insignificant and disillusioned as an individual working within a larger movement. Ultimately, on reflection, she decided to effect change from inside the system.

In the big scheme of things, I think that those who stay in the system and work to change it may have a better chance of making a difference as far as influence is concerned. And I would say that's probably why I eventually went on to finish my degrees and do what I do now, in the sense that I can work in it [the system].⁸

For Moule, the most effective way

to challenge the status quo was as a teacher in the university system. Moule is passionate about meaningful multicultural experiences for her students, and in her oral history, she honestly discussed the university's stance on diversity and multicultural education. She said that while she heard a lot of rhetoric about diversity at OSU, she also saw "walls and obstacles about anything that moved us in that direction that took extra work." She continued: "I often felt that I was the only one ready to put my time, passion, and, more importantly, my research and writing on the line to reach our stated goals."⁹

Although her specialty prior to joining the OSU's College of Education program was in talented-and-gifted education, the program placed Moule

on a track to teach multicultural education and cultural competence. Although she was unfamiliar with the specific field, she recognized the challenge as an opportunity to shape future teachers and define their needs for being competent teachers of diverse students. Moule frequently uses the term *cultural competence* to describe her approach to teaching; she defines it as both “the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than your own” and a framework for “developing certain personal and interpersonal awarenesses and sensitivities, learning specific bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching.”¹⁰

For Moule, it was not enough to simply talk about multicultural education theory and cultural competence in the classroom. She knew that her students needed to gain experiences applying their textbook-based knowledge. So, she initiated an “immersion program” in collaboration with Portland and Salem schools that allowed student teachers to work with diverse student and teacher populations in order to develop the life-based knowledge and skills necessary to be culturally competent in their future teaching experiences. One of the key elements to multicultural education is the understanding that cultural competence is both a professional *and* personal lifelong journey, and Moule practices what she teaches. In her book, Moule wrote:

I am a wife, the mother of three biracial children, and grandmother to six. My journey in these roles included and continues to include

work with schools. . . . I have discovered that becoming culturally competent is a complex and lifelong process that needs constant care and reflection.¹¹

The OMA’s relationship with Moule began in early 2011. The Jean Moule Papers, 1984–2011, reflect her professional work, documenting her teaching, research, and writing in the field of multicultural education.¹² The bulk of the two-cubic-foot collection spans from 1997 to 2009 and consists of a wide variety of course materials, such as class outlines, student work, and course feedback. Moule’s work extends beyond the classroom through her professional writing, and the collection includes publications consisting of her research materials and original scholarship, such as her book and dissertation.

In addition to the collection, OMA staff conducted three oral history interviews with Moule in late 2011 and early 2012.¹³ The interviews detail her personal life, including her childhood, family relationships, and religious and spiritual journey; they also document her professional life, including her work with the Oregon’s Talented and Gifted Program, her early teaching career in primary and secondary classrooms, her graduate program, and her tenure as a professor at OSU. Perhaps most importantly, she reflects on how her personal and professional lives were intertwined, especially how her background influenced her teaching. During the first oral history interview, for example, Moule reflects on an experience she had while repeating a high school U.S. history class in which she authored a paper that her teacher

refused to believe Moule had written:

She gave me an "F" on it and said "You've plagiarized this." She wouldn't accept it as mine because from her perspective it was too good to come from an African American. . . . I didn't finish the paper [laughs], got another low grade and she just didn't believe I did it myself. That's sort of a key part to me because I think that's part of what drives me to help teachers understand the impact they can have on students, with something that simple.¹⁴

When combined, the collection and interviews show more than just Moule's work as an instructor or researcher; they also include evidence of how her work impacted her students and of how she reacted to the students' thoughts. In her course materials, for example, are student responses to discussions and films, written in their "meta-cognitive journals." Moule highlighted parts that resonated with her and then used those as discussion points in the next class session. Another example is the materials related to her development of the Alternative Placement and Math/Science Curriculum Development for Pre-service Teachers of Minority Students Program for graduate students in OSU's College of Education Master of Arts in Teaching Program. Student essays and narratives are particularly valuable, because they reflect on participants' placement experiences. In the final part of the oral history interviews, Moule reads from several student reflections regarding their experience in the Immersion Program.

Although Moule's immediate impact was with individual students in individual classrooms, the collec-

tion offers researchers more than two decades of materials documenting multicultural education. Officially retired, Moule nevertheless continues to prepare future instructors, teaching strategies for incorporating multiculturalism and cultural competence into their classrooms by combining class work or discussion with service-learning opportunities.

URBAN LEAGUE OF PORTLAND RECORDS, 1945–2008

While the Jaramillo and Moule collections focus on the work of individual women, the Urban League of Portland (ULPDX) Records document the activism of many women, all working in a community-based organization dedicated to serving Portland's African American community.

The Urban League of Portland was established in 1945 as an affiliate of the National Urban League in response to pervasive racial tensions exacerbated by a massive influx of wartime workers from the South and East. As the population of African Americans in the city grew rapidly, Portland struggled with its history of racial intolerance and the state's legal and social policies of exclusion. The ULPDX, a community-based organization with a mission to "empower African Americans and other Oregonians to achieve equality in education, employment, and economic security," emerged as a strong force and community partner in advocating for fair housing laws, education, and employment assistance.¹⁵

Historically, Portland's African American women have organized,



In 1979, Freddye Petett (middle, with Rev. Fred Flowers at the left) began her tenure as the first and only woman to serve as the Executive Director of the Urban League of Portland.

worked together to bring equality to their communities, and actively engaged in a variety of activities and partnerships by working through grassroots community activist organizations, clubs, sororities, and churches.¹⁶ The work of two women leaders of ULPDX, Freddye Petett and Alta Smith Corbett, is documented in the collection.

Throughout her early career in the Pacific Northwest, Petett worked in many community-based organizations as well as in state and local government, reflecting a strong commitment to her community and dedication to leadership. She was Portland mayor Neil Goldschmidt's administrative assistant and Board Chair for the

Housing Authority of Portland, for example, and in 1979, Petett became the first (and only) woman to be the Executive Director of the ULPDX. She served during an era when issues of school segregation, economic development, and job training were at the forefront of Portland politics. Petett was passionately involved in local issues and vocally confident about the work of the ULPDX.¹⁷ During her tenure as Executive Director, the ULPDX headquarters moved out of downtown and "into the heart of the local African-American community in the Northeast."¹⁸ Petett left her position in 1984 and became Administrator of the Adult and Family Services Agency in 1987; she resigned in 1989. Petett has

since moved out of the region, but she has continued to work in positions related to leadership and advocacy for the African American community.

Although Petett is so far the only woman to have served in the ULPDX's top leadership position, many others have served on the organization's board of directors. Alta Smith Corbett was one of those women, and like others highlighted here, she merged women's rights with civil rights work. Corbett has a significant record of public service with the Portland Women's Union and League of Women Voters. Her experience as a white woman working in the ULPDX during its early years is also valuable, offering another dimension to the records in our collection. In 1945, Corbett became a founding board member of the ULPDX; she served as Board Vice President in 1947. She recalled that, from the beginning, the ULPDX was "a professionally staffed social agency working to improve conditions to create a better climate of interracial understanding."¹⁹

Prompted by a 2006 reorganization and move to a new headquarters in Northeast Portland, the ULPDX approached staff at the OMA in 2007 about becoming the official repository for its organizational history. It was a win-win situation, with the organization finding a permanent repository for its historical documents and the OMA beginning a partnership with the historically significant ULPDX. The Urban League of Portland Records documents and reflects the league's outreach to the community through various programs, activities, and fun-

draising; interaction with the National Urban League; and African American life in Portland.²⁰ The fifteen-cubic-foot collection consists of documents generated by the ULPDX and its board, officers, and staff and includes administrative records, publications, subject files, photographs, sound recordings, and videotapes.

The ULPDX collection offers researchers the opportunity to investigate the history of Portland's African American community. In particular, it documents how the organization's leadership raised awareness about issues or made changes to improve the quality of community members' lives. The collection also is rich with research possibilities for those interested in the role of women in civic organizations; for instance, the organization's meeting minutes, reports, newspaper clippings, and photographs reflect the prominence and influence of women active in the ULPDX.²¹ Researchers might delve into this collection by investigating the unique accomplishments and contributions of individual women linked to the ULPDX, noting that because it contains the archives of an organization, additional secondary and primary research would create a fuller picture of each woman. Because these women were also active in many other local organizations, other collections offer further research opportunities.

Researchers will find a connection, for example, to the ULPDX in the OMA's Nunn Family Collection.²² Bobbie Nunn was an ULPDX member, but she also was a leader in the NAACP, worked with the Model

Cities program in the 1960s, directed the Career Opportunities Program to recruit and train minority teachers, and was active in St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church. In the spring of 2012, the OMA began a relationship with her son, who is working with us to provide access to her collection of photographs, scrapbooks, materials related to her civic involvement, and family genealogical items.

Another route might be to link the ULPDX collection to regional archival collections related to those who worked to advance the rights of women, such as the Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford Family Collection at Portland State University Library's Special Collections and University Archives.²³ Verdell Rutherford was an ULPDX board member, an active member of the Portland Chapter of the NAACP during the 1940s and 1950s, and a member of the African American women's association "Culture Club."

Finally, researchers could link this collection to those at a national level and investigate the women in the National Urban League, exploring the similarities and differences in involvement and impact the women had on their communities.

THE COLLECTIONS featured here offer different perspectives on the women of the OMA and on the stories of women of color in our state as well as many avenues to explore the ways those women worked to improve the lives of minority and under-represented groups. Ranging from organizational records to personal papers to oral history collections, the OMA is valuable for scholarship, discussion, and research on many levels and in a variety of disciplines. Researchers can use the collections in the study of social or political activism, social justice, civic engagement, and citizenship in multicultural communities. Because Annabelle Jaramillo and Jean Moule are still active and the Urban League of Portland is still a thriving organization, we expect the collections will continue to grow with future accessions and additional oral histories. By continuing our work to build the OMA collections, we hope to open up the individual and community histories of Oregonians of color so historians can work to integrate their stories into the larger narrative of our state's past, changing and making it more complete in the process.

NOTES

The Oregon Multicultural Archives is physically located in Corvallis, Oregon, and is a part of the Oregon State University Libraries' Special Collections and Archives

Researcher Center (SCARC). The OMA collections are housed in SCARC and are open to the public; however, they are intellectually separate from other SCARC

collections and can be accessed through the OMA website: <http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oma>.

1. Jun Xing and Erlinda Gonzales-Berry, *Seeing Color: Indigenous Peoples and Racialized Ethnic Minorities in Oregon* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2007).

2. MSS Annabelle Jaramillo Papers, 1967–2011, Oregon Multicultural Archives, OSU Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Corvallis [hereafter OSU].

3. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Basic Information,” <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/basics/index.html> (accessed July 30, 2012).

4. Veronica Nelson, “Hispanic Women Urged to Air Their Concerns,” *Deseret News*, September 27, 1992, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/249909/HISPANIC-WOMEN-URGED-TO-AIR-THEIR-CONCERNS.html> (accessed June 7, 2012).

5. Basic Rights Education Fund, “50 Voices for Equality: Annabelle Jaramillo,” <http://www.basicrights.org/50VoicesForEquality/voice9.html> (accessed July 31, 2012).

6. Lance Robertson, “Activist Makes a Difference,” *Eugene Register-Guard*, September 30, 1992, 3B.

7. Jean Moule, *Cultural Competence: A Primer for Educators*, 2nd Edition (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2012).

8. Jean Moule, interview by Natalia Fernández, October 17, 2011, transcript and audio recording, Oregon Multicultural Archives Oral Histories Collection, OSU.

9. Jean Moule, interview by Natalia Fernández, May 8, 2012.

10. Moule, *Cultural Competence*, 5.

11. *Ibid.*, xiv.

12. MSS Jean Moule Papers, 1984–2011, Oregon Multicultural Archives, OSU.

13. Jean Moule Oral History Interviews Parts 1–3, interview by Natalia Fernández, transcripts and audio recordings, Oregon Multicultural Archives Oral Histories Collection, OSU.

14. Jean Moule, interview by Natalia Fernández, October 17, 2011.

15. Urban League of Portland, “Who We Are,” <http://ulpdx.org/who-we-are/> (accessed

July 31, 2012).

16. Steven Reed Johnson, “The Evolution of Civic Activism in the Albina Neighborhood,” http://stevenreedjohnson.com/stevenreedjohnson/CivicPdxAlbina_files/Albina%20Neighborhood.pdf (accessed July 31, 2012). Grassroots civic activism projects included representatives from a variety of organizations such as the Federated Women’s Clubs and ULPDX. This model of partnership continues today with projects such as the 2011 ULPDX and African Women’s Coalition collaboration on the Urban Harvest Garden. See “Unique Garden Engages Community of Color,” *Portland Observer*, available online at <http://portlandobserver.com/?p=8273> (accessed July 31, 2012).

17. Searches of state newspapers such as the *Oregonian* or the *Eugene Register-Guard* in the 1980s offer many examples of Petett’s viewpoints and projects.

18. Darrell Millner, “The Urban League of Portland: On the Road to Equality: a Fifty Year Retrospective,” 1995, p. 39, in MSS Urban League of Portland Records, 1945–2008, OSU.

19. Kathleen McMullen, “Alta Smith Corbett (1886–1976),” *Women City Builders*, <http://wcb.ws.pdx.edu/?p=33> (accessed July 31, 2012).

20. MSS Urban League of Portland Records, 1945–2008, Oregon Multicultural Archives, OSU.

21. All of the ULPDX meeting minutes contained within the collection, 1945–1949, 1964–1995, May 1998, 2000, are available online: <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/handle/1957/22019>, and over 400 photographs have been digitized at <http://tinyurl.com/7ycbkud>.

22. At the time this article was written, the collection had just arrived and not yet been processed.

23. Suzanne Pardington, “Saving a black family’s story: A new collection in the PSU Library chronicles a Portland couple’s commitment to civil rights,” *Portland State Magazine*, <http://www.pdx.edu/utrn/news/saving-black-familys-story> (accessed July 31, 2012).