

===== MIMS HOUSES MEMORIAL MONUMENT DEDICATION PROGRAM (1:30) =====

INTRODUCTION: Eric Richardson  
AFRICAN ANCESTORS MOMENT OF SILENCE AND WORDS: Tariq Richardson  
WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Eric Richardson

=====

INTRODUCTION OF NEXT SPEAKER by ERIC RICHARDSON, President of NAACP Lane County :

Lisa Ponder is a graduate of Oberlin College. She moved to Eugene in 1982 from Texas after graduating from the University of Texas School of Law. At U of O she earned a Masters in History. In 1998 she formed her company “Heritage Stone” dedicated to preserving individual and community histories. She enjoys combining her unusual combination of professional skills as a legal historian and stone carver. Locally this is her fifth civic monument she’s worked on creating.

===== LISA’s SPEECH =====

Wow. Seeing everyone gathered here for a history marker is a history teacher’s “dream come true” !

Willie and Sally Mims asked me to speak about what this monument means to me.

Why is this monument important here?

**We can talk about Statistics:**

Home ownership affects people’s health, their stability, their wealth, their plans, and their community roots and connections. In addition,... there is a strong correlation between a family’s situation and whether there was home ownership three generations prior.

**We can talk about the LAW:**

Oregon’s 1859 State Constitution forbade all Blacks from settling here, whether slave or free. Then, in 1868, our state revoked our ratification of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Segregation in Oregon was upheld by our courts until 1953. **AND**, Oregon refused to ratify the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment until 1959.

**We can talk about Ethics:**

Real estate agents and banks operated with maps on which they had drawn red lines around areas that they had decided were to stay Black only or White only. This was called “red lining”. The Real Estate Code Of Ethics forbade selling homes across race lines. Many deeds in Eugene still carry this language of segregation.

**We can talk about community behavior:**

Even when Federal loans became officially available, local banks would not give the loans to Blacks. Even when a business did not put out a sign saying “Whites Only”, Black families were not assured service. African American Oregonians were not alone in receiving mistreatment; Variations on the same story exists for Asian Oregonians, Latino Oregonians, and Native American Oregonians.

## **But... What does this memorial mean TO ME?**

Before I moved here in 1982 - from Austin, Texas, as a new law school graduate - I told my black girlfriend Deb, "Come on! Move to Oregon with me!" She swiftly said: "Blacks DON'T go THERE!" I said, "WHY?", and she repeated: "BLACKS just DON'T GO THERE". That's ALL she would say.

I did not know yet that until **1926** Oregon law declared it illegal for African Americans to live in Oregon. I did not yet understand that the KKK had grown strong here and then spread to the south.

I did not know yet that here in Eugene, no non-whites lived south of this river, which was the city limit back then. But, by the 1940's Lane County Commissioners were being pressured to figure out where African-Americans could live, without being inside the city limits. The County Commissioners unofficially decided that Blacks could live across the bridge, in the flood plain, among the piles of scrap wood that EWEB burned for creating electricity. There, between huge piles of old growth lumber - and rats - the African American families built homes and built a chapel. They hauled water from a filling station and crossed the bridge to come into town to go to jobs and schools.

"Across the bridge" is where the Mims first lived. CB Mims worked in the Osborn hotel. The hotel's white owner, Mr. Earley, broke ranks with racism by inviting African Americans to live in the hotel when the river overflowed and flooded their homes, which was a frequent occurrence in the days before the dams. And,... he continued to defy the pressures on Whites to conform.

Mr. Joe Earley went on to be the secret agent that enabled the Mims to purchase this home. The impact of that one act has reached far beyond the safety of the Mims family.

And, this one man wasn't the only ally..., a white woman started a petition to try to get the Mims ousted, ... but.... White after white refused to sign and the Mims stayed put... right here.

And there were other white allies, too. .... When the commissioners decided to bulldoze the neighborhood across the bridge, white allies joined in to take it to court. When the sheriff then disregarded the limitations of the court order - saying "ALL them people got to go" - white church folks showed up with cars to help the black families swiftly move belongings and white families helped find new housing for the displaced African Americans. The year was 1949.

In 1983, at my baby shower, Dean Derrick Bell gave a toast. (He was the first African American dean at the UO law school). He spoke of having the bravery to bring a child into the world... this world. As a white parent-to-be, I did not understand him in the way a Black parent immediately does. As a white there is an invisible protection and privilege surrounding me and my children every day, I do not have to be aware of it... It is just there. With this irrationally derived racial privilege comes responsibility, but if you don't see your privilege you might not see your responsibility. Becoming aware can change everything. It should not have required street protests and CORE and new laws to get Eugene landlords to rent to non-whites. It took following Mr. Earley.

What does it take for each of us who are white to break rank with racism? And when will we do it? For my mother, that time came as a child when she snuck a drink of water from "the other" fountain and was stunned to find there was no difference in the two waters. The Walls of Racism crumbled for her in that instant. When do those walls crumble for each of you?

For me, this memorial is a BIG reminder that our choices have ripples; A reminder of one white man whose choices had impacts still felt here in Eugene; A reminder that all our lives are interconnected. Most fundamentally, this monument holds up for me the example of respect, courtesy, courage, fortitude, and human dignity exemplified by the story of the Mims Family, and the others who have had to live “across the bridge”, who were set down into this world at this place and time.

Annie D Mims loved the song: “This little light of mine”. Each of us here has a “little light.” Mine is an odd mix of talents. I’ve used mine to help let our African American history shine and be visible. I urge each of you to use your own mix of skills to move us toward justice - to let shine the light of hospitality and respect that CB Mims and Annie D Mims, in their lifetimes, extended freely.

And so, I’ve shared a bit with you about what this monument means to me.... But I’m left with one question: what does this monument mean to you? I urge you to care for this monument as if it were your own family marker... indeed, for us as a city it is just that – So, ... protect it, guard it, treasure it... We are in this together. Each day, our actions create what will become our history. THAT’S what this monument means to me. You get to decide what it means to you. – Thank you.

---

---

INTRODUCTION OF NEXT SPEAKER by LISA PONDER, Mims Memorial Monument Designer :

=====

At this time, I have the honor of introducing the next speaker.

Ta-Nehisi Coates (p.69) has said: “We did not lay down the direction of the street, but ... we ... [can] – and must- fashion the way of our walk.”

Our next speaker is a woman who has made conscious choices every day of HOW to walk on the road of life as it stretches out before her.

Lyllye Parker is a member of the Sam and Mattie Reynolds family. She is a First Generation Eugenean, and was the First African-American born at Sacred Heart Hospital. She was educated in the 4J school district and was a member of the First graduating class of Sheldon High School. She was active in the Civil Rights Movement as member of the Congress of Racial Equality and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. She earned a BA degree in Sociology from the U of O with a minor in Women’s Studies at the age of 45. She has held important positions at the UO, and the “Women of Color” Speaker Series at U of O is now named in her honor. She is a mother and grandmother, and proud to be the 7<sup>th</sup> child of Sam and Mattie Reynolds.

===== LYLLEYE PARKER’s SPEECH=====  
=====CLAIRE SYRETT, City Councilor, Ward 7, for Mayor Kitty Piercy=====  
===== SALLY MIMS, wife of Willie C. Mims – Poem “The War Cry of Willie C.”=====  
===== WILLIE C. MIMS, son of CB Mims and Annie D Mims=====  
==UNVEILING OF MONUMENT: COLUMN WITH BRONZE PLAQUE & CARVED STONE WALKWAY==  
==END==*on to the House Patio for History reading & the NAACP fundraiser (Mims garden salads & King Estate Wine & Ninkasi beer)*

---

---

*Dedication*  
*of the*  
**MIMS' HOUSES**  
**Memorial**  
**Monument**

330/336 High Street, Eugene, Oregon, USA

1-4 pm, Sunday, May 29, 2016

1:30 unveiling

~

*Speakers:*

Welcome: Eric Richardson, NAACP

*Lisa Johnson Ponder*, Heritage Stone

*Lyllye Parker*, Reynolds Family

*Claire Syrett*, Eugene City Councilor, Ward 7

*Sally Mims*, wife of Willie C. Mims

Willie C. Mims, son of CB & Annie D Mims

**Unveiling**

*In keeping with the Mims' courtesies, please insure that  
our elders be the first to visit the unveiled memorial.*

~

NAACP fundraiser reception to follow, on the patio  
1940's Music compiled by Willie C. Mims

*Thank you for being present for this special event!*

---

**"This Little Light of Mine"**

---

*Lyrics by Avis Burgeson Christiansen (1895-1985)*

*Music by Harry Dixon Loes (1895-1965)*

- 1 This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine;  
this little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine;  
this little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine;  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 2 Everywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine;  
everywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine;  
everywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine;  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 

*To learn more about the Lane County NAACP, visit:*  
**naacplanecounty.org**

*To learn more about Oregon's race history, Google*  
"Timeline of Oregon and U.S. Racial, Immigration,  
and Education History" – *to be found at:*

www.osba.org/~media/Files/Resources/Improving%20Education  
/CFEE\_Timeline.pdf

*To learn more about being an ally, read:*  
web.cortland.edu/russellk/courses/hdouts/raible.htm

---