

Compass Points to Sirius Bonner



Special Advisor for
Diversity and
Equity Sirius
Bonner

Sirius Bonner, Clark College special advisor for diversity and equity, was presented with the Compass Award at the Urban Spark Collective's fourth annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast, held January 18 in Clark College's Gaiser Student Center.

The Compass Award is given to an individual or organization that carves a new path for diversity and inclusion in education, in the workplace, or through community engagement. As Special Advisor for Diversity and Equity, Bonner advises and supports Clark College's Executive Cabinet, College Council, Cultural Pluralism Committee and the entire college community. Since joining Clark in 2011, Bonner has introduced new programs to the college; brought a sharper focus to issues of power, privilege and inequity; overseen the opening of a new Diversity Center on the main campus; and expanded the number of opportunities for faculty, students, and staff to build their skills.

Bonner earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Arts degree from Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Before coming to Clark, she served as the Director of Multicultural Recruitment and the Multicultural Affairs Student Program Coordinator at Reed College and later as the Assistant Director of New Student Programs for Diversity Recruitment at Portland State University.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast is sponsored by a number of community organizations. The event is the brainchild of community activist Deena Pierott, who is the founder of diversity executive search firm Mosaic Blueprint. This year, the breakfast had a surprise guest: U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Georgia), who worked with Dr. King in the Civil Rights movement, spoke to the assembled guests. In her remarks upon accepting the Compass Award, Bonner said she was inspired by Rep. Lewis, noting that he had inspired her to “get into trouble” in the quest for equity for all people.

Vancouver Mayor and Clark alumnus Tim Leavitt presented the award to Bonner. The event keynote speaker was Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia, an Oregon native and psychiatrist at Oregon Health & Science University.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

History Lesson



Readers of the Gettysburg Address were, *left to right*, Tracy Fortmann, Rowena Tchao, Claire Bauer, Rosalba Pitkin, Bill Charles, Tim Leavitt, Julie Eddings, Bill Ritchie, Pat Jollota, Lisa Gibert, and Sirius Bonner.

Four score and five people attended a recitation of the Gettysburg Address on November 19, the 150th anniversary of

that famous speech's delivery by President Abraham Lincoln. The event, which was organized jointly by Clark College Mature Learning and the National Park Service's Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (FVNHS), took place in Foster Auditorium.

The event was part of the Learn the Address project, an effort by documentarian Ken Burns, along with numerous partners, to encourage Americans to video record themselves reading or reciting the address.

Eleven different presenters recited lines of the speech: Vancouver Mayor and Clark alumnus Tim Leavitt, Clark College Foundation President and CEO Lisa Gibert, Clark College Assistant Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education Kevin Kussman, Fort Vancouver Superintendent Tracy Fortmann, Clark College Special Advisor for Diversity & Equity Sirius Bonner, Skyridge Middle School student Claire Bauer, Mature Learning student Bill Charles, Northwest Indian Veterans Association Color Guard member Julie Eddings, Crossroads Community Church pastor Bill Ritchie, Clark College Diversity Outreach Specialist Rosalba Pitkin, Clark College Foundation Annual Fund Specialist Rowena Tchao, and Clark College Mature Learning instructor and Clark County Freeholder Pat Jollota.

The program also included period Civil War music by "Illinois" Doug Tracy; a presentation of the colors by the Northwest Indian Veterans Association Color Guard; lecture on Lincoln by Mature Learning instructor Dr. Elliott Trommald; a lecture on Fort Vancouver's role in the Civil War by Tracy Fortmann; a welcome by Clark College Vice President of Administration Bob Williamson; and the reading of a Walt Whitman poem by Clark College Trustee Royce Pollard.

"This program is one of several this year that we are doing in a partnership we have inaugurated with the National Park Service and Fort Vancouver National Historic Site," said Mature Learning Manager Tracy Reilly Kelly, who emceed the

event. "Our co-programming will focus on history and archaeology."

Reilly Kelly added that FVNHS staff had told her that they appreciated that Clark College President Bob Knight made it back from China just in time to attend that evening's launch of the Fort's new exhibit, "The Civil War in the West: A New Birth of Freedom."

Story submitted by Tracy Reilly Kelly

Photo: Clark College Mature Learning/Don Gardener