



Longtime PCC board member Harold Williams passes away

Photos and Story by [James Hill](#) | [View 33 comments](#)



Harold Williams, Sr., a member of Portland Community College's Board of Directors since 1990 and noted community leader, passed away on Sunday, July 1. He was 69.

The college will celebrate Williams' more than 50 years of service to the community with a memorial celebration at 11 a.m., Thursday, July 12 in the gymnasium, Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St. The public is invited to share their recollections and stories. Donations may be made in Harold's name to the [Portland Community College Foundation](#), which plans to award a scholarship to a PCC student in his honor.

"This is a sad time for us all," said PCC District President Preston Pulliams. "In the community, Harold was known for his eloquence and was sought after to speak at conferences and other occasions. Many people know about Portland Community College because of a presentation that Harold has given, and many have been moved to donate, volunteer, or enroll in the college because of his outreach. We have lost a man widely regarded as a pioneer, advocate and mentor for our communities."

Williams was appointed in 1990 to represent Zone 2, which encompasses North Portland and portions of Columbia County. He was elected in 1991 and re-elected in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. He was president of contracting firm CH2A Associates and a member of the Black Leadership Conference as well as The Urban League. A past chair of the Coalition of Black Men, Williams served on the board of the Oregon Community College Association. He held bachelor's and master's degrees from Portland State University and lived in Northeast Portland.

Williams had a long record of service to the community and extensive background in civil rights, affirmative action, education and justice. He served as Affirmative Action Director and Equal Opportunity Coordinator to former Oregon Governor Bob Straub. He was Labor Relations Manager for the State of Oregon Executive Department from 1979 to 1984 and served as a consultant to the Oregon Youth Authority from 1995 to 2006. From 1969 to 1973, he served as Director of the Educational Center at Portland State University. He taught at Linfield College where he mentored students.

He was President of the Portland-area African American Chamber of Commerce, Chair of the African American Committee of Community College Trustees, and a widely known motivational speaker. He served on Portland Mayor Tom Potter's Charter Review Commission and acted as a consultant to the Portland Development Commission in their efforts to expand minority and women-owned business contracts. He has served on many advisory committees and has volunteered hundreds of hours of time to civic, religious and cultural activities. Williams also served on the Board of Directors for St. Mary's School for Boys, on the Advisory Board for the Oregon Convention and Visitor's Services, and chaired the NAACP Youth Committee.

Williams' most significant contribution to Portland Community College was his work in bringing community college

services to all parts of the college district. When PCC's first bond measure passed in 1992, he led the effort to expand the PCC campus in North Portland so that students who lived in that poor area of town could enroll in courses they needed to complete an associate's degree without having to travel to other PCC locations. When the college passed another bond measure in 2000, he was the driving force behind a major expansion of college services in another under-served part of the community. And Williams was instrumental in pushing for a college policy that would ensure that college construction contracts would meet minority-contracting goals.

In addition, he was known for his promotion of alternative programs for at-risk students. He was successful in expanding classroom space for mentorship programs for students of all ages. An example of this work is Williams' "Success Academy" where spiritual and cultural leaders come to assist PCC students who have been involved with the juvenile justice system. Williams favorite quote echoed this work and was, "To give without remembering; to receive without forgetting."

He has been a force in local, state and national political leadership for many years. Williams was a candidate for the state legislature, walking door to door in his campaign to raise awareness of the issues facing the African American community in Portland. If he had been successful, he would have been only the second African American elected to the Oregon Legislature at the time. At PCC, during Oregon Legislative sessions, Williams routinely testified on bills of significance to community colleges.

For all of his hard work at PCC, Williams was selected for the Association of Community College Trustees Pacific Region Trustee Leadership Award in 2010.



Harold Williams, left, is congratulated by PCC President Preston Pulliams on Williams' winning the Pacific Region Trustee Leadership Award in 2010.

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About The Author: James Hill

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Comments

There are 33 responses to "Longtime PCC board member Harold Williams passes away" . If you see a comment that doesn't belong please click the "x" and report it.



by **Roy Jay** 7 months ago

X

Harold was and will still be the Community Godfather. He was always there to help shape and direct our community to do better. Whether it was in business, education or religion, he was our community rock. Harold had a gift of words that most of us only dream of. For over 30 years, he and I traveled, laughed, cried, disagreed, collaborated and supported each other .. all on a hand shake. He will be missed. These will be big shoes for someone to fill. Portland was much better off with Harold Williams, Sr. at the table. — Roy Jay



by **Chris Britton** 7 months ago

X

I have had the honor and priveledge of working with his daughter Natasha. My thoughts and prayers to the family of Mr. Williams.



by **Steve Andersen** 7 months ago

X

Harold often engaged me in conversation when he was on one of his many excursions around the Cascade Campus, asking how things were going and thanking me for helping to keep the community safe. Harold cared about everyone and I believe we sensed that caring. My condolences to his family, which included all of us.



by **Earline Penson** 7 months ago

X

Harold
Was a dear friend we all was in grade school together at Boise, he will be missed and I loved it when he gave his speeches at different events, I was glad I was able to see him and talk to him one last time.



by **Dana Haynes** 7 months ago

X

A great leader for Oregon and education. He will be missed.



by **Lynnette Jackson** 7 months ago

X

Harold Williams, Sr. was a true community champion, hero and regal gentleman. He deserves our highest accolades and is his life's accomplishments are worthy of celebration. Many prayers for his family and loved ones.



by **Clarence A Hatton Jr** 7 months ago

X

It was only a few days ago when we passed by each other near your Home, as we spoke and said hi to each other.all our lives you kept that pleasant smile on your face. You will be missed but

never forgotten, Rest my friend until we meet again.



by **Leon Willis 7 months ago**

X

Harold and I grew up together in the same neighborhood. He was a friend and will be missed. My prayers go out to his family.



by **Mario DePriest 7 months ago**

X

He was engaging, articulate, poetic, mesmerizing, political, spiritual, progressive and unpredictable. He loved his “Boys” and set the example. Too many fond memories to mention. An intense love for community and penchant for esoteric expression. He was my cousin and a hero to many. Peace and blessings to the family. He’s in the best hands....



by **Yugen Fardan Rashad 7 months ago**

X

Harold was infamous for stepping up on behalf of the community in times of woe and controversy.

His famous quip would be: ” Don’t worry, I will speak the truth on folks minds but most are too afraid to say”. He was our Bernie Mack! RIP, bro...



by **Mike Smith 7 months ago**

X

Harold was unfailingly a gentleman, always articulate and kind. He always took the time to explain and teach, and I appreciated his thoughtfulness. People of his caliber are rare treasures. My best wishes to his family.



by **JoAnne Beilke 7 months ago**

X

Being on the Chemeketa Board the same years as Harold I will miss his devotion to students. He was always looking for ways to serve students in his district, state and national level. We will miss you Harold.



by **Lynn Sullivan 7 months ago**

X

Thank you “Hal” for being a great family friend to us and partner to our dear Consuelo. My family’s deep condolences to Harold’s children. He will be sorely missed by all of us.



by **Karen Shimada 7 months ago**

X

Mr. Williams was a firm believer in lifelong learning and a strong advocate for ‘Life by Design NW’ — a PCC community-based program that gave opportunities for individuals at all all ages and stages of life to re-career and give back to the community. He came to many of our programs; and gave the keynote address at our opening ceremony with Marc Freedman. He always advised us: “Remember the importance of dressing with good taste, class, and respect for elders”. Sage wisdom from a wise man. He will be missed by our community.



by **Baruti Artharee** 7 months ago

X

I am traveling but heard about Harold. We met in the early '70s. He got me my first job after college. When I later told him I needed to make more money he introduced me to folks at Boise Cascade. I ended up working there 15 years and launching my career. Just like he helped me, he has assisted thousands of other young people trying to get ahead. Rest in Peace, my brother!



by **Komi Kalevor** 7 months ago

X

Harold Sr. is our own shining Black Prince in this area. A very positive man, he was and is a gentle giant and a quiet warrior — always ready to lend a hand and passionate about family and educating the next generation. After a recent job loss, Harold Sr. reached out to me and asked me to consider teaching at PCC. Little did we know that was to be our last conversation. Rest in peace my chief. Damirifa due.



by **Harvey Rice, GRI, SRES, CAPS** 7 months ago

X

I met Harold Sr at the Ho Ti Supper Club in the 1960s and became good close friends only to find out we both were students and both go on to work for Portland State University Education Center and State of Oregon. Due to Harold Sr recommendation I worked in the education field until my retirement from Portland Public School in 2000. Harold Sr's smile and gift for words will be missed by all. My condolences to his family. May Harold Sr rest in peace.



by **Jere Fitterman** 7 months ago

X

I feel privileged to count my neighbor, Harold, as a friend. He spoke from the heart and to the heart, he saw the soul.



by **Anthony M. Lathan** 7 months ago

X

There are not enough words to express the gratitude I feel for a man who inspired multiple communities to strive for more... and to reach for the stars in our professional and personal endeavors. Mr. Williams, I thank you for the light of your life and for continually being a shining example for all.



by **Kate Dins** 7 months ago

X

Mr. Williams was a tireless advocate for those who were often left behind by our educational and social services. His passion, eloquence, and hard work moved many who may have been tempted to write off those who with a little attention could blossom into success. His impact will likely never be measured because he was everywhere and anywhere he could lend a hand.



by **Cathy Galbraith** 7 months ago

X

Our brother Harold will never get full public recognition for the many behind-the-scenes efforts he devoted time to -- he was always direct in saying what needed to be said, but could often be the stealth-force who made the difference for the community's benefit. Now there is a huge void where Harold stood. His passing is a tragedy but his life was a triumph. How much we love and

miss you, Harold!



by **Colleen Brewer 7 months ago**

X

Mr. Harold Williams truly was a man of valor who stood in the gap for countless others and believed in righteousness and justice. His presence depicted strength, confidence, compassion, and courage. Mr. Williams has left a tremendous legacy that will live on . . . Blessings and comfort to the family. -Colleen



by **Ralph E. Ahsehn 7 months ago**

X

Harold will be remember by some us as being, one of, if the first African American man to host a local broadcast TV public affairs program. "People" with Harold Williams and his guests, was seen Sunday mornings on KGW-TV, channel 8, in the early 1970s. Taking on subjects that were thought provoking and sometime edgy, he handled them all with grace and skill. As producer of the show, I was honored to have worked with this Gentleman. "Gentle" in every way. Sadly, we often loose close communications with past acquaintances. The years rush by and memories are dimmed, but we never forget the Friendships. A piece of my life has been taken away.



by **Wyman&Karen Macon 7 months ago**

X

Mr.Garland

We did not know your brother well, but we believe he was a fine person. God bless you throughout this passing.

Love you



by **Sandra Dixon 7 months ago**

X

Harold was a great man. He added value to the community at large.

Sandra Dixon



by **Lola Love 7 months ago**

X

Trailblazer #1. Thank you.



by **Mary Merriweather 7 months ago**

X

Thank you Cousin for giving your life to pave the way. I will finish our many discussions.....Is my promise to you. Enrolling in PCC Cascade this fall to finish my degree as you were so proud that someone in your family would do on this campus. It started out as an effort to prepare & prove something to myself, but now it is a MUST to honor your commitment to make it possible. I will love, keep it moving & value your "Message" forever,
Cousin Mary Merriweather



by **Ronald Winthers 7 months ago**

X

I am saddened to hear of the loss of my dear friend and fellow community college trustee. We have lost a truly great man who taught all of us to put others first. Harold touched and changed the lives of many people. God bless you my brother, you're in a better place to continue your good work.

Matthew 25:21

His lord said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord".

Ronald Winthers



by **Brent Dahl 7 months ago**

X

In a gentle but firm way that only he could curate, Harold followed a path over the years designed to keep us all together. What a giant of a man. Community stewardship and Mr. Williams are one in the same, we've lost one of our icons. Gracious and approachable to the end, Harold we'll miss you.



by **Peter Seaman 7 months ago**

X

I'll never forget something Harold said at a PCC Board meeting just before Christmas a couple years ago:

"This holiday season, give something to someone who has less than you do."

May we all strive to live those words.



by **Gloria Ann Guzman 7 months ago**

X

I am saddened to hear of Harold's passing. I had the pleasure of working with Harold on the national level. You could disagree with him but he always respected your opinion. He stood out in a crowd with his beautiful suits and hats. The community colleges have lost a true friend and advocate.



by **O. Clayton Johnson 7 months ago**

X

Harold Wilson was a great person who served Portland Community College and community very well. He was a friendly person and always had a joyful conversation for those he met along the way. He will be missed in Portland and his deep concern for educational achievement. Rest in Peace my friend and we will keep the faith!



by **Tom Bennett 5 months ago**

X

I am very sorry to hear of Harold's passing. He will be missed.

Add to the discussion

PCC encourages you to add your voice to this page. Just remember that we take the time to look over each comment

and reserve the right to remove submissions for any reason.

Your comment

Name:

Email: Your email

address is required, but will not be posted. [Need an avatar?](#)

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