

- [HOME](#)
- [CONTACT US](#)

43
years

Advertise with us



Committed to Cultural Diversity

- [A&E](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Law & Justice](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [RSS Feed](#)

Paths to Success

– November 14, 2012 **Posted in:** [Education](#)

Accomplished professionals give back at SEI

By Cari Hachmann/ The Portland Observer



New York author Mitchell Jackson returns to Portland to talk about his local roots and inspire students at Self Enhancement, Inc. to reach for their goals. Photo by Cari Hachmann/The Portland Observer

“There’s a lot of different ways in which you can become successful,” Tony Hopson, president of Self Enhancement, Inc. told a group of students at a panel discussion Friday inside the school auditorium where four SEI alumni spoke about their paths to professionalism.

“You do not have to be an athlete or an entertainer,” he said, “but you do have to become educated.”

• [About Arras WordPress Theme](#)

Copyright Portland Observer. All Rights Reserved.

Education, finding your gift, falling down, getting up and persevering were themes all speakers touched on, but it was Mitchell Jackson's story that fell closest to home.

The author of "[Oversoul](#)," a collection of short stories and essays on growing up in north and northeast Portland may have surprised kids to learn that he once sat where they did.

The 37-year-old, dressed head-to-toe in black, said he had few intentions of ever becoming an author when he was a young man living on Northeast Sixth Avenue and Mason Street.

Some of his early life impressions began looking out the window of his home and watching his mother disappear into the neighborhood behind the unfamiliar doors of a crack cocaine addiction.

Attending SEI when it was located on Northeast Weidler Street, Jackson said he learned focus and perseverance, but it was through basketball that he believed he would make his escape. He transferred to Jefferson High School to play on the school's reputable hoop team, but when Division 1 college recruits failed to notice him, he chose to continue playing nearby at PCC.

In the early 1990s, when Portland was at the height of America's "war on drugs" Jackson was a young college student and began dealing dope. In his junior year, he got caught and was sent to prison for 16 months.

When he got out, Jackson was hopeful when he learned he could go back to school. He returned to Portland State University where he ultimately walked away with a Masters degree in Creative Writing.

"I found something I was finally passionate about," said Jackson, who now lives in New York City as a teacher at New York University and editor of a lifestyle magazine, "And I think you guys are going to have that too," he told students.

"It's going to be a feeling in you," continued the Portland native, "It's going to be booming in you."

Jackson went on to tell students that it won't be easy. People will reject you. He read three rejection letters he received from publishers trying to get somebody to buy his book.

Wow, I thought I could write, he recalled thinking. Eventually, he found his way as an author. His ebook collection explores topics like literacy, black manhood, love and relationships, the prison system, mother and son bonds, and the gentrification of urban cities.

Jackson's novel, "The Residue Years," will be released by Bloomsbury USA in the spring of 2013.

"If you keep persevering, someone is going to reward you for that perseverance," said Jackson.



About Cari Hachmann

Cari Hachmann is a writer and photographer for the Portland Observer. Have an idea for a story? Contact carih@portlandobserver.com or leave a message at 503-989-1243.

No Comments

Start the ball rolling by posting a comment on this article!

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published.

Name

Email

Website

Comment

You may use these HTML tags and attributes: <abbr title=""> <acronym title=""> <blockquote cite=""> <code> <del datettime=""> <i> <q cite=""> <strike>

Post Comment

•

a Supreme evening
Featuring Mary Wilson of the Supremes

A special holiday fund-raising concert for Portland area non-profits and activities

Friday, December 14, 2012
Oregon Convention Center
Portland Ballroom • Door's open at 6:45 pm

General Admission Tickets Available Now!
\$100 before 12/8, \$150 after 12/8
Ticket price includes special buffet
Purchase your tickets today by calling 503-254-3918
Cash and Debit cards accepted

ALSO FEATURING
Portland's
FLINK TASTIN
And special appearances
Steve Duran, KATU ABC News Anchor

CO-SPONSORS
Fred Meyer, Bank of America, and various local businesses.

**Human Relations Commission Public Information
Program Coordinator**

The City of Portland and the Office of Equity are seeking applications to hire a Program Coordinator. This position will have dual primary responsibilities to staff the City of Portland's Human Rights Commission (HRC), which falls under the oversight of the Office of Equity and Human Rights, and function as the primary communications and public information representative for the Office of Equity & Human Rights (OEHR). To view the full announcement, login using (www.portlandonline.com/jobs). This recruitment will close when 100 applications are received or no later than 4:30 PM, November 16, 2012.

