

Introducing Dante J. James, New Director of the Office of Equity and Human Rights

February 16, 2012



After completion of a national search and an application review process involving stakeholders from the community as well as city staff, Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced on February 16 that Dante J. James will be the first Director of Portland's new Office of Equity and Human Rights. He comes to Portland from Denver, Colorado, bringing over 20 years of political and legal experience as an attorney in private practice, non-profit director, administrative hearings officer, community organizer, government administrator and political consultant.

Dante has been active in social justice causes throughout his more than 25 years in Denver, serving on many political and community boards and commissions. He was most recently the Manager of the Small Business Office for the Regional Transportation District where he oversaw the District's compliance with federal regulations regarding utilization of disadvantaged and small business on the build-out of metro Denver's light rail transit system.

Asked by Commissioner to share why equity work matters, Dante responded "Equal access to opportunities in areas such as employment, economic development, and government contracting can only add to the status of Portland as a world-class city. I look forward to becoming a Portlander, and sharing my experiences to help ensure greater opportunities for all of the residents of Portland."

Dante James, a U.S. Army veteran, previously headed a non-profit organization focused on training community activists, political candidates and elected officials on strategic approaches to effecting political and policy change. He was an appointee of Denver Mayor Wellington Webb leading the Mayor's Office of Contract Compliance. For six years, he worked as advance staff for the Clinton Administration nationally and internationally.

He taught high school in Japan, and was an Adjunct Professor at the University of Colorado and the University of Denver College of Law. He worked as a Public Defender, and volunteered with Aurora, Colorado's Teen Court. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of Central Arkansas and his Juris Doctor Degree from the University of Denver Sturm College Of Law.