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## As Clinton fades, Obama begins to ready for race against McCain

Charles Babington and Sara Kugler

BEND, Ore. — Barack Obama began sketching the outlines of his expected presidential contest against Republican John McCain,

saying the fall election will be more about specific plans and priorities than about questions of political ideology or patriotism.

Barely mentioning Democratic rival Hillary Rodham Clinton, Obama said he was open to campaigning with McCain in "town hall" events. McCain's advisers have already said he would be open to holding such joint forums or unmoderated debates in which both candidates would take questions from voters.

Obama warned that he won't stay away from controversial issues and he attacked McCain's proposal for a temporary halt in the federal gasoline tax as a "pander."

The turn toward campaigning against McCain and not Clinton came as Obama, who would be the nation's first black president, surpassed Clinton last Saturday in the all-important count of superdelegates.

Superdelegates are the nearly 800 party and elected officials who will attend the Democratic national convention this August in Denver and are free to support whomever they choose, regardless of the primary results.

They are key because the Democratic race has been so close that neither Obama nor Clinton can win the nomination without them.

Clinton, who is vying to be the country's first woman president, started the year with a lead of 169-63 among superdelegates. Now Obama has endorsements from 276 superdelegates, according to the latest tally by The Associated Press. Clinton has 271.5.

In the overall race for the nomination, Obama has 1,864.5 delegates and Clinton has 1,697, according to the latest AP tally; 2,025 are needed to secure the Democratic nomination at the party's national convention.

In a sign of his new focus on McCain, Obama is beginning to campaign in states without upcoming primaries. He said he will soon visit Michigan and Florida, two bat-

leground states whose Democratic primaries were essentially nullified by party disputes, and Tuesday was slated to visit Missouri for a campaign event focusing on economic issues.

During a campaign stop in

*The turn toward campaigning against McCain came as Obama, who would be the nation's first black president, surpassed Clinton in the all-important count of superdelegates.*

Bend, Ore., which holds its primary May 20, Obama made sure to say that he had not won the nomination yet, but nonetheless entertained several questions about the likely outlines of a contest against McCain.

"Rather than an abstract set of questions about, 'Is he

too liberal, is he too conservative, how do voters handle an African American, et cetera,' I think this is going to be a very concrete contest around very specific plans for how we improve the lives of Americans and our vision for the future," he said. "I think it is going to have to do with who has a plan to provide

*Obama, continued to page 6*



Community activists, friends, family members and concerned citizens gathered at Townfield in Fields Corner last Sunday for the 12th Annual Mothers' Walk for Peace, organized by the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. (Tony Irving photo)

## New Northeastern program to tackle urban health issues

Talia Whyte

In an ambitious move, Northeastern University recently announced plans to launch a master's degree in public health (MPH) program in urban health next fall, the first such program at any New

England college.

The two-year program, offered through the university's Bouvé College of Health Sciences, will focus on training future advocates who will address the factors that contribute to health disparities across the strata of race, ethnicity and class.

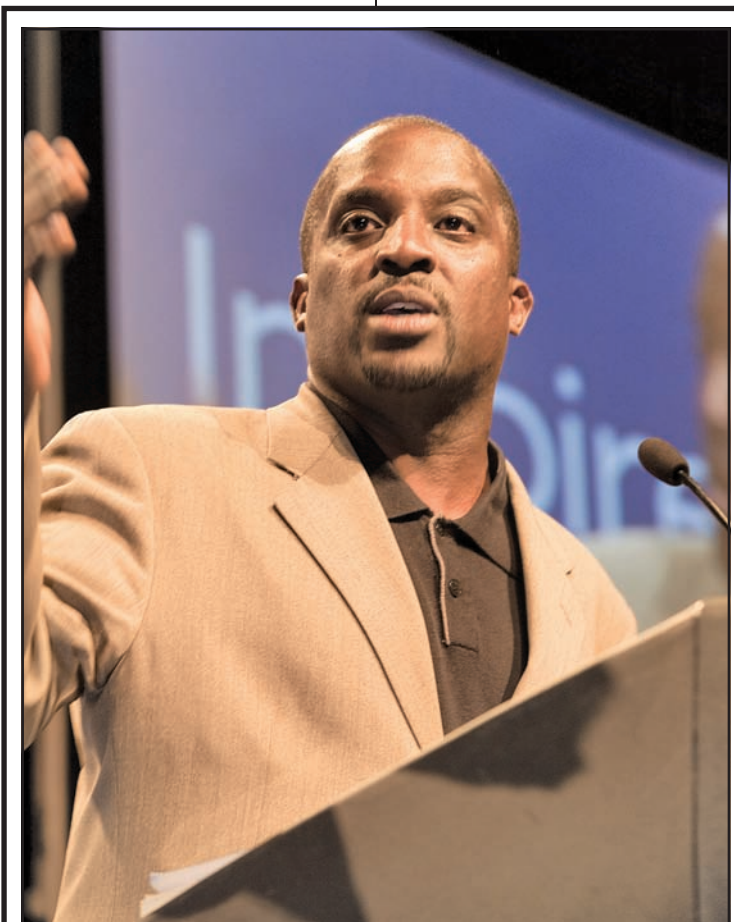
Under the leadership of Dr. Shan Mohammed, students will work with state and city officials, as well as health advocates from the communities surrounding Northeastern, to improve health outcomes in urban areas.

"[The program] reflects North-

eastern's focus on urban engagement," Mohammed said. "Student practicum projects can center around three issues in health advocacy — program planning and evaluation, policy development and research."

Mohammed has nearly 20 years of experience working on health issues affecting poor and marginalized communities, both in the United States and abroad — he once served as a Peace Corps volunteer on the Thai-Laotian border, working with communities on

*Urban, continued to page 17*



Ron Bell, longtime community activist and now director of the state Office of Civic Engagement, delivers an address at the Boston Civic Summit, held May 3 at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center in South Boston. Bell was one of several key figures in local social and political life to deliver addresses during the one-day event. (Photos courtesy of Denterlein Worldwide)

## A different kind of 'Morehouse Man'

Errin Haines

ATLANTA — From his first day at Morehouse College — the country's only institution of higher learning dedicated exclusively to the education of black men — Joshua Packwood has been a standout.

His popularity got him elected dorm president as a freshman. His looks and physique made him a fashion show favorite. His intellect made him a Rhodes Scholar finalist. His work ethic landed him a job at the prestigious New York investment banking firm Goldman Sachs.

But it's his skin that has made all of this an anomaly.

Packwood is set to take the stage today and address his classmates as the first white valedictorian in Morehouse's 141-year history.

The 22-year-old from Kansas City, Mo., will graduate with a perfect 4.0 GPA and a degree in economics.

He could have gone elsewhere, to a school like Columbia, Stanford or Yale. But his four-year journey through Morehouse has taught him a few things that they could not, and he makes it clear that he has no regrets.

"I've been forced to see the world in a different perspective, that I don't think I could've gotten anywhere else," he said. "None of the Ivies, no matter how large their enrollment is, no matter how many Nobel laureates they have on their faculty ... none of them could've provided me with the perspective I have now."

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