

NAACP banquet to address youth education, justice

By **KELLY ADAMS**
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Getting more minority youths into school and keeping them out of jail is the goal next year for the NAACP, said Earl Ford, the president of the Vancouver chapter.

To that end, the chapter will welcome John Jackson, an attorney and the chief policy officer for the National NAACP as the keynote speaker.

"Addressing the Inequities in Education and Juvenile Justice," will be the evening's theme.

Nationwide, 56 percent of black teens don't graduate from high school; of those, 70 percent end up in jail, he said.

"We seem to be creating a permanent underclass," Ford said. "We need to put our youth to work. We need to give them hope."

The local chapter is working on solutions for Clark County youth. The Rites of Passage program is a four-week session based at either Clark College or Washington State University Vancouver. Students learn

If you go

■ **What:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Vancouver Chapter will feature John H. Jackson, the chief policy officer for the national NAACP at its fourth annual awards banquet.

■ **When:** 6 p.m. May 5.

■ **Where:** Clark College, 1800 E. McLoughlin Blvd., Vancouver.

■ **Cost:** \$25. Tickets will not be available at the door.

■ **Information:** 360-256-6232.

about African American culture and gain an introduction to college life. The chapter also works to connect minority youth with internship and job opportunities.

"We're really looking to solutions," Ford said. "We want to step that up a notch."

Jackson has a strong background in education. He has earned five post-secondary degrees and served as the NAACP's National Director of Education for five years before being appointed to his current post.

In 1999 at the age of 27, he was appointed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office

of Civil Rights by President Bill Clinton.

At the May 5 banquet, 20 Clark County students will be recognized for academic and other achievements.

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