



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE FEDERAL CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY.

May 2010 Political and Legislative Updates



SPECIAL EDITION

A Tribute to Our Soror Dr. Dorothy Irene Height March 24, 1912 – April 20, 2010



“I want to be remembered as someone who used herself and anything she could touch to work for justice and freedom.... I want to be remembered as one who tried.”

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The Federal City Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Committee Co-Chairs: Soror Pia J. Miller, Esq. & Soror Michelle Rose

To join the Social Action Committee and receive our emails, contact us at: socialaction@thefcactst.org



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE FEDERAL CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

Soror Dorothy I. Height's Service to Delta...

Soror Dorothy Irene Height served as the 10th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated from 1947—1956. During her Presidency she established the following programs:

In 1950, The Bookmobile Library was purchased by the Sorority.

In 1952, under the leadership of Soror Height and the Executive Committee the Sorority purchased the first National HQ at 1818 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

In 1953, the first Executive Director of National HQ was hired, Soror Patricia Robert Harris.

In 1955, a National Projects Committee conducted a study to determine the most effective programs for our sorority to pursue.

There were named Five point projects –Currently known as Five Point Programmatic Thrust.

The Sorority's Alumnae Chapters was renamed from Greek names to represent the City where they were located.

Soror Roberta Hopkins

As A World Leader...

Dr. Dorothy Height's influence is evident worldwide, throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America. Her international travels and studies began in 1937. As Vice Chair of the United Christian Youth Movement of North America, she was chosen as one of 10 American youth delegates to attend the World Conference on Life and Work of the Churches in Oxford, England. Two years later, Height was sent as a YWCA representative to the World Conference of Christian Youth in Amsterdam, Holland.

By the early 1950s, Dr. Height's presence on the international scene was well known and widely felt. Even while Dr. Height was serving as our sorority's National President, she remained committed to international work. While still serving on the board of the YWCA, she went to Port-au-Prince, Haiti as a representative of NCNW at a meeting of the Congress of Women. While she was there she spearheaded the initiation of Delta Sigma Theta's first international chapter. In 1952 she also served as visiting professor at the University of Delhi, India.

In 1958, she was one of a 35-member Town Meeting of the World on a special people-to-people mission to five Latin American countries. She continued her international work with her involvement in the Women's Federation of the World Council of Churches, and began her work in South Africa with the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid in 1974. Dr. Height returned to work with the Black Women's Federation of South Africa in 1977 and several times thereafter, and also helped to expand women's organizations in several West African Countries.

Soror Jordyn White



Present Song To First Lady: In Washington during a White House reception, members of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority hosted Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower. She was presented a copy of the Delta song *There'll Be A Jubilee*. Making presentation to Mrs. Eisenhower were Miss Patricia Roberts, Mrs. Dorothy Harrison, Miss Dorothy Height, Mrs. Reber Cann, and Mrs. Letitia Kirtley.



(Photo courtesy of Carol Moseley-Braun)
Carol Moseley-Braun with Dr. Dorothy Height and Coretta Scott King at the Congressional Black Caucus
Carol Moseley-Braun (center) is with two of her role models from the civil rights movement. Dr. Dorothy Height (left) and Coretta Scott King (far right) at the Congressional Black Caucus.



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE FEDERAL CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED



Soror Dorothy I. Height's Impact on FCAC Sorors...

Soror Dr. Dorothy I. Height was and is a legend in her own right. I remember on more than one occasion she indicated that when she was asked, why were you never in the forefront of the pictures during the Civil Rights Era, when the Marches took place? She said, " No one ever walked in front of Dr. King!" On another occasion she mentioned that in her travels to other countries that the elderly was always looked upon with reverence and adoration.

Soror Martha K. Forston

When Teaching for Change and the Poverty and Race Research Action Council published the book Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching: A Resource Guide for Classrooms and Communities in 2004, Soror Height eagerly agreed to host the book launch at NCNW headquarters. She understood the need for teaching new generations of students an accurate history of a movement to which she had dedicated her life. The book was also distributed to schools and students that attended the stage play, "If this Hat Could Talk," based on Soror Height's memoirs. As one of the co-editors of the book, I was once again proud to be connected with such a mighty warrior for justice.

Soror Jenice L. View

As a student at Cardozo High School in 1959, one of my teachers was Ms Edith Menard. In Ms Menard's English Class, she would tell us about the civil rights movement. She brought us articles and a small group of us started to meet with her after class to learn what was happening around the country with the civil rights movement. She told us about the first President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah. We also talked about how important it was that African Nations were becoming independence.

A lot was happening during that, I remembered seeing Emmitt Till's body on the front cover of Jet Magazine. I went with my parents to Union Station to see Emperor Haile Selassie, (Ethiopia) ride into DC to attend the funeral of President John Kennedy. With Ms Menard as a mentor, I became very interested in what was happening with Black people in America and Africa. I joined and participated in rallies and teach ins with various groups like the Young Democrats, Southern Christian leadership Conference (SCLC), NAACP and NCNW. SCLC and Young Democrats would hold public meetings and attracted the attention young people interested in the movement. The meetings I attended were at the corner of 7th & O Sts., NW every Friday evening. Other meetings were held at Odd Fellows Hall at 9th & T Sts., NW

Ms Menard was a member of NCNW at one of our meetings she told us she had arranged to take us to a meeting at the NCNW office. The NCNW was located at 1725 R St., NW I was one of 30 young girls that attended the meeting lead by Dr. Dorothy I. Height. Early in the morning of August 28, 1963 a group of us lead by Ms Menard marched from NCNW to the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington. Dr Height had us stand on the side of the stage.

Soror Shirley Rivens Smith



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE FEDERAL CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

On Her Shoulders, Stand I

I write in tribute to the Divine power that sustains me
 The power that mothered and fathered me in my orphan state
 The power that intersected my path with flesh to hold me up when I was too overwhelmed to hold on
 The power that exalts my ordinariness to greatness
 The living water that refreshes and renews my thirst for
 righteousness...justice...
 truth...YOU

I write for Dorothy I. Height
 I write in tribute to the matriarchs and queens who labored so that I might live
 Who fought so that I might rest, reflect, and revolutionize for the little sisters hiding behind her shadow
 Who sacrificed so that I might dwell in an abundant atmosphere
 Who believed so that I might understand the power of faith
 Whose unwavering spirit taught me the importance of solid foundations rooted in truth
 Who loved and let love so that I might be liberated
 Though the highest order of liberation has yet to engulf my soul
 I am yet breaking free
 Liberation is my inheritance
 On her shoulders, stand I

Try
 Aspire
 To change self
 To inspire change in others
 To aid in the transformation and renewal of broken persons and communities
 I dream
 I try
 I fall
 I cry
 I get up
 I go
 I GO!

Dr. Dorothy Irene Height, may your legacy and leadership inspire within us the desire to live beyond ourselves, carrying the torch with pride; for we know you cannot

Soror Yorri J. Berry



Polly Cowan and Dorothy I. Height, Co-founders of WIMS
Caring People (Fall 1992): 16



Inspiring Quotes from Soror Dorothy I. Height

“Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop.”

“Greatness is not measured by what a man or woman accomplishes, but by the opposition he or she has overcome to reach his goals.”

“A Negro woman has the same kind of problems as other women, but she can,t take the same things for granted.”

Soror Dawne E. Wilson



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE FEDERAL CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED



In 1995 the Xi Zeta chapter was having their first line since their reactivation in 1994. While some chapter members were waiting in the lobby of 700 7th Street with the candidates to enter the room for our activity Soror Dorothy I. Height entered the lobby. Upon entering the lobby she looked over and saw us, she knotted her head and smiled. Since the Sorors were dressed in black and the candidates in their white dresses she knew exactly what was taking place. This memory has and always will be precious to me because it meant that Soror Height was trusting us to carry the torch, to carry that for which she and thousands of others have labored. Her inspirational words and her life have enriched my life. I will miss her greatly.

Soror Wanda M. Lawson

From her book, Open Wide the Freedom Gates:

My years of involvement (with DST) have afforded me wisdom I would never otherwise possess and given me an even greater thirst for knowledge and for new ventures to be of service to others. The power of sisterhood for African American woman is a very strong force (p. 249)

And when questions about her emphasis on service and social action, she responded: "...our sisterhood has a purpose. We don't have a sisterhood for the sake of sisterhood. I believe that in the sisterhood we are to enjoy ourselves and at the same time do some service that helps others. In fact, I believe we can have fun being of service! (p. 251)

Soror Courtney Anderson

While many of us have met Soror Dr. Dorothy Irene Height several times during various Delta functions, the most meaningful encounter was just last year during Black Family Reunion. Many FCAC Sorors, collegiate members and volunteers were gathered at a Census Education table when Soror Thelma Thomas Daley came by to greet us. We were so engaged in our conversation with Soror Daley that we had to do a double take when we saw Soror Height slowly making her way towards the tent. Soror Height made her presence known. She graciously acknowledged Sorors, thanking us for our hard work and participation. She continued to the stage and delivered an eloquent speech about the importance of remaining active in our communities, the power that we have as a collective group of activists and the legacy that today's youth must carry out. We were all in awe of Soror Height and even more honored to serve with her.

We mourn her loss but celebrate her life. We are thankful for her tireless work and fearless leadership.

Soror Keren Odeah Johnson



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

THE FEDERAL CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED



Dorothy Irene Height Biography

Dorothy Irene Height, the celebrated civil rights leader and Chair *Emerita* of the National Council of Negro Women, transitioned to eternal life on April 20, 2010 in Washington, DC. Dr. Height dedicated her life to service and leadership, working tirelessly to the very end. A recipient of The Congressional Gold Medal awarded in 2004 and The Presidential Medal of Freedom among hundreds of other honors, Dr. Height has worked on every major advancement in civil rights and justice for women and people of color dating back to the 1930s. She gave counsel to every American president from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Barack Obama.

Born on March 24, 1912, Dr. Height awakened early to the social injustice of segregation and became active with organizations as a teenager. As a young social worker in her 20s, she helped New York City resolve the Harlem Riots of 1935 and helped organize protests against lynching. She soon went on to work for the desegregation of the armed forces and for access for all people to public accommodations.

As the only woman leader among the civil rights leadership known as the “Big Six” Leadership (which included Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, A. Phillip Randolph, John Lewis, and James Farmer), Dr. Height played a critical role in helping her colleagues put aside their factional differences and forge a united front. At her urging during the March on Washington in 1963, Dr. King was given no time limit compared to the other leaders and was scheduled to be the last speaker that day to deliver what would become known as the “I Have a Dream” speech. As she wrote in her memoir, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates*, “I do not think there was anyone who really would have wanted to follow him!...It was a riveting sermon that struck the conscience of America....A moment of grace, of transcendence, touched the thousands who were there and the millions more who watched from afar on television.”

Dr. Height headed her beloved National Council of Negro Women for more than four decades, but began her association with the organization as a volunteer under her mentor Mary McLeod Bethune in 1937. With NCNW, Dr. Height devoted her energies to advancing quality of life issues for African American women and their families, impacting health, education and economic empowerment. Many African American women who have achieved high positions of leadership are quick to acknowledge a profound debt to her efforts. Under her leadership, NCNW organized the Black Family Reunion Celebration to underscore the traditional values and strength of the African American families (to be held for the twenty-fifth consecutive year on the National Mall this September). The organization’s headquarters, the Dorothy I. Height Building at 633 Pennsylvania Avenue, is the only property on the nation’s corridor of power owned by people of color and women. Dr. Height also worked for over ten years to erect the statue of Mary McLeod Bethune in Lincoln Park on July 10, 1974, in Washington, DC, the first such commemoration for a woman and person of color on federal land in the Nation’s Capital.

On the international front, Dr. Height worked on an array of human rights and humanitarian issues, including training and research, economic empowerment, and leadership development projects for women and organizations in Africa, the Caribbean, and India, among other countries.

For more than three decades beginning in the mid-1940s, Dr. Height served on the staff of the National Board of the YWCA spearheading their racial justice initiatives. She was also elected the tenth National President of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority (1947–1956) and helped that organization expand its social activism in the US and abroad. In a soon-to-be published book *Living With Purpose*, Dr. Height left the following advice to meet today’s challenges:

“To move forward, we have to look at the world as it is becoming rather than how it has been. We have to see how we have to stretch ourselves to become related to this ever-changing scenery. We have to gain a recognition not only that no one stands alone, but on a positive side, that we also need each other....In the long run, it is how we relate to each other and how well we work together that will make the deciding difference.”

Dorothy Height is survived by her sister, Anthanette Aldridge; three nephews, Phillip Aldridge, Bernard Randolph (Billie Jean) of St. Louis, Missouri, and Daniel Aldridge, Jr. (Dorothy) of Detroit, Michigan; two nieces, Jean Randolph Linzey (Camerson, Sr.), and Leutta Henderson of Brooklyn, New York; great and great-great nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends, including one devoted friend/daughter, Alexis Herman Franklin (Charles) of McLean, Virginia. She also leaves to mourn her passing, her beloved National Council of Negro Women family, including staff members who served for over thirty years, Lola Early and Christine Toney, and her devoted caregiver of ten years, nurse Mary Brown.

Biography as presented at Dr. Height’s Funeral Service Thursday, April 29, 2010, Washington National Cathedral