

## **Honoring Seattle Heroes**

By Margaret Boddie, Program Manager  
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What does one of the first African American Seattle Public School teachers have in common with the first Head Start director, and one of the nation's top pastors? Each one was honored at the Second Annual Heroes Celebration, an event recognizing contributions made by local trailblazers. The event was sponsored by the African American Elders Program, a component of Catholic Community Services, and several community businesses.

About 80 individuals participated in the ceremony held May 23, 2008, honoring Virginia Galloway, Dorothy Hollingsworth, and Reverend Samuel B. McKinney. Among those involved in the celebration, were six elders 90 years of age or older - major milestones also worthy of recognition. "Without your efforts in the community, many of us would not enjoy the comforts we now have," AAEP case manager Gwendolyn Williams said in her introduction of the honorees.

**Virginia L. Galloway** grew up in Washington, D.C. in the 1920s and 1930s. Following her graduation from Howard University, she accepted an offer to teach with the Seattle Public School District. When she arrived in Seattle, however, it became obvious that she was pregnant and was informed by the superintendent that "married teachers were not hired!" Thelma DeWitty went on to become the first Black teacher hired by the school district. Virginia acknowledges DeWitty's success as a major factor leading to the hiring of five more Black teachers, with her being one of them. Her first assignment was at Horace Mann Elementary School. Later assignments included vice principle at Lafayette, and principle at Genesee Hill and Maple Leaf Elementary Schools. She also earned a Masters in Education from Western Washington University. After retiring from the district, she worked as principle at St Mary's School in Seattle. In retirement, she volunteered in schools in Jamaica, Kenya, Crete, Ghana, China and Mexico.

**Dorothy Hollingsworth** grew up in North Carolina in the 1920s and 1930s. She moved to Seattle in 1946 with her husband, who had earlier been stationed at Fort Lewis. Through her involvement with the YWCA and her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, Hollingsworth quickly became involved with open housing discussions sponsored by the Christian Friends for Racial Equality (CFRE). She worked as a social worker throughout the 1950s and 1960s, focusing in particular on education issues in Seattle's Central District. Hollingsworth began to take on increasingly active civic responsibilities in the 1960s: as the first director of Seattle's Head Start program, as a consultant to Sesame Street, a participant in the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC), and Deputy Director of Planning for the Seattle Model Cities program. In 1975, Hollingsworth became the first black woman elected to Seattle's School Board, and during her six years on the Board she helped oversee the implementation of Seattle's busing program. In 1984, she was elected to the State Board of Education, serving until 1993, when she also retired from the City of Seattle in 1993, after serving as director of Youth Services, and later as interim director of the Housing and Human Services Department. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Seattle Central Community College.

**Reverend Samuel B. McKinney** grew up in Cleveland, OH in the 1920s and 1930s as the son of a prominent and politically engaged black minister. He attended Morehouse college, where was a classmate of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. After serving as a minister in Providence, RI in the mid 1950s, McKinney moved to Seattle in 1958 to lead one of Seattle's oldest and most prominent black churches, Mount Zion Baptist Church. McKinney quickly became a leader in the "movement for human rights," which included playing a major role in the Central Area Civil Rights Committee (CACRC). McKinney retired from Mount Zion in 1998, after serving its congregation for 40 years. But from 2005 to 2008, he returned to once again lead the church that has been so instrumental in Seattle's civil rights struggles.

The African American Elders Program, and Catholic Community Services, diligently works to provide in-home care management and supportive services to African American elders in King County. Our goal is to help them remain in their home and community for as long as possible. For more information about the AAEP, or to make a referral, contact (206) 328-5639, or email Margaret Boddie at [margaretb@ccsww.org](mailto:margaretb@ccsww.org)

**Sources:**

HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, "Hollingsworth, Dorothy (b.1920)" (by Mary T. Henry), [http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file\\_id=291](http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=291) .