

Biographical Summary of Leona Ford Washington

As a devoted and community driven native of El Pasoian and Historian, with a great inner craving to empower El Paso's youth educationally by teaching in the El Paso Independent School District, for more than 39 years. Her teaching culminated with her retirement from Alta Vista Elementary School in 1989.

Civic Duty and Achievements

As an outstanding community activist she lived a philosophy which was dedicated to others as she served in the El Paso community in many capacities. As an exemplary citizen of El Paso, she held many positions that provided for the betterment of El Paso residents.

She was a community leader and songwriter. In 1976 she composed what is now the official song for the City of El Paso; she was Co-founder and Director of the Miss Black El Paso Southwest Scholarship Pageant for over 23 years.

In December 1993 she founded and became Director of the McCall Neighborhood Center. The center is a nonprofit organization that provides a meeting place for community organizations and a site for community functions. It also provides educational enrichment activities, economic development, health and human resources. She was a charter member and held the position of secretary for the Black El Paso Democrats. She was co-founder of the Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Committee of El Paso. She was founder of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial at Chamizal Leona F. Washington was also a member of the El Paso County Pioneer's Association. She was President, Vice-President and Treasure of the Phyllis Wheatley Chapter of El Paso, an organization that provides programs to address the needs of children, youth, families and elders and provides guidance and assistance to help individuals and families empower themselves.

Leona F. Washington was Editor of the Good Neighbor Interpreter; member of the El Paso Community Foundation Advisor Board; member of the Planned Parenthood of El Paso Board; Prairie View A& M University Alumni Association, El Paso Chapter; Grand Marshall of the Black History Month Parade, and a member of the Arts and Resource Board of El Paso.

In 2001 Missouri Recreation Center in El Paso was renamed to Leona Ford Washington Recreation Center in her honor.

She collected over 800 photographs documenting El Paso Black history and in 1991 donated them to the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), thus giving her the unofficial title of Historian. UTEP honored her contributions by naming the collection "*Leona Washington photo collection of El Paso's African American past*" at UTEP Special Collections.

Awards and Recognitions

El Paso County Democratic Hall of Fame Inductee – 1984
Commander's Award, White Sands Missile Range – 1989
Conquistador Award by the City of El Paso – 2000
Missouri Recreation Center Renamed in her Honor - 2001
Woman of the Year Award – 2002

Myrna J. Deckert Lifetime Achievement Award by the YWCA -2007

