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Ladies First: The Ways Women and Girls Affected Change in the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans

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Ladies First: The Ways Women and Girls Affected Change in the Civil Rights Movement in
New Orleans

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

History

Public History

by

Terri R. Rushing

B.A. Tulane University, 2018

Dedication

I was often told different accounts by family members about their roles in activism by cultivating an atmosphere of equality for members of our race. My great uncle participated in a local group, Deacons for Defense and Justice to protect life and property of Blacks voting for the first time in Washington and St. Tammany Parishes in Louisiana. My father, who attended a segregated high school, did not have the experience of participating in change for equality in education. However, his younger siblings became some of the first Black teens to integrate Covington High School in the early 1970s.

My grandmother, who did not involve herself outright in the movement, asserted her presence by being in the room. What that means is a Black person's mere presence in white spaces was enough to evoke a violent reaction from white Americans. Waiting rooms, public schools, and lunch counters were some of the key battleground locations for resistance. Black people stood to defy societal norms of the day by inserting themselves in every aspect of American life, for the right to shared public spaces and equal treatment.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother, who endured long waits in doctor's offices, often without being seen. It is a tribute to parents who only wanted equal learning experiences for their children. This thesis is in honor of women who gave of themselves unselfishly, and braved brutality for the advancement of Black people in the city of New Orleans and the nation of the United States.

In education, economic, and political arenas Black Americans have made their presence known in public spaces and experiences; and have demanded equal treatment. In the fight for equal treatment and equal rights, women advocated boldly, because they understood the power

of their presence. However, women were suppressed in their activism initially by being relegated to positions in administration or strictly organizing, while Black males became the front-facing agents of the Civil Rights Movement.

The women discussed in my thesis project/tour advocated, marched, picketed, boycotted, participated in sit-ins, organized voter registration drives, held political offices, created opportunities for Black New Orleanians to share public spaces; and have equal access to institutions of learning. Outlined in this thesis project and paper are the ways women inserted themselves into the Civil Rights narrative. They made their presence known publicly and inspired future generations of women to agitate for increased civil rights.

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Abstract

New Orleans Historical is a project of the Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies in the History Department of the University of New Orleans. This thesis and tour presents and discusses the “Ladies First” tour which contains seven tour stops on New Orleans Historical. The tour chronicles seven women and girls who have advanced the cause of equal rights and justice in the metropolitan region of New Orleans, Louisiana between 1950 and 1975. This thesis examines the work of seven key figures: Rosa Keller, Doratha “Dodie” Simmons, Marie Ortiz, Sybil Morial, and Dorothy Mae Taylor; and participants in the Civil Rights Movement, two young Black girls, Leona Tate and Ruby Bridges. These seven women’s activism centered on three principal areas: for education, resistance to segregation, and political participation.

Keywords: Activism, African American, Black, Civil Rights Movement, Women, Girls, New Orleans, Segregation, Integration

Introduction

The title of this thesis is inspired by Queen Latifah's hip-hop anthem, "Ladies First."¹ This song was a tribute to the power of womanhood and a call to action for the Black community to recognize that women hold just as much power as men when it comes to uplifting and representing their communities. The women and girls in this thesis paved the way for other activists to assert themselves in the Movement and stand up for equality in the South. Both hip-hop and civil rights activism were initially male-dominated fields. The song, first released in 1989, inspired another generation to become proud of their blackness and become involved in the communities in which they belong. The women and girls in this thesis showed their strength and bravery, and it is in this spirit that this thesis educates and inspires the future generations of activists.

Women's activism was long overlooked by many academic historians in the past, even though women and girls placed themselves at the forefront of the Movement and put themselves in danger in the process. In recent decades, scholars have begun to address women's roles in the Civil Rights Movement. Yet within public memory of the Movement, women still play a secondary role. While some of the women discussed here became recognized nationally, each of these women worked at the local level to procure better opportunities for Black people in the city of New Orleans. Without their work and willingness to sacrifice their time and safety, the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans would not have moved forward into the 1970s and 80s.

Enacted after the Civil War through the mid-twentieth century, Jim Crow laws codified white supremacist notions and the oppression of racial minorities. Jim Crow laws not only created

¹ Ahmir Thompson and Tarik Trotter, *Queen Latifah: "There Were Certain Things I Could Not Say," Songs That Shook*, (YouTube, May 10, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN8oAVo4ao8>.

separate and inadequate conditions for Blacks but also facilitated violence by whites against Blacks. During the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement, Black Americans challenged racial discrimination and disenfranchisement through organized political action. Civil rights activists advocated for equal employment opportunities and wages, and the integration of public spaces and services.²

This public-facing project explores how women and girls played a significant role in challenging legislation that perpetuated racial segregation in New Orleans. By integrating, organizing, protesting, marching, picketing, boycotting, holding board positions, and conducting important behind-the-scenes administrative tasks, women and young girls successfully championed the cause for Black equality and supplied a framework for future generations of women to advocate for increased civil rights. The efforts of the women and girls highlighted in this thesis and tour, and their many forms of activism during the Civil Rights Movement, started in the 1950s and advanced into the 1970s and 1980s.

This work is divided into three sections: education, activism, and politics. These were the main avenues of female participation in the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans, Louisiana. This work will draw from the Amistad Research Center's archives, New Orleans Public Library (NOPL) archives, and various works dedicated to the works of women who courageously led advancements to equal rights.

Early histories of the Movement decentered most Black women from the narrative. This thesis, however, continues in the spirit of recent historians that have demonstrated that women and girls were some of the key players in the struggle for civil rights beginning in the 1950s. The

² Thomas Holt. *The Movement: The African American Struggle for Civil Rights* (Oxford University Press, 2021) 29-120.

work of Lee Sartain, Shannon Frystak, and Rachel Devlin, among others, has retrieved for us the instrumental role of women in civil rights activism. Inspired by their scholarship, this thesis and tour underscore the ways that women expressed their power in a variety of arenas of struggle and with different strategies than those of their male counterparts.

Too often, historians overlook certain contributions of women and girls during the Civil Rights Movement, because of its radical nature. In some cases (such as with Rosa Keller) women's activism proved to be effective because it occurred within traditional channels of women's philanthropy drawing upon Keller's privileged access to the social and political elite. In other cases (as with Leona Tate or Dodie Simmons) it has taken generations for the dangerous work they did to be recognized as path breaking.

Lee Sartain explains in his work, *Invisible Activists: Women of the Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1915-1945*, how often women and girls were overlooked in historical narratives where civil rights were concerned. Even though women were not exempt from holding offices or chairmanships in rights organizations, women were often subordinate to the men, thus men retained control and women were relegated to form women's auxiliaries.³ Sartain argues that "Clubwomen did not believe that women existed solely to perform domestic chores or to be good wives, they were encouraged to contribute to general community advancement." This argument proves that women understood, early on, their abilities to lead and bring their unique talents to the struggle for the advancement of their people. This work pays homage to female leadership and its role in encouraging youth participation and uplifting communities, which is the foundation of the civil rights process.

³ Lee Sartain, *Invisible Activists: Women of the Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1915-1945*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2007) 31.

In Robin D.G. Kelley’s work, “We Are Not What We Seem,” the author sheds light on the activism of working-class Blacks. ‘Too often politics is defined by how people participate rather than why,’ Kelly writes. He argues that we do not understand change when we ignore the activism that happens outside of formal political structures. According to Kelly the “traditional definition the question of what is political hinges on whether or not groups are involved in elections, political parties, grass-roots social movements.”⁴ He challenges historians to look in unfamiliar places to find racial activism, including day-to-day resistance on public transportation and in the workplace. Kelley’s work is also helpful in re-examining the activism of many Black women whose resistance strategies have often been overlooked or underexamined.

In *A Girl Stands at the Door*, Rachel Devlin studies the experiences of Black girls in desegregating schools in the Deep South, arguing that their participation was critical. “School desegregation could not have happened without those who were willing to put themselves forward—the “guinea pigs,” as they sometimes called themselves—willing to incur the wrath of local white officials and at times backlash from within their own communities,” writes Devlin.⁵ Devlin’s work lends to the fact that for many young girls, school desegregation was their way to contribute to Black equality.

Devlin’s work supports the fact that some girls and young women felt a sense of obligation to their communities by participating in the desegregation of schools. *A Girl Stands at the Door* also argues that girls felt other obligations to pursue integration. Devlin said that “Girls perceived that adults exacted then to succeed—academically and otherwise—in white environments.” She further states that “Leaving, for girls, did not feel like a choice, both

⁴ Robin Kelly, “We Are Not What We Seem: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South,” *The Journal of American History* 80, no 1 (June 1993) 78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable.2079698>.

⁵ Rachel Devlin, *A Girl Stands at the Door* (New York, Basic Books, 2018), x.

because they understood their parents' expectations of them and because they had fewer alternatives."⁶

Shannon Frystak's *Our Minds on Freedom: Women and the Struggle for Black Equality in Louisiana, 1924—1967*, supplies accounts on multiple sides and covers the work of many women detailed in this thesis. Frystak's work increased exposure to the significance of women in activism, who were slighted in the past works of other historians. In *Our Minds on Freedom*, Frystak said "The modern Civil Rights Movement was, for all intents and purposes, "gendered" terrain."⁷ Women activists, in Frystak's interpretation were community-oriented; they used their skills to organize, plan, coordinate, and resolve conflicts.

Kim Rogers's collection *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement* gave insight into white as well as Black participation and the fruits of interracial activism of white women such as Rosa Keller. *Righteous Lives* explains why white elite liberals in New Orleans, like Rosa Keller, became involved in the pursuit of Black equality. According to Rogers, "Race relations activism became a way to satisfy needs that the prevailing social and political system did not meet." She adds "White integrationists gained knowledge, and the experiences with a different culture and different racial experience."⁸ In concert with *Righteous Lives*, the Rosa Keller Papers at the Amistad Research Center offered insight into the methods Keller used to create opportunities for Blacks to gain employment with white businesspeople within the city, firsthand from Keller herself.

⁶ Rachel Devlin, *A Girl Stands at the Door* (New York, Basic Books, 2018), 196.

⁷ Shannon Frystak, *Our Minds on Freedom: Women in the Struggle for Black Equality in Louisiana, 1924-1967*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2009) 237.

⁸ Kim Rogers, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement*, (New York, New York University Press, 1993) 27.

Rogers's work *Righteous Lives* painted broad picture of the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans but also provides details about particular female activists and their activism. One example is Doratha "Dodie" Smith-Simmons, who participated in pickets outside segregated stores, freedom rides, sit-in protests at lunch counters and voter registration drives. The author details how Smith-Simmons became involved as a teen and how her activism empowered her to delve deeper into civil rights demonstrations and causes that mattered most to her community and her people.

Recent public-facing projects have addressed the lack of scholarship on women in civil rights activism. The Library of Congress instituted the *Civil Rights History Project: Women in Civil Rights* in 2010. This project focused on the efforts of women who were often overshadowed by their male counterparts during the Civil Rights Movement. The *Civil Rights History Project* contains interviews with female activists who explain their struggles and triumphs within the Movement. This digital collection contains articles and essays on music in Civil Rights work, the methods of deploying a nonviolent philosophy and using self-defense, school segregation, and the murder of Emmett Till. The SNCC Legacy project, in collaboration with Duke University and the Center for Documentary Studies and Duke Libraries, created the SNCC Digital Gateway. The SNCC Digital Gateway builds upon the collaboration of veteran activists, archivists, and historians and documents the insistence of women on equal space and power within the Movement.⁹

⁹ Library of Congress, "Women in the Civil Rights Movement, Articles and Essays, Civil Rights History Project, Digital Collections, Library of Congress." (Web page. Accessed April 10, 2021), <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>.
SNCC Legacy Project and Duke University Libraries, "SNCC Digital Gateway," (Web page, Accessed May 5, 2021), <https://snccdigital.org/>

The women highlighted in “Ladies First” facilitated change that would help to create space, ease constraints, and show the world what was possible in the realm of activism and demands for equal rights. Through the integration of public schools, serving on committees and boards, organizing protests and voter registration drives, the female presence in the movement proved to be a vital instrument in the pursuit of racial equality. This tour and thesis both strive to paint a more inclusive picture of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement by focusing on the women and girls who played a significant role.

As women’s roles in the Civil Rights Movement has become better understood and delineated in scholarly work, it is also important that these stories become a part of public memory of the Movement. This tour, designed for a broad popular audience, aims to insert those women and their important work into public understanding of the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans. This thesis delivers the narratives of seven New Orleans women and girls and their roles in the Civil Rights Movement. This work is a continued effort to insert those women and their important work into public understanding of the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans.

The narrative is organized along three main themes: education, integration of public spaces, and political access. It is organized chronologically, as each person became involved in the Movement. For clarification, Rosa Keller became active in New Orleans equal rights initiatives in the mid 1950s and early 1960s, hence the reason Keller will be featured first. In this thesis, I made the conscious decision to place Rosa Keller first. Keller’s position in the tour was not only for chronology's sake, but because she was inspired by the on-going activism of other Black women in New Orleans. Both Leona Tate and Ruby Bridges integrated New Orleans Public Schools in November 1960. Doratha Simmons and Sybil Morial began their activism efforts in the early 1960s, both organizing or creating organizations to facilitate the pursuit of equality for

Black people in New Orleans. Pastor Marie Ortiz and Dorothy Mae Taylor continued to pursue equality in the late 1960s through the 1970s and 1980s.

The research conducted to create this tour draws, primarily, on collections at Amistad Research Center's archives, New Orleans Public Library (NOPL) Special Collections, and oral history archive at The Historic New Orleans Collection, as well as recent scholarship outlined in the bibliography below. Collectively, these sources reveal that through the integration of public schools, serving on committees and boards, organizing protests and voter registration drives, the female presence in the Movement proved to be a vital instrument in the pursuit of racial equality. In keeping with the title of this work, women were a vital source of empowerment for Black people, by strategic use of what power they had—occupying and using space on boards of directors, city streets, and the dangerous threshold of all-white schools—with extraordinary spirit. “Ladies First” provides a window for the public, beyond academia, into New Orleans’s women’s efforts toward racial harmony, socioeconomic equality, and equal rights.

Education

Integration of Institutions Higher Education and Public Libraries: Rosa Keller

Rosa Freeman Keller used her influence, as a white woman, to mold the world around her and change the unfair practices she saw daily due to white supremacy and segregation. Because of her white, privileged status, she could work against segregation and inequality from within the unequal, discriminatory social system itself. Keller was the daughter of a successful Louisiana Coca-Cola tycoon, A.B. Freeman. Keller's wealth and social connections bolstered her activism efforts. Keller's brother served as a member on several boards in New Orleans and Keller maintained a close friendship with Judge Skelly J. Wright.¹⁰ Judge J. Skelly Wright led efforts to integrate New Orleans Public Schools in 1960.¹¹

In 1932, Keller experienced anti-Semitism after marrying her Jewish husband Charles Keller Jr. Keller's husband was in the army and spent time away from the family. Keller used that time to focus on activism. Keller recalled, "It was World War II that woke a lot of us up...I'd married a Jewish fellow and learned a lot about prejudice then...I thought I could see the seeds of what got Germany in such terrible trouble right here."¹²

In 1944, Keller began her role in activism when she joined the New Orleans Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Board of Directors, a position previously held by her mother.¹³ Keller noticed the difficulties that African Americans experienced and became aware of her own privilege. "It was bad enough that they were kept out of privately owned facilities, but worse was

¹⁰ Kim Rogers, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement*. (New York University Press, 1994), 26.

¹¹ "School Board Approves Pupil Placement Plan," *The Louisiana Weekly*, (October 15, 1960), Amistad Research Center.

¹² Rogers, *Righteous Lives*, 28.

¹³ Shannon Frystak, *Our Minds on Freedom: Women and the Struggle for Black Equality in Louisiana, 1924-1967*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 32.

my perception that “public” meant “public for whites only,” said Keller.¹⁴ Keller began to work alongside middle-class Black women for the first time at YWCA. Keller recalled, “They were ladies, lovely people, beautifully educated. I didn’t know they existed; the town was so sealed up in compartments.”¹⁵

In 1945, Keller became a supporter of the Urban League, and would become its president.¹⁶ Keller used her influence to open doors that were closed to African Americans. Keller escorted leaders of the Black community into the offices of white businesspeople to encourage the employment of African Americans.¹⁷ In 1959, Keller worked to desegregate New Orleans public schools and public libraries, after being appointed to the New Orleans Public Library Board.¹⁸ Keller received death threats for her efforts.¹⁹

Keller served on the boards of Dillard University and Flint-Goodridge Hospital, which provided higher education and much needed medical services to the African American community. In 1964 Keller financed the lawsuit that desegregated Tulane University, and participated in voter registration projects with African American leaders.²⁰ Keller worked with white liberals and African American community leaders to address issues that affected African Americans in New Orleans. Because of her service in advocating for integrating of public

¹⁴ Rosa Keller, *Rosa Keller Memoirs*, Vol 1, Box 2, Folder 2, Amistad Research Center.

¹⁵ Kim Rogers, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement*, (New York, New York University Press, 1994), 28.

¹⁶ Rogers, *Righteous Lives*, 28.

¹⁷ Rogers, *Righteous Lives*, 28.

¹⁸ “Gist of the News-Mayor Morrison Announces the Appointment of Rosa Freeman Keller to New Orleans Library Board.” *Times-Picayune*, January 16, 1953.

¹⁹ Shannon Frystak, *Our Minds on Freedom*, (Louisiana State University Press, 2009) 105.

²⁰ Kim Rogers, *Righteous Lives*, 78.

spaces, especially spaces that involved the educational opportunity in New Orleans, Louisiana, a New Orleans Public Library branch was dedicated in her honor in 1993.²¹

SITE(S): The location selected on the New Orleans Historical tour for Rosa Freeman is the Rosa F. Keller Library & Community Center, 4300 S. Broad Avenue New Orleans, LA. This site was chosen because it was dedicated in Keller's honor in 1993. Rosa Keller understood the inequalities Black people faced in the city of New Orleans and in the United States. Keller used her influence and privilege to make strides for Blacks in the city of New Orleans.

IMAGES:

Rosa Keller Branch Dedication Exhibition-Images from New Orleans Municipal Government Photograph Collection--NOPL Series <http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/exhibits/keller/rosa.htm>



²¹ "Rosa Keller Branch Dedication New Orleans Public Library," New Orleans Public Library. <http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~noplexhibits/keller/rosa.htm>.

Figure 1. Opening of the Broadmoor branch (part II)-NOPL

On January 22, 1954, Mrs. Keller joined other Library officials and the mayor in an inspection of the Washington Avenue building recently acquired to serve as a new branch library. All library branches were desegregated in 1954 due to the activism of Rosa Keller. The facility was dedicated on April 4 of that year as the Norman Mayer Broadmoor Branch. It served the community until the early 1980s when the building was condemned by city officials. The new Broad--now Rosa Keller--Branch replaced the old structure in 1993.

Images from the introduction, Opening of the Broadmoor branch (part II)

<http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/exhibits/keller/shiny.htm>



Figure 2. Algiers Point Branch reopening.

A major achievement of Mrs. Keller's term as chairperson was the reopening of the Algiers Point branch in 1975. The facility had been closed since suffering extensive damage from Hurricane Betsy ten years before. Rosa Keller is pictured here as one of the speakers at the October 14th re-dedication ceremony.

Reopening of the Algiers Point Branch (part III)

<http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/exhibits/keller/speech.htm>

Figure 3. Broad Street New Orleans Public Library dedication.

Rosa Keller and City Librarian Dan Wilson cut the cake here at the Broad Branch on its dedication in 1993. Mrs. Keller was an active user of the new facility until her death on April 13, 1998.



Broad Street Branch Dedication (part III)

<http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/exhibits/keller/cake.htm>

Integration of Public Schools: Ruby Bridges and Leona Tate

Leona Tate

In the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment prohibiting states from denying equal protection of the laws to any person.²² This court decision declared separate educational facilities for white and African American students inherently unequal. Without clear instructions from the federal government on how public schools would integrate, public schools in southern states took full advantage of the lack of federal leadership and allowed schools to remain racially segregated.²³

Several years later, federal intervention forced the racial integration of public schools throughout the nation. Judge J. Skelly Wright first ordered New Orleans Public Schools to

²² *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*, U.S. Supreme Court 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

²³ "N.O. Schools Desegregated; No Violence," *The Louisiana Weekly*, November 19, 1960, Amistad Research Center, 1 and 8.

integrate on February 15, 1956.²⁴ Ultimately the Judge had to execute his own integration plan after the New Orleans Public School Board refused to establish one of their own.²⁵

On the morning of November 14, 1960, three six-year-old girls, Leona Tate, Tessie Prevost, and Gail Etienne entered the doors of McDonogh No. 19 Elementary school as its first Black students. The media dubbed them “The McDonogh Three.”²⁶ As the young girls entered McDonogh No. 19, crowds of angry and verbally abusive white people gathered outside of the school. “Somehow we were able to maneuver through a crowd of cursing, screaming, yelling people, who were being held back by the police,” said Tate.²⁷

There was no physical violence that day, as one by one white children were removed by their parents.²⁸ Throughout the day, white parents removed their children from the classroom where Leona and the other two girls (Gail Etienne and Tessie Prevost) were assigned. “By the end of the day,” Tate said, “there was nobody left in the classroom but the three of us.”²⁹ Federal marshals escorted the three girls into the school. The McDonogh Three became the public faces of New Orleans Public School integration.

That experience would change Leona Tate’s life and set her on a course to her lifelong role in community activism. In 2009, Tate formed The Leona Tate Foundation for Change. Tate focuses her life’s work on promoting change through education and empowering and enriching

²⁴ “School Board Approves Pupil Placement Plan,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, May 21, 1960. Amistad Research Center, 1 and 8.

²⁵ Alan Weider, *Race and Education: Narrative Essays, Oral Histories, and Documentary, Photography, Counterpoints*, v. 47 (New York, Peter Lang, 1997), 93-121.

²⁶ Katy Rechdahl, “The McDonogh 3 Help Unveil Historical Marker at Their 1960 School,” *Times-Picayune (NOLA.com)*, https://www.nola.com/news/education/article_c10b1497-3208-5b6b-89d3-3e5aaf418503.html.

²⁷ Leona Tate, “Gliding Past Mobs Toward Education,” *Times-Picayune*, May 20, 2004. 7.

²⁸ “N.O. Schools Desegregated; No Violence,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, November 19, 1960.

²⁹ Rachel Delvin, *A Girl Stands at the Door: The Generation of Young Women Who Desegregated America’s Schools*, (New York, Basic Books, 2018), 212.

her community. The Leona Tate Foundation for Change aims to address the community's issues "from a spiritual, multicultural, economical, historical and social perspective."³⁰

In 2005, McDonogh No. 19 School closed following the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. In 2019, Tate's foundation, in partnership with Alembic Community Development, acquired the McDonogh No. 19 building.³¹ Tate announced that the school she once helped to integrate would become The Tate, Etienne, and Prevost (TEP) Interpretive Center.³² The center will focus on providing affordable housing for senior citizens, educational programs, training and workshops, and revitalizing the Lower 9th Ward. Tate said, "I'm overwhelmed with unspeakable joy because I'm excited about what this project means for the city of New Orleans and the pivotal role it will play in revitalizing the historic Lower 9th Ward community."³³

Tate's primary objectives in preserving the McDonogh No. 19 building are to create a permanent memorial site and exhibition dedicated to the McDonogh Three and the integration of New Orleans Public Schools curate engaging programs that will attract visitors, address the needs of community, and stimulate the local economy of the Lower 9th Ward. Tate wishes for all who enter the center to leave with an overall understanding of the importance of the events of November 14, 1960, and McDonogh Three's contribution to the Civil Rights Movement and the possibilities for the further advancement of Black people. Tate feels that there is more work to

³⁰ "Mission Statement," Leona Tate Foundation for Change, last modified February 7, 2020. <https://www.leonatafoundation.org/>.

³¹ "The Leona Tate Foundation Purchases McDonogh 19 School," *The New Orleans Tribune*, <https://theneworleanstribune.com/the-leona-tate-foundation-purchases-mcdonogh-19-school/>

³² Della Hasselle and Katy Reckdahl, "Leona Tate, Developers Break Ground on New Civil Rights Center in Old McDonogh 19 Building," NOLA.com, https://www.nola.com/news/article_c9bf8746-6241-11ea-91ec-9f70a64d5993.html.

³³ "The Leona Tate Foundation Purchases McDonogh 19 School," *The New Orleans Tribune*, <https://theneworleanstribune.com/the-leona-tate-foundation-purchases-mcdonogh-19-school/>.

be done, as segregation has taken on new form through the restructuring of school districts by creating tiered systems that disadvantage poor Black New Orleanians.

SITE(S): The site chosen for Leona Tate is 5909 St. Claude Ave. New Orleans, Louisiana. This is the school Tate integrated, and later purchased to create the Tate, Etienne, Prevost Interpretive Center.

IMAGES: The images chosen to show the first day of school for Tate and included are images as the building stands presently. The building is currently barricaded because of current renovations.



<http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/313256>

Figure 4. View of Leona Tate and escorts entering or exiting McDonogh 19 next to station wagon



Figure 5. McDonogh School No. 19, 5909 St. Claude Avenue

<http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/56907>



Figure 6. Image of McDonogh No. 19 School, present day by Terri Rushing

Ruby Bridges

On the morning of November 14, 1960, Ruby Bridges, a six-year-old Black New Orleanian, took her first steps through the front door of William T. Frantz Elementary School (now Akili Academy). A mob of white people greeted Bridges with jeers and threatened to remove their children from Frantz Elementary if Bridges entered the premises. Bridges later described the loud mob's roars like "being at Mardi Gras."³⁴ Bridges did not understand what was happening that morning, only that she would be attending a new school.

Federal marshals escorted Bridges to school. Bridges did not go into a classroom the first day but remained in the principal's office watching parents remove their children from the classrooms.³⁵ In addition to student withdrawals, teachers quit as they refused to instruct Black children. One teacher remained to instruct Bridges, a Boston-native teacher, Barbara Henry. Once Bridges finally joined other students at play, she realized the reason for her isolation. Bridges tried to make new friends; however, she was told by a fellow student that they were instructed by their parents not to play with her because of the color of her skin.³⁶

In 1999, Ruby Bridges formed The Ruby Bridges Foundation in New Orleans. The foundation's mission is "to promote respect and equal treatment to all races."³⁷ Through her foundation, Bridges attends public speaking engagements, hosts a virtual classroom and podcast, and she also has a book club. Bridges' desire is to teach others how to overcome racism. Bridges was the subject of the Norman Rockwell painting, *The Problem We All Live With*, and a Disney movie was released about the history-making event that shaped her life.³⁸ Bridges visited the

³⁴ Ruby Bridges, interviewed by CBN correspondent, February 17, 2017, "Ruby Bridges Shares the Keys to Overcoming Racism," YouTube interview, https://youtube.com/watch?v=SvW10_kvKDA.

³⁵ "N.O. Schools Desegregated; No Violence," *The Louisiana Weekly*, November 19, 1960, 1 and 8.

³⁶ Bridges, "Keys to Overcoming Racism," YouTube.

³⁷ Ruby Bridges, "Civil Rights Leader," <https://www.rubybridges.com/>.

³⁸ Stephanie Plunket. "Painting Tour: *The Problem We All Live With (1964)*." Norman Rockwell Museum.

White House under former President Barack Obama's administration when Rockwell's painting was on display during the summer of 2011. Upon meeting Bridges, President Obama, thanked her for taking the brave steps she took as a little girl, and explained how that event influenced his life.³⁹ Bridges has two elementary schools named in her honor, one in Alameda, California and the other in Woodinville, Washington. Bridges has a bronze statue dedicated in her honor at William T. Frantz Elementary (Akili Academy).⁴⁰

SITE(S): The site chosen for Ruby Bridges is 3811 North Galvez St., New Orleans, LA. This is the former William T. Frantz Elementary School (now Akili Academy). The school maintains its original façade and the original building contains a memorial classroom, dedicated to Ruby Bridges and the desegregation of William T. Frantz Elementary School. There is also a small bronze statue on grounds in her honor.

IMAGES:

³⁹ William Allman, "President Obama Meets Civil Rights Icon Ruby Bridges," <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/07/15/president-obama-meets-civil-rights-icon-ruby-bridges>.

⁴⁰ Danielle Drellinger, "New Ruby Bridges statue inspires students, community," NOLA.com, https://www.nola.com/news/education/article_658eba5f-d372-566d-9f04-0ee68ab5eb2e.html.



Figure 7. Ruby Bridges desegregated William T. Frantz Elementary School November 14, 1960. Image courtesy of Terri Rushing.



Figure 8. President Barack Obama, Ruby Bridges, and Laurie Norton Moffatt Discuss Norman Rockwell's "The Problem We All Live With" in the West Wing Hallway of the White House
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/157649854>



Ruby Bridges Shares the Key to Overcoming Racism

227,422 views • Feb 21, 2017

👍 5.6K 💬 54 ➦ SHARE ≡+ SAVE ...

Figure 9. This video clip gives insight to the events that took place November 14, 1960 from Ruby Bridges. She speaks about the first day of integration and how the events of that day shaped how she interacted with her fellow students and how the event shaped her future. YouTube video “Ruby Bridges Shares the Key to Overcoming Racism” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvW10_kvKDA

Activism

Doratha “Dodie” Smith-Simmons

As a teen, Doratha “Dodie” Smith-Simmons entered the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans, with enthusiasm, following the example of her older sister, Dorothy Smith Venison. Her Civil Rights career began to gain access to The Golden Pheasant Social Club.⁴¹ Simmons’ sister and fellow activists would meet at the Golden Pheasant after their NAACP meetings.⁴² In exchange for not telling their parents that her sister attended these meetings, Simmons asked for bus fare and access to the NAACP meetings. However, because of the different approaches to activism and protesting, Simmons preferred to join the New Orleans chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE at the age of 14 or 15. Simmons attended a CORE meeting and decided to join. Simmons said she “liked what they were doing because the NAACP wasn’t doing any direct action.”⁴³ CORE’s activities were at the center of non-violent protests in New Orleans. CORE organized boycotts, sit-ins at New Orleans lunch counters such as McCrory’s and Woolworths, picket lines outside establishments that were segregated, and freedom rides. Simmons found CORE’s direct approach “exciting.”⁴⁴ Simmons became known as a “first lieutenant” to fellow CORE member and organizer, Oretha Castle Haley.⁴⁵

As the New Orleans chapter of CORE grew in prominence, Simmons’ activism grew as well. As a teen Simmons braved violence while she picketed and participated in sit-ins, which sometimes resulted in a trip to the New Orleans city jail.⁴⁶ Her activism within the CORE

⁴¹ Nayita Wilson, “Freedom Rider Reflects on Youthful Sacrifice, Fearlessness,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, 2014.

⁴² Wilson, “Freedom Rider,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, 2014.

⁴³ Wilson, “Freedom Rider,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, 2014.

⁴⁴ Shannon Frystak, *Our Minds on Freedom*, (Louisiana University Press, 2009) 118.

⁴⁵ Katy Reckdahl, “Few New Orleanians Remember Civil Rights Workers,” *The Advocate*, 2014.

⁴⁶ “Nine Pickets Are Arrested,” *Times Picayune*, March 28, 1964, Morning Edition, America’s Historical Newspapers.

organization evolved to the Freedom Rides, by becoming a “test rider” prior to the national Freedom Rides. She and other CORE members rode on a bus that went from New Orleans to McComb, Mississippi to test segregation practices of public facilities such as rest rooms and lunch counters. According to the Supreme Court case *Morgan v. Virginia* (decided on June 3, 1946) separation of races on passenger vehicles (buses, trains, etc.) “are invalid.”⁴⁷ The riders took seats at the lunch counter at the bus terminal in McComb, MS to test the law, and as Simmons said, “all hell broke loose.”⁴⁸ An attack on the riders ensued, and Simmons escaped to the “colored section” of the bus terminal. From 1962 to 1963 Simmons worked with CORE to integrate Florida hotels and beaches and she participated in the March on Washington.⁴⁹ Simmons is proud of her sacrifice. “I sacrificed, I guess, my youth. I wasn’t out doing what 17- and 18-year-olds were doing. I wasn’t going out dating,” she said. “My whole life was dedicated the movement.”⁵⁰

After the “test rides,” Simmons became a trainer for CORE. She taught members how to participate in nonviolent protests. In an interview with Mark Cave, Simmons said “They decided to set up three centers for training. One was Nashville. One was Montgomery and the other one was New Orleans.”⁵¹ Simmons shifted her focus on voting rights for New Orleans Black citizens, by educating them about voter registration tests and organizing voter drives. Simmons served as the last chair of CORE’s New Orleans chapter. After her years of activism, she went on to work at the Preservation Jazz Hall and helped establish The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage

⁴⁷ *Morgan v. Virginia*, U.S. Supreme Court, 38 U.S.373 (1946).

⁴⁸ Nayita Wilson, “Freedom Rider Reflects on Youthful Sacrifice, Fearlessness,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, 2014, <http://www.louisianaweekly.com/freedom-rider-reflects-on-youthful-sacrifice-fearlessness-2/>.

⁴⁹ Wilson, “Freedom Rider,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, 2014.

⁵⁰ Wilson, “Freedom Rider,” *The Louisiana Weekly*, 2014.

⁵¹ Dodie Simmons, “Dodie Simmons Interview with Mark Cave,” *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, August 21, 2017.

Foundation. Mrs. Doratha “Dodie” Smith-Simmons made her mark on New Orleans and American history.

SITE(S): The site chosen for Doratha “Dodie” Smith Simmons is 1130 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana. This was the site of her arrest for picketing the State Palace Theatre in March 1964. It would be many of the stances Simmons would take over her Civil Rights career. Picketing was one of her forms of activism, along with sit-ins, freedom rides and voter registration drives.

IMAGES:

Figures 10 and 11. Below: Loews State Palace Theater at 1130 Canal St. Site of one of the arrests of Doratha “Dodie” Simmons. Images by Terri Rushing.



Figure 12. Below: “Nine Pickets Are Arrested.” Times-Picayune. March 28, 1964, Morning Edition.

NINE PICKETS ARE ARRESTED

Nine persons, including two juvenile girls, all Negroes, were arrested about 7 p. m. Friday outside the entrance to Loew's State Theater in connection with picketing protesting the theater's segregation policy.

The seven adult arrestees were booked in the First District station with disturbing the peace, resisting arrest, criminal mischief, obstructing a public passageway and making an entry after being forbidden to do so. The juveniles were turned over to the juvenile bureau.

Booked were Doris Castle, 21, 917 N. Tonti; Ruthie Wells, 22, 6325 N. Tonti; Harold Sullivan, 17, 3713 Erato; Doratha Smith, 20, 2801 Metropolitan; Alice Thompson, 24, 1931 Tupelo; Shirleu Thompson, 20, same address; and Katrena Jackson, 20, 1228 Annunciation.

The arrests were made by police Supt. Joseph Giarrusso and other officers.

Police said that in addition to the pickets carrying signs on the sidewalk, a group holding hands formed a moving ring around the box office and blocked theater patrons from the ticket office.

Police said the group was requested by the theater manager and police to leave the premises but they refused.

The oral history used with this site is courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection.

Simmons was interviewed by Mark Cave for the NOLA Resistance Collection. The link for the complete interview: <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/3/31147>

More interviews about the NOLA Resistance Collection:

<https://www.hnoc.org/research/nola-resistance-oral-history-project>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ4cFuXIUOU>

Figure 13. The video used in the tour project, created by The Historic New Orleans Collection as part of their NOLA Resistance Oral History Project, features Simmons discussing her experiences with CORE.

Sybil Haydel-Morial

Growing up in New Orleans during the 1930s and 1940s, Sybil Haydel-Morial wondered why she could not go to certain places like other people. “Why I wondered, should my color separate me from the things I want to see and do?”⁵² The oppression of white supremacy and racial segregation affected Haydel-Morial’s everyday life. Haydel-Morial’s family created their own networks of interaction in Black communities. Haydel-Morial explained in her memoir, *Witness to Change*, “My parents, along with other middle-class blacks, out of necessity created our own cocoon of interaction for professional and social activities and at the same time limited the rejection and humiliation we experienced in our Southern cities.”⁵³ Haydel-Morial’s parents opened their home to weary travelers due to a lack of accommodations for Black people in New

⁵² Sybill Morial, *Witness to Change: From Jim Crow to Political Empowerment* (John F. Blair, 2015) 38.

⁵³ Morial, *Witness to Change*, 11-13.

Orleans. Haydel-Morial's parents also made their backyard a play area for the neighborhood children, because they were not allowed on the public playground.

Haydel-Morial studied at Xavier University before transferring to Boston University in 1950, and that was when she began to see life differently. "I relished my new life in Boston," Haydel-Morial said. "I would always have an abiding love for Louisiana, but in leaving it, I had found that my roots could grow both deeper and wider."⁵⁴ In Boston, all facilities were open to Black people, and Haydel-Morial wanted to experience life without the trappings of segregation. Haydel-Morial's experiences in Boston made her want the same for Louisiana. On May 17, 1954, Haydel-Morial turned on the radio and heard the news that in the case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. This ruling declared segregation of public schools was "inherently unequal."⁵⁵

The following summer, Haydel-Morial returned to New Orleans. After a Great Books Book Club meeting, Sybil Haydel-Morial met with a friend, Ernest Nathan "Dutch" Morial, and after discussing W.E.B. DuBois' *Souls of Black Folk*, the two decided to meet and discuss *Brown v. Board of Education*. After their conversation that Haydel-Morial decided to apply to Tulane University. She was accepted and enrolled in two courses. When filling out a registration form, Haydel-Morial wrote "Negro" in the blank for race. Tulane University asked Haydel-Morial to leave because they did not accept Black students. Haydel-Morial called "Dutch" Morial, "It's over," Haydel-Morial said, "I was asked to leave."⁵⁶ Nearby Loyola University also rejected

⁵⁴ Morial, *Witness to Change*, 54.

⁵⁵ U.S Supreme Court, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

⁵⁶ Sybil Morial, *Witness to Change: From Jim Crow to Political Empowerment* (John F. Blair, 2015), 55.

Haydel-Morial because she was Black. Haydel-Morial returned to Boston to complete her master's degree and began teaching.⁵⁷

In February of 1955, Sybil Haydel-Morial married "Dutch" Morial and they returned to New Orleans. "Dutch" Morial dove into local civil rights activism in New Orleans and held a law practice with A.P. Tureaud, a prominent civil rights attorney in New Orleans. Sybil Haydel-Morial also became a champion for civil rights. After being rejected by the League of Women Voters for membership based on race, Haydel-Morial and several other mothers formed their own organization, CiCulSo (an acronym for Civic, Cultural, and Social Organization).⁵⁸

CiCulSo evolved into the Louisiana League of Good Government (LLOGG), an organization of women of different ethnicities, that pursued voting rights and ensured voter rolls included Black people. Haydel-Morial also joined the women's auxiliary of the Urban League, the Urban League Guild. The Urban League Guild supported the Urban League and was responsible for fundraising, mentoring youth, and helping community leaders develop leadership skills. In 1963, Haydel-Morial filed lawsuits against the Orleans Parish School Board for enforcing a law that kept Orleans Parish school teachers from advocating for integration or belonging to associations that favor integration.⁵⁹

Throughout her teaching career in New Orleans public schools, Haydel-Morial brought cultural awareness to many students she encountered. She championed many civil rights issues, all while raising five children with her husband "Dutch" Morial. Haydel-Morial curated educational programs to raise awareness about civil rights while leading several community organizations. Haydel-Morial became an administrator for Xavier University, and eventually,

⁵⁷ "Degree Awarded," *Times-Picayune*, (June 6, 1955), n.p.

⁵⁸ Morial, *Witness to Change*, 89.

⁵⁹ "Law Attacked by N.O. Teacher," *Times-Picayune*, (August 31, 1963), Morning Edition, sec. one.

Associate Dean, where she remained for 28 years. In 2015, Haydel-Morial completed her memoir *Witness to Change: From Jim Crow to Political Empowerment*.

SITE(S): The site chosen for Sybil Haydel-Morial is 1 Drexel Drive, New Orleans, Louisiana. This is the site of Xavier University. This site was chosen especially for the many years of service Morial dedicated to this institution of higher learning. Morial was also a champion of equality in education, and challenged discriminative practices in New Orleans, Louisiana.

IMAGES:



Figure 14. Image above: Sybil Morial and Family (from left) Jacques, Mayor Ernest N. Morial, Monique, Marc, Mrs. Sybil Morial, Julie, Cherie. *Mayor Ernest N. Morial Photograph Collection*, NOPL. http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/photos/enm/enm34_557.htm

Figure 15. Image below: *Sybil Morial - Mayor Ernest N. Morial Photograph Collection, NOPL*
http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/photos/enm/enm34_559.htm



Marie Galatas Ortiz

Marie Galatas Ortiz, born in New Orleans in 1939, participated in many demonstrations, marches, boycotts, and founded Grass Roots Organization for Women (GROW).⁶⁰ Ortiz became increasingly involved in the Civil Rights Movement after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The tragic event inspired her to continue to strive for equality in her community. Ortiz remembered how she felt following the passing of Dr. King. “I just said I’m going to get so active,” replied Ortiz. “I’m going to help keep his work going on,” she said. “They can’t stop us!”⁶¹

Ortiz furthered her commitment to the Civil Rights Movement by founding the nonprofit organization, Grass Roots Organization for Women, or GROW in 1975.⁶² Ortiz wanted an organization that encouraged women to serve in their communities and in the Movement through peaceful protests, rallies, street marches, and boycotts. “Why did I get that organization formed? I’ll tell you why,” Ortiz said. “Rev. Harvey was that old-time minister that didn’t believe in women in leadership, in those days.”⁶³ Ortiz went on to say that eventually Rev. Simmie Harvey, president of the Louisiana chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), changed his mind about his anti-feminist sentiments. GROW challenged the traditional patriarchal social systems that prevented women from participating in leadership roles.

Not only did GROW challenge patriarchal social systems but GROW also created a communal bond within the community. The function of the grass-roots organization “sustained bonds of community, mutual support networks, and shaped black working-class political

⁶⁰ “GROW Photograph at Headquarters, 1610 Basin Street,” *Marie Ortiz Papers*, Box one, folder one, Amistad Research Center.

⁶¹ Marie Ortiz, “Mark Cave Interview with Marie Galatas Ortiz,” *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 2017. <http://hnoc.mimisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/3/31355>.

⁶² “Grass Roots Organization for Women (GROW Inc.),” Louisiana Business Filings, Louisiana Secretary of State.

⁶³ Ortiz, “Mark Cave Interview,” *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 2017.

struggle,” said Robin D.G. Kelley.⁶⁴ The Basin Street location for GROW’s headquarters served the New Orleans community, making it accessible to all people in New Orleans and surrounding areas who requested their services.

Ortiz was a force in the later years of the Civil Rights Movement and led protests in many surrounding areas. In 1976, Ortiz led demonstrations for the family of Stanley Magee who suspiciously passed away while in police custody in the Covington, Louisiana jail.⁶⁵ The protest and subsequent march over Stanley Magee’s death began at the 22nd Judicial Courthouse and included many African American residents of St. Tammany and Washington Parishes. The Stanley Magee protest remains one of the largest demonstrations ever held in Covington. Ortiz explained that some of the more difficult and passionate Civil Rights cases, especially those involving racially motivated deaths and violence were passed on to her organization from the NAACP. “It was GROW that did the work,” Ortiz said.⁶⁶ Ortiz remains politically active today. Her most recent work is dedicated to taking down monuments dedicated to Confederate leaders in New Orleans.

SITE(S): The site chosen for Marie Galatas Ortiz is 1610 Basin Street, New Orleans, LA. Ortiz established the Grass Roots Organization for Women (GROW) and it was housed at this location. Rev. Ortiz worked tirelessly for local causes in New Orleans, and the surrounding metropolitan areas.

IMAGES:

⁶⁴ Robin Kelley, “We Are Not What We Seem: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South,” *The Journal of American History*, 80, no.1 (June 1993), 75. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2079698>.

⁶⁵ Ortiz, “Mark Cave Interview,” *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 2017.

⁶⁶ Marie Ortiz, “Mark Cave Interview with Marie Galatas Ortiz,” *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 2017. <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/3/31355>.



Figure 16. Image of Marie Galatas Ortiz (center) – *NOPL Recent Photographs Collection*
<http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/photos/recent/morerecent13/recent711.htm>

Figure 17. Image by Terri Rushing of 1610 Basin St.





Figure 18. Image of 1610 Basin Street, present day. The site is now home to Prince Hall Mason lodge.

Link to full interview with Mark Cave: <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/3/31355>

Politics

Dorothy Mae Taylor

Dorothy Mae Taylor was born on August 10, 1928, and is known as “The First Lady of 1300 Perdido Street” due to her years of service in New Orleans City Hall, which is located at 1300 Perdido Street, from 1986 to 1994.⁶⁷ In 1971, Taylor became the first woman of color elected to Louisiana’s House of Representatives and served in the legislature until 1980.⁶⁸ Before being elected, Taylor helped desegregate New Orleans public schools and the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD).⁶⁹ Taylor fought for civil rights, corrections reform of Angola Prison, and economic equality for Blacks in the span of six decades. “When I decided to run for the LA State Legislature, my major concern was that I might use my office to improve living conditions—the social, political and economic makeup of my district,” said Taylor.⁷⁰

Taylor believed in the need for more female leadership and more women role models. Taylor’s role model was Sojourner Truth and Taylor promoted pride in one’s self. Taylor said “We need these historical role models to remind us that we are somebody. That we were somebody before slavery. That we were somebody during slavery. That we were somebody after slavery.”⁷¹ Taylor emphasized the importance of Black involvement in city government

⁶⁷ Micheal Radcliffe, “Remembering Dorothy Mae Taylor: The First Lady of 1300 Perdido St.” *The Louisiana Weekly* (June 14, 2011).

⁶⁸ “Black Woman Eyes Senate,” *Milwaukee Star*, August 31, 1972.

⁶⁹ “Dorothy Mae Taylor,” Voices of Progress, *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, <https://www.hnoc.org/virtual/voices-progress/dorothy-mae-taylor>.

⁷⁰ “Bringing About Change Within the System,” *Dorothy Mae Taylor Papers*, Amistad Research Center,” Speeches 1971, “(Box 1, Folder 7).

⁷¹ Dorothy Mae Taylor, “The Importance of Black Involvement in City Government,” *Dorothy Mae Taylor Papers*, Amistad Research Center, “Speeches, 1971,” (Box 1, Folder 7).

and was a fierce advocate on “eliminating policies that have a negative impact on the equality of life in the Black community.”⁷²

Taylor’s stance on creating equal opportunities for the Black community is her lasting legacy. In the later years of her career, Taylor enacted an ordinance that prohibited segregation practices in Mardi Gras krewes. Taylor felt that if public resources were used for krewes to participate in Mardi Gras parades, then all citizens should be allowed to join any particular krewe. Taylor also knew that important deals made behind closed doors of certain Mardi Gras krewes did not include or benefit the Black community. In 1992, she enacted a city ordinance to prevent Mardi Gras krewes from discriminating based on race.⁷³

SITE(S): The site chosen for Dorothy Mae Taylor is 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA.

Taylor dedicated many years to public service in state and local government. She held positions in the Louisiana State Legislature as well as New Orleans City Council. She is more known for her stance on discriminatory practices of Mardi Gras krewes late in her career. 1300 Perdido Street is the location of New Orleans City Hall.

IMAGES:

⁷² Dorothy Mae Taylor, ‘Black Involvement,’ *Dorothy Mae Taylor Papers*, Amistad Research Center, ‘Speeches, 1971,’ (Box 1, Folder 7).

⁷³ Karen Bates, ‘Dorothy Mae Taylor’s Impact on Mardi Gras,’ (February 27, 2006), WWNO-New Orleans Public Radio, NPR.org <https://www.npr.org/>



Figure 19. Image of Dorothy Mae Taylor – *NOPL Recent Photographs Collection*
<http://archives.nolalibrary.org/~nopl/photos/recent/morerecent3/recent246.htm>

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VITA

Terri Rushing BA, Public Relations, Tulane University 2018.

Terri was born in Covington, LA and is a graduate of Covington High School (Covington, LA). After graduating high school, she began Communications and Journalism studies at Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond, LA). However, she would complete her bachelor's degree at Tulane University (New Orleans, LA) in Public Relations in 2018.

Terri completed an internship at the Tacoma Rescue Mission in Tacoma, WA, researching the availability and retention of vital services to the city's most vulnerable citizens. She was also responsible for creating training modules and policies for volunteers and staff that will be utilized over five campuses associated with the Tacoma Rescue Mission. After graduation from Tulane University, she completed press releases and proclamations for the Atlanta City Council Communications Division. Working with the communications division allowed Terri to speak with people who played pivotal roles in the Civil Rights Movement such as C.T. Vivian and Xernona Clayton. She returned to Covington, LA after completing assignments in both Tacoma, WA and Atlanta, GA.

Studying the past is of great interest, having completed studies on such subjects as New Orleans People and Places, New Orleans Anthropology, and Colonial Louisiana. Terri has maintained the historical property databases for the National Parks Service and Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, in the Department of Historical Preservation. Because of her love of Louisiana culture, Terri began her master's degree studies with the University of New Orleans in History in 2019. Terri has completed projects with New Orleans Historical and Freedom on the Move, and Terri is a member of the Louisiana Historical Association.