



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

The New York State Conference of Black Senators mourns the loss Of a great leader Dr. Dorothy I. Height “The Godmother of the Civil Rights Movement”

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON April 28, 2010

| COMMITTEE: **NEW YORK STATE CONFERENCE OF BLACK SENATORS**



On Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the nation lost one its greatest civil rights leaders, Dr. Dorothy Height who passed away at the age of 98. Dr. Height dedicated her life to the struggles of equality and human rights for all people. She was a key figure throughout the Civil Rights Movement, along with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney H. Young, A. Philip

Randolph, James Farmer, Roy Wilkins and John Lewis. She was the female team leader in the Civil Rights Leadership At the 1963 March on Washington, Dr. Height was on the platform when King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. During the civil rights era, Dr. Height led the National Council of Negro Women in dealing with the unmet needs of women and their families, through combating hunger and establishing decent housing and home ownership programs for low income families with the help of the federal government. Her organization led voter registration drives and established "Wednesdays in Mississippi" where interracial groups of women would help at Freedom Schools.

Dr. Height had to overcome many adversities. She was denied admittance to, Barnard College due to their quota requirement of accepting -two black students. Dr. Height was determined to attend college and enrolled in New York University. Where she earned her bachelor and master's degrees in four years. Dr. Height did her postgraduate work at Columbia University and the New York School of Social Work. Dr. Dorothy Height has been duly recognized and honored by numerous educational institutions and has received over thirty Honorary Doctorate Degrees from universities and colleges.

As the National Past President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (1947-1956) and as Chair of the National Council of Negro Women (1957 -1998); Dr. Height's life exemplified her true commitment for a just society and a vision of a better world. In 1994, Dr. Height was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's Highest Civilian award by former President Bill Clinton and in 2004, she was presented with the Congressional Gold Medal, the Highest Civilian and Most Distinguished Award by the United States Congress.

"She was a trailblazer, a civil rights leader, a scholar, a woman and a true inspiration to all women everywhere. Dr. Dorothy Irene Height will truly be missed", said by **Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Chairwoman –NYS Conference of Black Senators.**

From my earliest memories of a woman in the civil rights movement, Dorothy Height, stood among the tallest. Dignified, astute, fashionable and formidable. No issue significant to African American women went unaddressed by this iconic leader. She was the “Gold Standard”, said by **Senator Andrea- Stewart- Cousins (Westchester)**.