

Jacquelin E. Washington

Detroit - Jacquelin E. Washington, a pioneering leader for women's rights and equal justice, died in her home on April 27, 2019. She was 87.

In 1970, she helped organize and chair the first Violence Against Women Committee for the National Organization for Women (NOW) Detroit Chapter. Later she served on the national board of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. She co-founded the personnel agency New Options in 1975, at a time when careers for women were limited, and placed women and minorities in desirable, non-traditional, affirmative action positions throughout business and industry. She became the Human Resources Manager of the Detroit area Bendix Corporation, and later the Human Resources Director for Vixen Motor Company in Pontiac. She was President and CEO of the Pontiac Area Urban League from 1988 - 1992, and the first African-American President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of Southeast Michigan from 1992 until her retirement in 1999. In 2000, she was elected to the Wayne State University Board of Governors where she served as Board president. She was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 1995. For 17 years she served on the ACLU Michigan Executive Board, serving 4 years as president, and representing Michigan on ACLU's national board.

"Jackie was a gentle but fierce warrior for human rights. An immensely skilled leader, she understood the importance of building bridges to create real change. Always kind, she taught me how to bring people together while staying focused on the north star." Kary Moss, Director of Affiliate Support and Nationwide Initiatives at ACLU.

Washington was a member of many service organizations, including the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Greek-lettered organization for African-American women. She was a past-president of the Detroit Chapters of the Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and Top Ladies of Distinction. For nearly 50 years, she was an active member of Central United Methodist Church in Detroit.

Born in St. Augustine, FL, she lived in Miami before earning a degree at Fisk University in Nashville, TN. Washington married and moved to Detroit in 1952 where she worked for the Detroit Welfare Department. She earned her MSW at Wayne State University's School of Social Work in 1965 and began her career as a social worker in the Detroit Public Schools.

Washington had been living at Henry Ford Village in Dearborn where she was active in the Women's Christian Guild, League of Women Voters and served as Resident Representative on the Henry Ford Village Executive Board. She had recently been diagnosed with cancer.

She is survived by her three children, Sandra (Darrell), Byron (Christine) and Kristin, a granddaughter, Grace, a brother-in-law, Leon (Carol), a cousin, Janie, six nieces and nephews, and a host other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, Kenneth B. Washington, DDS in 2004.

A Memorial Service for Henry Ford Village residents will be held on May 24th at 10:00AM in the Chapel.

A public Memorial Service will be held at Central United Methodist Church, 23 E. Adams in Detroit on Saturday, May 25th. The Family Hour begins at 10:00AM. The Memorial Service begins at 11:00AM

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions to the Jacquelin E. Washington Endowed Scholarship, Wayne State University School of Social Work, Detroit, MI Fund # 0-66044.