

Student Tool 38: Living Under Jim Crow Laws Guest

Biographies

Guest Biographies

History in the First Person: Living Under Jim Crow Laws

Lois Jean Turner

Octogenarian Lois Jean Turner is a native St Louisiana who grew up in the historic Ville Neighborhood. She graduated from Charles Sumner High School which was the ‘anchor’ of the Ville as the first high school west of the Mississippi River built especially for ‘Colored’ students. In 1949, Lois Jean earned her bachelors degree in Education from Harriet Beecher Stowe Teachers College, also in the Ville.

Ms. Turner began her career advocating for the classroom students, her fellow teachers and all school personnel. She became a member of the St. Louis Teachers’ Union, Local 420. Later as a Board Member, she went to state, regional and national conventions. She soon became highly identifiable as the ‘representative with the energy.’

Her advocacy grew exponentially and she became the first classroom teacher to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She served on the committee that developed criteria for what a teacher should know and be able to do. For her dedicated work she received an Outstanding Service Award for 1989 – 1992.

Lois Jean has been a Trustee on the Public Schools Retirement Board of St Louis. Her work at the SLPS Retire Board led to her membership on the National Association Of Security Professionals (NASP).

Her latest endeavor was membership on the Board of Trustees of the St Louis Branch of the American Liberties Union (ACLU). She was re-elected for three terms.

She has fought strongly against the second amendment and the right to carry guns. She spoke and worked endlessly for The Voting Rights Act of 1960, which was gutted by the U.S. Supreme Court when Section 5 was removed from a most masterful piece of legislation.

She is proud of her advocacies on these meaningful issues. Her awards are a testimony of her dedication and hard work. In 1993, she received a Certificate of Life Membership by the NAACP; 1999 she was awarded The Lifetime Achievement Award by the Committee on Political Education, Local 420; she received the 2000 Living The Legacy Award from the AFL-CIO Women’s’ Rights Committee; in 2006 NASP awarded her the Pacesetters Award; and in 2011 the ACLU of Eastern Missouri awarded Ms. Turner the Distinguished Citizen Award.

William A. McAllister

William A. McAllister was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1923. His family moved to St. Louis in 1928. In 1941 he graduated from Sumner High School. His three years at Harriet Beecher Stowe Teachers College were interrupted by his service in the US Army 1943-46.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University. In 1948 he entered the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. There he met his wife Mary. In 1947, Mary was part of a group of students who became the first African Americans to matriculate at Washington University since 1919. Both hold a MSW Degree.

Mr. McAllister began his long association with the YMCA as a youth in 1932 at the Pine Street YMCA in St Louis. His first professional position was as Youth Work Director in St. Louis in 1947. In 1954 he became the Executive of the West Branch YMCA in Chester, Pennsylvania.

McAllister accepted the position of Executive of the Michigan Avenue Branch YMCA in Buffalo, New York in 1959. In 1964 he became the Executive of the Michigan and Humboldt branches and in 1967 became the Associate Executive for Urban Affairs. While serving in that position, he founded the Y Academy – a supplemental education program for gifted inner-city boys conducted in cooperation with the University of Buffalo's Department of Education.

In 1968 McAllister was named Associate Executive of the West Central Area of the YMCA and in 1970 was chosen as the first Executive Director of the newly formed Mid-America Region. In his eleven-year tenure, he helped to develop the Management Resource Center concept and was responsible for the region's growing to include seventeen Midwestern and Southwestern states. During 1975-77, McAllister served at the World Council meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In 1981 William McAllister became the director of the department of personnel and training for the YMCA of the USA. He brought together and expanded the department, which served and supported all local affiliations and their employees, and also provided leadership to the Y's Young Professionals Abroad Program. The National Conference of YMCA Directors presented him the Lawrence K. Hall Citation in 1982 for Outstanding Accomplishments and Service as a YMCA Professional Director. In 1984 he was elected Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Director of the YMCA Retirement Fund. While there, he established a strategic planning process and set in motion mechanisms between the local YMCA, the YMCA of the USA and the Retirement Fund. He established the Retirement Seminar program for prospective retirees.

McAllister retired in 1989, but he served as treasurer of the Greater County YMCA, as well as a member of the Sioux Indian YMCA and YMCA of the Rockies advisory boards. In 1994 he was elected chairman of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees, which included members in eleven countries on five continents. William A. McAllister remains active in many local, national and international organizations and most recently he became a fellow of the Elliott Society at Washington University in St Louis.