

An Extraordinary Educator, Advocate and Friend

Esther Collins Early Education Center
Renaming Ceremony ~ Thursday, August 28, 2014



Mrs. Esther Harris Collins
1930 -2013

Esther Collins was a champion for low income families in the Los Angeles area throughout her thirty-five year career with the Los Angeles Unified School District and partnered with several communities based non-profit organizations during her personal hours. Mrs. Collins' personal mission was to provide children and their families with avenues that would promote education, self-sufficiency and personal improvement.

During Mrs. Collins' career with the Los Angeles Unified School District she was part of the then titled, Child Development Division administrative team. This team was instrumental in opening Children Centers throughout Los Angeles that provided free or low cost child care to low income families, which enabled parents to attend vocational training to increase their income and/or go to work knowing that their child would be cared for in a nurturing learning environment. As this program expanded and touched lives throughout the years, there are now many parents and students who through the assistance of this program have returned to visit as doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other esteemed professionals. Mrs. Collins was integral in creating policies and procedures that shaped the foundation for early childhood programs throughout the city. Mrs. Collins' demanded excellence from every person that served the children and families within the Children Centers from the aides and teachers in the classroom, to the office support staff, all the way to the administrative team that represented the program to the Board of Education and the public.

In her personal time, in 1954, Mrs. Collins' promoted education by forming an Alumni chapter in Los Angeles for Tougaloo College. One of the many charges of the chapter was for alumni to back and support high school students with scholarships so that they could afford to attend college and obtain a higher education. Mrs. Collins' was awarded the honor of Alumnus of the Year in 1993 from the Tougaloo College National Alumni Association. Her work in promoting education for students of color during a time of segregation and the fight for civil rights was of great significance. She remained active in this work until her passing.

Another community organization that Mrs. Collins was an active member in until her passing was the Y's Men Group of the YMCA. She held many position in this organization including Regional Director, Chapter Secretary and Hostess. While involved in this organization, she was instrumental in the planning of fund raising events that raised funds to send children from low income families to camp, to trips to the State Capitol for hands on lessons in government and to gain active membership with the YMCA.

Through her active service with her church, "The Guidance Church of Religious Science." Mrs. Collins coordinated and participated in many charitable events throughout the years, again helping those in need and less fortunate than most.

Mrs. Collins' work over the years has always aligned to her mission of helping children and families improve their quality of life. The family of Mrs. Collins is proud of the work their mother, sister, aunt and friend has accomplished in her life time and feels honored for any consideration given towards her contributions to the good of humankind.