

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

A Public Service Sorority Founded in 1913

1707 New Hampshire Avenue N.W. ▲ Washington, DC 20009 ▲ (202) 986-2400 ▲ Telefax (202) 986-2513

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact

Ashley Chaney, (202) 986-2400, ext. 384

achaney@deltasigmatheta.org

Ella McNair, (202) 986-2400, ext. 504

emcnair@deltasigmatheta.org

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Mourns Beloved 10th National President and Civil Rights Matriarch, Dr. Dorothy Irene Height

WASHINGTON—Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. across the globe are deeply saddened by the loss of Dr. Dorothy Irene Height, the organization’s 10th National President and chair and president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women. Dr. Height died early this morning of natural causes at Howard University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

A civil and human rights leader, women’s rights pioneer and staunch advocate for social justice, Dr. Height was a strategist in the struggle for equality for all people for more than a half a century. She was often the lone woman at the table strategizing with world renowned Civil Rights leaders such as: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney H. Young, A. Phillip Randolph, James Farmer, Roy Wilkins and John Lewis.

“The world knows Dr. Height as the ‘Godmother of the Civil Rights Movement,’ but to the members of Delta Sigma Theta, she was so much more,” said Cynthia Butler-McIntyre, National President of Delta Sigma Theta. “Dr. Height was a role model, mentor, sister and friend who will be greatly missed. She leaves behind an extraordinary legacy that will inspire us all to work toward effecting change with the vigor and tenacity that she embodied.”

Dr. Height served as an advisor to Eleanor Roosevelt on Civil Rights issues and was a driving force behind the development of policies affecting women, families and children, as well as social welfare, economic development and civil and human rights. A devoted student of Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of the NCNW and honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta, Dr. Height was committed to keeping her vision alive. She received hundreds of honors and awards, including the Medal of Freedom, presented by Bill Clinton, and the Congressional Gold Medal, presented by President George W. Bush.

Dr. Height was initiated into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in 1939 through Rho Chapter at Columbia University. She went on to serve as the 10th National President of the Sorority from 1947-1956. During her tenure, she oversaw the purchase of the Sorority's first National Headquarters building. She was involved in hiring the organization's first executive director, The Honorable Patricia Roberts Harris. Dr. Height also developed leadership training programs as well as interracial and ecumenical educational programs for members of Delta Sigma Theta as well as other organizations and institutions throughout the United States.

Dr. Height was always present and very much involved at national Delta events and many local and regional events as well. There was never a time that she did not leave words of wisdom for Sorority members and guests who were present.

“Words cannot express what Dr. Height has meant to the members of Delta Sigma Theta,” said Butler-McIntyre. “She is a visionary leader who has inspired others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more. Her dedication, sacrifice and committed service have played a major role in shaping strategies, policies and procedures that continue to sustain Delta as the single largest African-American women's organization. We join the nation in mourning the loss of this phenomenal woman.”

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded in 1913 on the campus of Howard University to promote academic excellence; to provide scholarships; to provide support to the underserved; educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy; and to highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities. Today Delta Sigma Theta Sorority has over 250,000 members and more than 900 chapters worldwide. The Sorority uses its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust of economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health, and political awareness and involvement to create its national programs.

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