

AFTER HALF A CENTURY, HONORING A PROPHET

In civil rights as in other endeavors, history sometimes takes a while to recognize and honor the prophets. For Gertrude Jackson that day will come on December 20, when she will receive an honorary degree at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Jackson, who was part of a group that founded Boys Girls Adults Community Development Center at Marvell, and her husband were pioneers in the civil rights struggle in the Delta almost 50 years ago. They invited the field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to hold weekly meetings in the community church at Turner so people could vent their grievances. When the school board ignored sewer backups in the black school she organized a boycott of the school until the board made the repairs. In 1966, she and her husband launched a class-action lawsuit to desegregate the schools.



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"Unsung activists like Mrs. Jackson are often the lifeblood of impoverished Arkansas Delta communities in helping to sustain daily life," said Dr. Joel Anderson, chancellor at UALR. "The award of an honorary degree recognizes the contributions of Jackson and other women like her whose efforts are significant yet all too often sidelined because they remain out of the headlines and out of sight."

The degree will be conferred at the fall commencement at 9:30a.m. on Thursday, December 20 at the Jack Stephens Center at UALR.



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