

elected to the Valley District Dental Society as Vice President for 2 years.

Dr. Conlin graduated from the College of Holy Cross with an A.B. degree in 1953. He later attended the American International College for Post Graduate studies from 1958 to 1959. Frederick Conlin received his DDS from the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry in 1963.

Conlin has also served in the Armed Forces for his country. From 1954 until 1956 Dr. Conlin proudly served as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. However, Lieutenant Conlin has also given to his country through his participation in local politics, having held many elected positions in his local community.

Dr. Conlin was elected as a Town Meeting Member for 25 years. He was also elected to the Park and Recreation Commission and the Board of Selectman both for 6 years respectively. He was also chosen to be on the Board of Health for 5 years. Dr. Conlin served as Vice President of the City Council for 3 years.

In addition to being elected to numerous organizations by his peers, Dr. Conlin also has volunteered to donate his time and talents to a plethora of other boards and organizations; including, the Town Government Study committee for 15 years, the American Legion Post 207 for 15 years, the Ramapogue Historical Society for 6 years, and served on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Seniors for 4 years. He also was a co-founder and member of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee for 10 years, and served on the West Springfield Veterans Council for 2 years. Always staying involved in politics, Dr. Conlin served 30 years on the Republican Town Committee.

Dr. Conlin is a citizen of Springfield that we are extremely proud of and we wish him nothing but the best in his retirement. Dr. Conlin has been a member of St. Thomas Church for 50 years. He has been blessed with his wife the former Barbara Crowley for 26 years, and has one son, Rick, who currently attends Temple University School of Medicine. We wish you the best of luck and good health, Dr. Conlin.

TRIBUTE TO MCKINLEY LANGFORD BURNETT

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, our nation recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, which struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine, holding that segregated public schools violated the equal protection provisions of our Constitution.

As we honor the many intrepid Americans who fought for racial equality for many years in order to make the *Brown* decision a reality, I want to bring to your attention the important contribution to this effort made by McKinley Langford Burnett of Topeka, Kansas. The *Brown* decision was the fulfillment of a long fight over several years to assure equal education for children. McKinley Burnett began the Topeka, Kansas-based arm of this campaign in earnest in 1948, when he became president of the Topeka chapter of the Na-

tional Association of Colored People [NAACP]. While earlier attempts had been made to challenge segregation in Topeka, by 1948 only Topeka High School was integrated, and that school had separate sports teams for white and black students. As an observer of the situation said of Burnett after the fact: "He faced a school board and superintendent who believed that schools should remain segregated, black teachers afraid of losing their jobs, and many who just didn't want to rock the boat. They all faced McKinley Burnett, a man whose drive and determination kept him working for the day when schools would be open to all."

Born in Oskaloosa, Kansas, in 1897, McKinley Burnett faced discrimination throughout his early life: offered only parts as dancers or butlers in school plays; relegated to working as a supply clerk at the Veterans Administration; and turned down for a job as a route driver with a local bakery because of his race. In 1948, however, he became president of the Topeka chapter of the NAACP, in a community where separate schools for the races had been established in 1927. For 2 years, Burnett held meetings and wrote letters seeking support for school desegregation, without success. According to Charles Baston, a member of the Topeka NAACP chapter, the school board would often extend its meetings by sitting and joking, hoping the NAACP members at the meeting would leave without speaking: "We never left."

In 1950, the NAACP, under Burnett's leadership, recruited 13 black families to challenge segregation by sending their children to enroll in white-only schools. The 20 children, including 7-year-old Linda Brown of Topeka, were denied enrollment, and in February 1951 the NAACP filed suit. Three years later, the Supreme Court issued their landmark decision, in a case that also included suits from South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Burnett continued to serve as president of the Topeka NAACP chapter until 1963, dying in 1968. As Roy Wilkins of the NAACP said upon his death, in a telegram to Burnett's widow, Lea: "Throughout the years he was in the vanguard of our fight for full citizenship rights. For more than a quarter century he served as President of the Topeka branch of the NAACP. During that period against seemingly insurmountable odds he was instrumental in initiating the school desegregation case of Linda Brown in Topeka which culminated in the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. He could have no better monument than this decision which changed the course of public education in our country."

Mr. Speaker, proclamations honoring the life of McKinley Langford Burnett were issued by the Topeka Board of Education, the Shawnee County, Kansas, Board of Commissioners, and the Governor of the State of Kansas. I include them in the RECORD, along with an Associated Press article summarizing Mr. Burnett's life and good works, and an editorial from the Topeka Capital Journal commending his life.

RESOLUTION 01-06

Whereas, McKinley Langford Burnett was a behind-the-scenes force in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka case that dismantled the "separate but equal" provisions for the education of African American students in America's public schools; and

Whereas, Mr. Burnett was the Topeka chapter president of the NAACP from 1948-1963, concentrating his efforts on the integration of Topeka Public Schools and with determination, conviction and persistence challenged the Board of Education to end segregated schools; and

Whereas, Mr. Burnett was responsible for recruiting a group of 13 black families to challenge segregation by sending their children to enroll in all-white schools in the fall of 1950 and upon the denial of their enrollment, Mr. Burnett, along with other NAACP officials and attorneys, developed a strategy for a court case and filed suit against the School Board through the local NAACP chapter, on behalf of the families; and

Whereas, three years later the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed the case, which had been joined with four other school desegregation lawsuits from South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia and the District of Columbia, and on May 17, 1954 issued their landmark ruling that said "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and that the separate but equal doctrine had "no place" in public education; and

Whereas, 40 years later, the Topeka Public Schools' Board of Education entered into a school desegregation remedy plan in the reopened *Brown* case, successfully implemented the remedy plan, and four years later, July 27, 1999, District Court Judge Richard Rogers approved the district's motion for unitary status and directed the case be closed; and

Whereas, a committee appointed by the Superintendent of Schools pursuant to Board Policy 2200 has recommended that the unnamed Administrative Center of the Topeka Public Schools be named in honor of Mr. Burnett.

Now therefore, in recognition that Mr. Burnett's vision and passion for educational justice for all children resulted in *Brown v. The Board of Education*, and has been felt in Topeka and across the land,

Be it resolved, on this 7th day of June, 2001 that the Topeka Public Schools' Board of Education, to commemorate the progress of educational equity initiated by Mr. Burnett in the 1940's, immortalized by the 1954 Supreme Court, and sustained in recent years by the courts and Topeka Public Schools' Board of Education; and to honor this unsung hero for his untiring efforts until his death in 1968, does hereby name the Topeka Public Schools' Administrative Center, the: "McKinley L. Burnett Administrative Center."

PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the late McKinley L. Burnett would have been 100 years old this year on January 31, 1997; and,

Whereas, the original 1942 charter for the Topeka Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will be on display at the Topeka-Shawnee County library between the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on May 17, 1997; and

Whereas, on February 28, 1951 the NAACP led by McKinley Burnett filed a lawsuit which resulted in the Historic Supreme Court decision on May 17, 1954, *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*; and,

Whereas, on Saturday, May 17, 1997, the Kansas Committee to Commemorate *Brown v. Education* and Bias Busters of Kansas will observe the 43rd anniversary of the Historic Supreme Court Decision at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library at 4:00 p.m.; and,

Whereas, at the Committee's annual observance, a special ceremony on this day, tribute will be paid to McKinley L. Burnett, president of the Topeka Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored people with a Pictorial Stamp Cancellation; and,

Whereas, *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* is recognized as the Civil Rights Case of the Century by overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and deciding that "Separate is not necessarily equal"; and,

Whereas, this Nation has become a great Nation because of the contributions of many people of different races and nationalities, all giving their best to make our Country what it is today; and,

Whereas, frequently we become so involved in our daily tasks that we neglect to say "Thank You" to those who give their time and energy to benefit others.

Now, therefore, the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Shawnee, Kansas, meeting in regular session on this 15th day of May, 1997, does hereby proclaim May 17, 1997 as McKinley L. Burnett Day in Shawnee County and invite the participation of every section of the population regardless of race, color, creed, or religion.

STATE OF KANSAS

Whereas, The late McKinley L. Burnett would have been 100 years old on January 31, 1997; and

Whereas, On May 17, the Kansas Committee to Commemorate *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* and *Bias Busters of Kansas* will observe the 43rd anniversary of the Historic Supreme Court Decision. At the Committee's annual observance, a special tribute will be paid to McKinley L. Burnett with a Pictorial Stamp Cancellation; and

Whereas, The original 1942 charter for the Topeka Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will be on display at the Topeka-Shawnee County Library on May 17, 1997; and

Whereas, *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* is recognized as the Civil Rights Case of the Century by overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and deciding that "separate is not necessarily equal"; and

Whereas, This Nation has become a great nation because of the contributions of many people of different races and nationalities, all giving their best to make our country what it is today;

On behalf of the citizens of the State of Kansas, I would like to recognize McKinley L. Burnett and invite the participation of all citizens, regardless of race, color, creed, or religion.

BILL GRAVES,
Governor.

MCKINLEY BURNETT IS FORGOTTEN BUT PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN BROWN CASE

(By John Hanna)

TOPEKA.—Most folks know about Linda Brown, the young black girl who was barred from attending a school near her home because of her race. Many also have heard of her father, Oliver Brown.

His name appeared first on one of the U.S. Supreme Court's most famous cases. The May 17, 1954 ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* declared school segregation unconstitutional.

But few people have heard of McKinley Burnett. People who do know about him think his anonymity is a shame, because he played a key role in the Brown case.

Burnett served as president of the Topeka chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from 1948 to 1963.

And his anger at the local school board's refusal to end segregation in elementary schools helped fuel a small but persistent movement that led to the Brown case in February 1951.

"Quite frankly, McKinley Burnett was one of the primary catalysts," said Cheryl Brown

Henderson, a daughter of Oliver Brown, who is now president of the Brown Foundation. "It's very important that people have their rightful place in history."

Local activists scheduled a ceremony for Saturday at Topeka's public library to honor Burnett, marking the 100th year since his birth and the 43rd anniversary of the Brown decision. On display will be family memorabilia, pictures and letters.

Burnett was born in Oskaloosa in January 1897. He became an activist early in life, said a son, Marquis Burnett.

"When they had school plays, the only parts he could get were being a dancer or a butler," Marquis Burnett said.

McKinley Burnett worked in the Santa Fe railroad shops, as well as at the Veterans' Administration hospital as a stock clerk, one of the better jobs available for blacks in those days. People understood that some jobs simply were closed to blacks.

Letters the family displays from its collection show the harshness of discrimination. Some are from McKinley Burnett to various Kansas officials, complaining about the refusal of companies to hire blacks.

In November 1950, he wrote about his conversation with the sales manager of a Topeka bakery, which had an opening for a route man.

"He told me that he could not hire a Negro for such a job and that such had never even been considered, neither had they ever had such a request before," Burnett wrote.

In 1948, Burnett and other NAACP officials began pushing for integration of Topeka's elementary schools. State law allowed segregation in cities as large as Topeka but did not mandate it.

Topeka High School was integrated but had separate sports teams and clubs for whites and blacks.

At the time, the city had 18 all-white elementary schools and four for blacks. The district's superintendent believed in segregation; the school board agreed.

One board member challenged McKinley Burnett to a fight. Charles Baston, another local NAACP member, remembered in a 1992 interview for the Kansas State Historical Society that the board was rude. It forced NAACP members to wait until the early hours of the morning to voice their concerns.

"It was rather disgusting, because a lot of times, a board member would go through their agenda, and then they would sit and laugh or joke about something to try to extend the time," Baston said. "We never left."

By 1950, McKinley Burnett had enough. He and a small group met at the home of Lucinda Todd, the local chapter's secretary, to plot strategy.

"Going to court was their last recourse," said Henderson, the Brown Foundation president.

NAACP officials recruited parents with schoolchildren to be plaintiffs. Legend has it that Oliver Brown's name was listed first because it was first alphabetically, but in fact his daughter suspects it was because he was the only male parent.

In her interview for the state historical society, Mrs. Todd remembered how concerned some blacks were. Black teachers had been told by one school official that integration would end their jobs.

"A lot of people had jobs—they worked for the city—and didn't want to cause trouble," Marquis Burnett said. "It wasn't really popular."

In the fall of 1950, 13 black families tried to enroll their children in white schools across the city. All were turned away. The NAACP had counseled them to have a witness and to document what had happened.

The lawsuit was filed in February 1951. The U.S. Supreme Court consolidated it with four other cases before issuing its historic ruling.

"At that time, he never thought, 'I'm going to do something to make history,'" Marquis Burnett said of his father. "He was just doing what he had to do."

McKinley Burnett greeted the ruling with jubilation, telling reporters in Topeka: "I say, thank God for the Supreme Court."

Burnett battled leukemia throughout his life and retired as NAACP president in 1963. He died five years later, at the age of 71.

May 17 remained a special day for him.

"That became McKinley Burnett's personal holiday, and he would not work for anyone on that day," said Baston, the NAACP board member.

MCKINLEY BURNETT—A CIVIL RIGHTS HERO

In any worthy struggle, there are those who doggedly go about the task at hand without fanfare. McKinley Burnett was just such a man.

The Topekan got his due, albeit late, recognition Saturday at a ceremony and special pictorial postal cancellation at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library.

Although Brown and often Scott are the names most often mentioned in the landmark 1954 school desegregation ruling, Burnett had built the foundation on which it was based. His effort started back in the 1930s and focused not just on schools, but also other forms of segregation, including movie theaters, restaurants, court-houses and other facilities.

But Burnett saw the schools as the best place to initiate the changes, and he worked diligently for that cause. When years of effort failed to move the Topeka Board of Education, Burnett in 1950 finally threatened to sue. The march toward *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* began.

Brown refers, of course, to the family that alphabetically headed the list of plaintiffs. Scott is the name of the family of lawyers who argued the case. But make no mistake, Burnett is also an important part of the suit.

Saturday's special cancellation attests to that. Done in recognition of the 43rd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the cancellation cites the suit filed by the NAACP on Feb. 18, 1951, that led to the ruling. Burnett, who is pictured on the cancellation, was president of the local NAACP at the time and this is the 100th anniversary of his birth. He died in 1968.

It's unfortunate his contributions weren't more highly recognized during his lifetime. By all accounts, however, Burnett valued results more than personal glory. A true hero.

CONGRATULATING MS. GWENDOLYN MASTIN

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Gwendolyn Mastin, founder and CEO/President of the New Phoenix Assistance Center located in the Second Congressional District of Illinois, which I proudly represent. I would like to congratulate Ms. Mastin on being chosen for the 2004 Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership award. She is one of just ten outstanding individuals who have been honored this year by the foundation for innovatively bringing health care to communities whose needs have been ignored and unmet.

Gwendolyn Mastin founded Chicago's first scattered-site housing program for homeless