

Alice Faye Kent Hoppes Statewide Essay Scholarship 2011

By Joycelyn Pegues Jackson

Alice Faye Kent Hoppes Statewide Essay Scholarship, Chairperson

The Alice Faye Kent Hoppes Statewide Essay Scholarship was developed in honor of Alice Faye Kent Hoppes for graduating seniors of African American decent across the state of New Mexico. The scholarship is given every other year in February during African American Day at the Legislature by the African American Legislative Council.

Alice Faye Kent Hoppes, the second of four children of the late Harold and Bessie Kent, was born in Tucumcari, NM on May 20, 1939. Faye, as she was known during her childhood, was reared in a strong family that supported the ideals of hard work, honesty and independence. The Kent children attended the segregated school earmarked for the small black student population in Tucumcari, New Mexico. Faye graduated though from Tucumcari High School in 1958 which had become integrated. From an early age, the separate and unequal treatment of African American citizens endured merely because of the color of their skin was troubling and unacceptable to her.

When Mrs. Hoppes and her family moved to Albuquerque in 1967, she began her quest to provide a voice on behalf of black citizens in the community. By this time she was more readily known as Alice. She fervently and fearlessly fought to make the political, social, and governmental systems accountable to its black citizens in, not only, Albuquerque but throughout the state as well.

Mrs. Hoppes was elected president of the NAACP-Albuquerque Branch in 1984. She served in this position for 12 years. During her tenure, she spearheaded efforts to create an African-American Day at the annual State Fair, organized civil rights marches to protest unfair practices, and spoke out in a variety of venues about prison reform, biased media reporting, unfair labor practices, fair housing and equal access. Additionally, Mrs. Hoppes fervently lobbied for the creation of the African-American Pavilion at the NM Expo Fairgrounds. Mrs. Hoppes was involved in a number of organizations, but her most notable accomplishment was her appointment in 2003 as director of the Office of African-American Affairs by Governor Bill Richardson.

Mrs. Hoppes died on October 21, 2003. For her many years of tireless work on behalf of African Americans and others in New Mexico, Governor Richardson decreed that the African-American Pavilion at the NM Expo Fairgrounds be named the Alice F. Hoppes African – American Pavilion. For all that she did on behalf of black and/or disenfranchised citizens in NM, we are grateful.