

Presidents

Biographical Sketches of the Presidents of the San Diego NAACP

William T. Hendrey

Born in Tennessee, William T. Hendrey (1873-1962), an African American who worked for several years (roughly 1917 to 1924) in San Diego as a barber and deliveryman, was the first president of the San Diego branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), serving from January until November 1919, and subsequently serving as vice president and as a board member under Judge Alfred Haines. He lived at 1680 Logan Avenue with his wife, Alexenia Cora Hendrey, who was chair of the branch's education committee. They had two children, Adrain and Clarence. After the death of Alexenia in 1924, Mr. Hendrey left town and resettled in Bakersfield, California where until his death he was an active, revered elder at Cain Memorial A.M.E. Church.

Alfred Haines



Alfred Haines (1845-1934) was the only Caucasian to serve as branch president. Born in Pennsylvania, as a teenager he fought in an Iowa regiment during the Civil War. After studying law at Beloit College in Wisconsin and at Harvard University he returned to Iowa to practice law and became mayor of the Vinton, Iowa. He moved to Dakota Territory where he was a member of the First Constitutional Convention of South Dakota. Arriving in San Diego 1887, he was admitted to the California Bar in 1888; was a partner in three law firms; appointed an assistant district attorney; was the second president of the

San Diego County Association and vice president of the California Bar Association; argued on behalf of area citrus growers before the U.S. Supreme Court; and was



elevated to Judge of the Superior Court. Elected NAACP branch president on November 18, 1919, he served in that capacity for nearly three years, then was a mainstay on the board of directors. His most significant achievement was the rewriting and expansion of the state's original civil rights law which was prompted by a board member's daughters being denied service at an east San Diego drug store in 1923. Upon his death on October 15, 1944, he was eulogized by blacks as their loyal friend both in the *San Diego Union* and *The Crisis*. Twice married and widowed, he had eight children, among them Charles C. Haines who followed in his footsteps to become a lawyer, judge, and member of the San Diego NAACP. Today Judge Alfred Haines is mainly remembered as the former owner of two historic, architecturally impressive homes in Chula Vista and Golden Hill (photo above, "The Haines House").

Charles H. Dodge

Though he received little recognition until near the end of his life, Charles H. Dodge (1868-1942) was one of the most accomplished African Americans in the first half of the 20th century. Born



in Illinois, the son of an adventurous but unlucky white gold miner and a black woman, he worked his way through Fisk University freelancing as a barber on campus. Short of funds, instead of entering law school in St. Louis he wound up a janitor in a large bank. Ever resourceful, he taught himself accounting and banking principles and secretly agreed to do the work of the bank's passbook clerk without pay. One night after closing, the bank's president surprised Dodge balancing pass books. Shocked, he told Dodge to get back to work mopping floors. But the president was curious. He examined the pass books and found they were perfectly balanced. Thus, Dodge replaced the white man who's work he had been doing for free.

After a few years the president ordered all drafts due the bank made payable in cash to Charles H. Dodge. In 1912, he moved to San Diego where he was promoted from clerk to cashier of the Southern Trust and Commerce Bank, and later promoted to bank currency counter, a step below vice president, when this bank merged with the Bank of Italy and renamed the Bank of America. This meant that **in the 1930s Dodge occupied the most prominent position held by any black at a white-controlled financial institution in the United States**. Elected NAACP branch president in 1922, he informed NAACP national treasurer J. E. Spingarn that he immediately balanced the branch's books which he found in a "very bad condition" and liquidated its debts.

Dodge and his wife, Martha, maintained a long, personal friendship with W.E.B. Du Bois whom they had known prior to arriving here, and Dodge was also an acquaintance of Frederick Douglass. More than a businessman, he was a warm and caring human being. He spent 12 years

and a considerable amount of his own money to free a wrongly accused white soldier once condemned to death. He even went to the White House, shook hands with President Coolidge and pleaded for the soldier's release which occurred soon thereafter. He also helped to get the governor of California to pardon a local doctor who he feared would die in prison. A philanthropist, he contributed funds that built Sumner High School in St. Louis, the first high school west of the Mississippi River specifically intended to educate blacks. In poor health, Dodge retired to the Los Angeles area in the late 1930s and died in Inglewood, survived by his wife and son, Charles H. Dodge Jr.

Elijah J. Gentry

A shoe shiner at a stand at 431 C Street, choir director at First Baptist Church, and Sunday School superintendent at Calvary Baptist Church, Elijah J. Gentry (1877-1968), a native of Tennessee, was elected president of the branch in 1923. He supported Martha Dodge's uphill fight to build a youth recreation center and investigated Chester Carleton's incarceration in Tijuana at the behest of headquarters. The photo of him posing next to a classic automobile was snapped in 1948.



Dennis Volyer Allen



Without question the most controversial--but also one of the most effective and durable--leaders of the San Diego NAACP was Dennis V. Allen (1883-1967). Born in Eatonton, Georgia, he lived in Los Angeles before coming to San Diego in 1912 where he was a career mailman. His first significant gesture as a civil rights advocate was in 1920 when he asked Mayor Louis J. Wilde to hire blacks in the Fire Department. A founding member of the San Diego NAACP, he was branch president from 1924 to 1929. During his tenure the branch won its appeal to city leaders to have signs barring blacks removed for stores, theaters, and restaurants; lobbied Mexican officials to have such signs removed in Tijuana; won admission of black females into the nurse training program at San Diego County Hospital; and fought until homeless and abandoned black youths were allowed admission into the Children's Welfare Home. In addition to his leadership of the branch, Allen was on the Board of Directors of Bethel A.M.E. Church (1916); was manager of the Negro Harmony Singers (1929); president of the Citizens' Co-Operative Civic Club (1933); and chairman of the National Negro Day celebration (1935). Although his branch

presidency ended in bitterness due to a protracted fight over the priorities of a youth auxiliary, he renewed his membership in the organization in the late 1930s.

From 1924 to 1957 Allen was president of the San Diego Race Relations Society (SDRRS), a low-key multiracial (mostly non-black) group which attracted many prominent citizens who worked behind the scene to insure "racial harmony." He also had the distinction of being first chairman of the state's Human Rights Commission, then the only one of its kind in the nation, created in 1938 at the suggestion of the SDRRS. However, in his declining years he became increasingly conservative and obstructionist, opposing the establishment of the San Diego Urban League in the early 1950s and arguing against the creation of a human rights commission for the city in the early 1960s. Oddly, in his obituary in the *San Diego Union* there was no mention of his affiliation with the NAACP. Part of the obituary read: "Allen, of 2844 Franklin Ave., said on the occasion of his official retirement from public life in 1962 that, 'gradually, slowly, finally, San Diego is one of the most perfect interracial cities.'" Today Dennis V. Allen Park, south of I-94 at Boundary and F streets, honors his memory.

Rebecca Brown Craft



Vice president Rebecca B. Craft (1887-1945) survived the turbulent final months of Allen's term to succeed him as president in 1929. She grew up in Versailles, Kentucky, graduated from Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute for Colored Persons (now Kentucky State University) and taught school for several years in her home state before relocating to San Diego with her husband John E. Craft, a realtor who once owned Crafty Cleaning Company. She had to relinquish any dream of teaching here because the city school board was determined not to employ blacks as regular teachers. A tireless volunteer worker in her church and community, in addition to her work in the branch she was also president of the Baptist Young Peoples Union; director of the Logan Heights Young Peoples Community Center; treasurer of the San Diego Inter-Racial Committee; was on the executive board of the Negro Democratic Club; and, from 1935 until her death, president of the Negro Women's Civic League (NWCL), an organization she created.

As branch leader Craft tried to reinvigorate and restore the reputation of the branch. She dutifully oversaw fundraisers like the baby contests, membership drives, and handling complaints of racial discrimination. It was during her years with the NWCL that she fought relentlessly to force the school board to hire black teachers in permanent full-time positions. The result was the hiring of San Diego State College graduate Lorraine Van Lowe on July 21, 1942. When World War II erupted, Craft worked closely with the USO, counseled and provided entertainment for servicemen, and was a section warden who wore helmet and armband when checking her Logan Heights neighborhood during blackout drills. This was also the time when

this former milliner (she had once owned and operated a shop called “The Hat Craft”) was employed in the city as a parachute packer at the famed black-owned Pacific Parachute Company, a venture financed by black Hollywood comedian popularly known as “Rochester.” Craft died at age 58 and was buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Edward William Anderson

If historians took a vote to as to who was the most important and accomplished African American resident of San Diego in the 20th century the winner would likely be Edward W. Anderson (1871-1953). There are three distinct realms in which Anderson achieved extraordinary status: civil rights, business, and community service combined with politics.

Born to former slaves in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, he arrived here in the mid-1890s. On the fateful day of May 17, 1897 Anderson, with his wife, purchased tickets for the show “Around the World in Eighty Days” at the Fisher Opera House (right), but instead of being ushered to their premium seats close to the orchestra they were told by the manager, "I do not allow colored people on that floor," and were redirected to the balcony. Thanks to provisions of the state's new civil right law, Anderson sued and won a \$299 judgment in the first such case of its kind in Southern California. But this was just the beginning of his lifelong struggle against racial injustice. Unprecedented, this founding member of the San Diego NAACP served as president on at



least three separate occasions (1931 to 1933, 1935 to 1936, and 1941-1943) and when not its president he was a branch official serving in various capacities for more than three decades, always available to lend a sympathetic ear and share his wise counsel, in effect insuring the long-term stability of the organization.

As businessman it seemed that everything Anderson touched turned to gold. Said to have started here with just \$1.25 in his pocket, at age 25 he owned and operated IXL (I Excel) Laundry which became the largest steam laundry in town with 35 employees. In 1910, he bought 160 acres along the California-Mexico border and shortly thereafter resold it for a 50% profit. He next bought out his uncle’s grocery store then launched Economy Waste Paper Company and the prosperous San Diego Rubbish & Garbage Company that for seven years held an exclusive contract with the city. When awarded the contract to dispose of Coronado’s garbage he had the ingenious idea to feed some of the refuse to hogs which led him to established a hog farm (the “Silver Strand Ranch”) and meat packing and retail

business (Anderson Meat Market) on the island that sold his special brand of sausage. His prize-winning porkers competing at fairs at Del Mar, Pomona, and Sacramento earned him the nickname “Hog King of San Diego.” It was reported in early 1939 in the *California Eagle* that Anderson was listed by Dunn & Street to be worth \$75,000 (equivalent to \$1.2 million today). Four years later he started Anderson Mortuary which was sold after his death by his wife, Mary, to future branch president Hartwell Ragsdale and today is known as Anderson-Ragsdale Mortuary. An unassuming man who stood 5 feet 6 inches, Anderson was also a Prince Hall Mason; president of the Negro Business League; board member of the YMCA; president of the Independent Voters League; treasurer of the Negro Civic League; president of the Douglass League; elected to the San Diego Republican Central Committee; was chairman of the Negroes for (Earl) Warren Committee; and a member of The Elks and the Old Timers Club.

John Edgar Roundtree

John E. Roundtree (1880-1961) was a Howard University-trained attorney and real estate agent who had previously served as president of the NAACP branch in Terre Haute, Indiana. He had worked as special assistant District U. S. Attorney in Cleveland, Ohio before moving to Los Angeles in 1931 where he was briefly in private practice. Months later he moved to San Diego with his wife, Mary. The only black attorney in the county in 1932, his presence did not go unnoticed as the *San Diego Evening Tribune* blasted the headline on October 22, “NEGRO ATTORNEY TO PRACTICE HERE.” Roundtree worked in private practice with offices at the black-owned Douglas Hotel and at 2871 ½ Imperial Avenue. Known to be cordial, Christian, impeccably dressed, and with a reputation for efficiency, he was elected branch president in 1933 and reelected for a term to 1935. He was also secretary and director of the Douglass League; an honorary trustee of Bethel Baptist Church; and a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Circa 1936, he began work in the DA’s Office where he eventually headed the Family Relations Division. He apparently eschewed community service and Republican Party politics upon working as a government prosecutor. Roundtree returned to private practice in 1954 and resided at 441 Sampson Street where he lived quietly until his death on October 14, 1961. His body was buried in his hometown, Topeka, Kansas. Like the two branch presidents who preceded him, Rebecca B. Craft and Edward W. Anderson, his marriage did not produce offspring.

Lloyd W. McCloy

The pastor of Logan Heights Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church since 1931, Rev. Lloyd W. McCloy (?-?) was branch president in 1937. In 1940, he was elevated to Presiding Elder of the California and Washington Conference and before leaving town was given a reception with branch officials and ministers in attendance. By



the late 1940s McCloy was pastor of the First Portland Church in Oregon.

John W. Porter

In 1939, John W. Porter (?-?) and insurance underwriter made local history when he became the first African American to seek city-wide office. However, his candidacy for a seat on the City Council representing District 5 came to an abrupt halt when he was disqualified for failing to get enough supporting signatures to have his name put on the ballot. Porter, whose home address was 3230 Franklin Avenue, served as branch president in 1938.

Theodore Moses Brinson



Born in Xenia, Ohio, Theodore M. Brinson (1877-1957) had served in the Army, been a musician in Chicago, a postal clerk in Ohio, and a mail carrier in New Mexico prior to moving to San Diego in 1936. By the late 1930s he was director of the senior choir at Bethel A.M.E. Church. His wife, Yola, an active soror of Sigma Gamma Rho, was a friend of Ralph Bunche's mother, Olive Bunche, when the Bunche family lived in Albuquerque. His son, Theodore Jr., was a noted jazz musician in Los Angeles. Branch president during the early months of World War II, Brinson retired to Pasadena, California in 1941. A long-time active member of the NAACP, he once wrote to field secretary William Pickens who he had once met at an Indian reservation: "I am still the zealous worker for the N.A.A.C.P. and will be until the day I die." That day was September 12, 1957.

Claude DuBois Jolly

During his relatively brief time in San Diego, Mississippi-born Claude D. Jolly (1899-1957) was district superintendent of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company, a now defunct black-owned enterprise that was headquartered in Los Angeles but with a branch office at 2781 Imperial Avenue. Jolly succeeded Theodore Brinson as NAACP branch president in 1941 and pushed for the employment of more blacks in defense plants here. In 1942, he was on one of the city's regional rationing boards. With the war ended, in 1946 he was back in the Los Angeles area advertising and selling insurance and, as licensed real estate agents, he and his wife formed Jolly Realty Company and sold homes there. Jolly was one of the founding members of the all-black Consolidated Realty Board of Southern California in 1950.



Edward Anderson Bailey



Apparently here only during the war years and slightly after was Dr. Edward A. Bailey (1884-1963) whose address was 2201 Ocean View Blvd. Born in Winchester, Texas, he attended Tillotson College, Prairie View State College, and the University of Chicago before completing his medical training at Meharry Medical College in 1912. Bailey practiced medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. When he moved his family into an upscale home in Shaker Heights whites gave them a very hostile reception. Police intervention turned out to be as problematic as the violence so the Bailey's abandoned the home.

During his term as branch vice president in 1944 Bailey, a 32nd degree Mason, conducted a bond rally; was selected to serve on the county's Grand Jury and the city's housing commission; and was a member of the San Diego Race Relations Society and the San Diego Mothers Clinic Association. He was here he endorsed the election of a number of politicians and became a personal friend of land developer and state senator Col. Ed Fletcher who he eulogized in the *San Diego Union* in 1955. Bailey relocated to Los Angeles in the late 1940s and was active in community and professional groups there, among them the Watts Chamber of Commerce as vice president and the Los Angeles Handicapped Placement Center as board member. Despite his good works, his life had an inglorious ending. In October 1963, Bailey pleaded not guilty to the charge of writing fake prescriptions for \$25 each to supply drugs to narcotic addicts. He died a month later.

Mercer Z. Ray

Stepping in to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Bailey in July 1944 was insurance executive Mercer Z. Ray (1911-1990). Born in Roxboro, North Carolina, he was an outstanding chemistry graduate of North Carolina A&T University. He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity



Inc., the Urban League, and was an elder in the Presbyterian church. His first job out of college was as an agent for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1939. In 1941, he moved to California and was district superintendent in the Pasadena office of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company before being transferred to head the San Diego office. It was Ray's prudence and foresight that kept the San Diego NAACP from getting too involved with communists in 1946 when they and the branch jointly protested racially discriminatory hiring practices by white-owned businesses in Southeast San Diego. He fully supported the communists in picketing the businesses but,

suspicious of their motives, did not encourage branch members or blacks generally to walk the picket line with them. A year later Ray returned to Los Angeles to finish his career in the insurance industry.

Jack Johnson Kimbrough

Barely escaping Ku Klux Klan violence in Lexington, Mississippi, the family of Dr. Jack J. Kimbrough (1908-1992) fled and found refuge among relatives in Alameda, California. Upon acquiring his dental degree at University of California at San Francisco he hitched his way south to San Diego where there were no black dentists in 1935. He quickly gained a mentor in branch member Dr. A. Antonio DaCosta, a wealthy black physician and businessman who gave him free office space and with whom he later shared an office building at 25th and K streets. Settled and married by 1947, and still feeling the sting of being refused service at a white-owned “greasy spoon” years earlier, Kimbrough, possibly along with board member Gordon Stafford, devised a scheme to challenge eateries that discriminated against blacks. With the assistance of black and white students at San Diego State College who acted as observers and likely victims of racial discrimination, their scheme netted dozens of court victories and fines levied against offending restaurants. In 1948, Kimbrough personally confronted a waitress who flagrantly ignored black customers at the Grant Grill in the U.S. Grant Hotel and persuaded her and the staff to do the right thing.



Bolstering his reputation as one of the most accomplished and influential African Americans in the city over the past century, Kimbrough co-founded the San Diego Urban League in 1953; helped to establish the Southeast San Diego YMCA; served on the board of the San Diego Historical Society; was the first black to be elected president of both the San Diego Dental Society and the California State Board of Dental Examiners; was Section Chief of Dental Medicine at San Diego County Hospital; invited to the White House by President John F. Kennedy to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation; participated in “Flying Samaritans” providing free dental service in rural Mexico; was leading archon of Alpha Pi Boule; and treasurer of the San Diego Unified School District’s Public School Building Corporation, to name a few. Kimbrough was also a serious collector of autographed and rare books by black authors and also African art and artifacts. Today much of his renowned book collection is housed at the Museum of the African

Diaspora in San Francisco. He and his wife, Quincella, enjoyed entertaining guests at their home in National City, among them sociologist E. Franklin Frazier and blues singer Leadbelly. Jack Kimbrough Elementary School at 321 Hoitt Street, constructed in 1997, honors his memory.

John J. Lewis



A graduate of Clark College and Gammon Theological Seminary, Rev. John J. Lewis (?-?) had also studied journalism at the University of Chicago and had been an editor, publisher, and Army chaplain before he arrived in San Diego in 1944 to lead the congregation of the newly organized St. Paul's Methodist Church.

Reflecting internal problems plaguing the branch, Lewis wrote to NAACP executive secretary Walter F. White: "I have been elected President of the San Diego Branch of the NAACP for 1948. Our Branch here is in a very bad condition, but I will do all in my power to make it one of the best in the nation." But his term only lasted a year and in 1950 he left to minister to Methodist churches in Los Angeles.



Willie Magdalene Roberson



Willie M. Roberson (1898-1982) was not only one of the most civic-minded and sociable individuals of the 1940s and 1950s but she was also a branch president and the mother of a branch president. She was installed in office as branch president in 1948 by no less a figure than the mayor of San Diego himself, Harley E. Knox. Born in Texas, she raised two children at 345 Milbrae Street. Both she and her husband, Ernest J. Roberson Sr., a career Navy man, were active in predominantly white organizations. In addition to her work in precinct politics, the YMCA and YWCA, she was chairperson of the Ninth District Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in 1950; president of the Volunteer Bureau in 1960; and president of The Links Inc. in 1968.

Ray Frazier

A state certified embalmer, Ray Frazier (1908-1994) was manager-mortician at Anderson Mortuary. Born in Texas, he and his wife, Louise, lived in San Diego at 396 Hemlock Avenue. Elected branch president in December 1949, Frazier, who remained active in Republican Party politics, was appointed by Assemblywoman Kathryn Niehouse to the Republican State Central

Committee in 1950 but was unable to serve. He was reelected branch president in January 1951. He loved "playing the ponies" and in 1965 won \$23,195 at Caliente Race Track in Tijuana.

Therion Ellis Cobbs

A loyal alumnus of Wilberforce University (Class of `46) which awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity in 1955, Rev. Therion E. Cobbs left First A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles as youth minister to become pastor of Bethel Memorial A.M.E. Church in 1950. He was a religious scholar who authored the 345-page *Basic Principles and a Program of Christian Education for the A.M.E. Church* (1985) and edited the church journal *Religious Literature*.



Cobbs, whose family lived at 3089 Island Avenue, was president of the branch from 1952 to 1954. There is no mention of him in the *San Diego Union* after 1956. We do, however, know that as late as 1975 he preached at a revival in Evansville, Indiana. Cobbs was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and died in Nashville, Tennessee.

Ruth A. Green

Considered a local pioneering African-American professional, Ruth A. Green, (1907-1995), born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, was educated at Langston University (Class of `36), the University of Chicago, Claremont College, and San Diego State University. She settled in San Diego in 1938 and became the city's first black probation officer and registered social worker. The branch was officially reactivated and experienced a strong resurgence during her term of office, 1954 to 1956, substantially increasing its membership and its civil rights cachet in the community.



Among her many accomplishments and titles were President of the California Probation and Parole Association; founder of Women Incorporated; Second Vice President of the San Diego Urban League; founding member and co-chairperson of The Links Inc.; coordinator of the Southeast Senior Clinic; and member of the city's Park and Recreation Board and the Housing Advisory Board.

Green was also a very active and loyal Republican who received a number of party recognitions and appointments, including one by Gov. Ronald Reagan. In fact, she helped to organize the Southeast San Diego Republican Women's Club and in 1994 donated \$300 to the National Republican Senatorial Committee. Her death a year later at age 88 occurred at her

Valencia Park home at 5415 Bonita Drive, the same location where her husband, Gloyd L. Green who worked in the County Assessor's Office, had drowned in a swimming pool in 1963.

James Edward Lee

Retired Army dentist Dr. James E. Lee (1889-1962) was here for only a short time, 1956 to 1957. Apparently his reputation as a capable, experienced leader preceded him. A crowd of nearly 300 showed up to witness his installation as branch president at the Mission Valley Country Club on January 24, 1957. But after just seven months Lee resigned and returned to Newark, New Jersey to practice dentistry and resume his work there on the city's Central Planning Board. A graduate of Howard University's dental college, he had been a former president of the Newark NAACP and a co-founder of the South Orange branch; and he was active in Democratic Party politics here and in New Jersey and belonged to professional groups like Chi Delta Mu and the Interstate Dental Association. So highly regarded back East was Dr. Lee that his obituary was published in the *New York Times*.

James Eldridge McCann

As branch first vice president James E. McCann (1915-1993) took the helm when Dr. Lee resigned. Born in Dover, Oklahoma, and educated as a biology major at Langston University, he had been quite active in the affairs of the Southeast YMCA, ultimately serving as chairman of its



Board Management. McCann served two separate terms as branch president, 1957 to 1959 and 1962 to 1963. In 1960, he helped to coordinate picketing of downtown department chain stores that had too few black employees both here and in the South. As many as 300 individuals walked the picket line.

At a meeting in Palm Springs in 1958, McCann was elected vice president of the NAACP Southern Area Conference and installed in office by the internationally celebrated musician-composer Duke Ellington; and on July 13, 1961 he, along with a number of other NAACP officials from across the nation, met with President John F. Kennedy in the White House to discuss future civil rights legislation. Residing at 3802 T Street, McCann was the first black supervisor at Convair/General Dynamics and also was involved in the real estate industry. A member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, he was also the first black president of the San Diego chapter of the American Management Association.

Harold Eugene Burt

An OBGYN from Wilmington, Delaware, in 1946 Dr. Harold E. Burt was granted his medical degree at Meharry Medical College and practiced at Brewster Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida before being licensed to practice in California in 1953. In 1956, he was state vice president of the National Medical Association (NMA); was elected to the board of the Family Service Association; and in 1972 he was president of the newly chartered San Diego chapter of the NMA.



By 1958 he was a board member of the San Diego NAACP and in 1960 was branch president. He collaborated with Ted Patrick and James McCann to have hundreds of protestors picket large department store chains that had few if any black employees. Two years later it was reported in *Jet* magazine (July 26, 1962) that Burt and attorneys Robert A. Ward and Thaddeus D. Williams, along with architect Alonso Bryant, sued for \$31,000 and got a permanent injunction against the Bonita Golf Club for practicing racial discrimination. There was an out of court settlement for damages and court costs. In 1970 he was one of the nine doctors who formed Prod Development Company Inc. which planned to build a medical building on a site between Market and Imperial Avenue. In 1980, at a conference sponsored by the San Diego unit of the American Cancer Society, Burt gave a presentation on cancer's effects on the African American population. Retired, he resides in San Diego.

Hartwell Waddell Ragsdale II



Born in Ardmore, Oklahoma where he worked in his father's funeral home, Hartwell W. Ragsdale (1925-2004) founded Anderson-Ragsdale Mortuary in 1955, located at 2601 Imperial Avenue. In 1962, he was branch vice president and in 1963 ascended to the presidency, the same year he helped lead a protest involving 150 persons who picketed right wing lightning rods Rev. Billy James Hargis and Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker at Russ Auditorium. Also during his tenure the branch reported progress in the hiring of blacks in government departments attributed to its pressuring the City Council; and a "selective buying campaign" was initiated by the branch against Pepsi Cola because it had not hired any black truck drivers. Ragsdale's once admitted that the proudest moment of his life occurred on March



29,1964, when he as branch president ordered a limousine to the airport to whisk Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to branch headquarters to meet with him and his staff.

Ernest John Roberson Jr.



Born in San Diego in 1938, active in Junior Achievement and an outstanding athlete at San Diego High School, in 1955 Ernest J. Roberson Jr., the son of former branch president Willie M. Roberson, was awarded a \$2,000 Crown-Zellerbach scholarship. During his college days at the University of the Pacific where he was the only black member of an otherwise all-white fraternity, he spent six summer weeks in the Belgian Congo demonstrating agricultural techniques. He eventually returned home and in 1965 became the youngest ever branch president at age 27. Early in his career at San Diego Gas & Electric he worked as a salesman and later as a community service representative in the public relations department. While employed at SDG&E, Roberson was on the San Diego Energy Education Task Force and in 1979 co-authored the article "Captain Power and Power Quiz: Two New Energy Education Programs" in *Elementary School Journal*. During his one-year term as branch president he voiced the organization's strong objection to racial imbalance in the public schools and asked that the Board of Education imposed a moratorium on city schools site selection and planning. In retirement, he continues to live in San Diego.

Thomas Jefferson Johnson

A natural leader with a bold "can do" attitude, Thomas J. Johnson (1924-1987), better known to everyone as simply Tom Johnson, was born in Paoli, Oklahoma, but mostly raised in Imperial County. From 1942 until his retirement in 1983 he was employed by Pacific Bell. In 1953, he was promoted to administrative supervisor for building operations in San Diego and Imperial counties, thus becoming the first black to attain such a high level of responsibility in the company.

Branch president from 1967 to 1969, he once told a gathering of area teachers: "I think that our educational systems impose restraints that most educators don't want to buck. I ask you to quit teaching in your all-white classrooms that this is a big democratic country and everyone is created equal. . . . This is a lie!" Johnson's confrontation with the management of the U.S. Grant Hotel which happened in January 1968, was another masterstroke of negotiation in the branch's long history. For quite some time the branch had



heard complaints of discriminatory hiring at the prestigious hotel. When the National Council of Churches (NCC) was set to convene its annual conference here in mid-February Johnson knew this would be the opportune time to meet with hotel management to hammer out an agreement to hire and promote more blacks. Simultaneously, the branch notified the NCC that it should be prepared to cancel its meeting of 250 to 300 delegates at the hotel if management failed to satisfy its demands. The NCC fully supported the branch, the hotel management caved, and Johnson called a press conference on January 31 to announce that this victory was just the "significant first step" in the branch's "program to better integrate staffs of San Diego's major hotels and motels."

After serving his two terms as president Johnson served as chairman of the Education Committee and was branch first vice president in 1978. He continued working for Pacific Bell in the capacity of minority relations representative and, near the end of his career, as business manager. In 1979 he ran for a seat on the city school board representing District E (Southeast San Diego).

Charles E. Johnson



Branch president Charles E. Johnson (1938-2004), born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, enjoyed a more colorful business career than most. His start in the entertainment industry was in 1959 as a fill-in radio disc jockey. After a stint in the Air Force he became the first black general manager of a radio station in California (KTYM-FM, later KACE in Los Angeles). By 1964 he had relocated to San Diego where he was the first black to own an FM radio station in the state. Radio station XEGM broadcasted in Spanish during day hours and in English at night, directing its programming at African Americans and Latinos.

There were 300 members of the branch in 1969 when Johnson took the helm. He told an interviewer that he hoped to bring in more "grass roots members of the community" into the branch. He tried to encourage the city as a whole to honor the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., and both praised and criticized minority hiring at local radio and television stations.

From the late 1970s through the mid-1990s Johnson was the owner of the 24-hour Soul Beat Television Network in Oakland, California, the first music video TV network in the nation to feature MC Hammer and Digital Underground before they became celebrity acts. He died of cancer in Oakland at age 65.

Charles Edward Reid

A former Marine and graduate in mathematics at Texas College in Tyler, Texas, Charles E. Reid (1938-2004) worked as a programmer, design specialist, aerospace engineer and manager at General Dynamics, and spent the remainder of his career as an administrator in the county's human resources and social services departments. He was affiliated with various civic groups but received notoriety when he was president of the San Diego Community College Board of Trustees, president of the National Association of Community Colleges, chairman of the San Diego Economic Opportunities Commission and, from 1970 to 1974, president of the San Diego NAACP.



As branch president in December 1971, realizing that the Republican National Committee (RNC) was scheduled to meet in the city in August, Reid announced to the press that the branch would survey local hotels to confirm whether or not they were equal opportunity employers and that an evaluative list would be given to the RNC. The branch also threatened to go to court if companies it observed profiting from government contracts were not in compliance with equal opportunity guidelines. According to Reid, the branch had earlier compelled the San Diego Zoo to return nearly \$100,000 in federal grant money "because it (did) not employ the required number of minorities." In January 1972, he appeared before the El Cajon City Council and criticized it for not taking a stronger stand against the "whites only" policy of the Elks Lodge in El Cajon and vowed to seek a boycott of the group by discouraging organizations from using its facility. And, in 1974, the tradition of the branch's annual awards banquet began.

In his memory, the San Diego Community College District established the Charles E. Reid Book Fund for its aspiring students.

Walter James Porter



Born in Lake Providence, Louisiana, Walter "Wally" Porter (1927-2001) led an interesting life. Janitor, Army drill instructor, Pepperdine University graduate, probation officer, college dean, ventriloquist, and songwriter were all roles he could claim. Porter arrived in San Diego in 1968 to work as a counselor in the San Diego Economic Opportunities Commission and, in 1973, was employed in the San Diego Community College District, climbing to Dean of the Skills Center and earning a doctorate before retiring in 1994.

Porter recalled that while in St. Louis in the 1940s: "I went to the NAACP to get some information for a valedictory address and wound up buying a 50 cent membership." Years later he joined the Hollywood branch. In 1974, he took control of the San Diego branch and guided it for three years. In 1975, the branch received the Ike Small Award from headquarters for having the most successful membership drive of any branch in the nation. Porter lashed out against county supervisors in February 1976 when they scrapped a three-year-old minority employment program that set hiring goals for vendors doing business with the county, calling their action "regression at its foulest." And it seemed somewhat incongruous when, after confronting the brass at Camp Pendleton about the confinement of 14 black marines suspected of assault on suspected Ku Klux Klan members in a barracks, the following year he was a guest of honor representing the San Diego NAACP at a ceremony at the Naval Training Center (photo above).



Porter eventually moved from his Emerald Hills home to an address in Del Cerro. He was on the boards of the San Diego Civic Light Opera, United Way, the Salvation Army, et al., and he was in the forefront of inaugurating the tradition of the annual Martin Luther King Parade in San Diego. He died of pneumonia at a convalescent hospital in El Cajon. Walter J. Porter Elementary School, with locations at 445 South 47th Street and 4800 T Street, was named in his honor.

Charles William Thomas II

At age 16 a member of the NAACP youth branch in Maryland, UC-San Diego professor Dr. Charles W. Thomas (1926-1990) renewed his active participation by joining the branch in 1974. Highly respected among black psychologists, a published author, and a Republican, he gave his views on the racial climate in the city in the *San Diego Union* (October 10, 1976) and was blunt and outspoken in his criticism of both blacks and whites. He began his elected 2-year term as branch president in February 1977, but after just over a year he resigned because he and board members were not in sync in regards to policies, programs, and personalities. Tragically, twelve years later Thomas, an authority on black criminal behavior, was stabbed to death in his automobile near a bank ATM on El Cajon Blvd. and his black assailant was never apprehended.



Sonja Reynolds Reid



Thankfully, the calming personality of Sonja R. Reid, wife of former branch president Charles E. Reid, helped to reassure the community that things would soon return to normal after Dr. Thomas's resignation in April 1978. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, she had attended Kittrell College in North Carolina and the University of Maryland before arriving in San Diego in 1966. For many years she was associated with the management of Ebony Fashion Fair but was also involved in civic organizations like the San Diego Historical Sites Board and Las Munecas Auxiliary to the Children's Home Society. Reid had worked as an NAACP fundraiser since her days as a kid in Baltimore and later participated in protest demonstrations against racial discrimination there. She had been active in branch governance five years prior to being elected president. The most important project during her nine months in office was "Operation Sweep" which both increased branch membership significantly and contributed funds to a financially strapped national headquarters. For five years Reid was president of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women; a trustee of the San Diego Community College District; vice president of the Advisory Council of the Educational Cultural Complex (ECC); and donated her time and talents to charitable groups in the city.

Geraldine Adams Warren

While working as a field representative for state Sen. James Mills, Geraldine "Gerri" Warren (1947-2009), was elected branch president to serve in 1979, the same year she married her second husband, John Warren. During her term she sought the intervention of Michigan Congressman John Conyers, then chairman of the House Law Enforcement Committee, to investigate the controversial killing of Samuel C. Brown by city police after the county District Attorney ruled his death as justified.



From Avon Park, Florida, Warren had lived here since 1967 and had earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at National University. Her service to the San Diego community included seats on the boards of the Human Relations Commission, Boy Scouts of America, and United Way. She spent the early 1980s in the nation's capital where she was elected to the D.C. Statehood Constitutional Conventional and was executive vice president of the Washington, D.C. Chamber of Commerce. Back in San Diego in 1985, Warren steered the Section 8 program for the city's housing commission before co-publishing with her husband and working as managing editor of the *San Diego Voice & Viewpoint*. She also co-founded and ministered with John at

the Eagle's Nest Christian Center; founded and was president of the county's black chamber of commerce; set up the annual Gold Coast Classic football game played at Qualcomm Stadium from 1997 to 2004; and in 1997 established the *Florida Tribune* newspaper, informing the black population in Florida's central counties.

Theodore William McNeal

The oldest person to occupy the office of branch president was veteran civil rights leader Theodore W. McNeal (1904-1992). Born in Jefferson County, Alabama, he was a tall, no-nonsense, straight-talking man who had migrated with his family to Chicago in 1914. His pre-law studies were interrupted by his labor activism. In 1945, the Chicago NAACP had a case pending in the Illinois Supreme Court due to the fact that McNeal had been refused service in an Illinois Central train station in Centralia. He and his brother chartered an AFL-CIO-affiliated black labor union in New York City (Bartenders and Restaurants Employees Union, Local 386). He returned to Chicago in 1951 to assist in rallying African American merchants to form the "Bottle and Cork Club," a group that helped to jumpstart Rev. Jesse Jackson and "Operation Breadbasket."



McNeal joined the Chicago NAACP in 1936 and from 1940 until 1953 headed a labor division within the branch. To support himself he worked for Renfield Importers Ltd., a liquor distributor. Upon retiring his wife persuaded him to move to San Diego where he soon joined the local NAACP. Unaccustomed to the quiet life, he returned to work as advertising manager for the *San Diego Voice & Viewpoint*, sold real estate, and volunteered to assist a labor council and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. Late in his term as branch president in 1980 McNeal made some upsetting statements critical of the city's two high profile black Republicans--Catfish Club founder Rev. George Walker Smith and San Diego Urban League head Clarence Pendleton---causing them to respond angrily in the *San Diego Union*. McNeal retired a second time in 1981 and enrolled at San Diego State University where he was an Afro-American Studies major. Of course, he was one the oldest students in the school's history, and at age 82, still unable to suppress his compulsion to organize and fight, he tried to start a student chapter of the NAACP.



Robert Clarence Ard



Rev./Bishop Robert C. Ard (a.k.a. Ikenna Anyanwu Kokayi), born in Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1938, came to San Diego in 1956 as a sailor. More specific, he was the drum major of the Naval Recruit Depot drum and bugle corps. A high school dropout, he became president of the student body at Los Angeles City College and president of the black student group at Pepperdine University where he graduated with a degree in religious education. Leaving behind the military and college, he worked as a lending officer at the Bank of America, was vice president of the National Economic Management Administration, and taught business management at a community college. In 1976, Ard was made executive director of Harambee House, a residential facility for roughly 20 juvenile offenders. In 1977 he was installed as president of the Southeast San Diego Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance to act as spokesman for the city's black religious community.

As NAACP branch leader in November 1980, Ard reiterated that the branch would boycott a dinner of the Catfish Club's honoring County Superintendent Thomas Goodman as "Man of the Year." He told the press that the branch was ready to investigate certain complaints made by black military personnel and also complaints about inadequate instruction that stunted the academic progress blacks in the public school system.

For many years Ard, the pastor of Christ Church of San Diego, was treasurer of the Ecumenical Council of San Diego Council. He was also chairman of the United African American Ministerial Action Council; president of the San Diego Black Leadership Council; and president/CEO of the United African American Ministerial Action Council. In 1985 he was appointed to the city's Human Rights Commission and a year later ran unsuccessfully as a Republican against Assemblyman Pete Chacon in the 79th District.

Mamie Louise Greene



Mamie L. Greene (1939-2007), born in Midland, Texas, and a graduate of San Diego High School was the mother of five daughters and a son.

In June 1981 she wrote a commentary in the *San Diego Union* slamming the San Diego Teachers Association (SDTA) and the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) for "circling the wagons" to support of the city's record addressing racial imbalance in school and the education of minority kids. She wrote: "The SDTA, the PTA, the district, and the board would have us laud district *effort* rather than *results*. Our children can not afford that kind

of measurement." During her presidency in November 1981, at a press conference in San Diego alongside Assemblyman Pete Chacon and Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, she called for "appropriate disciplinary action to be taken to the point of impeachment" against state Supreme Court Justice Stanley Mosk because he had drafted a constitutional amendment aimed at ending racial hiring goals in state government. "We cannot allow such a blatant, bigoted train of thought to be present on our judicial system," she said. In October 1982, Greene signed and sent letters to 23 hotel managers accusing them of only token efforts to hire blacks and called for a boycott by black and other minority race organizations. To emphasize its resolve, the branch held its annual awards banquet at a community center managed and catered by African Americans instead of enriching one of the city's premier hotels.

Greene was an employment specialist at the California Employment Development Department and was on the boards of the Black Federation, San Diego County Board of Health, and the Educational Cultural Complex. She was also vice president of the Black Advocates in State Services, and secretary of the San Diego chapter of the National Council of Negro Women.

Curtis Moring

Curtis Moring (1928-2004), from Summerville, Georgia, was raised in Philadelphia. He joined the military in 1946 and fought as a Marine sergeant in Korea. Sinking roots in San Diego in 1954, he took business classes at San Diego City College and the University of San Diego. Moring started his insurance agency in 1963 selling life insurance and later sold other types of insurance. He became a top selling brokers of Insurance Company of North American, receiving its \$1 Million Sales Award.

In 1967, he was on the board of directors of Brokers Mortgage Company, believed to be the area's first financial institution majority-owned by blacks. Moring was also on the boards of the Southeast Anti-Poverty Planning Commission, Neighborhood House, San Diego Parks and Recreation Commission, and Bethel A.M.E. Church; and he was president of Southeast's Black Business Association from the late 1970s into the 1980s. In February 1980, he was revealed to be one of two sympathetic black men who had posted bond for Haitian emigrant Marissia Constant who had spent more than two years at the Metropolitan Correction Center resisting deportation when her story hit the press.



Moring's early interaction with the NAACP was in Philadelphia when in 1950 the branch there picked him to integrate a unit of the Marine Corps at the MCRD. He served two separate terms as San Diego branch president: 1983 to 1986 and 1988 to 1992. During his terms the branch participated in "Black Dollar Days" to demonstrate black buying power and their contribution to

the area's economy; started its first ACT-SO competition; supported the discriminatory hiring complaint against KFMB-TV that resulted in the station's 5-year license downgrade to temporary status; and co-managed a legal defense fund for Sagon Penn who shot and killed a policeman in self-defense. In his spare time Moring was a community theater actor and gourmet cook. After two strokes he died from complications of pneumonia at Kaiser Permanente Hospital, leaving behind a wife, six sons, and a daughter, among them an insurance broker and a Superior Court judge.

Daniel Weber

His obituary in the San Diego Union started with this sentence: "Daniel Weber often was most comfortable, it seemed, making the establishment uncomfortable." Born in New Orleans,



Louisiana, and relocating as a teenager to Los Angeles, Judge Daniel Weber (1942-2002) attended Cal State-LA and UCLA where he graduated from law school and was president of the Black Graduate Student Association. Admitted to the California Bar in 1975, he worked in the offices of the state Attorney General and the Los Angeles City Attorney before establishing private practice in San Diego. By 1992 he was an administrative judge for the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board. By then he had been instrumental in founding the California Association of Black Lawyers and had been president of both the San Diego NAACP and the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association (formerly the Association of Black Attorneys of San Diego County), of which he was a founding member.

He was credited by one branch president for having "breathed new life" into the branch and by another for having worked effectively behind the scenes to elevate deserving black lawyers to the bench, working closely with Gov. Jerry Brown and state Assembly Speaker Willie Brown to accomplish this. As branch president, Weber fought against at-large City Council elections in favor of district elections, and challenged the police department to have it acknowledge police misconduct in the black community—most notably intervening the controversial case of police shooting victim Tommy Dubose and the questionable arrest of Dr. Walter Woodson---and pushed to institute a civilian police review board.

Weber served for several years on the board of governors of the National Bar Association which represents African Americans in the legal profession; was once chairman of Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC); and received a number of honors and appreciations for his outstanding service and pro bono work.

Frank Richard Jordan

Born in Georgia, for quite awhile Frank R. Jordan was involved in operating radio and television production companies. As branch president he oversaw an innovative strategy to register black voters by stocking 25,000 voter registration forms in nearly 200 area small stores and mini-marts stores like 7-Eleven. But he received more publicity for his work in the NAACP after his term as branch president (1992-1995) because soon thereafter he was president of the California State Conference of the NAACP responding to controversies across the state, among them a Black History Month library memorabilia display that went awry in Lodi; and a renegade branch president in Compton who, contrary to the stance taken by headquarters, endorsed Clarence Thomas for the office of U.S. Supreme Court Justice.



Willie Evet Manley

Rev. Willie E. Manley, born in Stephens, Arkansas in 1933, left his congregation in chilly Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1966 to conduct a revival in San Diego. "I asked my uncle if it ever snowed here and he said, 'No.' A month later, I came out to live." In 1973, Manley founded Greater Life Baptist Church in Emerald Hills. In 1990, prior to becoming branch president, he headed the Metropolitan Fellowship Foundation which conceived the Save Our Children and Community Campaign, a one-day door-to-door effort employing parishioners from 50 churches to inform people of community resources, social services, housing and job opportunities. The father of seven, a world traveler and Christian missionary, in 2003 the United Nations conferred on him the Ambassador of Peace Award.



Randa McDaniel Trapp

Superior Court Judge Randa M. Trapp, a native San Diegan and a graduate of Lincoln High School, San Jose State University, and Georgetown University Law Center, was a deputy attorney and an attorney for Sempra Energy before her appointment to the Superior Court bench in 2003 by Gov. Gray Davis. A past president of the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association and a former regional director of California Women Lawyers, Trapp served on the boards of the California Association of Black Lawyers, Southeast Economic Development Corporation, San



Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the San Diego County Employees Retirement Association.

Shortly after being elected branch president in late 1996 she was interviewed by the *San Diego Union* and quoted as saying: "Here, the sun is always shining and people are smiling in your face. But in many ways we are farther behind than the people in the South. . . . A lot of our work is done behind the scenes. We will always stand up against racism." In November 1999 she protested the highly controversial police shooting of former pro football player Demetrius DeBose saying, "It should not have escalated from that point to where he was killed." In

2000 she co-authored a newspaper article with executive director of the local ACLU detailing with statistics the extent to which racial profiling occurs on the city's streets and pledged to assist the police department in its efforts to combat the problem. In 2004 she was named 79th Assembly District's Woman of the Year.

Petrina Marie Branch



As a student at Harvard University, Petrina M. Branch the athlete lettered in lacrosse, and as a scholar earned her law degree. She was admitted to the California Bar in 2009 and, presently, her law office is in the city of Chula Vista. Her previous employers include the Washington, DC law firm of Dow, Lohnes & Albertson, the U.S. Security and Exchange Commission, the San Diego City Attorney's Office, and the San Diego City Council (District 4).

As San Diego NAACP president, Branch served on the police chief's Community Advisory Board on Racial Profiling, a group that challenged a *San Diego Union* editorial which carried "several misconceptions about racial profiling." The November/December 2001 issue of *The Crisis* recapped her work against racial profiling and also focused on the branch's activities, in particular its W.E.B. Du Bois Leadership Institute for Young Black Scholars; convening of community forums geared toward politics and education; sponsoring a homebuyers workshop for those shopping in a high price market; and building relationships with other ethnic groups.

A past president of the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association, Branch was honored as a recipient of its President's Award in 1999 and 2007. Her business enterprise, P.B. Designs, markets her handmade all-cloth Afrocentric-themed dolls.

Douglas Alphonsa Oden



Born in San Diego on June 26, 1950, the son of an extraordinary Navy steward, Atty. Douglas A. Oden graduated from California Lutheran (Class of '72; 1995 Alumni Award) and got his law degree at Western State University College of Law. During the longest, uninterrupted tenure as president in branch history, Oden was often quoted in the news media and, among others things, was a leader in the local effort to defeat Proposition 54 (a.k.a. the Racial Privacy Initiative); supported Dr. Patricia Washington who was denied tenure in Women's Studies department at SDSU;

opposed the decision of District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis not to prosecute three policeman in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black parolee; supported Assembly Bill 1531 which deemphasized the use of the high school exit exam; backed a protest demonstration focused on the failure of public schools to address the needs of black students that followed the resignation of school superintendent Alan Bersin; and supported the renaming of the student services building at Southwestern College to honor United Farm Workers founder Cesar Chavez.

Oden is a past president of both the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association and the California Association of Black Lawyers, and he is on the board of Reach One Teach One Inc., a non-profit group that focuses on improving the lives of at-risk black youth.

Lei-Chala Indee Wilson

An economics graduate of San Diego State University and with a law degree from UC-Davis, veteran public defender Lei-Chala I. Wilson has established a very impressive record of civic and professional accomplishments which has every indication of being augmented moving forward. A partial list of her leadership achievements include holding the presidencies of the local section of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association (EBGBA), the California Association of Black Lawyers (CABL) and, of course, the San Diego NAACP (2009-); service on the boards of the National Bar Association, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of San Diego and Imperial Counties, San Diego Mediation Center, and the San Diego County Public Law Library; and she has chaired the State Bar of California Criminal Law Section and the Education Committee of this group.



During her term as branch president she addressed a crowd of 4,000 people protesting anti-same sex marriage Proposition 8 when it was upheld by the California Supreme Court; succeeded in having the branch intervene in *Associated General Contractors of America v. California Department of Transportation* lawsuit and signed on to the Amicus Curiae Brief in support of the U.S. 6th Circuit overturning the state of Michigan's anti-affirmative action Proposal 2; waged a persistent fight against a revamped admissions policy at San Diego State University that disadvantaged prospective black students, including co-authoring a piece in the *San Diego Union* explaining the branch's position; spoke to a coalition opposed to Arizona politicians' anti-immigrant and anti-ethnic studies stance; and received NAACP California State Conference Dr. H. Claude Hudson Award at the California State Annual Convention in Oakland.

Among Wilson's awards and recognitions are those from the San Diego County Bar Association, Volunteers in Parole Inc., EBGBA, NCNW, CABL, San Diego Black Contractors Association, and Phi Delta Kappa; and she has frequently lectured on legal topics to professional groups and arranged for a number of community forums that inform the public of their rights and responsibilities.

*San Diego NAACP Presidents**

William T. Hendrey (1873-1962)	1919
The Hon. Alfred Haines (1845-1934)	1919-1922
Charles H. Dodge (1868-1942)	1922-1923
Elijah J. Gentry (1877-1968)	1923-1924
Dennis Volyer Allen (1883-1967)	1924-1929
Rebecca B. Craft (1887-1945)	1929-1931
Edward W. Anderson (1871-1953)	1931-1933
John E. Roundtree, Esq. (1880-1961)	1933-1935
Edward W. Anderson (1871-1953)	1935-1937
Rev. Lloyd W. McCoy	1937
John W. Porter	1938
Theodore M. Brinson (1877-1957)	1939-1941
Claude D. Jolly (1899-1957)	1941-1942
Edward W. Anderson (1871-1953)	1942-1943
Dr. Edward A. Bailey (1884-1963)	1943-1944
Mercer Z. Ray (1911-1990)	1944-1946
Dr. Jack J. Kimbrough (1908-1992)	1947-1948
Rev. John J. Lewis (1884-1960)	1948-1949
Willie Magdalene Roberson (1898-1982)	1949
Ray W. Frazier (1908-1994)	1950-1951
Rev. Therion E. Cobbs (?.?)	1952-1954
Ruth A. Green (1907-1995)	1954-1956
Dr. James Edward Lee (1889-1962)	1957
James E. McCann (1915-1993)	1957-1959
Dr. Harold E. Burt	1960-1961
James E. McCann (1915-1993)	1962-1963
Hartwell W. Ragsdale (1925-2004)	1963-1965
Ernest J. Roberson Jr.	1965-1966
Tom Johnson (1924-1987)	1967-1969
Charles E. Johnson (1938-2004)	1969-1970
Charles E. Reid (1932-1995)	1970-1974
Dr. Walter J. Porter (1927-2001)	1974-1977
Dr. Charles W. Thomas (1926-1990)	1977-1978
Sonja R. Reid	1978
Geraldine "Gerri" Warren (1947-2009)	1979

Theodore W. McNeal (1904-1992)	1980
Rev. Robert C. Ard	1980-1981
Mamie Louise Greene (1939-2007)	1981-1982
Curtis Moring (1928-2004)	1983-1986
The Honorable Daniel Weber (1942-2002)	1986-1988
Curtis Moring (1928-2004)	1988-1992
Frank R. Jordan	1992-1995
Rev. Willie E. Manley	1995-1996
The Honorable Randa M. Trapp	1997-2000
Petrina M. Branch, Esq.	2000-2002
Douglas C. Oden, Esq.	2003-2009
Lei-Chala Indee Wilson, Esq.	2009-

*Birth and death dates are in parenthesis. Some tenure dates are approximate.