

Henrietta Roberts Stevenson

Beta Eta Chapter 1934

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Diamond Member 2009

Ivy Beyond the Wall October 30, 2009



San Antonio native Henrietta Stevenson earned her Bachelor's (1935 with honors) and Master's (1936) degrees at the University of Michigan. She was the first initiate of Beta Eta Chapter (U.M.) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and served one year as Chapter Basileus. Henrietta's service to education spanned over 35 years. She taught Spanish and French at Austin's Sam Huston College and San Antonio's St. Philip's College.

During their 62 years of marriage, Henrietta and her Sam Huston colleague, Ernest Stevenson, were blessed with two children, Ernest, Jr. and Maria. Henrietta's civil service employment included the War Department (WWII), Office of Dependency Benefits, Veterans Administration Insurance Division (NYC); and Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, N.J. During the 1950's, Henrietta was Basileus of Beta Alpha Omega Chapter, Newark, New Jersey, which formerly served all of Essex County.

In 1971, Henrietta transferred to Alpha Tau Omega Chapter. She served the chapter as Pecunious Grammateus (financial secretary), representative to the AKA national project--Cleveland Job Corps, financial coordinator for Fashionetta during the 1970's, sponsor of Fashionetta contestant Mrs. Minnie Lowery, and member of the Black Family Committee. Henrietta chaired the chapter's 1986 Sesquicentennial observance held at the Municipal Auditorium with over 2,000 in attendance.

Later in 1986, Henrietta attended the Palm Beach County Competition for the State of Florida's annual Black History and Culture Brain Bowl chaired by Maria. She arranged for Maria to share Florida's competition rules and materials with Alpha Tau Omega sorors. This sharing enhanced the development of Alpha Tau Omega's signature program, "Mahogany Brain Challenge." For several years, Henrietta showed her passion for the study of black history by supplying information to update M.B.C. questions.

Henrietta's civil rights activities included appointment as the first "Negro" teacher in Morristown, N.J. schools (1952), Co-Chair of the 1983 S.A. NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner, Voting Rights Round-table Chair, 1991 M.L.K. Commission member, and NAACP Diamond Life Member. As a community servant, Henrietta was a Deacon at First Presbyterian Church, member of Victoria Courts Childcare Auxiliary, Foster Grandparents Program, S.A. Conservation Society, Carver Community Cultural Center Development Board, Co-Founder of the Carver Volunteers, 2002 S.A. Women's Hall of Fame, and Life Member of the Eastside Optimist Club, National Council of Negro Women, Prudence Curry Society, S.A. Retired Teachers Association, and the University of Michigan Alumni Association.

Henrietta was a Life Member of the sorority and a Charter Member of Austin's Beta Psi Omega Chapter. Her family of sorors includes her daughter, Golden Soror Maria (Pi Chapter, Fisk) granddaughters Mona (Nu Beta, Georgia Tech), Yasmeen, (Gamma Kappa, Tuskegee), adopted daughter Judy Ponder (Beta Psi Omega), and god-daughter Madelyn Davis Gardner (Delta Rho, San Antonio).