

**Naming of Pavilion
Onie B. Conley**

We are here today to talk about Ms. Onie B. Conley, the advocate of Austin, Texas. Ms. Conley could make things happen. First her dream was to have a Senior Center in the East Austin area. After working with architects, spending some of her own money, making nearly every City Council meeting, Ms. Conley was finally able to see that being persistent and hard work can make things happen (the Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center).

Ms. Conley also has had a dream for over ten years to have a pavilion built in the park next to Conley-Guerrero Senior Center so that the community can have day and evening functions with bands. Mr. Conley spent her own money to have the first plans drawn of the pavilion, she helped get funding, caught a cab or got someone to give her a ride to the City Council meeting or other meetings to see that the pavilion became a reality. This was on her mind for days and years, but due to her sudden death she wasn't able to see it to completion. The advisory board of Conley-Guerrero Senior Center promised her that we would see it become a reality. **ONLY THROUGH MS. CONLEY'S EFFORTS THIS PAVILION HAS BECOME A REALITY. This is the reason that the PAVILION should be named the ONIE B. CONLEY PAVILION.** Without Ms. Conley's foresight, guts and determination the idea, plans and money this pavilion wouldn't have become a reality.

Ms. Onie B. Conley was educated in the public schools of Austin, attending Gregory Elementary (now Edward L. Blackshear Elementary) and Old Anderson High School where she graduated valedictorian. She began her post-secondary education at Samuel Huston College (now Huston-Tillotson University). While there, she worked as a domestic to help with college expenses and was a member of the Dragonettes and the YWCA. A talented athlete, she participated on the varsity teams of Girls' Basketball, Softball, Baseball and Tennis. As a campus volunteer, she helped coordinate plays and other fundraising activities to help the Librarian, Mrs. B. Lovinggood, purchase furniture and books for the library. In recognition of her hard work, she received awards for Best Student in both academics and extracurricular activities for two years. She graduated from Samuel Huston College with a B.A. Degree.

After graduation, she began teaching in the Austin Independent School District. In a career that spanned 43 years, she taught General

Science, Physical Education, Earth Science, Sex Education and Life Science. A consummate and dedicated educator, throughout those more than four decades in the classroom, Ms. Conley was absent only one day.

Ms Conley was always busy during the summer with volunteer work, other teaching assignments at Alcorn College in Mississippi, Prairie View College and Huston-Tillotson College.

Ms. Conley was dedicated to the community, as she was to her career, many non-profit organizations were the beneficiaries of her time, talent, and financial resources. Those organizations include Girl Scouts of America, Inc., American Red Cross, Holy Cross Hospital, Austin Dramatic Club, Salina Center, George Washington Carver Library and Museum, American Association of University Women, Old Bakery Emporium, Capital Metro, Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center Advisory Board and many others.

As a participant in the Blackshear Neighborhood Group, she served as the liaison between the neighborhood and the City Council, championing such causes as new streets, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters for East Austin; benches and shelters for bus riders; and ramps on sidewalks for the handicapped in wheelchairs. Her East Austin advocacy efforts also resulted in the 10,000 square foot Carver Library and the use of the old library for a Carver Museum.

This experience provided the groundwork for securing the senior center that bears her name, Conley-Guerrero Senior Center and also help the South Austin Senior Center become a reality because of her well-researched lobbying efforts with city officials. As testimony to the confidence in her abilities, elected officials selected Onie B. Conley twice as a representative to the White House conference on Aging.

THE SENIOR CENTERS, THE LIBRARY, HER ADVOCACY FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND HER ADVOCACY FOR THE ELDERLY ARE THE GREATEST ELEMENTS OF HER LEGACY TO THE CITY OF AUSTIN.

Another passion for Ms. Conley was her sorority. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. for nearly 60 years. She received the lifetime member award. She was also a lifetime member of the Conley-Guerrero Senior Center and Advisory Board.

Margarine G. Beaman, Marvin Massie, Maria Sosa, Alice Houston-Johnson, Margery "Tillie" Mackey, Mary C. Colunga, Willie Adams, Alexander T. Salone, Mona Vasquez