

Azie Taylor Morton (February 1, 1936 - December 7, 2003) was a teacher, a consummate civil servant, and is still the only African American to serve as Treasurer of the United States, appointed by President Carter to serve from 1977 to 1981.

Born in Dale, Texas, near Lockhart, Morton moved to Austin to attend high school at the Texas Blind, Deaf and Orphan School, a charity sponsored school for black children, because there was no high school for Americans of African descent in her hometown. After graduating high school at the age of 16, she was admitted to the first class of the newly merged Huston-Tillotson College in 1952, where she graduated Cum Laude in 1956 with a Bachelor of Science degree in commercial education.



While in Austin, Morton was known to swim in Barton Springs in defiance of the segregationist policies of the time. Her story is recounted in the film "A Reflecting Pool" by Karen Kocher, part of "Living Springs", an interactive documentary about Barton Springs. Similar such "swim-ins" became a prominent action early in the local civil rights movement. The integration of Barton Springs was not carried out single-handedly by any individual. In addition to Azie Morton's courage, prominent residents like Bertha Means, Willie Mae Kirk, Joan Means Khabele, Sandra Kirk, members of the Universalist Unitarian Church, students from Austin High School and several others in the community all worked collectively over a period of several years to integrate the Springs.

Morton worked locally as an educator and for the Texas AFL-CIO before her extensive career in Washington, D.C., which included working for President Kennedy's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and serving on the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing.

The late Honorable Barbara Jordan spoke at the U.S. Treasurer swearing in ceremony of Morton on September 12, 1977: "She may not have intended to be an example to others – but became an example. Her life is a manual on how to succeed by trying. It is a certification of the rewards of hard work and competence."

After her time in as Treasurer and her career in Washington, she returned to Austin where she became active with her alma mater Huston-Tillotson College in a variety of capacities, becoming a member of the Alumni Association to help manage a college bookstore and mentor students. She served as an example of the myriad possibilities that await those who graduate from this historic Black institution. She also served on the Austin Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (HACA) from 1999-2001.

Written by Jason Lopez