

# Leaders of Afro-American Nashville

Harold M. Love (1919-1996)



Harold M. Love was born September 8, 1919, to Samuel DeGreer Love, Jr., and Lillian Sinclair Adams Love in Nashville, Tennessee. The first of five children, including a twin brother, Arnold, Love was reared in a three-room house at 1421 Jackson Street near the current site of the Andrew Jackson Housing Project. This house, probably like many others in this community, had no indoor plumbing or electricity, indicating a sign of poverty. Despite the financial status of Samuel and Lillian Love, they stressed the importance of education to their children.

Love was educated in Nashville public schools, graduating first in Pearl High School's class of 1935. He later attended Tennessee A&I college, majoring in social studies and earning a B.A. degree in 1939. He earned a M.A. in Sociology at Fisk University in 1941. Upon obtaining his graduate degree, Love accepted short-lived employment as an instructor at Fisk when he was drafted into the United States Army January 31, 1942.

During his military service, Love served in the European Theater in France, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg, Germany. He also excelled in the military, earning the rank of Master Sergeant and becoming a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and two battle stars. After almost four years in the United States Army, Love was honorably discharged in 1945. When he returned to Nashville, he successfully obtained employment as an insurance agent for the Atlanta Life Insurance Company and resumed his teaching career at Fisk.

Between 1959 and 1965, Harold Love's life began to change when he married, sought a political career, and became active in the Nashville Civil Rights Movement. On June 28, 1959, in Fayette County, Tennessee, Love married Mary Alice Yancy and subsequently became the father of six children: Chrystal, Caralyn, Harold, Jr., Candyce, Anita, and Cheryl. Two years later he was elected to the Nashville City Council, representing North Nashville (the area extending north

of the Bordeaux Bridge) from 1961-1970. Of equal importance was Love's participation in the Civil Rights Movement. He solicited funds from Nashvillians to post bail for Tennessee State University students incarcerated during the Sit-In Movement and for other related expenses, and he marched with and supported those students throughout the Nashville Civil Rights Movement.

After a successful decade as a councilman, Love sought a higher level of Government—the Tennessee State General Assembly. Using the campaign slogan "Keep Love in the House," he was successfully elected to represent the 54th Legislative District in 1970, a seat he would hold for 25 years. A staunch politician, Love's political affiliations were many. He was chairman of the State and Local Committee and Davidson County Legislative Delegation, and a member of the Tennessee Black Caucus of Legislators, the Ways and Means Committee, the Fiscal Review Committee, and the Calendar and Rules Committee. He also made several significant accomplishments during his tenure as a State Representative, including a \$100 million appropriation for Tennessee State University for renovations and a \$200,000 deposit of state funds in Nashville's African American Bank, Citizens Bank and Trust Company. In addition, he obtained funds for the replacement of the Bordeaux Bridge, later renamed in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and successfully established the Memorial Home Program to rehabilitate old homes. Finally, State Representative Love was instrumental in the judicial appointment of Attorney A.A. Birch, Davidson County's first African American judge, and in opening employment opportunities for African Americans within Tennessee state departments.

Often described by his peers and members of the community as a compassionate and community-oriented man, Love was affiliated with numerous civic organizations. They included the Nashville Urban League, Metropolitan Business Association, Northwest

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**YMCA, and North End Citizenship Association. He served on the Board of Directors of Nashville OIC and Citizens Bank and Trust Company, and on the Trustee Board of Lee Chapel A.M.E. Church. He worked as a volunteer for Big Brothers and Sisters, Boy Scouts of America, and the United Givers Fund. In addition, Love was a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., the Free and Accepted Masons, Tennessee State University National Alumni Association, and the Nashville**

**Fisk Club.**

**Harold M. Love, a family man, died March 14, 1996. Focusing on safer neighborhoods, improving education, concern for senior citizens, and economic and community development, he left a legacy of community service, civil rights activism, and a successful political career spanning 35 years in Nashville, Tennessee.**

***Pamela Smoot***

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