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## Herman B. and Martha Greene, Pillars of Strength For the Community

Janet Braxton writes about her father and mother, Herman B. and Martha Greene. They lived in both the Mayfair/Parkside and Eastland Gardens neighborhoods. Herman B. held offices with several community groups. Martha helped begin and maintain the Minnesota Avenue Day tradition. Both made their neighborhoods, and the city, a better place to be.

Mr. Herman B. Greene

"A Pillar of Strength in the Community"

Mr. Herman B. Greene, a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, came to the Washington D.C. area in the 1940's. Mr. Greene immediately began working in his community in far northeast Washington, and soon became well-known for his leadership in coordinating efforts to make a better community.

His career in community service spans more than 4 decades. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Far East Community Services at the Capitol View Development for many years under UPO, serving as treasurer. He was involved in the foundation of the Kenilworth/Parkside Recreation Center. He was former chairman of the Citizens Committee for the rebuilding of Parkside.

He was the President of the civic association for the now defunct Mayfair/Parkside development for 13 years. He was former president of the Eastland Gardens Civic Association. He chaired the Far Northeast/Southeast Council. He is a former member of the 6th District Police Advisory Board. He and his wife Martha are members of the Episcopal Church of the Atonement on East Capital Street, N.E. Mr. Greene is largely responsible for stopping the burning of trash and debris in what is known today as Kenilworth Park.

He interceded on behalf of the citizens of Eastland Gardens when he had not even yet moved into the neighborhood, to make certain that unhealthy dumping of unprocessed sludge in Kenilworth park ceased. He worked diligently with engineers to get the area cleaned up. When the Group Home on Lee Street in Eastland Gardens opened. He met with city officials to negotiate rules and regulations of the operation of the home.

When the residents of Eastland Gardens felt uneasy about the Group Home, Mr. Greene received assurance from officials that the impact of this home in the community would not be a negative one. He consistently monitors the operations of the Group Home. As a result, it is one of the best run Group Homes in the District of Columbia. Over the years, Mr. Greene has represented the citizens of Eastland Gardens when meeting with the National Park Service and WOL radio and other organizations to protect the citizen's rights during the Stone Soul picnic held each summer, or any other event or held in Kenilworth Park.

He monitored the vendors in the park and didn't mind telling them to "move on" if they were breaking the rules. Always a soldier on the front line for the protection of citizen's rights, Mr. Greene is no respecter of persons when it comes to race or creed. He demands respect from his fellowman and he gets it. In addition, in his position as Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) for Ward 7, he has assisted countless numbers of citizens on various issues of concern, even personally placing phone calls to city officials if they were having problems with their property, always following through to make certain the problem was solved.

He maintains a close liaison with the Mayor's office, police departments, Federal and District, to ensure the adequate monitoring and protection of the citizens of Eastland Gardens and its environs. He patrols the neighborhood to make sure the neighbors are maintaining their property and, in cases of illness or death, or trouble in the neighborhood, he has always been there to lend a helping hand. He has dedicated his life to public service. One of his favorite phrases is "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Herman Green's daughter Janet Braxton, who wrote the tribute above, adds this:

My father was born June 9, 1915, and passed away May 8, 2001. He had just been sworn in that January as the ANC Commissioner for a second term.

He built his home on Marne Place in 1974. Prior to that he resided in Parkside and in Mayfair Mansions for many years.

The neighbors in Eastland Gardens really depended on my father to resolve a myriad of issues they faced. He worked closely with the National Park Service to get the Stone Soul Picnic moved out of Kenilworth Park because the crowds who attended would block residents in by parking their cars in front of their homes and defacing their lawns. More important is the fact that he was a major factor in stopping the burning of the Kenilworth dump. There was an article in U.S News and World Report on my daddy's efforts in 1975.

My mother, Martha Greene (August 19, 1916 to January 18, 2004), was also a community activist. She retired from the Federal govt in 1984 and immediately went to work with Marion Barry's administration setting up an office on Minnesota Avenue as head of the Minnesota Avenue Economic Revitalization Board. She was the first to plan Minnesota Avenue Day and hosted it for years before she became ill suffering a stroke that prevented her from serving in her office.

However, she remained active in community service and as public affairs officer for the National Hook-up of Black Women and many other activities.

My parents hosted campaign parties at their home for Barry (way before his fall from grace). Mayor Williams confided in my father to help him with many issues including the dilemma of DC General Hospital.