

A Legacy of Community Betterment

Joseph L. Allen dedicated his life to bettering Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood in which he grew up and later raised his own family.

"My father really cared about people," said Allen's daughter Lakeia Allen-Bowman. "He genuinely loved the city of Schenectady and willingly helped anyone who needed a hand. Especially the downtrodden and disenfranchised."

Bowman said her father would be extremely pleased to see his name on DePaul's newest project, a three-story, 52,500 square foot apartment building

located at 780 Albany Street in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood.



Joseph L. Allen

"He loved living in Hamilton Hill and often talked about how it used to be a very nice

neighborhood and how he wanted to see it become great again," Bowman added. "I'm sure that he would be pleased with [the Joseph L. Allen Apartments], not only because it is a great honor but because it will be a step toward improving a community that he cherished."

Joseph L. Allen passed away in April 2015 at the age of 79. After attending Mount Pleasant High School, he graduated from Kentucky State College in 1958. That same year, he was drafted into the United States Army where he served honorably until he was discharged in 1961. Mr. Allen later went on to earn his Master's degree in educational psychology from the College of St. Rose in 1981.

Mr. Allen's interest in community service began as a youth advisor with the Carver Community Center. He began working for the New York State Division for Youth in 1966, eventually rising to the assistant director of the NYS Division for Youth until 1990 when he became the Director of the Troy Community Urban

Home. Mr. Allen retired from New York State as a Supervisor of the Albany Intake Unit in 1999.

Mr. Allen's dedication to community betterment began even before he was elected as the first African-American member of the Schenectady City Council in November 1995. His long history of involvement started as a founding member of the Albany Alumni chapter of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. He previously served as the president of the Schenectady Chapter of the NAACP, President of the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association, Chairman of the Youth Advisory Board at the Carver Community Center, Human Services Planning Council of Schenectady County, Hamilton Hill Task Force, Minority Contractors Technical Assistance Board and the Schenectady IDA Board. He also served as a trustee board member of the Duryee Memorial AME Zion Church where he was an active member of the male chorus.

During his time serving on the Schenectady City Council, Mr. Allen served in many capacities, including council president, chairman of the Claims Committee, Public Safety Committee and chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Bowman said her father made a lot of connections through his community service.

"He knew everyone," she said. "We couldn't really go anywhere in the city without someone recognizing him or stopping to say hello. Even if they didn't know his name, they knew who he was."



Dedicated to community, education, work, family and his church, which is located right across the street from the Joseph L. Allen Apartments, Mr. Allen is remembered as always being accessible and willing to lend a hand.

Marion Porterfield, Mr. Allen's

successor on the Schenectady City Council, said having a building which will serve those on a fixed income or with a mental health diagnosis named after him is a great honor to Joseph L. Allen's legacy.

"He would be extremely pleased to see the development going in because he

was a strong advocate for the area," she said. "He always wanted to make sure Hamilton Hill was included in plans to revitalize the city."

"He loved living in Hamilton Hill and often talked about how it used to be a very nice neighborhood and how he wanted to see it become great again."

— Lakeia Allen-Bowman, Joseph L. Allen's daughter