NEW ORLEANS
300
1718 ~ 2018
TRICENTENNIAL

From *Bienville* to *Bourbon Street* to *bounce*. 300 moments that make New Orleans unique.

Oretha Castle Haley

was a courageous leader of a courageous group of African Americans in New Orleans fighting for racial equality in the city and throughout the nation.

Haley grew up on North Tonti Street, not far from Dooky Chase where her mother worked.

As part of the Consumers' League of Greater New Orleans, in 1959, Haley began picketing businesses on Dryades Street that catered to black clientele, but refused to employ African Americans. That commercial corridor was renamed after Haley in 1989.

Haley, Cecil Carter, Rudy Lombard, Lanny Goldfinch and Oliver St. Pee, established a local branch of the national Congress of Racial Equality, and, in 1960, members of the group staged a sit-in at the McCrory's lunch counter on Canal Street. Castle and the others were arrested and charged with criminal mischief.

The charges were eventually overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that the charges violated the 14th Amendment.

Haley, along with CORE, was also instrumental in organizing the Freedom Rides. Haley was arrested several times for participation in other civil rights' protests, including in 1963 when she was carried out of the New Orleans City Hall by police while still in a chair.

She later served as field director of CORE in northern Louisiana.

Haley also successfully forced the integration of the city's public parks system and helped Dorothy Mae Taylor, Louisiana's first black female legislator, get elected.

Haley served as a deputy administrator at Charity Hospital in the 1980s and helped create the New Orleans Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation.

Oretha Castle Haley was appointed president of the local chapter of CORE in 1961 and oversaw the group's marches to segregate stores, hotels, theaters and an amusement park.

Lolis Elie, the Rev. A.L. Davis, Ernest 'Dutch' Morial, the Rev. John B. Morris and Oretha Castle Haley, right, walk during the Sept. 30, 1963, Freedom March in New Orleans, the largest such march in New Orleans at the time.

Oretha Castle Haley was one of the marchers who targeted Dryades Street businesses. This stretch of the street was later named after her.