

CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER HONORED

By Cora Murray, Historian
Connecticut Historical Commission

On the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Connecticut's governmental civil rights agency (the nation's first), the home of the agency's first employee, the late Dr. Frank T. Simpson, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The two-story Tudor Revival house, built in 1913 at 27 Keney Terrace, Hartford, one-half block east of Keney Park, was purchased in 1952 by Dr. Simpson and his wife, Marie, who continues to reside there.

In a ceremony held at the home on January 18, state officials presented Mrs. Simpson with a certificate commemorating the significance of Dr. Simpson's career.

A prominent civil rights leader in the post-World War II era, Dr. Simpson was the long-time Director of the Connecticut Inter-Racial Commission, established in 1943 by the General Assembly. The agency was succeeded in 1951 by the Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights, and in 1967 the name was changed to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

Dr. Simpson served with the civil rights commission until 1959, by which time his title was Executive Secretary. He was instrumental in establishing the respected reputation of the commission through the lowering of barriers in education, jobs, and housing. As a result of his efforts, which relied on reasoning rather than rhetoric, construction unions and department stores in the Hartford area were opened to black workers.

Frank T. Simpson died in 1974, the year in which Hartford's Waverly Street School was renamed Simpson-Waverly School in his honor.

CAPTION

Pictured left to right:

Edward Cherry, architect and member of the State Historic Preservation Board

John W. Shannahan, Director of the Connecticut Historical Commission and
State Historic Preservation Officer

Mrs. Marie Simpson, widow of Dr. Frank T. Simpson

David Ransom, historic preservation consultant who prepared the nomination of the
Dr. Frank T. Simpson House to the National Register of Historic Places

Dr. Ivor Echols, member of the Connecticut Historical Commission

Ms. Cora Murray, historian and coordinator of the Connecticut Historical Commission's
Advisory Committee on Minority and Women's History

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