

Carl Connor

Education

Mr. Carl Connor has enjoyed a distinguished, pioneering career as a teacher and school administrator.

When coming of age, Connor wanted only to become a teacher after graduating from Douglass High School (Columbia, MO) in 1929. He and his three siblings hoped to attend the University of Missouri where his parents worked. For apparent reasons, that was not to be the case. Instead, he attended Lincoln University (MO), where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1934 and met his wife, Octavia, who was also an aspiring educator. After graduation, Connor began teaching adult education language classes, but it was during a trip to Hayti, MO, that he found his true calling.

Black children in Hayti attended school in split sessions: picking cotton during harvest time and going to school during the off-season. The day after his arrival, Connor was offered a teaching position in Hayti's only school. In two years, Connor became principal of Hayti Negro High School, which encompassed grades 1-10. Connor advocated for a four-year curriculum for black students and later renamed the expanded high school Hayti Central High School. The school often went without adequate learning materials and supplies.

Connor moved from Hayti to Boonville in 1942 and continued his career in education. With the onset of integration, black schools began to close in Boonville: African-American teachers were reassigned to menial jobs. In 1953, Connor moved to Kansas City where he served as an educator and administrator until retiring from Southwest High School in 1980.

Mr. Carl Connor has received legislative proclamations from the State of Missouri as well as civic recognitions from several Missouri school districts. Most recently, he received a Proclamation from the city of Columbia designating January 20, 2011, Carl M. Connor Centennial Day in honor of his 100th birthday.