

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ernest McBride

PERSON

McBride, Ernest, 1909-2007

Alternative Names: Ernest McBride;

Life Dates: November 12, 1909-May 5, 2007

Place of Birth: Carrollton, Mississippi, USA

Residence: Long Beach, California

Occupations: Civil Rights Activist; Community Leader

Biographical Note

Organizer, union activist and local NAACP field secretary Ernest McBride was born on November 12, 1909, in Carrollton, Mississippi. McBride was one of seven children of a farm couple. After completing his studies in segregated schools in Arkansas, McBride left the South for California, seeking a better life.

In 1940, McBride co-founded and became the first field secretary of the Long Beach NAACP. He and his activist wife, Lillian McBride, attacked discrimination through organized direct action. As an NAACP activist, McBride successfully integrated the Long Beach Police Department, the Naval Shipyard, Coles Market and the General Telephone Company. He also successfully challenged the Long Beach Unified School District to prevent their annual black-faced minstrel show. McBride also fought police brutality and housing discrimination. The FBI compiled a thick file on McBride and planted agents at his meetings. FBI records show that surveillance officially ended in 1964.

In 1965, McBride received a Long Beach city commendation for risking his life to save three children from a burning apartment. As a pastime, McBride played catcher for the Colored Giants, competing against the great Jackie Robinson, star of the Pasadena Dukes. Through it all, his house was a meeting place. Paul Robeson was his guest in 1948. McBride, his wife and six children often walked picket lines together. Now retired, McBride has eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and his home on Lemon Avenue has been designated an historic site by the city of Long Beach. McBride passed away on May 5, 2007.

Related Entries

Scipio A. Jones High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

San Pedro Cotton Compress [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Loader

Ralphs Grocery Store [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1931 to 1934]

Stock Clerk

NAACP [MEMBEROF]
[from 1940 to ?]

Field Secretary