

MONITOR Memorables

An Unrelenting Drive To Achieve and To Reach Back

The Story of LeGree Daniels

LeGree Daniels is an extraordinary, remarkable woman. Being in her presence for only a few moments one is left with the impression that she could move even the highest mountain—if it had to be moved. She doesn't ever have to proclaim that she is somebody and a very special somebody—you sense that when you see or meet her for the first time. Although "life ain't been no crystal stair," as she likes to repeat her favorite Langston Hughes poem, LeGree Daniels has always enjoyed the beauty of several worlds. She has lived and served in the fields of public service, religion, civics and politics.

Not even a 4th of July celebration can cause as much excitement as LeGree Daniels creates when she undertakes one of her favorite community projects. A born leader, the dynamic civic, religious and social activist is highly respected in her community and is widely recognized as one of the most influential women in the nation. She possesses an unrelenting drive to achieve.

LeGree Daniels has believed, since she was a very young girl, that her life's avocation is helping other people—and all of her life has been dedicated to doing just that. To those amiable and Christian virtues which adorn her flawless character, LeGree Daniels adds dignity of manners, superiority of understanding and an intelligent mind in all of her endeavors.

Born into an astute political family in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, LeGree Daniels' leadership role got off to a very early start. The eldest of five children, she took it upon herself to keep her brothers and sisters in tow, and got her first experience in working with other people.

The very energetic, hard-working community leader insists on excellence with an almost religious fervor in everything she does and with every organization with which she works. Somewhere along the way, LeGree



LeGree Daniels

Daniels remembers seeing a quotation on a wall that read, "Lord help me to remember that nothing is going to happen today that you and I can't handle." She has adopted this as one of her mottos in going about her life's work—and so far, it seems nothing has happened in her life that she and the Lord couldn't handle. Spending long hours working on the many community projects with which she is involved, LeGree Daniels quickly responds that long hours and commitment to her work are part of a greater goal—that of helping people. She considers this a lifelong process that may take her in many directions.

LeGree Daniels has taken the time to share her hard-earned skills with all of the people in her community and all who come in contact with her. Everyone knows that LeGree Daniels can always be counted on to help with

any worthy cause, in any way she possibly can.

LeGree Daniels' accomplishments, seemingly impossible feats at times, have benefitted hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom have never met or seen her. Another familiar quote that LeGree avidly remembers was in the form of a question and answer: "When does a brother help a brother?—today, tomorrow, always."

There hasn't been a time in the life of this dynamic go-getter that she wasn't involved with helping people. She always has been able to utilize her talents for organizing. As a teenager in Philadelphia, LeGree Daniels garnered invaluable experience soliciting funds and passing out literature for her father's political organization. At that time, however, LeGree's interest was not political. She had sat in on

meetings at her home, where her father's colleagues often met. And she heard them discuss many things that would make life for black people in this country better.

LeGree Daniels met many distinguished black leaders during that time, and remembered the long debates and conversations about the awesome plight of black people in America, especially the poor. LeGree remembers vividly some of the strong remarks made: "A voteless people is a powerless people." "Power and property ownership go hand in hand." But, it wasn't until years later when LeGree Daniels moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, that she really got the opportunity to work with and to "serve my people."

LeGree Daniels worked her way through Temple University and also attended Central Pennsylvania Business School. Constantly on the go and with sights set high, LeGree moved to Harrisburg in 1941 to accept a position at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. She was employed there for 28 years and became the first black examiner. Since that time, she has racked up many "firsts" for a black and a woman. She always has been full of dreams and energy, fired with the determination to succeed.

LeGree lived at the old Phillis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA for several years after arriving in Harrisburg. She immediately got involved in the activities of the "Y" and the community; and before long, again found herself in leadership roles. She developed a deep admiration for Phillis Wheatley after reading accounts of her life, struggles and accomplishments. LeGree Daniels still serves on the board of the YWCA.

In 1949, LeGree married Oscar Daniels, a distinguished-looking railroad man who later went to the State Insurance

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