

Algridge and Dorothy Brown: Community Builders

Algridge and Dorothy Brown were born in Cass County, Texas and moved to St. Joseph Missouri in 1948 where they hoped to find employment and better opportunities to raise their family. Once the couple moved to St. Joseph, Algridge and Dorothy Brown were committed to the community over the several decades they lived there. Dorothy was a homemaker, caring for the couple's 12 children while she attended Blankenship College of Cosmetology and graduated with a degree in cosmetology. She evolved into a businesswoman and opened her own hair salon. Dorothy was a member of St. Francis Baptist Temple, where she faithfully gave her offering even if she could not attend. Dorothy's support helped to make it possible for Algridge to be a community activist. In addition to his job at Swift's Meat Packing, Algridge was also an agent for Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company. As an insurance agent, Algridge made deep connections in the community. Algridge served as president of the PTA for Horace Mann School, worked on the campaign for a local Black candidate (Kelsey Bashier) for City Council, was a member of the NAACP, and a member of Black Citizens for Progress. As a member of Black Citizens for Progress, Algridge was instrumental with others in developing a community center on Messanie Street for the Black community in St. Joseph. Algridge also served on the City of St. Joseph's Human Rights Committee. The right to vote being important to the couple, Algridge and Dorothy dressed in their Sunday best to exercise that right. Algridge was a member of St Luke's Methodist Church, where he served as Lay Minister, delivering the sermon on those weeks when there was not a minister. After the couple opened Al's Thrif-Tee Food Market, Dorothy rented out her hair salon and worked side by side with Algridge in all aspects of running the grocery store and the various rental properties the couple acquired. A primary feature of Algridge and Dorothy's community activism and compassion was to provide housing, groceries, and general assistance in acquiring access to community services for people in need.