

Community. Success. Independence.

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Geri Brown, Single Parent Advocate

originally written by Denise Lyons and Kelly Brown (Geri's daughters); edited by Jo Ann Marsh, Director of Administration

"Everything is in divine order." This was always one of Geri Brown's favorite expressions. She also said she would only leave Warren Village at "check-out time" -- and she kept that promise. Geri went home on September 21, 1998, after a nearly year-long battle with the illness which finally claimed her. Warren Village is the poorer for her passing -- but the richer for having had Geri with us for as long as we did.

Geri's life and career path reflected her indomitable spirit. Geraldine Leonard Brown was born on April 15, 1935 and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Geri married and had her first daughter, Denise, before moving to Denver in 1959. In 1960, she married her second husband and had her second daughter, Kelly.

Shortly after moving to Denver, Geri went to work at St. Joseph Hospital in housekeeping and moved her up into the purchasing department. In 1963, Geri went to work for Western Electric in the purchasing department and eventually moved into upper management. One of her priorities throughout her time at Western Electric was to recruit minorities for employment. She retired in 1982, after eighteen years of service.

Although her life situations and family responsibilities had delayed her educational ambitions, Geri never let that stand in her way. In 1985 she obtained her undergraduate degree from Loretta Heights and in 1995, she earned a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Denver. She may have been the oldest graduate from the social work program in

its history.

For many years a single parent herself, Geri dreamed of establishing a single parents program in Philadelphia called Markoe Unique International. The program was based on her experiences growing up on Markoe Street, in a disadvantaged west Philadelphia neighborhood. Her idea was to design a program which provided various services to promote family self-sufficiency. When she discovered that Warren Village shared her goals, she became an avid volunteer. Geri served on the Board of Trustees from 1984-88 and started working with the Family Services staff under contract with NorthEast Denver Housing during this time. In 1994, Geri officially came on staff and was promoted to the Director of Family Services. Much of what the Family Services Program today encompasses was designed and developed by Geri's visionary dreams.

Geri was honored for Outstanding Achievement by the Big Sisters of America, was chosen as Women of the Year by the Denver Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.,

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Geri Brown
1935 - 1998

For Geri . . .

"One of the greatest challenges of being human is reconciling the fact that every one has the inner courage and strength of character to capably handle the difficulties and trials that pepper our existence. Challenge lies in the fact that the conscious mind is often not aware of this courage and strength. Perhaps a more spiritual way of looking at this challenge is in the age-old wisdom that God will never give a person more than he or she can handle. Call it what you will -- a divine test, a growing experience, one of

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