



GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS INDUCTEE 2008

NINA MIGLIONICO was born in Birmingham to Italian immigrant parents. Her father ran a delicatessen and from her earliest days Nina worked in the family store.

Reared in Avondale, she attended Woodlawn High School. There was never any doubt the honor student would attend college as her father told her she could do anything she wanted with her life, provided she finished college. She enrolled at Howard College, forerunner to Samford University then located at South East Lake in Birmingham.

At age 19, standing just under 5 feet tall, with a unique last name Miglionico (Mill-yon-i-co; the 'g' is silent), she enrolled at the University of Alabama School of Law. She was the youngest member of her class and one of only five women law students in the University of Alabama Law School class of 1936. It was a time when many law schools did not even accept women students. Of the five women graduates, only Nina began a law practice.

With a sterling reputation as a lawyer and involvement in a number of organizations, through her work, activities, speeches and writings, she changed a number of Alabama laws, including allowing women to serve on juries in Alabama.

Her drive to thrust the state and the City of Birmingham forward was not without risk. Crosses were burned in her yard, there were phone threats and a bomb was placed on her front porch. Fortunately, her father discovered the explosive and removed it.

In 1963, a new form of government created the opportunity for her to run for the newly structured Birmingham City Council. In the primary election she finished third out of 75 candidates. She took her seat on the original Council and won re-election in 1965, 1969, 1973, 1977, and 1981. During her 22 years of service, she served as chair of the Birmingham Park and Recreation Board and was the first woman president of the Birmingham City Council. Plus, she received the enduring name "Miss Nina."

An enthusiastic musician, traveler, reader, politician and attorney, she was revered for her trailblazing spirit.

She died in May 2009.