



GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS INDUCTEE 1985

DR. W. C. PATTON was a native of Alabama. He attended public schools in Birmingham and Alabama State College in Montgomery. In 1970, the honorary degree of Doctor of Law was conferred on him by the Birmingham Baptist College.

He spent 16 years as a principal in Alabama schools before becoming Alabama State Manager of the American Woodmen, a fraternal life insurance association. In 1962, he was elected a member of the National Board of Directors of the Supreme Camp of American Woodmen and in 1964, Vice Supreme Commander of the American Woodmen.

During this time, Dr. Patton became deeply involved in the political process of our state and nation. In 1952, he called community leaders together from around the state and organized the Alabama State Coordinating Association for Registration and Voting. At the time, there were approximately 20,000 registered black voters in the State of Alabama. He led the association into many counties where it was almost suicidal to discuss the NAACP. He became President of the Birmingham Branch of the NAACP and later became President of the Alabama State Conference of NAACP branches. After 10 years, he resigned his position with the American Woodmen to become Executive Secretary for the State NAACP of Alabama. Membership increased and Alabama ranked second behind North Carolina in the Southeast.

In 1956, when the NAACP was enjoined from doing business in Alabama, he became the National Association Director of Voter Education for the NAACP with headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. Later, he became National Director of NAACP Voter Education.

Mr. Patton did not limit his work to one area. He served his community in many capacities—on many boards, educational and civic committees, to make Birmingham a safe and progressive place to live.

He passed away in 1997.