

## MN Civil Rights leader to be honored by Mpls school kids & Mayor Hodges May 23

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Emerson Spanish Immersion Learning Center will host a community celebration honoring civil rights leader, Dr. Josie R Johnson, in their gym on, Friday, May 23, 2014, 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM.

Students from Emerson Spanish Immersion Learning Center will be performing a song written by Larry Long, under the direction of music instructor Yina Ha in honor of Dr. Josie R. Johnson, entitled "Listen To Each Other Now." Students will also be reciting select words shared by Dr. Johnson with the students about her life. Dr. Josie R. Johnson will also be presented with a story songbook of "Listen To Each Other Now" illustrated by students from Emerson Spanish Immersion with help from art Instructor Mina Leierwood. Mayor Betsy Hodges will be present to read the 'Dr. Josie R. Johnson Day Proclamation' in honor of Civil Rights & Social Justice Elder Dr. Josie R. Johnson at the celebration.

**About Dr. Josie R. Johnson:** Dr. Josie R. Johnson grew up in Texas only two generations out of slavery. She attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she earned a B.A. in Sociology. She went on to earn an M. A. and Ed. D. at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

In 1964, Josie R. Johnson led a multiracial delegation of women from Minnesota to witness first-hand the civil rights struggle in Mississippi. In 1967, her work as acting director of the Minneapolis Urban League, was responsible for creating many successful programs to help African American people find employment, housing, and to make community connections.

She served as a bridge between communities, as an assistant to Mayor Art Naftalin. Dr. Johnson used her experience, knowledge, and skill to champion with others the creation of the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights. Dr. Johnson became the first African American appointed to the Board of Regents at the University of Minnesota (U of M), in 1971.

In the 1990's, as associate vice-president for academic affairs at the U of M, she spearheaded efforts to increase diversity in the student body and faculty. To honor her committed efforts, the U of M established the Josie R. Johnson Human Rights and Social Justice Award.

What Dr. Josie R. Johnson is most proud of, though, is being the mother of three 'remarkable' daughters, and grandmother to three 'equally amazing' granddaughters.