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Outstanding Civic Leader

Negro Labor News

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OUTSTANDING CIVIC LEADER

FROM THE FILE OF THE NEGRO LABOR NEWS

MARCH 13, 1943
By C. W. RICE

PROF. WILLIAM LEONARD DAVIS, recently elected chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Affairs of Colored People, is an outstanding civic leader and educator of this state. He has an enviable record of service in the advancement and welfare of the colored people. He has been most active in educational, civic, religious and political movements. His attainments in life are an example of how one may rise from obscurity to the plane of recognition as a leader.

Mr. Davis was born in Fayette County on a farm near Schulenberg, Texas. Having received what education was offered by the schools of this county, he entered Prairie View State Normal College and continued his education between teaching periods until he obtained his M. A. degree from training received at Prairie View College; State Teachers College at Greeley, Colo.; the University of Kansas and The Work Shop, Philadelphia, Pa.

As educator, Mr. Davis has served for 36 years in the public schools of Hempstead and Houston, Texas. He has worked with the State Teachers Association for 30 years serving as its president, auditor, and as a member of the executive committee. While in the position of president of the association, he established the idea of agricultural extension work. He may be called the father of this work in Texas. As secretary of the Southwestern Branch of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Mr. Davis is responsible for placing Negro history books in the public schools of Houston.

Prof. Davis is one of the founders of the Commission on Democracy in Education and serves as chairman of its financial committee. The objective of this commission is to obtain equal educational opportunities for Negroes. One of the most outstanding achievements of the commission was the procuring of equal pay raise for teachers at Dallas.

Although advanced beyond the age of active military service, Prof. Davis was the first to volunteer his service for civilian defense work. He enrolled in a class for special police training and is the only colored graduate of the War Department for Texas Schools in the city. Mr. Davis is usually found supporting all civic and religious activities.

LEADS CITY MANAGER MOVEMENT

Mr. Davis was elected by a group of colored citizens as a leader in the charter amendment election campaign last year where the colored citizens voted 8 to 1 for the movement.

On January 1, 1943, at Gregg St. Presbyterian Church, Prof. Davis was unanimously elected chairman of the Advisory Committee on Affairs of Colored People, which was officially endorsed by the City Council. More than 2,000 persons attended the first public meeting of the committee on February 20, 1943, where the need of civic improvements for colored people were presented to the city fathers at the Good Hope Baptist Church. The Advisory Committee is composed of the leading business, civic and religious men of the city.