

## **Honoring the Rank and File Members of the Black Panther Party**

Why honor the rank and file members and who were these members?

The answers to these questions are found by remembering and giving recognition to those who actually did the work and who really made the Black Panther Party Programs happen.

The reality is that the average Party member was between the ages of 18 to 20 years old. These young Party members worked long and very hard hours both day and night without any pay. They lived collectively and shared almost everything with their fellow Panther members. They owned nothing and for the most part their closest relationships were with their comrades.

These young Panthers rose at dawn and worked until their assigned jobs were done. They functioned for the people and for their communities. They shouldered the tasks of cooking breakfasts for school children and working in the communities soliciting donations in order to keep those programs supplied. They went door-to-door, gathering signatures for petitions on issues that affected their communities and educating those communities on those same issues. They collected clothes for the free clothing program.

Very importantly, there was the job of selling the Black Panther Party Newspapers, which they did every day...door-to-door, on college campuses, in bars, restaurants, clubs, bus stations, and on street corners. This work brought on the harassment of the police, including arrests and time in jail. Even imprisoned they worked to politically educate and recruit inmates to join the Black Panther Party.

At the end of the day, these young Panthers were expected to read the Black Panther Party Newspaper cover-to-cover. They also had to attend political education classes as well as rallies and demonstrations. They were expected to memorize and understand the Party's 10 Point Party Program and Platform, the Three Main Rules of Discipline, and the Rules of the Black Panther Party.

The rank and file members of the Black Panther Party forged new revolutionary ways of thinking and demonstrated new ways of behaving. They developed and practiced the art of collective thinking by casting aside egotism and arrogance. The “We” became more important than the “I”.

These were no easy tasks, but for the rank and file members of the Black Panther Party to accomplish them on a national level, among poor, Black, disenfranchised, and oppressed people, were monumental and astounding revolutionary achievements.

**ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE AND ALL POWER TO THE  
RANK AND FILE MEMBERS OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY.**

Big Man