

Anthony Woods Panther/Friend

When I first joined the Party in the summer of 1968, I met Anthony and he became my Section Leader. We lived a few blocks from each other. We would hold our Section meetings and Political Education classes over his house on 72nd ave. The East Oakland office was located on the corner of 73rd ave and East14th St., a block away.

Anthony's mother, Agnes Woods, was an Oakland Legend. She was a community activist. I once asked Anthony how he first found out about the Party. He told me that his mother brought a newspaper home one day and he read it and went searching the Party out. He went over to National HQ's on 45th and Grove St to join. When the East Oakland office opened (July 1968), a block from his house, he started working out of that office. We became friends; we sold Panther papers together and studied principles and goals of the BPP together.

Anthony was from East Oakland and knew everyone. He was from a large family. One of Anthony's older brothers, Bradley, was a Panther for a while and his family always supported the Party. So I learned about East Oakland from Anthony. We didn't go downtown to sell newspapers much; we sold papers in East Oakland on East 14th st. We would also go up to Eastmont Mall and sell papers. We applied the Party's 10-10-10 program - a program of organizing ten people in a 10 block area and them organizing 10 more people. We sold papers from 73rd and E.14th St to 98th Ave and E.14th St. working both sides of the street. We went into every business and talked to the people in the stores and shops about the BPP. We developed a good understanding with many business people. They would sell our newspapers in their stores and shops. Some of the same businesses donated to our Breakfast program later.

We did door to door community organizing in our section which was Brookfield and Sobrante Park off 98th and Edes Ave to 105th Ave. People got to know us in the area. We worked with the BSU at Madison Jr. High to help them get Black History at the school. We opened up a Breakfast for school children program in our section. Some of the kids who went to that breakfast program still know me and say hi whenever they see me. We held Political Education classes at the Brookfield Community Center and showed films about the BPP there. We sold newspapers on 98th and Edes in front of James Liquor store. We had many young supporters of the Party working with us. Some of them still support the Party today.

I learned a lot from Anthony and he was a person you could trust. We used to hold weekend dances at the local community center on Fridays. When the Soul Center opened in 1969 on 70th and E.14th we used that Center for Talent shows and dances. The manger there was a friend of Anthony's. Robert Bay, our captain, liked that we had the dances as we brought in money to the office. Big Rob trusted us and he would call on us to deal with other money matters. I remember on May Day in 1969 at a rally in SF, Sam Naiper had these buckets and passed them out to Party members to collect donations. We had about 50 buckets and Big Rob took half of the buckets to East Oakland. Rob had Anthony and I count the money as he didn't trust some of the other brothers as much. We counted over one thousand dollars which we used to run the office in East Oakland.

Anthony and I went to Traders Gun Shop and we bought our guns. Later when apartments became available above the Panther office, we moved in and had rooms next to each other. We bought a reloader and reloaded all night some times. I dropped out of college and became a full time Party member. We would go to the range to practice our marksmanship. Sometimes we would go over to Anthony's backyard and shoot out the Lucky's Store sign about a block away to test our reloads. We helped secure the office by finding steel plates, sand bags and other material at night.

When we sold newspapers downtown and sold out early, we would spend the rest of the time at the main library doing research on Oakland. We believed in knowing your enemies and knowing your friends. So we did research on the Knowland family, Kaiser, the police department, Oakland Tribune newspaper and other enemies of the people.

We would smoke weed and drink Bitter Dog and listen to music when we had extra time. He liked jazz and had some good albums. We both liked Jimi Hendrix, Santana, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, and Sly and the Family Stone. We would go to the House of Music to buy albums when they were on sale.

Anthony had some contradictions with some Party members and left the Party in 1969. We still remained friends. He later went to jail for shooting someone and I was able to help him get help through then Captain Fred Bennett. I would visit him up in the Alameda County Courthouse. Some years passed and Anthony got out of prison and opened up an Auto Repair shop on the corner of 70th ave and E.14th st. I was out of the BPP and had moved to Mt. View California. I was still going to classes at Merritt College up on the hill. My car broke down and like a true friend, Anthony sold me a VW Bug for a

low price which served me for many years. At that time, Anthony was working only on Porsche cars and VW's. He had a nice Porsche, which he loved.

I moved to Sacramento in the 1980's and we lost track of each other for a number of years. In 1998, our website went on line and I started getting emails from him as the Highjumper. He was a highjumper while at Castlemont High.

We renewed our friendship and would talk on the phone and visit sometimes. Anthony even came to the 40th yr reunion. Anthony's mother moved to New Mexico and had a lot of old newspapers. She used to work on "The Flat Lands" and he knew I was collecting Oakland history and was going to give them to me, but he died before he was able to pass them on.

I often think of Anthony because as I write my book on my life's experiences, I wish he was here to help me relive all the great times we had while serving the people.

