

## **“OUR DORIE” MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Remarks by Courtland Cox  
Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington, DC  
Saturday, April 13, 2024

To my good friend, Joyce Ladner, to Dorie’s beloved daughter Yodit Churnet, and the Ladner family, I offer my condolences. While we all miss Dorie, we should also use this occasion to celebrate her consequential life. Without a doubt, Dorie Ladner’s life’s energy helped the irresistible forces of the 1960’s Freedom Movement desegregate America.

In her teens, Dorie joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). She was an essential member of the band of brothers and sisters and the circle of trust who understood the wisdom of Ms. Ella Baker’s statement, “*We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.*”

In its remembrance entitled “*Our Dorie*” the SNCC Legacy Project wrote,

*She was special in her fierce battles against racism and white supremacy. The great lesson she taught throughout her life was that you could fight; that there were deep wells of strength inside yourself and inside your community that you could reach into for sustenance.*

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*The loss and pain we feel is certainly real, and we will all be conveying this in the many different ways we exist in this world today. The bottom-line truth though, is that we all existed in Dorie’s universe—within her courage, her commitment, her strength, her love, and yes, her great love of us and ours of her. We still do.*

Over the years, people have commented to me about the bravery of SNCC staff in working in the most dangerous parts of the South. I often reply, *“What characterized the young people who worked with SNCC was not their bravery, but their determination to bring an end to the system of segregation.”* I also remind them that the strength that allowed us to be determined in the face of what most people perceived as insurmountable odds, was the connection to the communities that fed our bodies and nurtured our souls.

If I were to create a poster that represented the determination to end segregation in the South, I would use the face and the expressions of Dorie Ann Ladner.