

## **Las Cruces Black Legend- 106 Year old James Flowers**

[Caravan celebration to honor Tuskegee Airman Flowers, who is turning 106 on Christmas \(lcsun-news.com\)](http://lcsun-news.com)

## **Las Cruces Black Legend- Clarence Fielder**

A dedication ceremony for the Clarence H. Fielder Wing of Breland Hall was held in April to honor the memory of the man who started the African American history program at NMSU in 1970 and continued to teach at the university until he retired in 2010.

“Clarence loved a few things in life: his family, his church, history and education,” said Fielder’s niece, Marcia Boyer. “His joy for teaching and sharing history was spread from grade-school levels to college levels and from generation to generation. This earned him respect from his community.”

“This naming recognizes not only Mr. Fielder’s 40 years of teaching African American history at NMSU, but also his many years as a teacher in the Las Cruces Public Schools, in addition to his critical role in the restoration and preservation of Phillips Chapel in Las Cruces C.M.E. Church, the oldest extant African American church in New Mexico, listed on the state and national Registers of Historic Places,” said Beth O’Leary, NMSU professor emerita of anthropology. O’Leary helped organize the recognition for Fielder.

Fielder (1928-2015) was born and raised in Las Cruces. He graduated from NMSU in 1950 with a bachelor’s degree in business and earned a master’s degree in education in 1955. A decorated Korean War veteran, he served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army and was awarded the Purple Heart and Silver Star. He retired as a major in the Army Reserve.

Fielder also was recognized as state teacher of the year in 1971. In 2011, the New Mexico Office of African American Affairs recognized Fielder for outstanding educational services. He was presented with the outstanding historian award by the African American Museum and Cultural Center of New Mexico and was honored with the Aggie Cornerstone Award by the NMSU College of Education as an educational leader with an innovative approach to teaching.

Watch an 18-minute film, “A Walk with Clarence Fielder” at <https://youtu.be/17oGToFIAIE>

## Las Cruces Black Legend-Dorris Hamilton

Black Legend- Doris Hamilton- New Mexico's First Black Female Principal- Link [Dorris Hamilton, first Black school principal in Las Cruces, receives key to the city \(msn.com\)](#)

### **Dorris Hamilton, first Black school principal in Las Cruces, receives key to the city** Michael McDevitt, Las Cruces Sun-News - Mar 8

LAS CRUCES - Dorris Hamilton, retired local educator and civil rights pioneer, received the key to the city in celebration of her 94th birthday at the Las Cruces City Council meeting Monday.

Hamilton was born in Arkansas and became the first Black woman to attend the University of Arkansas. She was congratulated by civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. for breaking the segregation barrier at the university.

After graduating from college and beginning a teaching career, she moved to Las Cruces with her family in 1961 and joined the local NAACP branch. Hamilton became the first Black school principal in New Mexico, leading Lynn Middle School for 20 years. She retired from the Las Cruces Public Schools around 1996.

A [public legal battle over Hamilton's guardianship](#) has exposed weaknesses in the system and has led to reform legislation, such as a [bill this past legislative session which closed loopholes](#).

Mayor Ken Miyagishima read a proclamation describing Hamilton's life and accomplishments.

"I am so grateful for the recognition that I'm now receiving," Hamilton said Monday. "I am honored and humbled to receive this recognition."

**Another hometown hero:** [Florence 'Mama' Hamilton continues sharing Black history through storytelling](#)

Several notable elected officials spoke about Hamilton at the meeting, including State Rep. Joanne Ferrary, D-Las Cruces, State Auditor Brian Colón and Lt. Gov. Howie Morales.

"Even in the past few years when your rights were ignored and you courageously fought for them to be restored, you were the voice of so many being similarly victimized," said Ferrary, one of the co-sponsors of the recent guardianship reform legislation.

City councilors led the audience in singing happy birthday to Hamilton following remarks.



© City of Las Cruces From left, City Councilor Becky Corran, Rio Hamilton, State Rep. Joanne Ferrary, Lt. Gov. Howie Morales, Mayor Ken Miyagishima and State Auditor Brian Colón appeared to celebrate the 94th birthday of Dorris Hamilton, seated, at the Las Cruces City Council meeting March 7, 2022.

## Las Cruces Black Legend Albert Norris Johnson, First Black Mayor of Las Cruces

[Albert Johnson \(New Mexico politician\) - Wikipedia](#)



## Albert Johnson (New Mexico politician)

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<b>Albert Johnson</b>	
Mayor of <a href="#">Las Cruces, New Mexico</a>	
<b>In office</b>	
March 15, 1976 – 1980	
<b>Personal details</b>	
<b>Born</b>	Albert Norris Johnson <sup>[1]</sup>

	1934/1935
	<a href="#">Lebanon, Tennessee, U.S.</a> <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Died</b>	December 5, 1984
<b>Political party</b>	<a href="#">Democratic</a>
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Elmira
<b>Children</b>	3
<b>Education</b>	<a href="#">Tennessee State University</a>

**Albert Norris Johnson** (1934 or 1935 – December 5, 1984) was an American politician who served as the mayor of [Las Cruces, New Mexico](#). Johnson also received multiple gubernatorial appointments to state commissions. He was the first black person to serve as a mayor in New Mexico.<sup>[3]</sup>



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## Early life and education<sup>[edit]</sup>

Albert Norris Johnson was born in 1934 or 1935 in [Lebanon, Tennessee](#), to Allen P. Johnson and Louise Rucks. He graduated from [Pearl High School](#).<sup>[4]</sup> In 1958, he graduated from [Tennessee State University](#) with a civil engineering degree.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Career<sup>[edit]</sup>

After graduating from college, Johnson took a job at [White Sands Missile Range](#) and later served as the environmental improvement coordinator for the missile range.<sup>[2]</sup>

Johnson entered politics when he was selected to serve as president of the [Las Cruces, New Mexico NAACP](#) chapter.<sup>[4]</sup> During the 1960s he served as chairman of the [Doña](#)

[Ana County NAACP](#) and as president of the New Mexico NAACP, which he served as until his election to the Las Cruces city commission.<sup>[5][6]</sup>

## Las Cruces politics<sup>[edit]</sup>

On February 5, 1968, Johnson filed to run for a seat on the Las Cruces, New Mexico city commission from the 4th district.<sup>[7]</sup> He defeated Jerry K. Moore in the election and was the first black person elected to the Las Cruces city commission.<sup>[8][6]</sup> On March 18, 1968, Johnson was sworn into the city commission from the 4th district.<sup>[9]</sup>

In 1969, Governor [David Cargo](#) appointed Johnson to serve as a member of the Fair Employment Practices Commission to fill the unexpired term of J. H. Horton which lasted until April 29, 1971.<sup>[10]</sup> Cargo also appointed Johnson to the Commission on Human Rights, which was created to replace the Fair Employment Practices Commission, and he was selected to serve as the chairman of the commission.<sup>[11][12]</sup> In 1970, Johnson's appointment to the Commission on Human Rights was approved by the [New Mexico Senate](#).<sup>[13]</sup>

On February 1, 1972, Johnson filed to run for reelection to the Las Cruces city commission and defeated five other candidates in the election.<sup>[14][15]</sup> On February 5, 1973, he was reappointed to the Human Rights Commission by Governor [Bruce King](#) to a term that would end in December 1976.<sup>[1]</sup>

In 1975, a recall attempt was brought against the five members of the Las Cruces city commission, but only one member, M. C. Thomson, was successfully recalled while the four other members, including Johnson, remained in office.<sup>[16]</sup>

On April 29, 1975, Johnson was selected to serve as chairman of the South Rio Grande Council of Governments.<sup>[17]</sup> Johnson was also selected to serve as chairman of the Region V Commission of the Governor's Council on Criminal Justice Planning by Governor Apodaca.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

Johnson won reelection to the Las Cruces city commission in March 1976, against Ben Romero and Robert L. Stryker,<sup>[20]</sup> and on March 15, 1976, the city commission voted three to two, after five minutes of voting, to select Johnson to serve as mayor. T. J. Graham was selected to serve as [mayor pro tem](#).<sup>[21]</sup> In December 1976, he was reappointed by Governor [Jerry Apodaca](#) to the Human Rights commission to a term ending in December 1980.<sup>[22]</sup>

In 1978, Johnson was initially reelected as mayor by a vote of two to zero, with him claiming that a third vote from him was uncounted, but a plurality of three votes was required so another vote was held, which came out three to two.<sup>[23][24]</sup> Johnson chose to not seek reelection in 1980.<sup>[25]</sup>

During the [1976 presidential election](#), Johnson presented the [key to the city](#) of Las Cruces to presidential candidate [Mo Udall](#).<sup>[26]</sup>

## Personal life<sup>[edit]</sup>

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Johnson and his wife, Elmira, had three children.<sup>[2]</sup> One of his children, Albert Johnson Jr., served as a delegate for [Jesse Jackson](#) during the [1988 Democratic presidential primaries](#).<sup>[27]</sup>

On December 5, 1984, Johnson died from leukemia at age 49.<sup>[2]</sup> In 1989, Johnson was inducted into the [Democratic Party of New Mexico's](#) Hall of Fame alongside former Representative [Harold L. Runnels](#).<sup>[28]</sup> In 2004, he was inducted into the New Mexico Hall of Fame.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Electoral history[edit]

1975 Las Cruces, New Mexico recall election <sup>[16]</sup>				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
<a href="#">Nonpartisan</a>	Against recall of Johnson	<b>4,199</b>	<b>59.80%</b>	
<a href="#">Nonpartisan</a>	For recall of Johnson	2,823	40.20%	
<b>Total votes</b>		<b>7,022</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
1976 Las Cruces, New Mexico mayoral election <sup>[30]</sup>				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
<a href="#">Nonpartisan</a>	<b>Albert Johnson</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>60.00%</b>	
<a href="#">Nonpartisan</a>	Carlos Blanco	2	40.00%	
<b>Total votes</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

## References[edit]

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