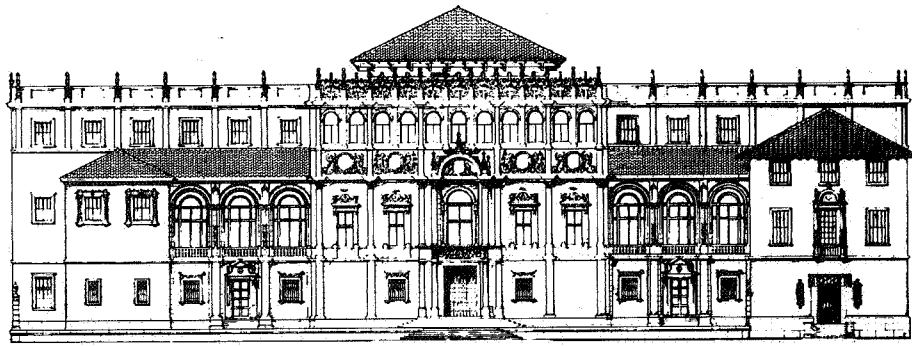


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# Between Friends

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News about Friends of the Houston Public Library

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## *Celebrating February as Black History Month:*

### Smith Branch namesake inspired his community

**H**ouston Dentist Lonnie E. Smith is still heralded for his devotion to civil rights.

Calling for equal voting rights among blacks in Texas, Dr. Smith was the primary force behind the Supreme Court case, *Smith vs. Allwright*, which determined in 1944 that the right to vote could not be based on race.

The Houston Public Library System dedicated the Smith Branch Library, 3624 Scott Street, in Dr. Smith's honor on Feb. 10, 1974. Dr. Smith, who died in 1971, was a resident of the local community for much of his life.

Dr. Smith was born March 27, 1901, in Yoakum, Texas. He attended Prairie View State Normal College and Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry. He began his dental practice in Galveston, before starting a private practice in Houston on Milam Street in 1946. The dentist later relocated his office to the Atlanta Life

Building on Prairie Street and worked there until retirement.

Following his victory with *Smith vs. Allwright*, Dr. Smith diligently worked in Houston neighborhoods to educate blacks on their voting rights. Because of his love for people and his community, residents gathered in Dr. Smith's backyard at 4902 Lyons Ave. to learn how to organize a voting precinct and to encourage blacks to vote.

Many city and county political leaders praised Dr. Smith for both his leadership abilities and his unique gift of working with people.

Today, the Smith Branch stands as a tribute to this tireless city leader. The branch, on Scott Street, operates as a peaceful haven and a valuable resource for local residents and numerous college students. The branch is near both the University of Houston and Texas Southern University, as well as several Houston Independent School District

schools. The library boasts a large Afro-American Heritage book selection and is a popular after-school stop-off for younger children.

The Smith Branch hosts several GED classes each week and has a spacious meeting room available free of charge for local community groups.

The staff at the Smith Branch is eager to serve as needed. The library's operating hours are: Monday and Thursday, noon to 9 p.m.; Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Recognition program needs your donations**

Keep those donations coming for this year's HPL Employee Recognition Program. Season tickets, concert tickets and gift certificates (for Spring 1992 or Fall 1992) are a great way to thank an employee for a job well done. Send items to the Friends Office.

