**Dorothy Hodge Johnson**  
**Pioneer Woman 2009**

Dorothy Hodge Johnson is a woman known for her community service and social justice advocacy in the greater Kansas City area. She attributed her passion for advocacy to growing up in a home committed to civic engagement, stating, “To me you cannot live and see all the problems in the world and not want to do something.”

Ms. Johnson attended the University of Kansas at a time when few women of color were in attendance. She was active on campus and in her sorority, Phi Beta Kappa. She graduated with a B.A. in journalism in 1937. In the same year, began work with Kansas City Call Magazine as a reporter and became a community liaison for the National Urban League. She later served as the Information Specialist for the Regional Office of the Office of Price Stabilization for the federal government.

Dorothy’s career then took a change, as she became the Director of the Florence Crittenden Home for Colored Girls from 1953 to 1958. During this time, she continued her work with the Urban League and her sorority as well. After leaving her position at the Crittenden Home, she returned to KU to earn her Master’s in Social Welfare. Her new degree brought on a new job as a caseworker for the Family and Children’s Services in Kansas City, Kansas. In 1973 she became the Director of the Department of Health and Welfare in Jackson County. Dorothy served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri at Kansas City’s School of Medicine. During her time, she and her husband created the Herman Jonson Scholarship to make higher education more feasible for students of color. To date, more than $600,000 has been raised. In the Fall of 2009, the Herman and Dorothy Jonson Residence Hall will open at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Campus.

Without a doubt, Dorothy served her community in a number of ways, and her work has not been overlooked. In 1974 she received the Distinguished Service Citation from the University of Kansas. The Kansas City Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers presented her with the Social Worker of the Year Award in 1977. The Central Exchange of Kansas City, Kansas presented Dorothy with the Woman of the Year Award in 1990. Today her personal papers can be found at the Kansas Collection in the Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas.