

The Clerk's Black History Series



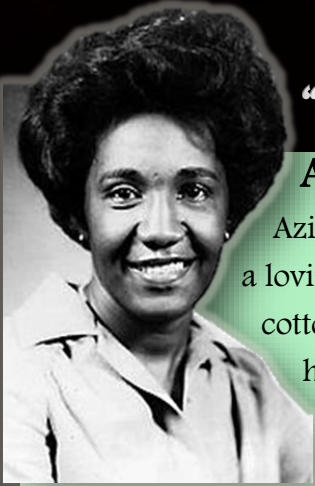
Debra DeBerry
Clerk of Superior Court
DeKalb County



Azie Taylor Morton

(February 1, 1936 – December 7, 2003)

“First (and only) African-American U.S. Treasurer”



Azie Taylor Morton was born February 1, 1936, in Dale, Texas to Fleta Hazel Taylor. Azie's mother was deaf and mute, and although she did not know her father, she was raised in a loving home with her maternal grandparents. After the school day was over, Azie worked in the cotton fields on their small farm. She attended Texas Deaf, Blind and Orphan School during her high school years because there was no high school for African Americans in Dale. She graduated with high grades at the age of sixteen in 1952.

That same year, Azie attended Huston-Tillotson College, an all-black college in Austin, Texas. In 1956, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in commercial education cum laude. She applied to attend the University of Texas for graduate school, but her admission was denied on the grounds that she did not have enough undergraduate courses. Undeterred, Azie began teaching at a school for delinquent girls. A short time later, she returned to her alma mater to serve as assistant to the president of the college for a short time. In 1957 she worked for the new Texas AFLCIO, a major labor union and later went to work on President Kennedy's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed Azie Taylor Morton to the office of Treasurer of the United States making her the first and only African American to hold that post. As the 36th Treasurer of the United States, she was responsible for the receipt and custody of government funds and served from September 12, 1977 to January 20, 1981. Along with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Treasurer must sign Federal Reserve notes before they can become legal tender. Azie Morton's signature was on U.S. currency for three years. In addition to Treasurer, she was a member of the American Delegation to Rome, Italy for the Enthronement of Pope John Paul II in 1978 and Chair of the People-to-People Mission to the Soviet Union and China in 1986.



After returning to Austin, Texas, Morton served on the Austin Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (HACA) from 1999 to 2001. In honor of her service, the HACA created the Azie Morton Scholarship Fund for low-income students attending her alma mater, Huston-Tillotson University.

Her husband died in January 2003 and on December 6, 2003,

Azie experienced a massive stroke at her home in Austin, Texas. She died the next day. Since most dollar bills only stay in circulation an average of 6 years, it may be difficult to find one with Azie's name today.

