

In Memory of Helen Rucker, a Pillar of the Community

November 19 2025

Heartfelt Condolences on the Passing of Helen Rucker



~ Helen Rucker, retired teacher, librarian and longtime community activist on the Monterey Peninsula. Ms. Rucker passed away on Wednesday, November 19th, 2025. ~

Helen Rucker dedicated her career and life to civil rights and community engagement. She served as a city council member for the Seaside community, board member of the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, and president of the NAACP Monterey County branch. She actively volunteered with numerous community organizations addressing issues important to her including: prison education, HIV/AIDS prevention, Black entrepreneurship, mental health services, tax assistance and meal delivery for seniors, police reform, low-income housing, voter education and registration and civil rights. In 2015, California State Assemblymember Mark Stone honored her lifetime of service by naming her Woman of the Year for the 29th District. In 2022, CSU Monterey Bay dedicated the Helen Rucker Center for Black Excellence in her honor.

Voting rights is a cause Ms. Rucker advocated over the years. She began her activism by holding voter registration information sessions in Louisiana and then in California. She is the founder of Seaside's Voter Education Center, an organization dedicated to inspiring young people, especially of color, to vote.

"I'm heartbroken to hear of the passing of a heroine of the civil rights movement and our community.

She was a role model for me and so many others and always a supporter of NCBI and our work."

- Elena Loomis, NCBI Board President

"She was an amazing force and leaves behind a huge void. I am forever grateful to have known her. She was a tireless leader, may she rest well. Thank you Mrs. Rucker.

- La Verne Baker Leyva, former NCBI Board President

"Another huge loss to our community of Black women leaders and community mothers. Our generation of matriarchs is leaving us. I'm very sad.

- Lynne White Dixon, NCBI Member

"The Great Anchor of the City of Seaside and the Black Community, Helen Rucker, died this morning at 1 am. As so many people can honestly say, she was my friend and mentor. I will be putting out a special tribute to her in the Black Folks Calendar. If you want to make sure you get the calendar, or you would like to contribute an article or statement or photos send to me directly at sgoings@csumb.edu. You can also post tributes on her Facebook page or mine. Obviously, I am heart-broken. I loved her so deeply. My biggest love goes out to her son, James and her caretaker [Dinice Maiden] who was Helen's anchor, friend and support for the last stretch of her life."

- Steven Goings, NCBI Member



It is devastating to lose such a valuable part of the community, however Helen Rucker's legacy will always live on through our resilient fight for equal rights and justice for everyone. Thank you Helen Rucker for inspiring us all.