

Rowena Moore No Longer Passive

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to be steamed up about was the garbage company because they parked their trucks across the street from our house. We (the council) got up a petition. We threatened demonstrations, and we won."

The Kellom Community Council also succeeded in getting Florence Boulevard and 20th Street designated as one-way thoroughfares for reasons of neighborhood safety. Another achievement was the Spencer Street Greenway between 16th and 19th Streets, designed to provide a linear park buffer between residences and commercial development.

However, industrial encroachment "is still a plague," Ms. Moore said. "We win some and lose some."

She also works with the Gray Panthers, as well as her Methodist church (she is a former Sunday school superintendent) and the Democratic Party.

She is a member of the party's State Central Committee and was a delegate to the national conventions of 1972 and 1976. She supported Frank Church in his bid for the presidential nomination in '76, taking satisfaction that he beat Jimmy Carter in the Nebraska primary "when they said it couldn't be done."

Ms. Moore was once a candidate herself. She ran unsuccessfully for City Council in 1972, finishing 22nd in a primary election that saw 14 candidates nominated.

She was surprised by her defeat: "I didn't have much money, but I did a lot of talking. I really thought I would win. I would have won if all those who promised they would vote for me had told the truth."

Malcolm X

Ms. Moore was born in a small town, Meridian, in Oklahoma. She and her parents came to Omaha when she was 13.

She attended South High School, but dropped out to take the job at Cudahy's "because I thought I ought to earn some money to help the family."

She later attended night school to earn a high school diploma. She also attended classes at the University of Omaha and Bellevue College. Today she works hard to persuade youths to stay in school.

Divorced (she legally reclaimed her maiden name), she has a son, Robert Rose, who is an insurance man in Denver. A University of Omaha graduate, where he was a star football player, he taught school here (at Howard Kennedy and

Horace Mann Schools) before going to Denver.

Of all the causes Ms. Moore supports, one of those which touches her most personally is the effort to establish a memorial to Malcolm X, the murdered civil rights activist. Ms. Moore tells this story to explain her interest:

"For a time in the 1950s I owned a grocery store at 2762 Grant Street. I was working in the packing plant then, so my father (the late Jethro Moore), my son and his wife helped operate it. One day I was in the store when a man came in. He had on a business suit and was very well groomed.

Birthsite

"He said to me, 'Y'know, my Dad used to live in that area at 34th and Pinkney. I understand your family owns it now.' It was true. My father had bought several lots around there.

"But I was so busy I didn't have time to talk to the man. He never introduced himself. But he came back two or three times. He was never in a hurry to leave. He would buy grapes or an orange, and he would walk around, looking at things and eating his fruit.

"I never really had a chance to sit down and talk to him. I don't know what his purpose was in coming there. But later my sister told me she had been reading Alex Haley's biography of Malcolm X. 'And guess what!' she said. 'He was born in Omaha, at 3448 Pinkney. That's our property now!'"

Ms. Moore confirmed that location as the Malcolm X birthsite by obtaining a copy of the purchase agreement given to his father at the time he bought the frame house which once stood there.

Later, when she saw a picture of Malcolm X, Ms. Moore recognized him as the man she had not had time to talk to in her store.

The lot at present "looks terrible," Ms. Moore said. "People dump trash there, even though the police put up barriers. They drive around the barriers."

A community effort to clean away the debris from the site is set for Monday and Tuesday, sponsored by the Third World Coalition of Minority Artists. Jeffrey Patterson, executive director, said the cleanup will help pave the way for "a shrine/memorial of some type in honor of Malcolm X."

Ms. Moore said she would like to see the memorial take the form of a building to house a community recreational and educational center as well as memorabilia associated with the slain leader.