

# ANNELLE PONDER

1932 - 2013

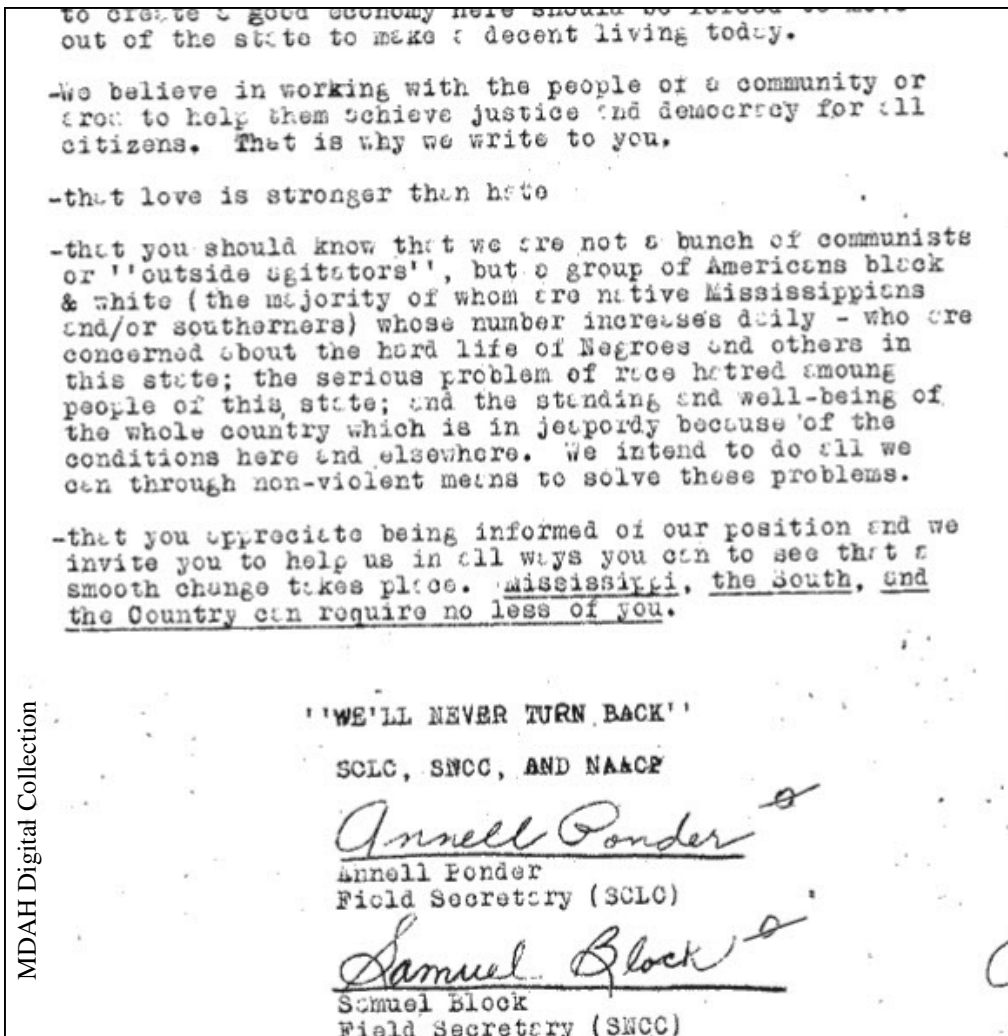


Annelle Ponder was the director of citizenship Education for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for Greenwood, Mississippi. She would select people from the thirteen southern state area and once a month take them to a training center and teach them how to identify problems and what nonviolence was all about. She was a civil rights worker from Atlanta, Georgia, who worked tirelessly to end the cruelties in the south and give Black people the right-to-vote.

She suffered a severe beating in Winona, Mississippi on June 9, 1963, along with Fannie Lou Hamer and others on their return from a training in South Carolina, when members of the group sat down to eat at the lunch counter, at the Winona Continental Trailways Station and asked to be served. The arrest took place after passage of the ICC/Interstate Commerce Commission ruling against segregation in Intrastate Commerce, however much of the south had not accepted the ruling. Two days after the civil rights activist were arrested, they were charged with creating a disturbance and resisting arrest. Sheriff Partridge had them dragged (many were still too bruised and bloody to walk as a result of a beating) in front of a Winona judge. Five of the six entered not-guilty pleas before being returned to their cells. That night someone shot Medgar Evers, the NAACP field secretary.

Dr. King asked Reverend James Bevel and Reverend Andrew Young to drive to Winona to see what had become of

Annelle Ponder and company. Dorothy Cotton insisted on joining them. When the sheriff released the prisoners their condition was appalling. Annelle Ponder's eyes were swollen and bloodshot from the beatings and one hip was swollen twice the size of the other. Mrs. Hamer had bruises all over her head, and her hips were bruised black. June Johnson's head was all bruised and her lip cut. James West's face was swollen and hips bruised. Lawrence Guyot was beaten so badly that he couldn't use one of his arms. Annelle Ponder whispered one word as she left the jail: "Freedom!" They wept when they heard that their friend Medgar Evers had been murdered.



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