



A Memorial Service to Honor the Lives and Work of United Methodist Rev. Bruce W. Johnson, Jr. and Eugenia Johnson

September 23, 2013, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Chicago, Illinois

Rev. Bruce W. Johnson, Jr. and Eugenia (Ransier) Johnson dedicated their lives to serving the people of Chicago. Born in Aurora, Illinois in 1938, Bruce Johnson attended Garrett Seminary from 1960 to 1962. It was during that time that he met Eugenia Ransier, who was also a student at the seminary. They married on September 1, 1962. Two years later they began serving the Humbolt Park congregation, a community with a rapidly growing Latino membership. In 1968, the Johnsons, along with their three young sons, moved to the Armitage Avenue Church in Lincoln Park. Within a few months, this church became “The People’s Church” and national headquarters of the Young Lords Civil and Human Rights Movement. Together, they set up a free daycare center, free health clinic, a free breakfast for children program, and held demonstrations to protest the displacement of hundreds of Latinos and poor families from the neighborhood. Less than one year later the Johnsons were found by their children, brutally murdered. Their murders have never been solved.

Those who knew the Johnsons have said “they were people immersed in the present always building for the future.” Deeply committed to the inner-city communities they served, the Johnsons worked tirelessly on behalf of the Latino families who had first made their homes in Lincoln Park and who were being forced from their homes through urban renewal. Eugenia was also well-known for her advocacy on behalf of special needs children. As one friend and colleague recalled, “They [knew] that they were engaged in a battle against the dark forces of this world. The school system that did not care for the handicapped child. The Urban Renewal that removed the poor. The world in revolution needing the Christ Revolution. They faced our world having known their acceptance by God. They carried faith and freedom as their shield. And their sword was the Word. In their ministries, they lived out of the Christian Story, celebrating life and the Word; constantly fighting for justice and freedom.”

Please join us as we celebrate the life and work of Rev. Bruce and Eugenia Johnson on September 23, 2013. Space is limited. Please call: (616)331-8099 or go to www.gvsu.edu/kutsche to reserve a seat.



This event is being organized by the Grand Valley State University Kutsche Office of Local History.