

# Cincinnati Thrift Store Manager Honored by Meeting with President Obama

Submitted by Eric Young



**Betty Daniels Rosemond**, manager of the Colerain Ave. St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store in Cincinnati, Ohio, can still remember walking into her interview with St. Vincent de Paul 28 years ago only to find her interviewer wearing the very same Holy Spirit pin that she had chosen to wear that day. She received the call

that she was hired later that afternoon.

Since that afternoon, Betty has shared her faith and spirit and often samples of her inspirational poetry with shoppers, donors and volunteers who come to St. Vincent de Paul. "I love organizations like St. Vincent de Paul that help people," she said. "I see the Lord at work here."

It was a different contribution, however, for which Betty was honored in December at the National Women's Law Center's Annual Dinner in Washington, D.C., where she met President Barack Obama. Betty was one of 15 women recognized at the dinner for her role in the Freedom Rides in support of the civil rights movement.

Betty, a native of New Orleans, spent a good part of 1961 with other freedom riders riding buses across the south and testing bus stations. At one station, in Poplarville, Miss, she was stranded at a phone booth when the bus she was riding pulled away to avoid an angry mob. Betty was at the phone booth calling to report

that three of her companions had been abducted when the the bus departed. Her message ultimately reached the office of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and it was a call from that office to Poplarville that ensured her companions' safety. She herself was driven safely to New Orleans by a local resident who remained anonymous at the time out of fear of backlash from the community.

For her role in the Freedom Rides, Betty was inducted into The National Black College Alumni Foundation Hall of Fame in Atlanta. Her greatest honor, however, was meeting the president. "He was wonderful," she said. "He was very nice and took the time to shake our hands and talk to each one of us."

Despite her fears following the incident in Poplarville, Betty continued to work for civil rights and along the way encountered much hostility, including a confrontation with police dogs. She was once arrested, but a federal court threw out the charges.



*"I've always tried to do what's right," Betty said. "And that's all that we were doing. We were not going to stop. It was right and it was important."*