



The Leon Gutherz Fund

In 1965 hundreds of young people from around the country answered Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call to spend the summer in the South registering black people to vote. This SCLC project was called SCOPE (Summer Community Organization for Political Education), and these volunteers helped register thousands of people throughout the South. The SCOPE project was instrumental in getting the Voting Rights Act passed, demonstrating to the Johnson administration that blacks across the South hungered to become voters and full citizens. Many people that summer shed their blood and gave their lives for the right to vote.

One of those who volunteered was Leon Gutherz, a 39 year-old history teacher from New Rochelle, New York. Dr. King and his staff decided to assign Leon as Project Director of the SCOPE Project in Pike County, Alabama. That summer Leon, Frechettia Ford, the Assistant Project Director, several volunteers from around the country, and many local volunteers registered more than 1,000 black residents.



*Frechettia Ford, Leon Gutherz, and
Johnnie Mae Warren, a local black leader
Troy, Alabama – August 1965*

Leon, Frechettia and Johnnie Mae have now left us, so we must carry on their work. At the 50th reunion of the SCOPE volunteers from around the country, the decision was made to band together once again to help facilitate change today. In 2016, SCOPE50 was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

The Leon Gutherz Fund will be used:

- To preserve the history of the SCOPE Project through SCOPE50's Oral History Project, which will be located in the Library of Congress. SCOPE50 will make these oral histories available to public schools and colleges throughout the country.
- To erect historical markers in Troy, Alabama; Ridgeville, SC; and possibly other communities where Leon worked in 1965.
- To recognize Leon's involvement in establishing freedom schools during the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, DC in 1968, and in Ridgeville, SC in 1969, provide underserved children today with the tools they need (such as tablets or laptops) to succeed in school.

Checks should be made out to SCOPE50, and noted that it is for the Leon Gutherz Fund. Mail to SCOPE50, 773 Spinnaker Beachhouse, Seabrook Island, SC 29455. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.