

# Daniel Arthur Holmes

Minister and Community Leader  
1876-1972

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by Kimberly R. Riley

Reverend D. A. Holmes, founder of Paseo Baptist Church, was widely known for his fiery sermons, as well as his civil rights activism.

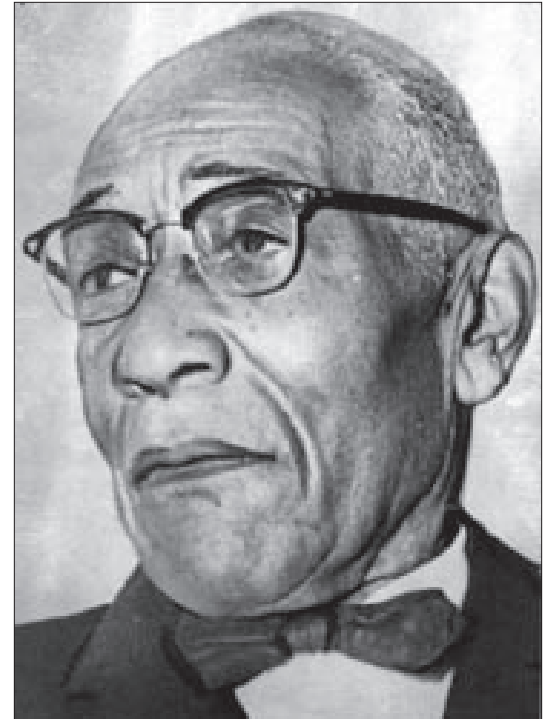
Daniel Arthur Holmes was born the son of slaves in Randolph County, Missouri, in 1876. His family moved to Macon, Missouri after being freed at the end of the Civil War. Holmes, a third generation preacher, answered the call to preach at age 17 and was ordained in 1901. He earned degrees from Western College in Macon, Des Moines College, and the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

Holmes began his career in the greater Kansas City area in 1914 as pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas. He later took over leadership at Vine Street Baptist Church at 1835 Vine and soon led the church in an expansion program. By 1927 the church was built at its current location at 25th Street and The Paseo and renamed Paseo Baptist Church. Holmes served as pastor for 46 years—from 1921 to 1967.

Holmes made a name for himself outside the pulpit due to his relentless battle for racial equality. He was an outspoken critic of police brutality and Pendergast machine politics of the 1930s. He also spearheaded an effort to integrate the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1939 and sought better homes and more jobs for blacks.

No stranger to confrontation, Holmes waged a long and bitter battle against the Kansas City School Board, which resulted in a new Lincoln High School at 2111 Woodland. Before Holmes became president of the School Improvement Association, bond issues were passed but no money was set aside for building a new Lincoln School, which was one of the few high schools African Americans could attend at the time.

Holmes held offices in the National Baptist Convention Inc., Kansas City Interracial Broadcasting Commission, Missouri Council



of Churches, and the Interdenominational Alliance. He was an instructor at the Baptist Minister's Union and founded the Carver Neighborhood Center.

A public elementary school (originally named Benton School) was renamed in his honor in 1963 and still stands in its original location at 3004 Benton Boulevard.

Holmes died in 1972 at age 96 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

#### Sources

*The Kansas City Call*, 3 July 1964.

*The Kansas City Star*, 6 April 1975.

*The Kansas City Times*, 25 October 1972.

*The Kansas City Times* 26 October 1972.

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