

Mary Lillian Andrews

(1942 - 1993)

Family

- Granddaughter of [Samuel and Lillian Sutton](#)
- Second child of Dr. Charles Andrews, Sr. and Smithie Sutton Andrews

Civil Rights Achievement

While a freshman at Our Lady of the Lake University, Mary took a bold step towards ending lunch counter segregation in 1960. As president of the local youth council of the NAACP, she wrote letters to managers of stores in downtown San Antonio asking that they provide equal service to all, regardless of race. She also served as mistress of ceremonies at the March 13th NAACP youth rally that established a plan of action for demonstrations and set a deadline for stores to respond.

Backed by an ultimatum from the NAACP, her words brought community leaders and managers together to negotiate the first voluntary, peaceful lunch counter desegregation of the national Civil Rights Sit-In Movement. [JET magazine](#) photographed her at what is believed to be Woolworth's on Alamo Plaza, the most prominent of the seven local stores to integrate.

Mary also inspired her mother, Smithie Andrews, to help integrate Joske's Camelia Room, which had refused the NAACP's request, drawing pickets and protests.

"In letters dated March 7, and directed to Joske's of Texas, S. H. Kress and company, and F. W. Woolworth company, management is reminded that certain groups are barred from dining facilities, and a change is asked.

The letters set forth:

"Youth of all races in San Antonio go to school, ride the buses, enjoy municipal recreational facilities together, but they cannot sit down and eat together in your store.

Help the youth of San Antonio realize that the principles stated in the Holy Bible and the Constitution of the United States can be a living reality in San Antonio by abolishing this discriminatory practice in your store.

We feel that the citizens of San Antonio are intelligent enough to accept such change.

Please inform us of your decision. . ."

The letters were signed by Mary Lillian Andrews, president of the local (NAACP) Youth council." [San Antonio Register](#), March 11, 1960.