

Anne McCarty Braden
1924 – 2006
Advocate for Racial Equality – Civil Rights Activist

Anne McCarty was born on July 28, 1924, in Louisville, Kentucky, and grew up in Anniston, Alabama. She attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, where she received a degree in English. After working as a journalist for newspapers in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama, she returned to Kentucky to write for *The Louisville Times*. She married Carl Braden, a fellow reporter, who was active in progressive politics. She worked more than five decades as a passionate journalist and activist, publishing the stories of injustice and working to change them. In 1954, with a deep concern for racial integration and economic justice, Anne and Carl Braden arranged to purchase a house in an all-white neighborhood of Louisville and had it deeded to an African American couple. White supremacists lashed out with cross burnings and by bombing the house. The bombers were never identified nor brought to trial. Anne and Carl Braden were charged with sedition. Carl Braden was convicted of sedition and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. After a U.S. Supreme Court decision invalidated state sedition laws, all charges against Carl Braden were dropped. Thereafter, Anne edited *The Southern Patriot*, the publication of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), an interracial organization to bring white people into the civil rights movement. She supported the work of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice (SOC) as well as several other regional and national organizations. Anne Braden dedicated her life to committing whites to the causes of racial equality and social justice. For her contributions to civil liberties, she received the American Civil Liberties Union's first Roger Baldwin Medal of Liberty in 1990. As she aged, her activism focused on Louisville, where she remained a leader in anti-racist drives and taught social justice history classes at local universities. She was a devoted member of St. George's Episcopal Church in Louisville. Anne Braden died on March 6, 2006. The Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research, established at the University of Louisville, opened on April 4, 2007. The institute's focus is on social justice, especially in the southern United States and the Louisville area. Over nearly six decades, Anne McCarty Braden's activism was focused on the injustice of racism and the responsibility of the white community to combat it.