

# JIM THOMPSON

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*By Thomas Rayfiel*

Jim Thompson, whose membership in the Coop spanned five decades, died May 17 due to complications from the coronavirus and kidney failure. He was 75. Jim spent almost his entire professional career in the Fort Greene Housing Projects (the Walt Whitman Houses), working first as an assistant teacher, then for a drug intervention program, and as a counselor for at-risk elementary-school-age children. He also volunteered for early morning breakfast programs and a weekend basketball organization which emphasized leadership and team-building. A true community activist, Jim served on the District 13 school board as well as Fort Greene Council Inc., an organization dedicated to serving seniors, children, and enriching the lives of families living throughout the neighborhood.

Jim joined the Coop in 1978. His wife of 46 years, Dolores Brandon Thompson, worked both their shifts. Fellow member Ramona Collier recalls:

“JIM WAS ONE OF THE KINDEST AND MOST JOYFUL PEOPLE I HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE OF KNOWING IN LIFE. HE WAS GENEROUS OF SPIRIT. HE WAS ONE OF THE

FIRST NEIGHBORS WHO INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO ME IN OUR BUILDING, AND HE KNEW EVERYONE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND GREETED ALL OF US WITH THE WARMEST HELLO AND AN INVITATION TO A CONVERSATION. HE TURNED AN APARTMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD INTO A HOME.”

In addition to his social work, Jim dedicated significant time and energy to local politics, working to pass initiatives that funded senior centers and daycare facilities. As his wife writes:

“HE WAS BELOVED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN HE SERVED (AND AMUSED,) AS WELL AS THE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS HE NEVER SAID “NO” TO. PARENTS KNEW THEY COULD LOVE HIM AND TRUST HIM TO LOVE AND CARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AS IF THEY WERE HIS OWN.”

Jim is survived by his wife, his brother Tom, as well as many aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.