

Thelma Fisher Dewitty Scholarship

This scholarship was founded by Robert Roblee in 2005 for current and future African American LGBTQ leaders and role models.

Thelma Fisher Dewitty's Story [*Excerpt from an article written after Mrs. Dewitty's death*]:

Mrs. Thelma Fisher Dewitty was born in Beaumont, Texas in 1912. Later in life she moved to Seattle with her husband, where she attended graduate school at the University of Washington.

In 1947, she became the first African American to teach within the Seattle Public School District. She began her long, distinguished career at the Frank B. Cooper Elementary School—located in West Seattle's West Delridge neighborhood—amidst public pressure and racial tension.

Although Seattle was known for racial tolerance, Mrs. Dewitty's appointment was a groundbreaking accomplishment. She left Cooper Elementary School in 1953, teaching at numerous other schools within the Seattle School District—including John Hay (1953-55), Laurelhurst (1955-56), and Sandpoint (1956-58) Elementary Schools—before she retired in 1973.

In the civic arena, Dewitty was active in the Seattle King County NAACP, serving as its president in the late 1950s. She also served on the State Board Against Discrimination and on the Board of Theater Supervisors for Seattle and King County.



Thelma Dewitty is shown reading to her second-graders at Cooper School in 1950.