

## Olive Morris



### Olive Morris

Olive Morris was born to parents Vincent and Doris Morris in St. Catherine, Jamaica in 1952. The Morris family moved to London, England in 1961 where she would leave a legacy her community would never forget. It is said the Morris did not complete grade school but she did go on to earn her doctoral degree in social science from Manchester University. As a teen living in South London Morris became active within the political movements that were gaining momentum in London. In her adult years she was a founding member of several groups who fought for the rights of blacks, women and “squatters.” (Squatters were the less fortunate people of London who usually in abandoned buildings.) The Organization of Women of African and Asian Descent, the Brixton Black Women’s Group, the Manchester Black Women’s Co-operative, the Manchester Black Women’s Mutual Aid Group, and the Brixton Law Centre are the organizations Morris help to found. She was an active and visible ally to the squatter’s movement as well as a member of the Black Panther Party during the 1970’s.

At the age of 27 Morris unfortunately died of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, but her spirit and influence did not leave the people of South London. Morris’ contributions were not overlooked by her community, the Lambeth Council, a local authority for the Borough of Lambeth in Greater London, honored her by naming one of its council buildings after her. The people of London voted to have Morris depicted on the one pound note of the local currency in Brixton, London. To call Olive Morris a brave woman would be an understatement; in 1969 she witnessed a Nigerian Diplomat being arrested because the police thought his Mercedes was too fancy for him. As the police began to beat the man, Morris broke through a crowd to come to the man’s aide. She was thrown to the ground by the police, kicked and stomped in the breast, and finally stripped naked by the police as

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they told her; “This is the right color for your body,” referring to the bruises upon her body. Despite facing constant racism, threats and attacks, she continued to fight for the rights of black people, women and the poor people of London. She was determined to exhaust her energy and resources to make sure her people would no longer be oppressed. Olive Morris, we proudly stand on your Shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0x\\_D5icK9o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0x_D5icK9o)

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