

## **Defina Emoan (Thirkield Thomas)**

Defina Emoan moved to Houston, Texas from Shreveport, Louisiana in 1964. She moved to the South Park area in 1968, and after a short period of time became active in her community. She joined the Shrine in 1976, and immediately became active in the church community.

Her career was a professional seamstress. Her work experience in Houston included working in factories that made women and men clothing, completing alterations at Pilgrim Cleaners and Walter Pye's Clothing store. Upon retirement from Walter Pye's she began a small dressmaking business in her home. Her specialty was wedding gowns, prom dresses, women clothing and alternations for women and men.

Defina has always been active in church and community affairs. Her church services at the Shrine include:

- Prepared Pato for Kazi every Saturday to feed the congregation work groups for 20 years.
- Worked with Bishop Binta at the Alkebulan Academy for 15 years. Activities included: watching the children, served lunch, and worked in afterschool program. Occasionally, she kept children in her home while their parents worked or if the children were sick and could not attend school.
- She opened her home for church members to live for periods of time.

Her civic services in the community include:

- Treasurer for the Area 237 Civic Club for 15 years.
- Served on the National Night-Out Planning Committee for 10years.
- Served on the Super Neighborhood Planning Committee for 8 years.
- Served on the Positive Interaction Program (PIP) -Citizens and Police Friendship through Education Program for 15 years.
- Food services volunteer at Neighborhood Centers for 10 years.
- Member of the South Park AIM-Partnership Education Team Program with the City of Houston Health and Human Services for 1 and a 1/2 years. The focus was South Park area schools.
- Served as a volunteer with the Texas Organizing Project (TOP) to advocate for Ike Recovery Funds for constituents in the South Park area for 2 years.

Defina is a strong believer in God and service to mankind which is her true purpose. Her family is very important to her and she is always providing assistance to them in any way she can. She is always aiding her neighbors by taking them to the food pantry, doctor appointments or helping them find needed community resources. She loves to travel, read and enjoys living in the South Park community with her dog.