

CITY OF EVANSVILLE - 2026

ESTELLA MOSS



*Evansville's First Black Woman Elected Official,
Civil Rights Advocate, Community Leader*

Estella Moss was born in Diamond, Kentucky, in 1928 and moved to Evansville in 1942. She has devoted her life to advancing civil rights and fostering positive race relations in Evansville and throughout Indiana. Her civic and political involvement began in 1944 when she volunteered during an election, launching a lifetime of public service.

A trailblazer, Moss made history as the first Black County Recorder in the State of Indiana and the first Black woman elected to office in Vanderburgh County, serving from 1976 and winning reelection in 1980. She was later appointed Evansville Superintendent of Cemeteries.

In these roles, she worked intentionally to open doors to civil service and government employment for Black men and women who had long been excluded.

Moss was a founding member of the Evansville Human Relations Commission and a charter member of the Evansville African American Museum. She also played a key role in the development of Liberty Terrace Apartments, further demonstrating her commitment to community advancement.

Her leadership has been recognized with numerous honors, including the Torchbearer Award from the Indiana Commission for Women, the Sadelle Berger Award, and Indiana's highest civic honor, the Sagamore of the Wabash. Even into her eighties, Moss remained actively engaged in civil rights advocacy, political action, and mentoring emerging leaders. From riding in the back of segregated buses to becoming a groundbreaking public official, her life stands as a testament to resilience and the power of meaningful change.