

Labor, civil-rights activist Grace Lee Boggs dies at age 100

DETROIT (AP) — Grace Lee Boggs, a longtime activist who was part of the labor, civil-rights, black-power, women's-rights, and environmental justice movements, died October 5 at her Detroit home. She was 100 years old.

Boggs and her late husband, James Boggs, were involved in advocacy for decades. She helped organize a 1963 march in Detroit by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the November 1963 Grassroots Leadership Conference in Detroit with Malcolm X.

Her death was announced by the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership, which she set up after her husband's 1993 death.

"Grace died as she lived, surrounded by books, politics, people, and ideas," Alice Jennings and Shea Howell, two of her trustees, said in a statement issued by the center.

In a statement released by the White House, President Barack Obama said Boggs learned early that "the world needed changing, and she overcame barriers to do just that."

"Grace dedicated her life to serving and advocating for the rights of others — from her community activism in Detroit, to her leadership in the civil-rights movement, to her ideas that challenged us all to lead meaningful lives," the president said.

The daughter of Chinese immigrants, Boggs was born in Rhode Island in 1915 and grew up in New York City. After receiving a doctorate in philosophy from Bryn Mawr



College in 1940, Boggs worked at the University of Chicago's Philosophy Library.

Boggs moved back to New York to work with socialist

DEDICATED ACTIVIST. Activist Grace Lee Boggs speaks to a crowd gathered for the Environmental Grantmakers Association conference in Detroit, in this February 25, 2014 file photo. Boggs, known as an international activist for justice, died October 5 at her Detroit home. She was 100 years old. (Ryan Garza/Detroit Free Press via AP, File)

theorist C.L.R. James, helping to create an offshoot of the Socialist Workers Party that focused on race and poverty.

She moved to Detroit in the 1950s to write for a socialist newspaper. That's where she met James Boggs, an African-American man who would become her husband and collaborator. In the 1960s, the couple became involved in the black power movement and were known to offer Malcolm X a place to stay when he visited Detroit.

Their later work focused on Detroit's residents and neighborhoods and included starting Detroit Summer, a program for young people to work on community projects.

Boggs was the subject of a 2013 documentary, *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs*, that aired on the Public Broadcasting Service.

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FROM PASTURE TO TIRE PLANT. Workers help construct a terminal to unload oil from rail cars at the \$300 million Yokohama tire plant in West Point, Mississippi. The state of Mississippi borrowed \$70 million to help finance improvements, including a rail spur used to deliver raw materials to the unit of Japanese tire maker Yokohama Rubber Co. (AP Photo/Jeff Amy)

\$300M Mississippi plant part of Yokohama expansion plan

By Jeff Amy
The Associated Press

WEST POINT, Miss. — For Yokohama Rubber Co., its \$300 million Mississippi plant is its platform to fight for a slice of the competitive North American tire market.

For West Point, the plant is a ticket out of the economic doldrums that have plagued the northeast Mississippi town of 11,000 for nearly a decade.

Company and state leaders gathered to dedicate the plant, which has hired about 260 people so far out of 500 promised. Tadaharu Yamamoto, president of the Japanese tire company's Mississippi branch, said it will take up to two years to reach yearly capacity of 1 million truck and bus tires.

"This plant is the most modern plant in Yokohama," Yamamoto said. "It's highly automated. The productivity is also good. I believe this quality of products from this plant is the best in Yokohama, I hope."

Yokohama has plans for three more phases beyond the 1 million square-foot building it constructed in a pasture north of the town. If all four phases are built, the company would invest a total of \$1.2 billion and hire 2,000 workers.

That would be a big boost to West Point, which suffered from sky-high unemployment after Sara Lee closed its traditional cornerstone — the Bryan Foods plant — in 2007.

"This town's heart had been cut out when Sara Lee left," said Joe Max Higgins, CEO of industry-recruiting group Golden Triangle Development Link.

Mayor Robbie Robinson said that although Yokohama hasn't completed first-phase hiring, its arrival spurred a turnaround in how residents feel about West Point. "Now we have hope again, and an economic future in our community."

Mississippi spent \$70 million to incentivize the first phase, along with \$12 million by West Point and Clay County. Total state and local incentives, including tax breaks, could total more than \$330 million for all four phases.

Continued on page 15

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