



# A History of the Black Panther Party as told by Elbert "Big Man" Howard

An Original Founding Father

One has only to look at his long list of accomplishments to recognize that his is a voice which needs to be heard. Elbert "Big Man" Howard describes the beginnings of the Black Panther Party and how a handful of young, progressive and courageous Black men launched an organization which inspired thousands, amassing support and forming coalitions across racial and class lines as never seen before or since.

## Biography

During his period as a member of the Black Panther Party from 1966 to 1974, Elbert "Big Man" Howard worked on many projects and programs.

As a student and peer counseling coordinator at Merritt College in Oakland, CA, he organized a prisoner re-entry program on campus under Adult Continuing Education. As a community organizer and activist he helped to develop the first BPP Survival programs: the Free Breakfast for School Children, Free community Health Clinic, and Free Transportation to Prisons programs.

As Deputy Minister of Information and the first editor of the BPP newspaper, he helped to develop and build it to a two hundred thousand copy per week circulation. As spokesman for the BPP, he traveled and lectured on the conditions and treatment of blacks and minorities in America. As BPP Coordinator of National and International Support committees, he traveled and helped build Solidarity Committees in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

As a teacher and mentor to young BPP members and students, as well as political educator, he spoke at schools, colleges, unions and for Human Rights Groups. Working with the Berkeley Community Action Program, "Big Man" helped the Organization of Disabled Persons to pressure the government to provide wheelchair access ramps on city streets and governmental buildings.

He worked to unify groups from Chicano, Native American, Asian and European Communities to combat racism and discrimination in housing, jobs and education.

Since leaving the Black Panther Party, Mr. Howard has remained active in the community and has held the following positions in Memphis TN: 2003 Coordinator of All of Us or None Ex-Offender Program, 2004 Board of Directors — Muumbi Charter School, 2004 Board of Directors Childrens' Institute for Higher Learning and Development, Inc. He now resides in Sonoma County and is a member of the Coalition Against Police Brutality and an advisor to various youth groups.

**Books Published:** "Panther on the Prowl" – 2003, "College Peer Counseling Handbook" – 1967, "Each One Teach One" – 1967, Foreword for the book "Up Against the Wall" by Curtis J. Austin – 2006.

**A film by** Kevin "Prophecy" Gary – U-Cen Productions • **Written by:** Elbert "Big Man" Howard  
**Produced, Directed, and Edited by** Kevin "Prophecy" Gary

