



(AP Wirephoto)

SHOT TO DEATH
Edwin Pratt

Civil rights aide slain in ambush

By ROBERT MCDANIEL
SEATTLE, Wash. (UPI) —

Edwin T. Pratt, executive director of the Urban League here since 1961, was shot to death from ambush Sunday night when he opened the front door of his home to investigate a noise on the porch.

The King County Coroner's office said the 38-year-old Negro, considered a moderate in the civil rights movement, was killed by a single bullet which entered his mouth and lodged in the back of his head. It apparently came from a small caliber rifle.

Gov. Dan Evans termed the slaying a real tragedy for the community and the state.

"He was a man of real understanding," Evans said. "Possibly his greatest contribution was to see the positive side of

issues and to work to bring people together."

The slain man's widow, Betty, told authorities she heard a noise "like a thump" about 8:50 p.m. outside the home, located in a predominantly white neighborhood.

She said she looked out a bedroom window and saw two males, possibly juveniles, crouching near a car parked on the street about 40 feet from the front door of the house.

Mrs. Pratt said she saw what appeared to be a rifle in the hands of one of the men and screamed to her husband, "Don't go near the door!"

However, he apparently had already opened it, and Mrs. Pratt said she heard him slump to the floor of the front room. She said the suspects fled in a late model car, but she was unable to determine whether they were white or Negro.

Sheriff's deputies said the getaway car was equipped with tire chains. A storm has blanketed the area with several inches of snow during the past two days.

Pratt received his master's degree in social work from Atlanta University and served with the Urban League in Kansas City and Cleveland before coming to Seattle in 1956. He was presented the Seattle Junior Chamber of Commerce distinguished service award in 1966.

In addition to his widow, Pratt is survived by a young daughter.

Joseph L. McGavick, chairman of the state board against discrimination, said Pratt was one of the "most responsible and able people in the whole area of civil rights.

"He was one of the most highly principled people I've ever worked with," McGavick said. He said he could not possibly imagine a motive for the murder.

A spokesman for Seattle Mayor Dorm Braman said the death "can only serve those ugly forces which would keep us a divided city and a divided people."