

Jeffries Family 3rd generation - 2301 K Court Avenue

The Boston Thurmond Community has a long legacy as a vibrant African American residential community in Winston Salem, where families of various backgrounds purchased lots and built homes that were owned and occupied exclusively by African Americans.

Some of our community's most well-known citizens lived in Boston - Thurmond as children and have passed on that heritage to a new generation.

One such example is the Jeffries' family home, now a 3rd generation (grandson), Marshall Everette Jeffries, Jr. owns and occupies the Jeffries family homeplace at 2301 K Court Avenue. Marshall Jr. was the first grandchild born to Robert and Eva and he grew up with many fond memories of family gatherings, special occasions, and the good times he spent at his Papa and Grandma's house.



In 1958, Robert Everette and Eva Jones Jeffries purchased two residential lots which would become their new home at 2301 K Court Avenue. These lots were part of new residential development called "Alta Vista" that was specifically created for African American families at that time. Alta Vista later became more commonly referred to as the "Boston – Thurmond" community. Unlike many areas of Winston-Salem that were first owned and occupied by Caucasian families, Alta Vista was a community that was built exclusively for African Americans.

Homeownership was not a new venture for this couple. Prior to building on lot at K Court Avenue, Robert and Eva had built their first home on 26th Street on a lot given to them by Eva's father, James Marshall Jones, Sr. This house was located beside Eva's parent's home located at 512 W. 26th Street. The Jones's family home was built by Eva's parents around 1940 and included a purchase of three lots at that time.

When the State of NC decided to construct the Cherry Marshall Expressway, Robert and Eva's home on 26th Street was standing on the land that the State of North Carolina proposed for the construction of a new Cherry Marshall Expressway (now known as University Parkway). The land purchase was part of a legal process called "eminent domain" which gave the state government "right of way" to purchase residential properties in order to obtain land necessary for the construction of the new expressway. When the State purchased Robert and Eva's house, the couple paid to have the house moved to a new location on Bacon Street. It was then sold to another couple, Fred and Geneva Douglas, to become their

primary residence. At that time, Mr. Douglas was a licensed Pharmacist who owned and operated the Model Pharmacy.

In a look back at the family history, it is important to know that Eva's family come into the area around 1940. Bunt was the youngest of six children. She had five 5 sisters and 1 brother. Her father worked at Reynolds Tobacco and taught them the value of higher education and each chose careers of service which included two registered nurses, another teacher, a retired Forsyth Hospital supervisor, a medical doctor and her oldest sister who was recognized by the WS Journal for her exceptional Southern Green Bean Casserole recipe.

Being the baby, she was given the nickname "Baby Bunt" and during her lifetime this nickname was how she was known to family and friends – **Bunt** Jeffries.

It is hard to write a short story that can adequately recount of their lasting contributions to Boston-Thurmond community, so here goes.....

Rob and Bunt were both educated in the public school system in Winston Salem. Rob graduated from Atkins High School in 1935 and Bunt in 1944. Bunt went on to graduate from Winston Salem Teacher's College in 1948 with a degree in Elementary Education. Schools in Winston-Salem were still segregated when she graduated which meant there were very limited jobs for new teachers to be employed in her hometown. Her first paid teaching job was in Warrenton, NC which is near Raleigh. Each week, she commuted to Warrenton and lived in a teachery. Teacheries were simply "rooms for rent" that were hosted in the homes of families in that community. These constructed living arrangements for teachers allowed them to be available to work in small towns that needed teachers and to gain formal teaching experience. And remember all of this was around 1948 - 1950 timeframe when commercial transportation was not readily available. Getting to Warrenton every week and back home was a big deal in and of.

Fast forward, Bunt has gotten a job in Winston-Salem working at Carver Crest Elementary School and Rob is working at the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC stores) at the time they build their home on K Court Avenue.

K Court Avenue was a new development that consisted of empty lots for new homes to be built and some homes that were moved and relocated from the land that was purchased by the State. (Imagine the process of moving an entire house structure in 1958.)

Homeowners on K Court represented a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, educators, Reynolds and Hanes factory workers, day workers, ministers, lawyers, insurance sales, brick mason and home makers. The diversity of this new development was important to the story because it was an inclusive community for the neighborhood.

Children living on K Court played in the streets, roamed the area on bicycles, set up basketball games and played Sunday football on the vacant land that is now the location for the Red Cross. Also noteworthy, the Children's Home property which was a functioning farm and dairy in the 50-60's backs up to K Court Avenue at 20th Street. It was not uncommon for one of the cows from the Children's home pasture to get loose and come wandering down the street on K Court.

Bunt was a founding member of the K Court Community Club which was established to support the neighborhood families (i.e. sending food baskets when families were sick, funeral flowers when someone passed, sharing children's outgrown clothing, etc.) Of course, everyone was invited to participate – and later they created a garden club called "*Inside the Picket Fence*", which included a Yard of the Month contest and coveted sign to display and a small prize. Rob often helped by serving as Club Treasurer and delivering the Yard of the Month sign to the winner.

Rob and Bunt were very active in their church, Goler Metropolitan AME Church and participated in many of the groups such as Deacon/ Deaconess, Sunday school classes, Church suppers and other fund raisers.

Bunt was a devoted and accomplished educator who taught for 34 years until her retirement in 1982. Her teaching years encompassed several generations who occupied a seat in her classroom. She taught many children who became adults and later taught their children too. Teachers, at that time, were considered "professionals". They dressed professionally, used proper grammar, and all with purpose and intention, because they knew they were the role models for the children that were in their daily care. That was a time when teachers would often schedule home visits with families who had children in their classes. And children knew for sure, if they were in trouble at school, it would be worse when they got home. Schools were an important part of the community. Therefore, the teacher - parent communication was very strong and very instrumental to ensure a child's solid education which was a key factor to building a better future.

Rob worked for the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board as an Assistant Manager until his retirement in 1985. He was well known for his work with the Forsyth County Election Board at voter registration and working early morning hours at the election polls.

In 1990, he and Bunt decided to open a small day care in their home called ABC (All Bunt's Children) Nursery. Rob was the resident PaPa and part time childcare helper when Ms. Dunlap was not able to report to duty. Grandma Bunt was the lead administrator for the ten years that ABC Nursery was open. They served many families who were grateful that their infants were not shuttled off to a public day care, but instead cared for by a retired teacher whose genuine love for children never ended.

Rob and Bunt were very active in their church, Goler Metropolitan AME Church and participated in many of the groups such as Deacon/ Deaconess, Sunday school classes, Committee to furnish the new pastor's house, church suppers, and other fund raisers. They even had my brother in a children's fashion show at Goler to raise money for the church.

I can say, being out with Grandma Bunt anywhere around town, was like being with a celebrity because so many of her former students who were now adults with children would always stop her and they were quick to say how much they remembered their days with "Ms. Jeffries". Not to mention the ABC day care kids that come back to celebrate reunions in later years.

I hope this story is not too long? I found it just too hard to capture the legacy of Rob and Bunt's contributions to the Boston-Thurmond community in "short" story.