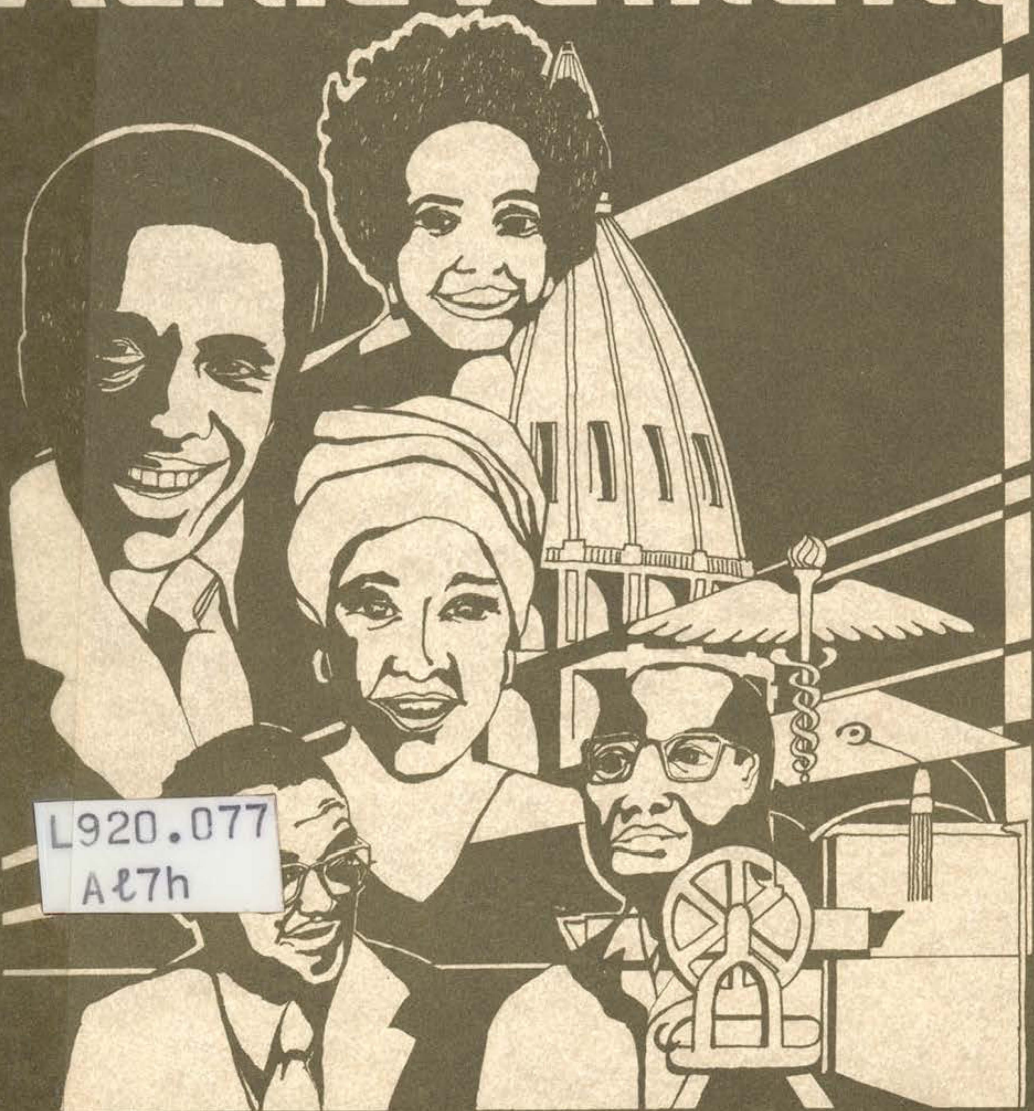


Hallmarks in Black Achievement



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Alpha Kappa Alpha, inc.

Forest Parke Library and Archives - Capital Area District Libraries

Hallmarks in Black Achievement

Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc.

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FOREWARD

The intent of this publication is to point with pride to the accomplishments of some Black Americans in Ingham County who have managed to succeed in a field of their choice.

The alumnae chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is grateful to the Ingham County Bicentennial Commission who funded this brochure under their HORIZONS grant category.

This publication will include biographical sketches of people who are FIRSTS BLACKS to attain their position within the county. It also includes biographical information about other Blacks who are the second in their field within the county, and are still living in the county.

The persons included are in the fields of:

EDUCATION
BUSINESS
POLITICS
PROFESSIONS

as well as persons we consider CLEARLY OUTSTANDING for their work within the community or for the recognition they have received outside Ingham County.

Each individual included is one of the many unique and important Black people contributing to the development of our nation, our state, and Ingham County. Each feels keen anticipation, pride and hope for today's young people. Each hopes that his or her life will show that Black Americans have made great strides and that today's youth will make even greater ones.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is a predominantly Black international professional women's sorority. (Soror - A Greek word meaning sister.) It was founded in 1908 on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C.

There are 253 alumnae chapters and 234 undergraduate chapters in cities and on campuses in the nation. There are more than 70,000 members in the United States.

The Lansing alumnae chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha has over 60 members whose careers spans social work, politics, education, medicine, homemakers, counseling and other service areas.

The Lansing alumnae chapter felt it a fitting contribution to the 200th anniversary of the independence of our nation to highlight some of the accomplishments and contributions of Black citizens of Ingham County.

FORWARD

The Board of Directors of the Forest Park Library and Archives is pleased to announce the completion of a major project in the renovation of the building which houses the library and archives.

The renovation project was completed in the summer of 1985. The project included the replacement of the roof, the installation of new windows, and the renovation of the interior.

The renovation project was completed on time and within budget. The new building is a beautiful and functional facility which will provide a comfortable and convenient environment for the library and archives.

The Board of Directors wishes to express its appreciation to the staff of the library and archives for their hard work and dedication during the renovation project.

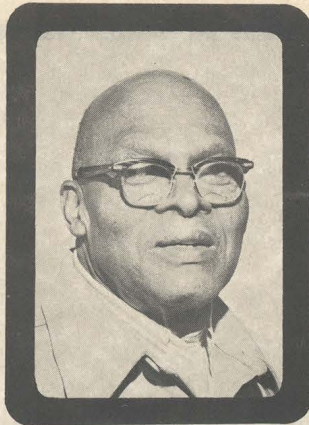
The Board of Directors also wishes to express its appreciation to the many individuals and organizations which have supported the library and archives over the years.

The Board of Directors is confident that the new building will provide a comfortable and convenient environment for the library and archives for many years to come.

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the completion of the renovation project and the opening of the new building to the public.



1985-1986



WILLIAM M. ALEXANDER
Store Owner

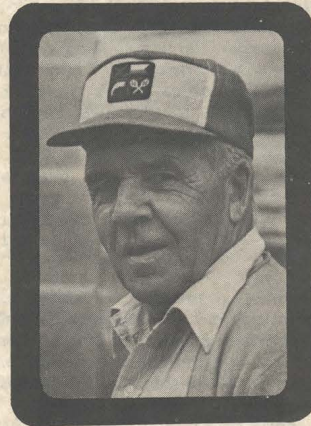
Alexander's Confectionary is one of Lansing's oldest Black businesses still in operation in the city.

Mr. William M. Alexander, merchant store owner of Alexander's Confectionary, was born in Okalona, Arkansas. His parents provided strict but loving guidance to him, his three brothers and three sisters. They were the products of a poor farm background; however, they always managed to have enough food. Mr. Alexander feels that his biggest problem has been being poor but he looked forward anyway. At the age of 16 he attended the Baptist Academy and later took a correspondence course in postal service as a way to continue his education. He sees himself basically as a self-taught man.

For 41 years Mr. Alexander has been a merchant. As a child, he worked in a commissary and this job stimulated his interest in owning his own store. He says that the most rewarding and exciting moments of his life was when he built and completed his own store and opened for business. His creed, "be myself, and pattern myself for me," has helped him with his life goals. He indicated that he has always practiced honesty.

Mr. Alexander is a member of Trinity A.M.E. Church and is a Mason. He has received the Business and Professional Women's Business Award for his contribution to the community in which he has lived for 52 years. He and his wife Effie are the parents of two children and grandparents of two grandchildren.

Mr. Alexander would advise young people today to "strive forward always. Stick to your goals if you have them set and you will make it."



OLLIE B. CROSS
Contractor - Builder

Ollie B. Cross was born in Mecosta County, near Remus, Michigan. He was reared on a farm along with five brothers and four sisters. The family was a closely knit one, with honesty as a basic philosophy for living. Wages were low, often \$1.00 per day. They were a poor family, a proud family and a happy family. They were also quite mobile, for jobs were difficult to find.

Ollie attended a country school through the eighth grade. Because of the frequent moves, schooling was difficult. Not many country children went to high school during those times.

Mr. Cross moved to Lansing in 1923 where he began work with the Christman Construction Company in July of that year. He has lived in Lansing for the past 52 years. Ollie enjoyed construction work and in 1925 he and his brother Lee were contracting masonry jobs. Ollie contracted to build his first house in 1936--thirteen years after his arrival in Lansing. This house still stands on the corner of Ohio Street and East North Street in Lansing, Michigan.

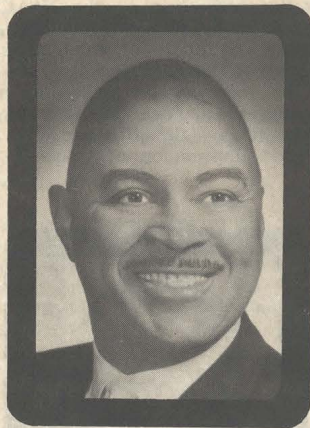
Some of Mr. Cross's most rewarding professional experiences were building more than one home for the same family and working as superintendent and builder for Fine Built Homes from 1966 to 1972. Not everything went smoothly, though, during his career. On numerous occasions attempts were made by local residents to delay progress on his homes under construction. It was difficult to get adequate municipal agency protection for such building sites.

His philosophy of life has ever been evident in his line of work, "Be truthful, honest and do good work." His advice to youth, "get as much education as possible, set your goals on what you want to be and do not settle for anything less."

Ollie Cross was a member of the Contractors and Supplies Association and the Capitol City Golf Club. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Golf Club and Lincoln Community Center. In the recreational area he has received three golf trophies.

Mr. Cross retired in September of 1972, but there are standing memorials to his 52 years as a builder and his professional skill throughout Ingham County as well as other counties in Michigan. These are products of a man who was skilled, persistent, and strove for excellence in his daily endeavors.

The Crosses reared a family of four successful children; three daughters June, Barbara and Mary, and a son Duane.



JOHN W. JOHNSON
Store Owner

Mr. John W. Johnson, owner of Johnny's Record Shop, was born in Woodlawn, Tennessee. He and his five sisters and four brothers grew up in a rural community under extremely poor conditions. They experienced hunger. They had few of the conveniences available today. The loyalty and religious training of their parents provided hope for them.

Mr. Johnson is basically a self-taught man in that he was only able to complete the sixth grade in a rural school. However, this did not stop him from hoping and striving. At the age of 15, Mr. Johnson ran away from home in order to better his conditions. As a young adult, he waited in soup lines during the depression and later worked for 75¢ a day.

For the past 28 years, Mr. Johnson has been in retail sales, a profession he desired even as a child. He takes pride in his relative success as a small business man. He attributes his success to faith in God and his mother's prayers. He lives by the creed, "help others who are less fortunate than myself and observe the Golden Rule."

Mr. Johnson is a member of Friendship Baptist Church

and is a lifetime member of the NAACP. He admits that he has done many things in his life, some of which he is very proud and others of which he is not so proud. He has worked with many different types of people and his message to young people is, "stay away from all types of drugs, get as much education as possible, refrain from loud, vulgar talk, affiliate with some church, and leave a good impression of yourself with others."



FAY WILLIAM LETT
Heating Plant Owner

Fay William Lett was born in Dowagiac, Michigan on June 4, 1907. He has lived in Lansing for 60 years.

Mr. Lett is included in this booklet because of his far-sightedness as founder of Fay Lett and Sons Heating and Air Conditioning business. It is a Black family business which is now the third largest heating and air conditioning company in Lansing.

The path to success had many obstacles to overcome including racial prejudice and being poor. Mr. Lett said there were so many problems "it would take weeks to tell."

Fay Lett started the company with fifteen dollars and an advertisement in the local paper offering furnace repair service. This 1947 decision culminated 20 years of coal delivery, furnace cleaning and chimney sweeping.

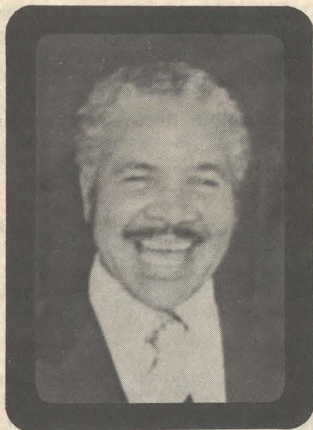
Selling nothing but the best equipment and doing excellent work have been the success formula. This was also Fay Lett's answer to competition with white residential contractors.

Mr. Lett is proud of the company's work and decided that the use of pictures of his whole family in their advertising displays in newspapers would let people know who they were, what color they were and the fact that the superior quality of work could compete successfully with everyone.

The Lett family, some family members spell the name Letts, have been involved with the community in many endeavors. Fay Lett's son Gerald is also written up in this booklet which may serve to show that Fay practiced the advice he now gives to young people. "If you are going into business, buy the best--do excellent work and make a neat appearance." Getting started may mean as Fay Lett jokingly says, "working 25 hours a day, 8 days a week."

Fay Lett is past president of the Lansing Heating Association and he received an award as an outstanding businessman from the Lansing Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.

Fay Lett and his wife Rose have raised four children in Lansing.



GERALD WILLIAM LETT
Store Owner

Gerald Lett or "Bill" as he is known in the area was born September 28, 1926 in Lansing. He is a graduate of the J. W. Sexton High School.

Bill and his wife Ruby are the owners of Lett's Fashions, a retail store selling ladies' fashions. They are the parents of three children, William, Gerald and Deborah.

Mr. Lett worked on lake-going cruise ships as a young man and for a number of years supported his family by working at the Oldsmobile Forge Plant. While at the factory, he used fifty dollars to supplement his income by selling stockings door to door. Gradually he began to sell more than stockings. As he got more customers, Bill Lett was able to open Lett's Fashions on West St. Joseph near Sycamore Street. At first he sold merchandise for the entire family. He eventually began concentrating on ladies' fashions. When the freeway took his property, he moved to his present location at the corner of Ottawa and Butler Streets.

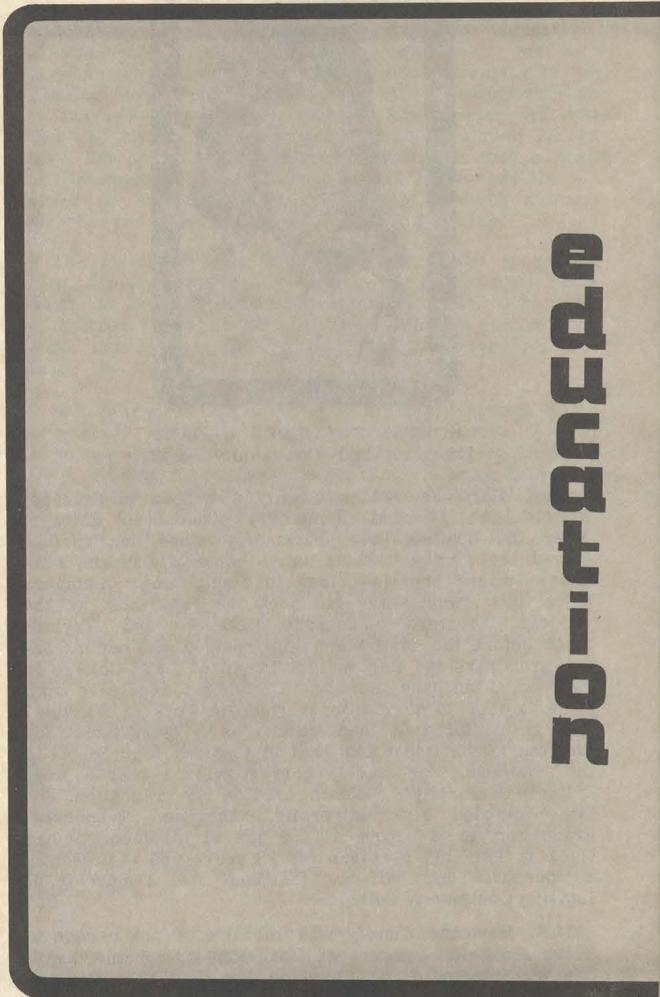
Bill Lett feels that "hard work is the key, not only to success but to happiness as well." To young people

Mr. Lett's advice is "become involved in the things which you yourself really have feelings for and then give it all you've got."

Mr. Lett has been a member of the Board of Directors of both the Lansing and the State Chambers of Commerce. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Convention Bureau and ALSAC (St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for Leukemia). He is a member of the Lansing Human Relations Committee, NAACP, the Urban League and the National Retailers Association.

Bill Lett received the National Advertisers Award for creative advertisements. He has been in business in Lansing for 24 years.

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NO. 10



HORTENSE GOLDEN CANADY
Educator and Community Service

Mrs. Hortense Golden Canady was born in Chicago, Illinois. She attended elementary schools in Chicago. After the death of her pharmacist father, her mother moved the family to their native home of Jackson, Tennessee where she was close to other family members since this community had been the residence of the Goldens, Atwaters, Andersons, DeBerrys and Taylors since before the Civil War. They resided with her maternal grandparents. Her mother taught at Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee. Hortense's mother took a leave from Lane College to do additional graduate work in Washington, D.C. Hortense then worked as a clerk-typist for the War Department and went to Cardoza High School in the evenings. She took a correspondence course from Indiana University to obtain credits for graduation. She later attended Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, graduating in 4 years at the age of nineteen. She has lived in Lansing, Michigan for 28 years and is presently a housewife and half-day Financial Aid Counselor at Lansing Community College.

Mrs. Hortense Canady was the first Black person to serve on a local Board of Education in Ingham County. She was elected to the Lansing Board of Education and

was the leading vote receiver in this election. She served for 3 years. Due to her very early involvement in educational circles and having been reared in an "educational atmosphere," she was highly respected by her colleagues and citizenry. She was elected Secretary of the Lansing Board of Education and was its representative on numerous committees. Because Mrs. Canady believed that all boys and girls, regardless of their race, should have the opportunity to learn together, she took a stand for integrating the schools. That stand cost her the position on the school board. Sometimes taking a stand for what you believe can result in great sacrifice.

The philosophy that has been instrumental in guiding Mrs. Canady has been "whatever we do, no matter how small or insignificant in our opinion, can and does make a difference. It can be a difference that is positive (our good, our heaven) or one that is negative (our evil, our hell). The choice is up to us."

Her numerous contributions in organized groups in the community include: League of Women Voters, AAUW, Women's Commission State of Michigan, Lansing Women's Club, Women's Symphony Association, Lansing Symphony Association, Delta Sigma Theta, Links, Inc., Les Meres, Lansing Council of Churches, Central District Auxiliary, National Urban League, YWCA, Ingham County School Board Association.

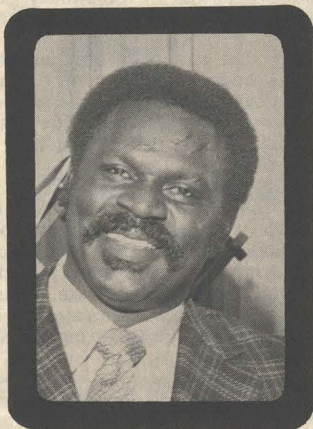
She has held the following offices in various organizations: Chairman of NAACP Education Committee, Vice President of the OEO Board, Treasurer United Community Chest, Chairman of the State Board of Education Task Force to Review Materials Relative to Citizenship, Morality and Values Education, President Elect of the National Dental Association Auxiliary, member of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Delta Sigma Theta Regional Director, Co-Chairman National Social Action Commission and Treasurer of the United Negro College Fund.

She has received many honors. Among them are Sojourner Truth Award, NAACP, United Negro College Fund, Community Services Council, Community Chest, Delta Sigma Theta.

Hortense is married to Clinton Canady, Jr., D.D.S., and has four children, Clinton Canady III, who is a 1973 graduate of University of Michigan Law School; Alexa

Canady, 1975 graduate University of Michigan Medical School--intern at Yale University; Alan Canady, Junior in Pre-Law University of Michigan; and Mark Canady, a ninth grader at Dwight Rich Junior High School.

Mrs. Canady would say to young people of today, "try to establish meaningful goals and plan realistic objectives to meet those goals."



HERMAN W. COLEMAN
Educator

Herman W. Coleman was born in Brookhaven, Mississippi, where he lived with his mother and two brothers and sister. Herman does not remember much of his father who died when he was five years old. They were a family of limited financial resources and after his father died they were quite poor economically, but very rich in love and spirit.

Herman was an exceptional high school and college student. He attended undergraduate school on athletic scholarships and completed graduate school by being awarded a Mott Foundation Clinical Intern Fellowship. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology

from Alcorn A. and M. College, Lorman, Mississippi. He attended Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan and Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan where he received his Master's Degree in Educational Administration.

Mr. Coleman is the first Black to serve as Executive Secretary of the Michigan Education Association (MEA). He was also the first Associate Executive Secretary for Minority Affairs for MEA in East Lansing, Michigan. As leader of the MEA, one of the most powerful teacher associations, he administers policies for over 92,000 educators.

Herman Coleman has also been a Director of Community Education Centers in Rochester, New York, a teacher, coach and Community School Director in Muskegon, Michigan. He has held other educational and recreational positions in which he worked directly with young people.

Among the many contributions Herman has made are serving as a registered lobbyist representing MEA at the Michigan State Legislature. He has been a consultant to numerous conferences, one at the request of the U. S. Office of Education called "National Career Education Conference--Implications for Minorities," in Washington, D.C. Herman has been instrumental in researching and developing recommendations which have had a great impact on desegregation and education. He has been in the field of education for thirteen years. He says, "I believe that education must become or play a greater role in improving the quality of life in our society." Young people should "continue in some educational program, set high goals for themselves and start early working toward those goals."

One of his most rewarding experiences was becoming Executive Director of MEA. His most exciting moment--becoming a father. Herman lives in East Lansing, Michigan with his wife Kay and their daughter Hope.



DR. OLIVIA IRENE LETTS
Educator

"From my earliest recollection, I always had a desire to become a teacher. I have never wanted to be in any other field." Olivia has been in the field of education for over 25 years. She has resided in Ingham County, Lansing, Michigan for 24 years. Olivia Letts was the first Black elementary teacher in Ingham County and later became the first Black principal and in Lansing, the first minority "area principal."

Mrs. Letts was born and lived in a poor area of Chicago, Illinois with her parents, grandmother, aunts and uncles and her brother Matthew Davis. Both parents, Matthew and Gertrude Davis, worked and provided for the family's needs. They always had good care and guidance.

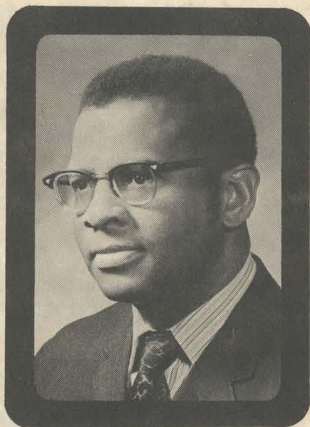
It was necessary to attend Chicago Teachers College to become a Chicago teacher. The college would only enroll 10% Black students and each applicant had to pass a written entrance examination, an oral examination and a physical examination. Getting into Chicago Teachers College was an important hurdle. Olivia received her Bachelor of Education from Chicago Teachers College. Her graduate work was taken at Loyola Uni-

versity, Chicago and Michigan State University where she received her M.A., Ed. Sp., and Ph.D. Her educational accomplishments are examples of her philosophy, "be willing to work hard enough for something and one can attain it. Have faith and trust in God."

Her recommendations to young people "have a worthwhile goal, investigate all its aspects including the training necessary, be thoughtful of others along the way and do not let hardships keep you from making some yearly progress toward your objectives. Always believe in your ability to succeed and you will!"

Olivia has served with many community organizations. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She received the Sojourner Truth Service Award from the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., and a Service Award from the Girl Scouts Council of the Lansing Area.

Olivia Irene Letts lives with her husband, Richard, and her daughter Eileen, a recent graduate of Ohio State University.



DR. JOHN W. PORTER
Educator

Dr. John W. Porter holds the highest school administrative position of any resident in Ingham County as well as the State of Michigan. He currently serves as the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Michigan.

He grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the son of parents who migrated North during the Great Depression years.

John Porter was an excellent high school student though he had not originally thought far enough ahead to consider college. A high school coach encouraged him to think of college. He went to Albion College on an athletic scholarship. He first considered being an architect. While in college he decided that as a Black man, he perhaps had a better chance of a career in education than in architecture. In June, 1953, John Porter earned a Bachelor's Degree from Albion College.

He came to Lansing, Michigan to get a job. He got a job as a janitor at Mount Hope Elementary School. Eventually he served as a junior high teacher in Lansing, Michigan at West Junior High School, a counselor and

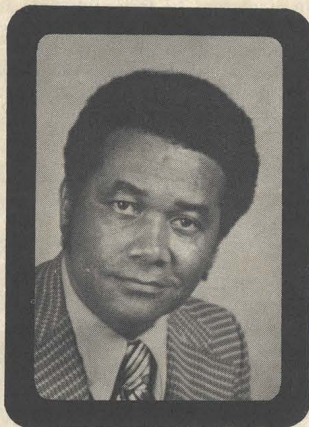
administrative assistant to the principal. In 1961 he went to work at the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority. He advanced through the ranks to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. As superintendent, he is responsible for education programs for the State of Michigan from prekindergarten through postgraduate programs at the universities.

He has had great honors in his career. He has also suffered many great and small indignities, such as his attempts to purchase decent housing in the East Lansing community, or to advance in the Lansing School District.

Dr. Porter has been involved in public school education for 22 years. He has served on advisory boards and committees throughout the nation. President Lyndon Johnson, President Richard Nixon and President Gerald Ford each appointed him to serve on national education committees. He currently serves on at least 12 state committees.

Dr. Porter has received many awards for distinguished service. Among them are a Doctor of Humane Letters from Albion College, a Doctor of Laws, Western Michigan, Doctor of Public Administration, Albion College, Albion, Michigan.

He is married to the former Lois French. Dr. Porter strongly believes in the quality of excellence in education for the children of Michigan. He would see that each is "prepared when the door opens."



DR. MATTHEW W. PROPHET
Educator

Dr. Matthew W. Prophet holds the highest school district administrative position of any minority in Ingham County. He is currently the Deputy Superintendent of the Lansing School District.

Matt, as he is called, was born in Okolona, Mississippi, the only child of Matthew and Elzira Prophet. He describes the town of his birth as one in which there existed the lowest forms of racial segregation.

He credits the love of his mother, who is a school teacher, and his father, who guided him through his developmental years, for the success he has achieved in two careers.

Before coming to the Lansing School District, Dr. Prophet had earned the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army. During the 20 years of service in the army, which he entered as a Private, he served as Commander and Staff Officer in Germany; Instructor at the United States Army Artillery Missile School, Chief of Individual Training Headquarters Fifth Army, Illinois; Personnel Manager Advisor Ninth Infantry Division in Vietnam. His tour of duty in the army took him to 23

countries in the world, that ranged from the Far East to the West and from Alaska to Mexico.

The creed that has most served Matt Prophet in his life has been: "I try hard at whatever I do. I try to be sincere and honest with everyone; to respect the human dignity and worth of all people of all races."

The honors, awards and medals that Dr. Prophet has received have been many. He holds 21 medals for service in the army. Among the highlights of his life was receiving the Legion of Merit Award for 20 years of OUTSTANDING service in the United States Army.

His educational career includes extra tutoring from his mother because the southern school year was limited to six months to allow children to pick cotton. Since there was no Black high school in his community, he attended a special school operated by the Episcopal Church of New York. His parents paid a large sum of money for him to attend. Eventually he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A.) in 1960 from the University of Nebraska. He earned the Master of Arts from Roosevelt University in 1970 and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from Northwestern University in 1972. During his civilian years he has conducted in-depth on-site observations, internships and studies with the Chicago Public Schools; Berkeley, California Schools; Highland Park, Michigan Schools.

Dr. Prophet is married to the former Freddie Adams of Oklahoma. They have four children, Michelle, Michael, Matthew III, and Tony.



BARBARA JEAN ROBERTS
Educator

Barbara Jean Byrd Roberts was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. She attended elementary, junior and senior high school in Detroit. She received two scholarships to attend college; one from the Michigan State University Regents Alumni and the other from the Sorosis League, a church organization. Mrs. Roberts completed both her B.A. and M.A. at Michigan State University and is now currently pursuing her Ph.D.

She is a member of the State Board of Education, a seat she won in a state election. She is the only elected Black woman in the country. She is also Labor Relations/Executive Director of Michigan Education Association Council 8F. She was formerly Executive Director of the Lansing Schools Education Association.

Barbara Roberts was raised by both parents in a poor, stable neighborhood in the Detroit inner city. Finances were always an obstacle as well as her parent's health. The obstacles were overcome by love, encouragement, affection, security, and the kind of direction given by her parents and other relatives. Her extended family is very close-knit and important in her life.

She has always been interested in all aspects of education. Being an activist she perceives as a challenge and part of her continuing educational process. Among the most rewarding experience in her life was working with the YPD's, a missionary youth group, that met at her house weekly for approximately five years.

Her philosophy is "live and let live. Tomorrow is not promised. Life is too short to waste any part of it. Respect others as you respect yourself. Always be able to look in the mirror. Always extend a hand to another who is in need. Love is unlimited and there is plenty to share. Share my life with God and He will lead me and my children in the right direction."

To young people she would give this advice, "analyze the future and yourselves and prepare realistically for what the future will bring and what you can give to the future."

Barbara has belonged to the Michigan State University College of Education Alumni Board of Directors, Urban League Board of Directors, Muscular Dystrophy Board of Directors, Model Cities Task Force, Lansing Educational Executive Planners, Missionary Society, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, NAACP, Black Alliance of Educators, among others.

She has been the Basileus (President) of both her undergraduate and graduate chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She has been second supreme Anti-Basileus (Vice President) of the sorority at the national level. She has been secretary and treasurer of the Muscular Dystrophy Association Lansing Chapter.

Mrs. Roberts has been honored as an Outstanding Young Woman in America, an Outstanding Young Person in Lansing Award by the Jaycees, and Muscular Dystrophy Service Award.



DR. CLIFTON R. WHARTON, JR.
Educator

Clifton Reginald Wharton, Jr., serves as the 14th president of one of the largest and most well known educational institutions in America, Michigan State University. He is the first Black man to serve as president of a major predominantly non-Black university in this century.

Unlike many Black men who struggled through poverty and adverse racial conditions, Clifton Wharton is the son of an American diplomat, who eventually became ambassador to Norway.

Clifton Wharton was born September 13, 1926 in Boston, Massachusetts. His early years were spent in Spain and the Canary Islands. At the age of ten he returned to Boston to enter the Boston Latin School. Upon graduation, he entered Harvard University at the age of 16, eventually earning the Bachelor of Arts in History. He later earned a Master of Arts in International Affairs from John Hopkins University in Baltimore, a second Master's Degree and the Doctor of Philosophy in Economics from the University of Chicago.

Before coming to Michigan State University he was well-known as an economic development expert focusing on underdeveloped countries. He became a leading expert on Southeast Asia spending the years 1958 to 1964 in Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia. While in Southeast Asia he served as a consultant to the Malaysian government as well as a Professor in Economics at the University of Malaysia and Singapore.

Dr. Wharton is married to the former Dolores Duncan of New York. They have two sons, Bruce and Clifton R. Wharton, III.

Clifton Wharton, a Black man of the 1970's, stands between the two educational and philosophical giants, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois, around whom such philosophical controversy raged in the early 1900's. Booker T. Washington was a practical realist who believed that education was to serve as the vehicle for improving the economic stature of the Black man in America. W. E. B. DuBois, the brilliant scholar, believed that the Black man could pursue intellectual excellence in the arts and philosophy as well as other men. DuBois believed that the Black race need not be relegated to a non-creative, chattel-like existence.

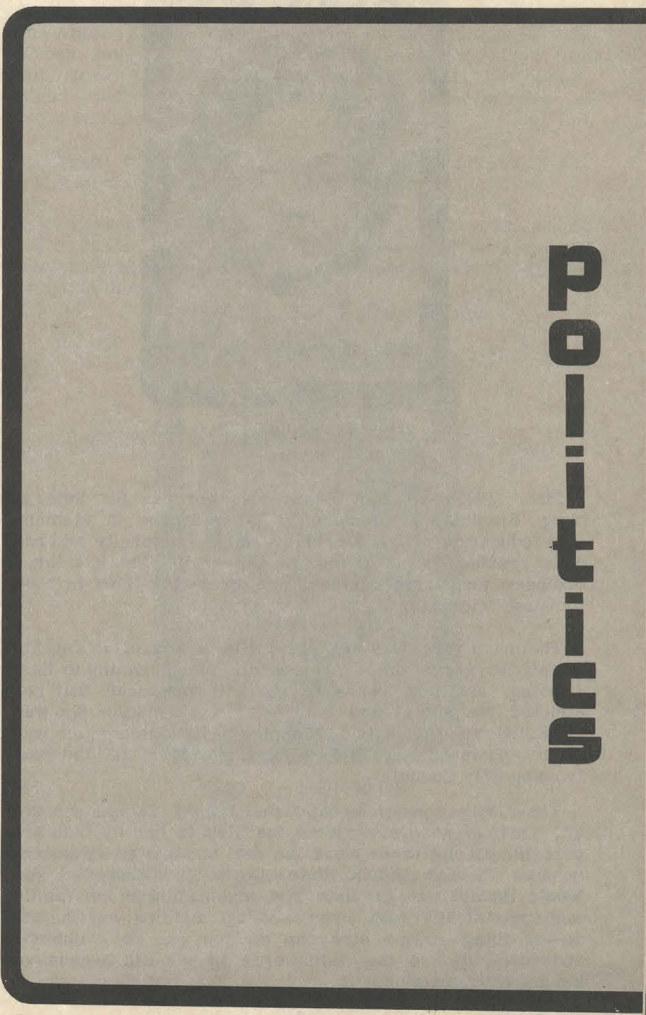
In a speech entitled Reflections On Black Intellectual Power, Dr. Wharton concluded: "Black intellectual manpower is the vital human capital indispensable for Black economic development and social progress. The goal is clear. If the Black economy is to prosper, if Black society is to forge ahead, if our Black people are to flourish, we must strengthen and expand our base of intellectual power. Through our expanded intellectual power, which is inextricably related to economic and political power, we will then be in many of the key positions in education, government, professions and private enterprise. We will be there not because we are Black but because we have the ability and the will to achieve and to contribute."

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THELMA KNIGHT EVANS
Politics

Mrs. Thelma Knight Evans was born in St. Petersburg, Florida. She received a B.A. degree in elementary education from Florida A & M University and has done graduate work at Indiana University. She has three brothers and three sisters. She presently lives in East Lansing, Michigan.

Thelma Evans was the first Black woman in Ingham County to serve on a city council. Since coming to East Lansing, she was aware of the circumstances that restricted the social and political life of Blacks. She was appointed to the City's Planning Commission and was later appointed to fill an unexpired term on the East Lansing City Council.

The inspirational messages that helped Thelma achieve her various successes were instilled in her by both her parents. Among these were the fact that she was expected to live by the Golden Rule--Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You. Each child in her family was consistently told "you can do anything you want to do--anything anyone else can do you can do." Honesty and integrity are the watchwords in her life because of her parent's training.

Mrs. Evans has given much to the communities of East Lansing and Lansing. She holds active memberships in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (Vice President), the Urban League, NAACP, National League of Cities, the American Association of University Women, Links, Ingham County Medical Auxiliary, and is a member of Peoples Church.

Thelma is married to a physician, Dr. Matthies Evans, and has two children, Matt, Jr. and Susan.

A message that Mrs. Evans would give to young people today is to "set your own goals for your personal and professional life and don't be deterred from striving to attain them."



JOEL I. FERGUSON
Politics

Joel I. Ferguson was born in Lansing, Michigan in 1938. He currently lives at 3412 Sandhurst. He is married to Erma and they have five children; Barry, Dori, Jennifer, Stacie and David. Joel also has two younger brothers.

Mr. Ferguson was the first Black man elected to the

Lansing City Council and the first Black man appointed to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners. He shares 50% ownership in F and S Development Company, 4820 West Saginaw, Lansing, Michigan. Before his present employment, he served as Assistant Director of the Catholic Job Training Center and Director of the Urban League On The Job Training project. He attended Lansing Sexton High School and graduated with a B.A. degree in elementary education from Michigan State University. He is a United States Marine Corps veteran.

Mr. Ferguson became interested in politics after spending much time working with the youth in the community during a summer racial disturbance. At that time, the young people chose him to be their spokesman. Thus began his speaking career. He has been in the field 8 1/2 years.

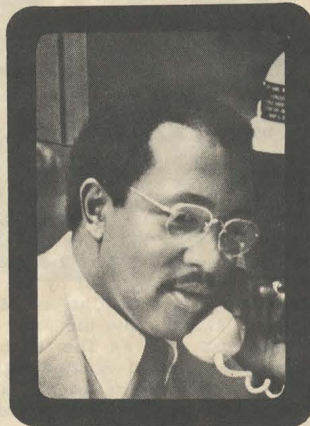
Mr. Ferguson's childhood was spent in clean and modest living conditions. While there was not an excess of money available, the family was provided with the necessities to live comfortably. His mother was the head of the household and raised the children alone. She was a very conscientious individual who was not only concerned with her own family, but also very involved within the community. The Ferguson home was not without problems, however. Joel's mother did everything possible to keep the problems away from her children. Mr. Ferguson's philosophy in life is, "the harder I work, the luckier I become."

In 1968, Joel was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. In 1972, he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. At that convention, he served as Chairman of the McGovern delegates from Michigan and Vice Chairman to the Michigan Delegation.

In addition to these busy tasks, Mr. Ferguson has belonged to the following organizations: Ingham County Board of Commissioners, Tri-County Manpower Consortium, Senior Citizen Consortium, Little League Football, Junior Achievement, Board of Directors--Michigan State University Development Fund. He has held the office of Mayor Pro-Tem, Planning Committee Chairman, Public Safety Committee Member, Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Chairman of the Tri-County Manpower Consortium and Chairman of the 1969 Cancer Drive for Ingham County. He has also received the Distinguished

Service Award given by the Business and Professional Women's Association.

Joel's advice to young people today would be to "establish goals and work hard to achieve them."



SENATOR EARL EDWARD NELSON
Politics

Senator Earl Edward Nelson was born in Emerson, Arkansas. He is the son of a Methodist minister. His family consists of five brothers and two sisters, three half brothers and two half sisters. His economic background was one of extreme poverty, but home life was rich in love and security. He had strict parental guidance with a heavy emphasis on work as being valuable in man's life. Earl graduated from Lincoln High School in Washington, Arkansas. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Michigan State University and has done graduate work at Syracuse University in New York. He was a vocal music teacher at C. W. Otto Junior High School in Lansing, Michigan for five years. He has lived in Lansing, Michigan 20 years.

Earl was the first Black in Ingham County to serve in

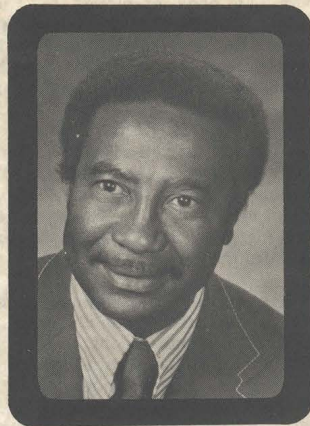
the Michigan Legislature. He was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1971 and served until 1974. He ran for the State Senate and was elected in 1975 and is currently serving as a State Senator. He is a member of the Michigan Senate Appropriations Committee. He entered the field of politics because he had a definite interest in serving people and government offered that opportunity.

Earl is extensively involved in community activities and holds memberships in numerous organizations. In 1963, he founded and is still the director of The Earl Nelson Singers, which is an integrated group of volunteer adult choristers dedicated to preserving the beauty and dignity of Negro Folk Music.

Senator Nelson has been an active worker in the civic and cultural life of the Greater Lansing Community. He has been recognized by various organizations for this service. Among the awards he has received are: The Community Service Award presented by the Negro Business and Professional Women's Club of Michigan, The Citizen of the Year Award from the Free and Accepted Masons of Michigan, as well as The Outstanding Young Man of the Year Distinguished Service Award from the Lansing Jaycees. While a music teacher at C. W. Otto Junior High School, he was voted Outstanding Teacher by his colleagues.

Earl Nelson has served as Director of Music for Wolverine Boy's State, and as Minister of Music of the First United Methodist Church.

An idea that has always been a part of Earl's life philosophy is to "trust and be trustworthy." He would advise young people to "prepare, then believe it can be done and realistically set goals and never doubt the wisdom of older people."



GRADY PORTER
Politics

Grady Porter was the first Black person elected to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners. He lived in a primarily Black community in which the constituency had no minority representation in either local or county government. "Friends and co-workers encouraged and persuaded me to run for office," says Mr. Porter. Grady was elected as a Commissioner for the 12th District in 1968. He has lived in Lansing, Michigan for 40 years, where he and his wife Marcelle have reared four children, Lilliane Jeanine, James Anthony, Sylviane Denise and Patricia Ann.

Grady was born in Carrolltown, Georgia. He lived with his parents and five brothers and three sisters. His home was a religious one with much discipline, respect and love. Grady was the seventh child of eight. The family was poor with food enough for all but little clothing or money. Grady worked afternoons and summers in a dry cleaning plant where he learned to clean, press and sew. He and his family were confronted with the usual problems facing a Negro family growing up in the South. He graduated the fifth highest in a class of 721 seniors in 1935 when he was 17 years old.

Grady Porter has been employed by Oldsmobile Division of General Motors Corporation as a truck driver for many years. He served as Unit Chairman for the U. A. W. Local during 1952 and 1954, and has been their Fair Employment Practices Committee Chairman for many years.

Grady is a World War II Veteran. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the United States Army, upon being honorably discharged in Paris, France in 1945. He worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Organization. He later received the Certificate of Service from the United Nations.

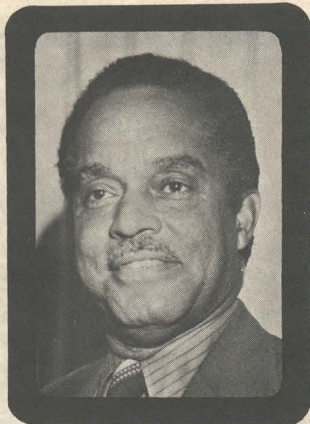
Mr. Porter has served the community in many ways; PTA President at Kalamazoo Street School, Vice President at Main Street School, Scout Master, a member of the Lansing Human Relations Committee, Ward Chairman in his voting precinct, life member of the NAACP and a member of the Committee on School Needs and Sites.

In his present elective position as Commissioner, he has been Chairman of the Law and Courts Committee for Ingham County, Chairman Pro-Tem and Vice Chairman of the County Commissioners, member of the Michigan Association of Counties Criminal Justice Committee and representative to the Energy Crisis Council.

Grady attended the University of Heidelberg, Germany in 1947, Lansing Community College in 1968 and Michigan State University in 1953.

Grady's accomplishments support his belief in life, "I allow no man to drag me down. I respect all persons and bow only to God." He advises young people to "study to show thyself approved unto God and a workman that need not be afraid or ashamed."

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DR. CLINTON CANADY, JR.
Dentist

Dr. Clinton Canady, Jr. was born in Detroit, Michigan. His father was a laborer at Ford Motor Company, and at one time had a modest tailoring business on the side. His parents were thrifty and were home owners. He has one brother and one sister. Dr. Canady's educational preparation includes attendance in high school in Detroit, Wayne State University, Meharry Medical School where he received his degree in dentistry, and post-graduate work at Northwestern University, University of Detroit, and Case Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Canady has lived and practiced dentistry in Lansing, Michigan for 28 years. His office is located in the Duncan Building, 530 South Pine Street.

Dr. Clinton Canady, Jr. was the second Black dentist to set up a practice in Ingham County. He chose the field of dentistry as a result of an inspiration received at a career conference in the ninth grade. Preceding Dr. Canady was a Dr. Wilson who no longer lives in the community.

His life's philosophy is "Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You."

Some major contributions to the community both social and professional include active memberships in the following organizations: Kappa Sigma Pi Dental Honorary Society, American Academy of General Dentistry, American Professional Practices Association, American Dental Association, National Dental Association, Central Dental Association, Michigan State Dental Society. Civic and social service include: Lansing Chamber of Commerce, Lansing Fire Board, NAACP, Capitol Lodge #8, A & FM, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Alpha Chi Chapter of Sigma Pi Phi (Boule), Torch Club, City Club, MSU University Club, Detroit Guardsman. He has held the following offices: Chamber Board of Directors, chairman of the Personnel Commission Lansing Fire Board, President of the local NAACP, President of the Boule, NDA Board of Directors, Legislative Commission of Michigan State Dental Association, Trinity A.M.E. Church. He received honors for being president of the Lansing branch NAACP, from National NAACP for being Life-Membership Chairman, from the National Dental Association and from Meharry Medical College.

One of the most rewarding and exciting moments in Dr. Canady's life was when his daughter gave the commencement address at the University of Michigan Medical School graduation exercises in 1974 after being selected by her classmates to do so. His statement to all youth would be, "excel with whatever skills you have."



STUART J. DUNNINGS, JR.
Attorney

Mr. Stuart J. Dunnings was born in Staunton, Virginia. His mother and father taught him the importance of responsibility and of obeying. Though the Dunnings family was for all practical purposes a poor one, they owned their own home. Stuart Dunnings recalls that when he was roughly aged two, his family got inside toilet facilities and in those days, that was quite a luxury. Another important early childhood memory for Stuart was that though he was a child during the depression, his family always had food and his father did not have to go on public relief. He recalls this as important to his father.

A lawyer for 28 years, Mr. Dunnings remembers being told by his father that he had a choice between getting up at six o'clock in the morning and making beds, or getting an education and attempting to do better. He chose to do better, but not without problems. He continues to strive to maintain his position as a successful attorney. Mr. Dunnings is one of the attorneys for the Lansing Board of Education.

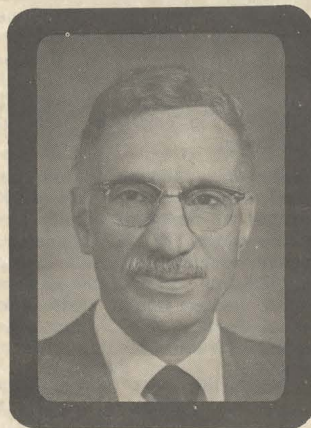
Stuart Dunnings went from elementary school through

high school in Staunton, Virginia. He earned the Bachelor of Arts Degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and the Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree from the University of Michigan Law School.

"Be somebody. Give respect to other people and demand respect for yourself. Get an education, but be humble" is a philosophy that has guided Stuart Dunning's life and career.

Mr. Dunnings is a life member of the NAACP. He is a member of the Lansing Human Relations Committee and a member of the Lansing Board of Law Examiners. Mr. Dunnings has received many honors in his career.

He counts among his chief treasures his family; his wife Janet and four children, Stuart, Jr., Stephen, Susan and Shauna.



DR. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON
Physician

William Henry Harrison was the first Black physician in the Lansing area and the first Black professional, coming to Lansing over 29 years ago in 1946. He was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma where he grew up with his mother and father, five brothers and two sisters. His

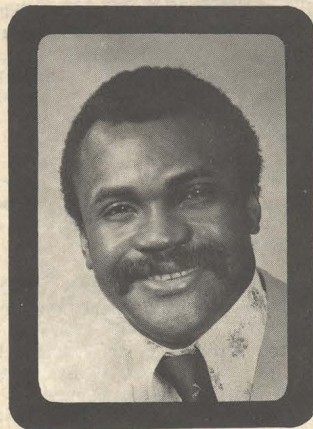
father worked in a railroad shop. Supporting a family of nine was not easy financially. Henry's mother was a religious woman who encouraged him to get an education. "My father was not interested in my advanced education until after I entered medical school." Segregated schools and finances were problems which existed for the Harrison family but inspite of this, Henry completed school as an honor student. He finished manual training high school as Valedictorian of his class and went on working to earn money to put himself through college. Henry was interested in Civil Engineering but in the 30's and 40's such jobs were not available for Blacks. He felt that medical school was his next best choice--for there was a better chance that he would be able to practice medicine than engineering after graduation.

Dr. Harrison attended Tennessee State University and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nebraska. He was an intern at Homer Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri and received his Medical Degree from Howard University, College of Medicine. As a doctor, his most rewarding and exciting moments have been "bringing new life into this world." The belief that "if someone else can do it, I can too" led him to become the doctor he is today. "Take advantage of all the educational opportunities you can," he tells his young patients and friends today.

He has received many honors in his life. He was an honor high school student and he has also been named as a Fellow of the Academy of Family Medicine. He is a member of the staffs of St. Lawrence, Edward W. Sparrow and Ingham Medical Hospitals in Ingham County. He is a member of the Board of the Lansing Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, Ingham County Medical Society, Michigan State Medical Society, the National Medical Association and Academy of Family Medicine.

Dr. Harrison has held the office of President of the Capital Chapter of the Academy of Family Medicine and Treasurer of the Ingham County Medical Society. He has served his community in many ways beyond his medical contacts and influenced the lives of numerous families. The NAACP, Alpha Phi Alpha and Alpha Chi Sigma Pi Phi Fraternities are among the civic organizations with which he has been affiliated.

Dr. Harrison and his wife Catherine have four children, James, William Jr., Deborah and Bonnie Kay.



DR. BLANCHE MARTIN
Education and Dentist

Dr. Blanche Martin, a dentist in East Lansing, is the first Black man in Ingham County to be elected to the Michigan State University Board of Trustees. He is also the first Black person to serve as the Chairman of the Michigan State University Board of Trustees. He was elected in 1968 for a term to extend from 1969 through 1976. He was elected as Chairman of the Board for the 1975-1976 year. As a member of the university's Board of Trustees, he helps to establish the policies that will govern the university.

Dr. Martin was born in a poor community in Melhaven, Georgia. He was raised by his grandmother and grandfather in River Rouge, Michigan. They also raised four cousins along with Blanche. He attended elementary, junior and senior high school in River Rouge, Michigan. Dr. Martin was an excellent student as well as an outstanding athlete. He was the President of his senior class in high school as well as President of the student government. He was also President of the River Rouge High School National Honor Society.

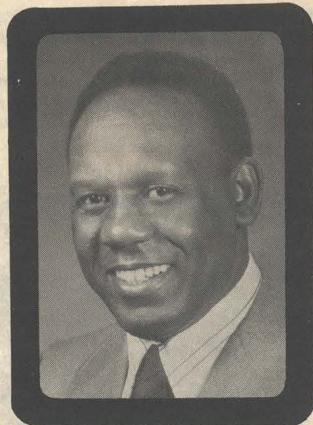
Blanche graduated with honors from Michigan State University in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

in mathematics and physical sciences. While at Michigan State, he was an Academic All-American. He received the Pigskin Club of Washington, D.C. Award for excellence in scholarship and athletic achievement. After he graduated from Michigan State University he played professional football one year with the Los Angeles Chargers.

Dr. Martin holds to the belief that there is no substitute for motivation and hard work. He believes in the importance of setting high goals in life and making a good effort to attain those goals.

Dr. Martin attended the University of Detroit School of Dentistry where he earned the Doctor of Dental Science Degree (D.D.S.) in 1967. He was the recipient of the Award for Excellence in General Dentistry, as well as one of ten seniors to be exempted from taking the State Board Examinations because of high grades. Dr. Martin has served as a part-time instructor at the University of Detroit Dental School.

Dr. Blanche Martin lives in East Lansing with his wife Josephine who was a law student at the time of their marriage. They have three children, Derrick Lee, Gary Blanchard and Steven Edward Martin.



JAMES RILEY
Funeral Director

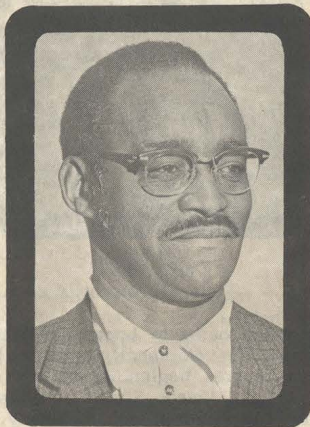
Mr. James Riley came to Lansing, Michigan 17 years ago and became the community's first Black funeral director. From modest beginnings he now owns his own funeral home on St. Joseph Street in Lansing. He is the only Black funeral director in Ingham County.

James was born in Memphis, Tennessee, the fifth child of an average Black southern family, who were morally strong and religious. To this day, James Riley attributes the success that he has achieved to the nurturing of loving parents and three brothers and three sisters. Like many other young men growing up in the early 1930's, the Riley family had very little money.

James Riley's education included graduating from the United States Army Technical Schools and Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan in 1960.

James Riley has been in the mortuary business for 24 years. Among his proudest moments has been the building of his own establishment Riley Funeral Home. He always does his best and expects it of others. He is awaiting the day when his son will join him in business.

James Riley is a member of the Boy Scouts of America, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, NAACP, and the Lansing Housing Commission. He belongs to these organizations for the services they render to the Greater Lansing Community, believing that the Black adult individual can and should render some service to the community.



WILLIAM HOWARD SMITH
Highway Field Engineer

William Howard Smith was the first Black highway field engineer in Ingham County with the Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation.

“Bill” Smith was born in Talladega, Alabama, the son of Julius and Regenia Smith. As a child he lived in an area that was heavily populated in a low income rental neighborhood. His father worked as a semi-skilled worker and his mother was a housewife. He had one brother and two sisters.

Bill Smith graduated from Hamtramck High School during the depression. He received an athletic scholarship to attend what was then Michigan State College. He graduated in 1937 with a Bachelor of Science in civil

engineering. He chose engineering as a field primarily because the college offered scholarships in that field. Bill Smith has been an engineer for 39 years. He counts among his greatest pleasures seeing and riding over roads that he helped to plan, design and construct.

Bill Smith has served as President of the Chapter 100 Michigan State Employees Association. He is a professional engineer and a member of the Society of State Engineers and Professional Affiliates. Bill is a member of the Lansing Bahai Assembly.

Bill Smith is married to Eva Smith. He has six children, Harold, Patricia, Julius, Burton, Marianne and Kenneth. Bill Smith has followed a creed that expects each individual to do his best, to admit mistakes and recognize and respect your own limits. He has always tried to achieve some goals. He reminds his own children and other young people that “the world owes you only an opportunity.”



RUDOLPH V. WILSON
Chemist

Rudolph Wilson was born in Tampa, Florida as a member of a large family. He has seven brothers and six

sisters. He considers that his living conditions were good for a large, poor family in the South. His parents were religious, demanded respect, believed in discipline and were strict on the children maintaining good conduct in the community.

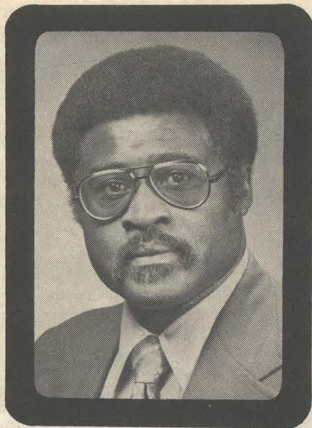
Mr. Wilson stated that he did not look on things as problems or obstacles because of his family training. It was instilled in him to persevere and weigh each situation for its value and worth.

The G.I. Bill, a law which helped veterans financially to go to school, made it possible for "Rudy" to go to college. This helped other members to also continue their education. Mr. Wilson's goal was medicine, but dwindling finances caused him to turn to work in the laboratory which he found very enjoyable. Oldsmobile hired him as their first Black chemist and their first Black salaried employee.

Nothing is too challenging, noted Mr. Wilson offering advice to young people. Continue educating yourself in some way and become involved both politically and civically in your community. He has been Vice President and Freedom Fund Chairman of the NAACP. He has belonged to Big Brothers, Board Member of Ingham County Mental Health, Masons Capitol Lodge #8, Urban League, Esquires, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Boy Scouts and the Trinity A.M.E. Church. Mr. Wilson has received the Community Service Award from the Negro Business and Professional Women's Club and the Civic Award of Involvement from Oldsmobile.

Rudolph Wilson is a graduate of West Virginia State College and has done graduate work at Michigan State University. He is married to Dorothy and is the father of two children, Claudia and Kevin.

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DR. DON E. COLEMAN
An Outstanding Athlete

Dr. Don E. Coleman is one of the Black men in Ingham County who has achieved national recognition. In 1975 he was inducted into the National Football Hall of Fame. This is a singular honor for an American athlete.

Dr. Coleman was born in Ponca City, Oklahoma May 4, 1928. He grew up during the depression years when times were hard for all Americans. He was raised in a segregated community in which all recreational and school facilities were limited, and did not encourage a child to develop his full potential. The Coleman family were warm and affectionate and raised their children including Don, two brothers now deceased, and three sisters, in a morally strong family based on the principles of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church.

While a student and athlete at Michigan State University, he was voted the Unanimous All-American Tackle (1951). He received the outstanding honor of being the first Michigan State University player whose jersey, No. 78, was retired. Twenty-five years later at the Hula Bowl in 1971, he was named Michigan State University's Outstanding Lineman.

After graduating from Michigan State University in 1952, he went to Flint where he became the first Black coach in the Flint School District and the first Black teacher at Flint Central High School.

Dr. Coleman returned to Michigan State University to earn the Master of Arts Degree in 1958. In the interim between earning the B.A. and his first teaching assignment, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army with a tour of duty in 1953 and 1954. He was honorably discharged in 1954, a First Lieutenant.

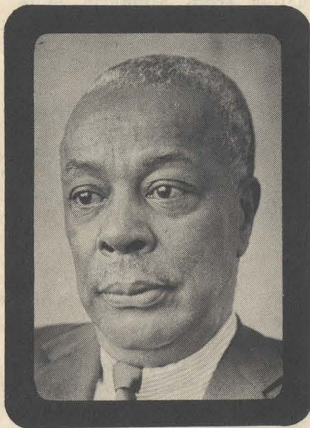
From 1954 to 1961 he served as a coach and teacher in high school, junior high school and the elementary schools of Flint. In 1965 he was appointed principal of Doyle Community School.

In 1968 he came to the Lansing community as an assistant professor in the health and physical education program at Michigan State University.

In 1971 he earned the Ph.D. degree in Administration and Higher Education at Michigan State University.

Dr. Coleman in analyzing the belief or creed that has motivated him to achieve his many accomplishments sums it up as "only the strong survive; those who are strong physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually."

To the young people in school today, he reminds them to develop their talents, search for options when developing a career, and above all "HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF."



MORRISON LEO RYDER
An Outstanding Community Leader

Morrison Leo Ryder has been a part of the lives of hundreds of Ingham County families. He was the Director of the Lincoln Community Center, the first community center in Lansing, Michigan. Morrison Ryder believed that although the Center was a source of recreation, it could function as a tool for bringing young people together to study, to resolve the problems of youth and to get to know each other--A Human Relations Center. There were programs for all ages in the Center under Morrison's direction. One year he instructed as many as 60 students in piano as well as directing the Center.

Morrison Ryder is now 71 years old. He was born in Pontiac, Michigan in 1904, the seventh of thirteen children. Morrison's father was killed in a foundry and his mother died when he was eleven. The rest of the family continued to foster interdependence and love and cared for each other through the following years.

Music played a major part in Morrison's life. He was a violin soloist and concert master of the Pontiac High School Orchestra. He also went to West Virginia State College on a music scholarship, graduating in 1934 with

a degree in music and social work. Morrison took additional work at Wayne State University in Detroit and Fisk University in Nashville where he studied 16 summers in Race Relations Seminars.

Mr. Ryder still looks to an era of improved social relations. He says, "I recall the feelings I experienced when I was seated separately from white students, the discussions on slavery and how all the students would turn around and stare at me. Being mocked about the way I walked as a result of the curvature of my spine used to worry me. But it came to me that the kids that used to mock me soon came to play. In fact, kids who looked to be physically normal and fine couldn't find others to play with, they were all in my yard playing with me. Those are incidents which you never forget."

Many of the "Firsts" included in this booklet owe a part of their start and success in Ingham County to Morrison Ryder who encouraged and supported them as they began their careers. He is indeed a friend to all men and a believer in his race. He has lived to see many of the youth he first met at Lincoln Community Center struggle through troubled years to progress and succeed as professionals and semiprofessionals in all areas.

Mr. Morrison Ryder is a TRULY OUTSTANDING citizen of Ingham County.

The Committee:

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Jessie Fry
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Olivia Letts
Mary McGuire
Barbara Thompson

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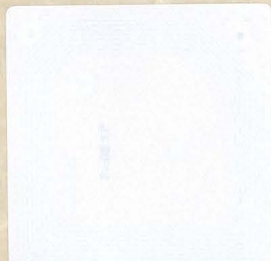
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