

# Search Continues For Info On County's Matriarchs

Why this project "Black Women of Yalobusha County?" When thinking of outstanding black women of Yalobusha County, it was easy for me to come up with a list of nearly 100 women. However, my list centers around Water Valley, I know I am missing those from Coffeeville and Oakland, thus I need help.

To date, I have secured several verbal commitments from individuals who are working on bios, stories, essays and memories of women who impacted their lives in a positive way. My plan is to share these accounts with you in some way.

Following the printing, on June 21, of the first article about this project in this publication and in the Tri-State Defender, the second phone call I received concerning it came from an 82-year-old Water Valley native now living in California. She left Water Valley after graduating from high school and now returns often to Water Valley and mentioned having fond memories of her black neighbors, a prominent family. She has agreed to write about her mother, who raised 10 children as a single mom and hopefully will share about her neighbors. I look forward to her stories and others.

In the past, most of us went off to school each



*Dottie Chapman Reed is a native of Water Valley. She graduated from Davidson High School in 1970 and from the University of Mississippi in 1974. She has worked in the Atlanta area since 1981. She has launched a project to collect bios, pictures and other info about women in the county who have made an impact on the African American community. She can be reached at (678) 825-2356 or reed2318@bellsouth.net*

day not knowing where or to what addresses our mothers went to work as caretakers, maids, nannies, babysitters, field hands, etc. Yet another conversation about this project with my home-girl here in Atlanta revealed that her grandmother worked for years for a family-owned retail establishment on Main Street, Water Valley. While there was no "whites only" sign, we were taught early on that we could only go in to place or pick up an order, nothing else. No sitting at the counter or in the

booths. A while back I read in this publication and learned from other sources about 100-year birthday celebrations for two outstanding women of Yalobusha, Mrs. Georgia Ann White and Mrs. Sallie Ann Polk. Both of whom I have known as strong, strong role models – not to mention their hats and stylish dress. Hats off to such great ladies!

While I wait for your bios, stories, memories and essays, here are portions of the life story of Mrs. Sallie Ann Polk in her own words at 100 years old recorded in May 2008.

*"I was born in 1908. I began school when I was five and finished when I was twenty-three years old. I went to Leigh Branch School and finished at Oakland School in Oakland, Ms. We did not have school buses when we went to school, so we had to walk. It was one mile from home to Leigh Branch and two miles to Oakland School.*

*When I was younger, I lived on a farm and Papa raised cows, chickens and hogs. I had to do housework, barn and yard work, along with gardening. Most of our clothes were made out of flour sacks. At the age of five, that was a busy year for me because that was the year I started working. Every day was a busy day for me. I had to pull watermelons, pick cotton, and carry water from a homemade well to the house.*

*When I was 13 years old, I went to town for the first time.*

*Papa had bought me some shoes, but they were too little, so Papa had to take me to town to try on my shoes. After that I can't tell you the next time I went to town.*

*For entertainment, I played playhouse, ball and jump rope with grapevines or sneaked and got some of Papa's ropes, but only after all our work was done. When I was growing up there were not a lot of white*



The late Sallie Ann Polk

*people around us. The only white people that I came in contact with were Molly and Polly Gilmore."*

....And perhaps contact with the Gilmore parents I would think. While Mrs. Sallie Ann had more to say about her wholesome life, her family and her love for God, what she mentioned about being able to go to town to try on shoes could get missed. The norm was that you had to maybe draw a picture of the child's foot and take it to the store. There was usually no such thing as trying on at that time in her life and lives of others.

What can we learn next...share your memories and stay tuned!

## FUMC Will Present Musical Program Sunday

A musical program of sacred and classical songs will be presented at 4 p.m. on Sunday, August 26 at First United Methodist sanctuary by Minister of Music Sergio Vergara and students at the University of Mississippi. Refreshments will follow in the Fellowship Hall. Joining Vergara

will be Caitlin Richardson, soprano, and others.

"The event is scheduled so that our community can attend prior to Sunday night services in their respective churches," said Allen McGraw, minister. "We are delighted to offer these outstanding vocalists."



Sergio Vergara is Minister of Music at First United Methodist Church.



Caitlin Richardson is among the Ole Miss students included in Sunday's program.

## Tickets Sales Underway For September's 'I Am So Water Valley' Event

Organizers of the "I'm So Water Valley Event," scheduled Sept. 22 from noon to 11 p.m. at Baker Street Park are selling \$5 tickets until Sept. 15. Tickets purchased after Sept. 15 or at the event will be \$7. The tickets allow participants to enjoy an exciting lineup that includes games, bouncers, face painting, balloons and characters for the children.

Also planned are shaved ice, funnel cakes and other food and drinks which must be purchased separate from the entry

ticket. To purchase a ticket, contact Okesha Moore. You can purchase tickets from Okesha Moore, Latasha Moore, Stephaine Johnson Campbell, Jasmine Walker, Kalya Bolden, Tiesha Cooper, Campbell, Lenera Woodward, Kim Morgan Ingram, Moquinada Gooch, Tina Jarrett, Felecia Haillard Devault, Shelia Gooch, Audrey Pegues, Ann Woodard and Ramona Bernard.

For additional information or questions, contact Okesha Moore at (662) 714-0179.

## OBITUARY

### Pam McMinn Meek

A memorial service for Pam McMinn Meek will be held Sunday, August 26, 2018, in Woodland Hills Baptist Church, beginning at two o'clock in the afternoon. The church will host a reception for family and friends immediately after the service. The church is located at 1701 North Main Street.



The Lady Devil volleyball team earned two wins during the last week, a 3-0 victory over M.S. Palmer on August 16 and another 3-0 win over Cleveland Central Monday night. The squad includes (from left) Zarabeth Adams, Lillian Lindsey, Jayla

Murphy, Sara Ellis Dean, Laury Beth Hamilton, Brooks Hodge, Maggie Kate Kuchta, Anna Mills Avant and Molly Todd. The team was back in action at presstime Tuesday against Pontotoc.

– Photo by Keli Lindsey

Yalobusha County Farm Bureau members are cordially invited to attend the annual business meeting of the Yalobusha County Farm Bureau.

The meeting is scheduled at Yalobusha County Farm Bureau at Frostland Drive in Water Valley at 8 a.m. on Thursday, August 30.

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## WEEKLY Health Tips

### Preventing

### Foodborne Illness

Proper handling of food, especially uncooked meat, plays a big part in preventing foodborne illnesses. Always wash your hands before and after preparing food. Wash fresh produce under running water.

Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods in the shopping cart, bags and refrigerator. Have separate cutting boards for meat and produce, and wash these and any utensils thoroughly after use.

Cooking any food to 160 degrees F will kill any E. coli. Know safe cooking temps for meat and poultry; invest in a good meat thermometer. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours, pack containers 2 inches deep for quick cooling and use within 4 days.

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