

# Mrs. Lucy Kelly – Still Known by Her Full Name

My angel editor questions why I still insist on using Mr. and Mrs. when I refer to my elders. I cannot avoid it in this instance because the most special thing that I remember about Mrs. Lucy Kelly was we all called her “Mrs. Lucy Kelly.”

As a beloved teacher in the Davidson School System, she demanded our respect and honor. As with the majority of the outstanding women that we have featured, I was delighted to learn more about her and respect her even more because of this new information.

Lucy Martin Kelly was born November 18, 1900 in Bryant, Miss. to Barney and Hannah Martin. She joined Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Coffeerville when she was 19. The pastor at that time was Dr. C. P. Bohannon, who founded the Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Association in 1908. On January 19, 1935 she married Jonah L. Kelly and became a step mom to his six children. Lucy and her husband were farmers and both taught Sunday School. Her great nieces, Maxine and Clementine Booker, lived with the Kellys. After a while Maxine joined her mother out of state, but Clementine stayed with them until she graduated from high school.

Lucy completed her elementary and high school requirements in what appears to be several installments indicative of the limited educational opportunity for blacks in Mississippi at the time. Records show that she completed her early education at a Coffeerville Extension Center between 1941 and 1944. She was accepted in good standing by certificate to Rust High School in Holly Springs in September 1944 with elementary education to be her major. Records show that she also submitted her information to Mississippi Industrial College in Holly Springs, which is no longer in operation. Lucy received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Rust College on June 2, 1958.

Mrs. Lucy spent the majority her teaching career in the all black Davidson School System. The Kellys were neighbors of the Orice and Beatrice Sims family. According to their son, Lee Russell Sims, she also taught his father, Orice Sims, in a one room log cabin. Lee Russell remembers being in her fourth grade class. “She often left me in charge of the class when she had to step out or during end-of-the-year testing,” he said. He laughingly recalls she had a big paddle and loved fried chicken. Mr. Kelly, he added, was like a granddad to him and his 13 siblings and always watched out for them.

Mrs. Lucy was a decades-long member of Mt. Grove M. B. Church, remaining a congregant until her death on November 15, 1986, three days before her 86th birthday. Reverend Jacob Charles Hentz remembered her as “a fine lady and a dedicated servant of God. She worked tirelessly and supported many ministries while teaching in the public school and in the church.” She served as president of the Missionary Society and as the educational director. Mrs. Lucy served as the vice president of the Missionary Society for the Mt. Moriah District and was a past matron of Heroines of Jericho Court 160.

Mrs. Lucy Kelly also taught me in fourth grade, and I can still see us standing in line in front of the blackboard for the spelling quizzes. I was terrified of missing a word and terrified of her. But she did have a gentleness about



By Dottie Chapman Reed

Reed is a native of Water Valley and graduated from Davidson High School in 1970. This article is part of a project to compile and share info about women in the county who have made an impact on the African American community. Her column appears bi-monthly, with occasional exceptions. She can be reached at (678) 825-2356 or reed2318@bellsouth.net



Mrs. Lucy Kelly



Mrs. Daliah McLeod and Mrs. Dollie Ann Henderson on the playground at Davidson Elementary during the time of Mrs. Kelly's tenure.

her, and I came to understand that Mrs. Kelly was more smoke than fire. She loved us and wanted us to be successful, and we did not want to disappoint her. Like with most of my teachers, I did not care for moving on to the next grade after getting accustomed to one teacher, and this was especially true with Mrs. Kelly.

Now let's do the math Mrs. Kelly was born in 1900, and I was in fourth grade in 1961. She was 61 years old.

As I have said many times before, we had some awesome educators at Davidson. Just meeting the state requirements probably presented a challenge to all of them. Mrs. Lucy Kelly was one who garnered such respect that most of us still call her by her full name, not due to her age but out of sincere gratitude and admiration. She overcame obstacles and barriers to simply obtain an education, and because she shared that knowledge, we are better for it. There is indeed something special about being known by your full name. We remember her!

## Betty's Week

(Continued From Page One)

my relief on Friday night. Their daughter, Misty Wright, who teaches school in the South Panola School District, has the flu. She also has been very ill, but seemed to be getting better.

Heard of several more friends and family members of the nursing home staff who have been very sick. Seems that the flu and pneumonia season are beginning early this year. Hope everyone recovers soon. In the office sinuses have been the main ailment. Maybe if the weather ever settles down, this problem will clear up. Mine are different from most—they don't stop up, they drain almost to the point of drowning me at night. Also, they affect my ears, causing me to lose my balance. Usually I just can't walk straight and hit the walls or furniture, but twice over the weekend I almost fell backward. Thankfully I was close enough to furniture to catch—was scary though.

Was so excited that I got to attend the concert by Paid In Full of New Albany, Andrew Ishee of Laurel, and Gospel Revival of the local area. This event was the second by these groups, which is sponsored by Compassion Ministries as a fundraiser. It was one of the best gospel concerts I've ever attended.

All six of the vocalists in the two trios have outstanding voices and then Gospel Revival added Terry Champion on a couple of their numbers. He says he can't read music, but he sure does have a great bass voice. Mr. Ishee plays an outstanding keyboard, has a fine voice and he's a fine comedian. Paid In Full's tenor also added to the humor of the evening, with his stories about other members of this group.

All of the music was wonderful, very inspiring—it was a worshipful program, but also lots of fun. There was even an invitation at the conclusion. Now if you don't think Christians have fun, you should have attended this program.

At the conclusion of the

concert, it was so great to visit with Evelyn Cook and her daughter, Wanda. Wanda and the late Kitty Craven were good friends. Kitty worked for us for a few years and we got to enjoy all her friends, who often came by. There were about half-dozen of these girls, of which Wanda was probably the closest friend. Many times we went on trips with these girls and the late Stanley Crow. Think several of them were members of the rifle or flag team. One of the things I remember was that on our 15th wedding anniversary some of them (pretty sure Wanda was one of them) gave us a steak dinner and Stan provided a cake with a bride and groom topper.

These girls also helped out when we needed things folded, inserted or with any other chores they could do around the newspaper office. They were always a joy to have around and it was so good to see Wanda and enjoy recalling many of these fun times.

Sunday, we again enjoyed having Bro. Billy Childs fill our pulpit during the morning and evening services. Emily joined him that night and we're always glad to have her visit. Another visitor on Sunday night was Linda Williams. Linda is guest director for our Christmas Cantata. For many years Linda was the Music Director at Bethel Baptist Church. She was also an EMT at Yalobusha General Hospital. Then she taught in the nursing program of Northwest Mississippi Community College at Oxford, teaching many of the nurses from Water Valley and the surrounding areas. After retirement she was our music director at Woodland Hills for a few years.

Veterans were honored on Monday, November 11, with a program beginning at 11 a.m. at VFW Post 4100. Rep. Tommy Reynolds was the principal speaker. This program is always excellent, as it should be. We owe so much to these men and women who have sacrificed so much to keep us free. Thanks for your service.

# Update on Phase II – Oral History Project

The six students from the Oral History graduate class at the University of Mississippi have completed the first series of interviews designed to document black community history in North Mississippi. These students are pursuing masters degrees in southern studies, an interdisciplinary program that investigates the complexity of the American South.

The students report having had extraordinary experiences while learning about Yalobusha County and the lives of its black citizens. The students are now getting ready to present their interviews, a part of their final class requirements. These presentations will take place on the afternoon of December 7th in Water Valley and will be open to the families

of those interviewed and the general public. The location will be announced after final arrangements are made. This informative and educational program provides a great opportunity for younger generations to learn more of the black history of their community.

We are still soliciting individuals to participate in the interview process. We hope that the collaboration between this column and the University of Mississippi history department will continue beyond this semester. Consider this an invitation to support this project and mark your calendar to join us December 7th for the Oral History Event. Stay tuned for the time and location!

## County

(Continued From Page One)

following multiple public meetings prior to the adoption of the new regulations to ensure access by fire trucks or ambulances to lots in mobile home parks. Upchurch is the second property owner to publicly question the requirement after Andy Paul shared similar concerns for a mobile home park on County Road 105 during a discussion with supervisors back in July.

In both the July meeting and last week's meeting, input from supervisors included changing the regulations, ideas that ranged from eliminating the paving requirement and allow-

ing adequate gravel access roads for mobile home parks to strengthening regulations to improve the sightliness of mobile home parks.

“If we are going to change this, let's set about the effort to change it. But until we do, let's stick with it,” District 3 Supervisor Lee McMinn recommended about adhering to the regulations until any changes are made by supervisors.

“I have no problem with it not being paved, but let's make sure we go through the proper channels to change it,” District 2 Supervisor Ken Rogers agreed.

“There sounds like consideration would be made

to revisit the roads,” Board President Cayce Washington agreed before supervisors agreed to table Upchurch's request and revisit the regulations in future meetings. Washington also noted that discussion could also focus on the guidelines

regulating the sightliness of mobile home parks in the county.

Upchurch was also requested to submit a permit application for the addition of the mobile home on his property as required by the county regulations.

## THANK YOU !!

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I would like to express my appreciation to you. A mere “Thank You” seems small for all you have done for me. It is certainly an honor to serve as your Tax Assessor/Collector. Thank you again for the vote of confidence you have placed in me. God bless each and every one of you.

Sincerely,  
Linda Rae Shuffield

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## THANK YOU

To the voters of Yalobusha County, I want to thank you for electing me as your next Justice Court Judge. I am humbled by the encouragement and support I received. And I pledge to perform my judicial duties to the best of my ability.

A special thank you goes out to my relatives and friends who manned stations outside the polling places for me. I also want to thank my friend Tommy Defer for running a good clean campaign, and for a hard fought battle. His family and mine have been friends for years and nothing has or will change that.

Lastly, I want to thank my late wife, Shelley, without whose love and support I never would have made it this far. This political victory is hers as much as it is mine.

Sincerely,  
Trent Howell