



September
2015

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Batter Up!

Housing Authority's Newest Board Member Has Place in Baseball Museum

When the Negro Southern League Museum opened its doors next to Regions Field on Aug. 28, Charles Harris was there. He had a personal interest in the museum. The museum tells the rich history of African-American baseball in the South, and the Jefferson County Housing Authority's newest board member is part of that history.



*Charles Harris
in his playing days.*

Harris played for Stockham Valves and Fittings in the Birmingham Industrial League from 1962 to 1972. In its heyday, from the 1920s through the 1960s, the Birmingham Industrial League fielded teams that rivaled Negro League teams and was a proving ground for players who later went on to the Negro League and Major League Baseball – the great Willie Mays among them.

During Harris' 10 years with Stockham, the team dominated the Industrial League, winning five championships. In 1965, according to the Negro Southern League Museum, Piper Davis managed the team and recruited a roster of former Birmingham Black Barons and Negro League players. That team won the league's championship.

And Harris more than held his own amid such talent. "I was a pretty good fielder," Harris said when asked about his skill as a ballplayer. But the left-handed outfielder also handled himself well at the plate. According to stats available on the museum's website, Harris batted .390 in 1963, .363 in 1964, .385 in 1965 and .348 in 1967.

"We had a lot of talent here," Harris said. "A lot of guys played on company or neighborhood teams. That's how they got exposure. There were so many guys in Alabama



Harris with his glove from when he played for Stockham Valves.

Continues on Page 3 ...

Inside . . .

Community Spotlight
Take a Look at
Terrace Manor . . . 2

Warrior Addition
New Handicapped
Apartments . . . 2

New in Fultondale
Get to Know
Nikole Davis . . . 3



NEW ADDITION

New Warrior Court Handicapped Units Completed

For Steven Cottrell, manager of the Housing Authority's Warrior communities, it's been a long wait for his two newest apartment units to be completed and ready for occupancy. But the finished product has been well worth the wait.



Because these aren't any ordinary apartments. They are the Housing Authority's newest fully accessible handicapped units.

"These are two beautiful apartments," Cottrell said of the units at Warrior Court. "Management is so happy to have these two, brand-new units soon to be available. I am very excited that we soon will be getting residents in them."

Construction on the two-unit apartment building started more than a year ago, Cottrell said. Most of the work on the apartments has been finished for several months, but the Housing Authority has had to wait to get everything signed off and apartments approved for occupancy.

The apartments feature modern concrete wheelchair ramps, roll-in showers, low cabinets and countertops accessible to residents in wheelchairs, easily reachable light switches and under-cabinet lighting. In addition to a stove, washer and dryer hookups and central air conditioning and heating, the units have an icemaker line for the refrigerator. The units also come with outside storage rooms.

Now that the apartments are ready to be occupied, the next step is getting the final approval to begin selecting the lucky new tenants. Finding tenants shouldn't be hard. Cottrell said Warrior Court has a waiting list of applicants.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Terrace Manor

As part of a new regular feature, this month Community Connection shines the spotlight on Terrace Manor Apartment Community in Bessemer. The property is managed by Valencia Cobb. Whitney Taylor is assistant manager. Their offices are located in the community building near the entrance to the community.

Here are some facts about Terrace Manor.

Address: 4501 Little Drive, Bessemer, AL 35022.

Number of units: 130.

Types of apartments: One-bedroom, one-bath (486 square feet); two-bedroom, one-bath (610 square feet); three-bedroom, one-bath (685 square feet); and three-bedroom, one-and-a-half bath (734 square feet).

When built: 1985.

Community amenities: Two play areas and a community room.

Criteria for residents: Income-based affordable housing. Taking applications for two- and three-bedroom units through Oct. 1.

What's new: A Senior Companion Program; resident activities.

What makes the community special: Nestled on rolling hills featuring scenic landscapes and plenty of grassy areas and trees, Terrace Manor is close to Interstate 20/59, shopping, schools and parks.

From the manager: "From the moment you drive into our community, you will know you have found a place to call home. Terrace Manor is the community that cares."



NEW FACE

Get to Know ... Nikole Davis

My job: Assistant property manager, Fultondale.

When I started: August 18.

My duties: Accepting and processing applications, recertifications and work requests.

My background: I have been in property management 17 years and have handled both conventional and Section 8 housing.

Where I live: Center Point.

Where I was born: Birmingham.

I am a graduate of: Gardendale High School.

My past job was: A property manager.

My favorite hobby: Shopping.

What I like about my job: Everything!!

What I want people to know about me: I take pride in everything I do.



Charles Harris' Baseball Past . . . From Page 1

Harris said most of the big companies had teams. The Negro Southern League Museum has a display about the Birmingham Industrial League and lists on its website dozens and dozens of teams. They include such names as ACIPCO, McWane, Sloss Furnace, Connors Steel, Birmingham Pipe Shop, Englewood Iron Works, L&N Railroad, Republic Steel, Tennessee Coal & Iron, and many more.



Stockham Valves' 1965 Championship Team. Charles Harris is fourth from right on the front row.

Some of the Industrial League games were

played at Rickwood Field and other ballparks around town. But the big companies had their own baseball fields. "The field at Stockham had lights, so we played a lot of times at night," Harris said.

The Industrial Leagues games often drew thousands of fans. Sometimes, according to the Negro Southern League, they outdrew the Birmingham Barons.

A Welder

You can say baseball helped build Harris' career as a welder. "At that time, they were hiring ballplayers," Harris said of Stockham and other Industrial League teams. "I got hired because of baseball." Harris worked at Stockham for 10 years before taking a job at the Chicago Bridge & Iron Co., from which he retired.

At age 78, Harris is still active in baseball – not as a player, but as an ambassador. The Norwood native and 1956 graduate of Ullman High School is vice president of the Alabama Negro League Association. The association is a group of about 80 to 90 former players from Birmingham and around the country. The group meets each year in Birmingham, and during Black History Month, its members speak at schools about Birmingham's baseball history.

A resident of Spring Gardens for the past four years, Harris was appointed to the Housing Authority board as a resident representative. He was sworn in at the board's Aug. 24 meeting.

Harris said he will be a voice for his fellow tenants. "I am trying to get myself adjusted, but I'm looking forward to working on the board. I talk to people out here, and they tell me the things they want improved."

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

SPRING GARDENS is accepting applications for senior housing. Apply at the Spring Gardens Community Center. Call 205 841 5032 for more information.

TERRACE MANOR is accepting public housing applications through Oct. 1 for two and three bedroom apartments. Apply at the office in Bessemer. Call 205 426 8948 for more information.

FULTONDALE is accepting public housing applications for Fultondale Village, Brookside, Hickory Grove and Red Hollow. Apply at the Fultondale office. Call 205 841 2595 for more information.

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS performed by UAB nursing students are offered at Spring Gardens on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Community Center's dining hall. Call 205 841 5032 for more information.

FROM KEN**Fall Is a Great Time to Enjoy the Outdoors**

Fall is here! Which means Saturdays full of college football. War Eagle! Roll Tide! And, of course, NFL games galore. It's enough to keep you on the sofa for hours at a time.

But with its mild temperatures and mostly clear skies, fall is also a great time to get outside the apartment. Whether it's lounging on a patio chaise, talking a walk through the community or simply sitting on the front porch and waiving to friends and neighbors, I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.

I also ask you to help us keep your community beautiful and clean. Pick up litter and trash around your apartments, or call maintenance to have unsightly trash or junk removed.

Speaking of maintenance, don't hesitate to call us if something in your apartment is broken or not working properly. The same for outside lights that aren't working. Also, be nosy neighbors and report suspicious people or activity in your community.

Enjoy the football games. Enjoy the outdoors. And enjoy, take pride in and feel safe in your community.

New Board Member

I want to personally welcome Charles Harris to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners as the resident representative. Mr. Harris has been a resident of Spring Gardens for four years, and everyone who knows him will attest that he is a fine, upstanding member of the community. We are pleased to have him on the board.

Mr. Harris was also an outstanding baseball player in his younger years, as the lead article in this newsletter points out. Chat him up for stories about the glory days of the old Industrial League in Birmingham.

More important, though, let him be your voice on the Housing Authority board. Share with him your ideas about how to make your community better. You can even pass on your complaints, even though we prefer you to call the office first if there is something that needs to be addressed.



Ken Vaughan
Executive Director

CONTACT US

THE FOLLOWING IS CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE VARIOUS JEFFERSON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMUNITIES:

BESSEMER

(OAK RIDGE, TERRACE MANOR I AND II, AND BRIGHTON GARDENS)

MANAGER: VALENCIA COBB
205-426-8948

ASSISTANT MANAGER: WHITNEY TAYLOR
205-426-8950

FULTONDALE

(FULTONDALE VILLAGE, BROOKSIDE, RED HOLLOW AND HICKORY GROVE)

MANAGER: LATRINDA PEOPLES
205-841-2595

ASSISTANT MANAGER: NIKOLE DAVIS
205-841-2595

WARRIOR

(WARRIOR COURT, CHELSEA GARDENS, BRADFORD, DIXI MANOR AND TRAFFORD)

MANAGER: STEVEN COTTRELL
205-647-4369

ASSISTANT MANAGER: GABRIELLE FORD
205-647-9605

SPRING GARDENS

(SPRING GARDENS I)
MANAGER: NITA CLARK
205-841-5032

**JEFFERSON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
ABOUT US**

THE JEFFERSON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY WAS INCORPORATED ON OCTOBER 15, 1941, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SAFE AND SANITARY HOUSING FOR QUALIFIED LOW INCOME PERSONS RESIDING IN THE JEFFERSON COUNTY AREA. WE ARE GOVERNED BY A FIVE MEMBER BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, EACH APPOINTED BY THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION.

OUR VISION

IMPROVING COMMUNITY QUALITY AND PROMOTING SELF SUFFICIENCY THROUGH THE INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES FOR LOW TO MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES AND THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION.

OUR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NOLANDA BEARDEN CHAIR
MICHAEL J. DAVIS II VICE CHAIR
JANE BAILEY MEMBER
SAM PARKER MEMBER
CHARLES HARRIS RESIDENT MEMBER

OUR EXECUTIVE STAFF

DIRECTOR KEN VAUGHAN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING PROGRAMS JUDY BRYANT
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE HANNAH GORE

OUR OFFICE

3700 INDUSTRIAL PARKWAY
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35217 5316
PHONE: 205 849 0123
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OUR OFFICE HOURS

MONDAYS THURSDAYS: 7:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M.
FRIDAYS: 7:30 A.M. TO 11:30 A.M.