



**Doris Bailey - Teacher 1971-1992; Clothing, Foods, Independent Living**

### **Teaching at Southeast**

My first year at Southeast was 1971. I shared room 217 with another teacher named Jackie. She taught foods; I taught clothing. That was fine, because I preferred clothing. Jackie was only at Southeast one year. When she left, they offered me room 204, but I had to change to teaching foods. Even though I preferred clothing, I agreed, and it was the best decision I ever made. Room 204 was wonderful. I loved it. I was in room 204 until Southeast became a magnet school, and they changed 204 to a science lab. Then I got moved to the first floor to a room that had been an art room. That really tore me up. While I was at Southeast I taught clothing, foods and independent living. I left in 1992.

### **Other Teaching Assignments**

I taught at Yeager before I moved to Southeast. I taught 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade home economics. After 2 years, the head of the department invited me to Southeast in 1971. I was very pleased to move to high school.

After I left Southeast, I taught 6 years at East before I retired in 1998 after teaching for 31 years.

### **Memorable Classes and Teachers**

- Mr. Evans was the principal when I started at Southeast. I remember one time my mother was ill. I was very upset and talked to Mr. Evans about taking some time off. He said to just take the time I needed and let the substitute handle the classes. He was a real gentleman.
- Jeanne Finter and I worked together as Senior Class sponsors.
- Sarah Bivins and I were friends.

- I helped Dorothy Halloway (biology) and then Thomasina Long (home economics) with Beta. We went to St. Louis with the group, and we had the Beta reception in the home economics room.
- The teacher across the hall handled the Junior Senior Prom. I helped her, and then she helped me with the Senior Class.
- I remember Tom Levin as a student. It didn't seem like too long until he was back as assistant principal.

### **Southeast Memories**

I was Senior Class sponsor for 18 years. It was a joy but hard work. I got to meet so many more students.

- I measured each for cap and gown and explained the meaning of the ceremony. I insisted that no one wear tennis shoes with his/her cap and gown. Girls could not wear pants.
- We planned the graduation ceremony. A few years we had the ceremony on the football field. The graduates walked in a procession down from the school onto the field. Parents and guests were in the stands. It was just beautiful with the red and blue gowns. When graduation was at the Municipal Auditorium, we had a Knight and Lady lead in the procession. Before they entered, we announced "Let the pageantry begin." It was wonderful.
- We planned the senior class programs and came up with a different theme each year. Only the seniors could attend. That was how the class made money for the senior gift. We gave the school a new knight one year. I also remember Mr. Herron asking about our senior class fund when Emanuel Cleaver was coming to speak. He asked if we could give him "a little something" for his campaign. We did.
- It got to the point that Mr. Herron came to me whenever there was any issue with the seniors. For example, one senior picnic got out of hand – some of the students acted up. The next time, Mr. Herron told me to get a substitute and stay with them at the picnic.
- I was involved. The seniors were mine, and I liked that.

I loved the years I taught in room 204. I was even able to redesign the space when funds became available. We had 8 kitchens. Four students worked in each. Each kitchen had a table and chairs, a sink and a stove. We had a dining room where we had receptions and meals.

We baked cookies for school events and prepared food for ROTC field day. We had the Beta reception in the home economics room. We planned

Christmas parties for the staff. We had cookies and punch and a full buffet table. Some years we tried new recipes and made a recipe book for the guests. We decorated and made centerpieces. We prepared for weeks and weeks.

We had a big freezer where we stored the cookies. I discovered that the night maintenance crew took some. I told them not to take cookies from the freezer - that I would leave some out for them.

We cooked soul food for Black History month. Each table chose what they wanted to fix. One time I bought 120# of chitlins. One table decided on shrimp gumbo. One of the boys took some of the shrimp home. His group was really upset with him. We made up a song called "Shrimp Thief" and sang to him.

The executive board of the senior class had meetings in the dining room. We even were able to get a telephone installed there.

My students went on one field trip each year. It was a real experience for some of them.

- We went to the city market to visit and eat.
- We went to the Landing to eat out and practice manners. I warned the students to not steal anything. Even so, a girl took some gum. I shook her hand until she dropped the gum. I was never afraid to embarrass students if they needed to learn a lesson.
- My independent living students went shopping as if they were setting up an apartment. They comparison shopped for appliances and furniture. Sometimes we went to shopping malls up north. One time, a boy noticed the sign to the airport. He must have never been that far away from home before.
- One time we went to Bannister Mall. I cautioned the students that they must be back in time to ride home on the bus. One boy was late, and we left him. He did not come to class the next day, but returned after that. He was embarrassed. I told him I meant what I said, and it was good he was embarrassed. He learned something and would not make a mistake like being late again.
- I always called the shopping mall ahead of time to explain that there was a group coming to work on a class project. They all had name tags.

- Before the field trip, I warned the students that I would call the police if anyone stole anything. I never had to call the police. However, I did call a few parents.

Stories from the classroom:

- One day, a girl brought a baby to class. She had problems at home and did not know what else to do. I said that baby could not cry. We all pitched in and took care of the baby in one of the back rooms all day and kept it a secret.
- I insisted that girls always wear dresses when we cooked. Sometimes they complained that they might get something on their clothes. I told them if they cooked properly and wore their aprons, they would be fine.
- I never stood in front of a class in pants. I always wore a dress or skirt. The students asked if I even had any pants. I said that I did and wore them whenever I chose.
- I went to all the football games, and sometimes I wore pants. My students noticed that.
- Once Bobby Vanlandingham was going to tease about a girl's name. I just said that if I had a name like Vanlandingham, I wouldn't be teasing anyone else.
- I had a class that was all boys including a tall basketball player named Robert. I explained that when we sat at the table, we sat tall and raised the fork or spoon to our mouths. Robert raised his hand. He said that if he did that, the food would be cold by the time it reached his mouth.
- I told the boys that they had to know three things: how many teaspoons are in a tablespoon, how many tablespoons are in a cup and how many cups are in a pound of butter. I told them to think about a football yell. As they got close to the goal line, they should yell "3 teaspoons in a tablespoon, 16 tablespoons in a cup, and 2 cups in a pound of butter."
- Students thought I was crazy, but they respected me. Even if I was a mean old lady, I stood for my beliefs and what I wanted them to do. Once a vice principal asked if I wanted him to take a boy to the hall for discipline. The boy said that "Mrs. Bailey could handle the situation."
- One time after my purse was stolen; another student bought me a replacement.
- In all my years at Southeast, there was never anything really bad.

### **Current Events**

I came to Southeast in 1971. By then, the racial situation was calmer. I very seldom heard about racial trouble. There were some incidents that

could have escalated, but I made up my mind that it was not worth it. One black student told me that I was a racist because I liked the white kids better. Of course, that was not true. Another time, a white teacher asked me if I knew how to whistle. I said I did not. I guess she thought I should know how to whistle since I was black. Also, one year we had two boys both named John Williams. One was black, and one was white. People joked that you never knew which one would show up. That could have been a racial thing, but I ignored it. All in all, I never had a problem.

Jesse Jackson came to an assembly at Southeast. That was a big deal. Emanuel Cleaver spoke several times at Baccalaureate.

After Mr. Herron left, we got a white man from California as principal. I did not get along with him. He even questioned why we had red and blue for our school colors. He said those were gang colors for crips and bloods. He said we should change them, that we could have a green ninja knight instead. He did not understand Southeast tradition at all. I left the next year.

### **Family Life**

I had a husband who was working on his doctorate and two children, a son and a daughter. My husband was the school psychologist for the School for The Visually Impaired in KC, KS. He also spent time at UMKC and Manhattan. My time was filled with my commute to and from Southeast (I lived at 62<sup>nd</sup> & Parallel the entire time. It was 19 miles to Southeast.), cooking, taking care of our children and getting ready for the next day. I was (and still am) very active in my church. I always shared stories about my personal life with my classes. Whenever I traveled, I spoke about what I saw and what and where I ate. I used those stories to teach.

Mrs. Bailey gave the Alumni Association a student handbook and several pictures. She has some yearbooks, but does not want to part with them yet. She has Richard DeHart's contact information and will get with him when she locates additional items to donate.