



Julia H. Hammonds (Posthumously)

Mrs. Julia Hughes Hammonds was born December 28, 1917 in Tarboro, North Carolina. She died on May 5, 2006 at the age of 89. She graduated in 1936 from the Tarboro Colored High School. She received her B.A. degree with Summa Cum Laude honors in Early Childhood Education from Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. She later advanced her degree by attending East Carolina University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Edgecombe Technical Institute.

Mrs. Hammonds, a civic leader, will always be remembered, in part, for her poise and distinction. When Head Start was first launched in 1965, the premise was very simple: every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to reach their full potential. Active in the early Head Start movement, she embodied that premise and it reaped many benefits for the youth of Tarboro – African American youth in particular.

A participant in the 1978 National Head Start Conference in El Paso, Texas, Mrs. Hammonds was chairperson of the Career Development Committee for NEED Head Start and a member of the Head Start Education Committee. The Head Start Center in Tarboro was named for her in recognition of her contributions to the citizens of Tarboro. The Julia H. Hammonds Center stands today as a testament to her fidelity to the sanctity of youth.

A pioneer and advocate of equality, she was one of the first African-Americans to serve on the Tarboro Board of Education. Mrs. Hammonds served six years and was board vice-president for two years. She was also one of the first African-Americans appointed as an election judge by the Edgecombe County Board of elections. Mrs. Hammonds served a five-year term as chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Interracial Citizens Advisory Committee in Tarboro and was Volunteer for the Seventh Judicial District, Juvenile Division. She was a past member of the Board of Directors of the Edgecombe County United Fund.

Her civic and community involvements were numerous and included: the North Carolina Head Start Association, North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children, American Red Cross, Tarboro Housing and Community and Development Advisory Committee, Edgecombe County Democratic Women, the General Advisory committee for Vocational Education of Tarboro City Schools and the East Tarboro Citizens League Scholarship Committee. She was a member of Lactate Gamma Delta Sorority and the Financial Committee at St. Paul Baptist Church, Tarboro. Additionally, she was a member of the presentation committee for the Tarboro "All American City Celebration" and narrator for "THE Edgecombe Story" sponsored by the Edgecombe Bicentennial Commission. Julia loved public speaking and reciting poetry. Her favorite poem was "INVICTUS."

She married Benjamin Russell Hammonds in 1937. They were blessed with three children. Her daughters, Julia H. Harper and Doris F. Hammonds and her sons, Benjamin E. Hammonds and Reverend Milton Harrell revel with each of us in her legacy.